



HOW TO WRITE **DIALOGUE** IN YOUR NOVEL OR SHORT STORY

TO WRITING SUCCESS



Success Criteria

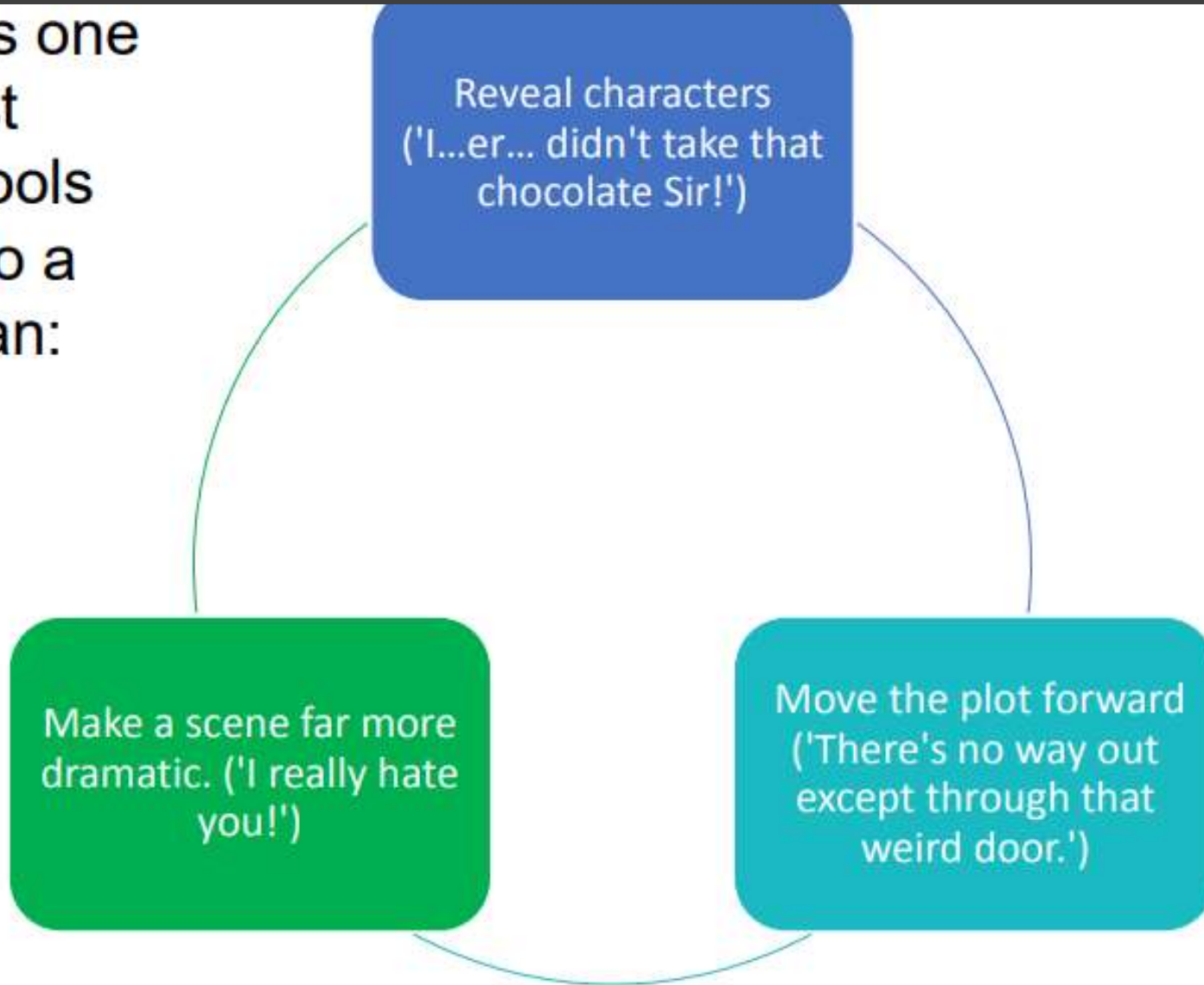
The key is to get rid of the 'umms', the 'ers', the half-finished sentences and the boring bits in real life conversations in order to create dynamic dialogue that brings characters to life, makes writing more vibrant and moves the plot forward.

Dialogue is one of the most powerful tools available to a writer. It can:

Reveal characters
(‘I...er... didn’t take that chocolate Sir!’)

Make a scene far more dramatic.
(‘I really hate you!’)

Move the plot forward
(‘There’s no way out except through that weird door.’)



I walked to school and got there late. Everyone was in class. I opened the door and there were kids everywhere. Boys were climbing out the window and there were paper planes all over the place. My best friend Anna was holding one of the rats from the science lab and the rest were running all over the room. Anna told me there were no teachers, none at all.



After

Late to school again, everyone was in class. I opened the door to the classroom at full speed. 'Duck!' yelled Matt, and a huge paper aeroplane came diving right at my head. 'Come on.' Jack was halfway out the window, two boys were right behind him. My best friend Anna was holding one of the rats from the science lab – the rest were running everywhere. 'What's happening?' I asked her. 'There's no teachers,' she cried. 'None at all!'

Dialogue brings characters to life

Matty Forever kicks in with dialogue from the moment the two main characters meet.



'Hello, Bill O'Connell,' she said.

'How do you know my name?' he asked.

'Just do. Can I come over?'

'Sure.'

'My name's Mat,' said the fairy, pushing her way through two broken palings that swung to the side like a kind of gate. 'Mat Grube. With an "e" at the end so it rhymes with tube.'

Bill didn't know what to say, but Mat filled in the awkward moment. She picked up a stone from the ground and said knowingly, 'This is an igneous rock.'

Dialogue makes the writing more vibrant

Dialogue enlivens this next scene in which family and friends are making a mural on the wall at Matty's house.

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By late afternoon there were seven people drawing and painting on the wall. Tessa was doing a dancing elephant. A man with no left arm who had come to borrow a book from Donald was drawing a giraffe (because, like Bill, he could only draw one thing), and a lady called Pip who had come to help Tessa make strawberry jam painted some fluffy clouds on a blue sky. They were joined by Mat's big brother, Tom, who loped into the room calling out, 'Make way for the professional artist! Six months off getting his diploma!'

Dialogue moves the plot forward

As we come to the climax of the book, Fernham relies heavily on dialogue to move the plot forward. At a fancy dinner party at Isabelle's house, Bill deliberately tells his 'shameful' secret. He knows that Isabelle will mock him and tell all the other kids at school. Why does he do it? To make amends to Matty, of course. This is how readers know that Bill values Matty's friendship, loyalty and courage more than ever.

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...Bill realised that Mr Schneider was talking to him. He had not heard a word.

'What?' Bill asked, confused.

'You mean I beg your pardon, Bill,' corrected Mrs Farnaby-Jones.

'Pardon?' said Bill clenching his teeth.

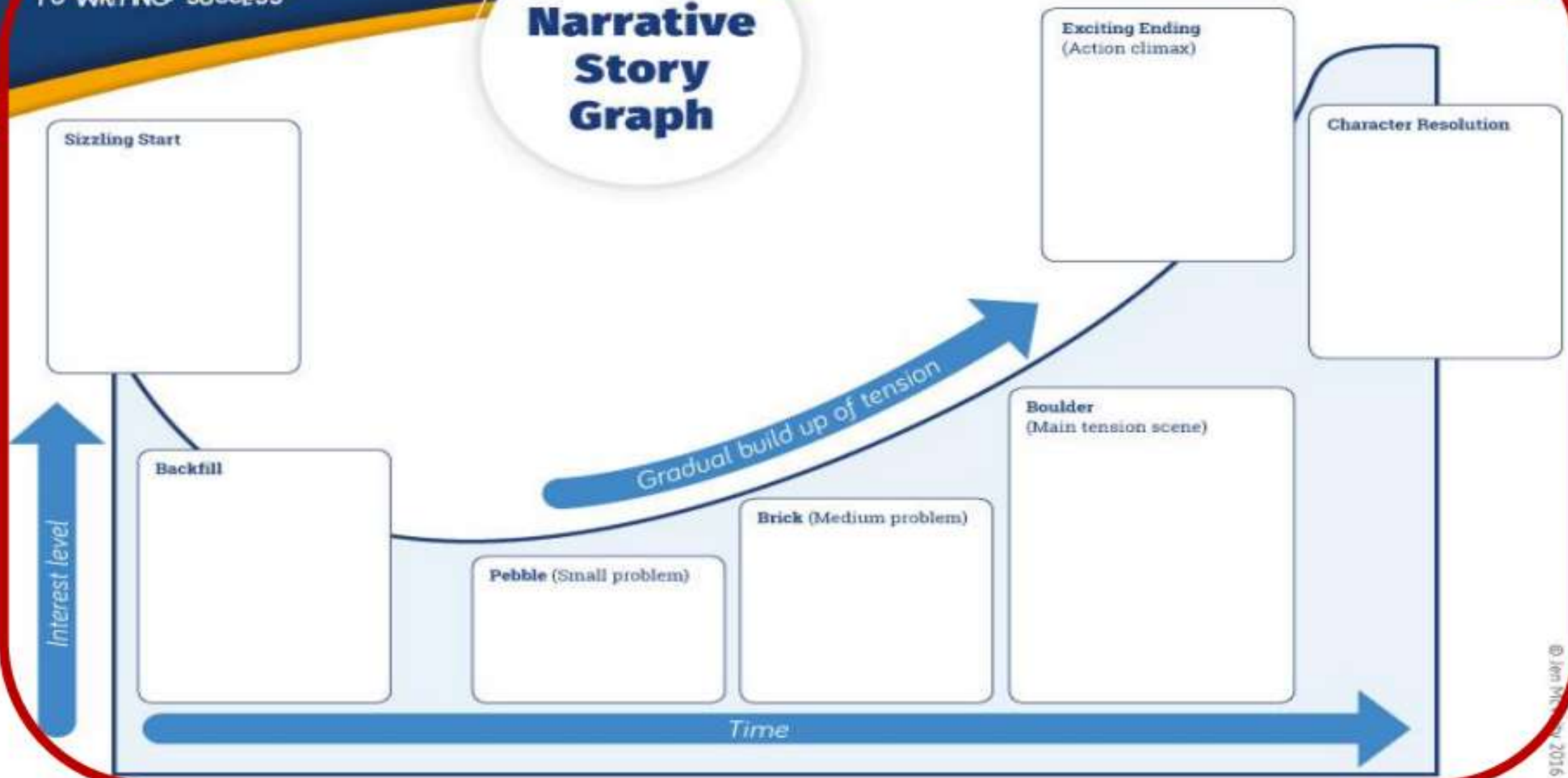
'That's okay, boy,' said Sonny Schneider. 'I was just asking what your daddy does for a living.'

'My dad?'

'Yes, your dad.'

Bill knew what he had to do. It might help to make up for his betrayal of Matty's big secret. It was also going to free him. But the cost was going to be mighty big.

Narrative Story Graph



Finally...

Visit this site for some excellent examples of dialogue in literature

<https://blog.reedsy.com/guide/how-to-write-dialogue/dialogue-examples/>