Story Guide

Hi All,

I am someone who likes writing fantasy novels. Here are some of the writing techniques I developed while writing. I don’t claim to be an expert. These are just points based on my personal experience.

I don’t know if these points are universal to storytelling. However, this is what I use in the genre called the hero-quest.

* As much as possible, narrate the story in the past perfect tense. Ex. He entered the room. She ate lunch and then stepped out of the room.
* Always write in the positive voice.
* It’s okay for characters to:
  + Speak in the passive voice
  + Use bad grammar
* Always speak from experience. This gives dept to the story, and makes it more real and vivid.
* When speaking from experience,
  + Strip out places, times, and people
  + Use the essence of the experience to create new events
  + Psychological experiences are more important than physical experiences
  + Dreams are an important source of inspiration. Cultivate them.
* The story must be event based. Ex. The hero faces 5 main challenges and seven sub-events such as a wedding, graduation, birthday, finding the prophesy, etc.
* Sprinkle humor in stories. Veiled dirty jokes work well.
* Drama is important
* Never reveal everything about the hero. Let that information reveal itself as the story progresses.
* Heroes are driven by hidden forces. This makes them say and do things the reader doesn’t understand. Eventually, the story reveals the reasons for the hero’s actions. Looking back, the actions become obvious.
* Heroes always travel a path of growth and development, as they mature as a person
* Use descriptive language when narrating, designed to evoke images.
* Avoid the word ‘said’. (Ex. ‘That bumpkin,’ he said. ‘Is that so?’ she said.) Instead use words that express emotion (Ex. ‘That bumpkin,’ he cursed. ‘Is that so?’ she wondered.)
* Later events in a story must refer to earlier events in a story, to:
  + Give the reader a sense of familiarity
  + Show how the hero progresses
* All stories have mini plots that are universal. Breaking these plots can cause confusion with your audience. In the excerpt from *The Hidden Princess and the Sleeping Dragon (book 4)*, the use of the two rude kids allows us to better introduce Mark’s new best friend.

“Hi everyone,” Mark said. “I am Mark and I’m going to be a wizard when I grow up.”

A brunette called out, “Aren’t you a little old for that?”

A boy beside her laughed and added, “He probably still believes in Santa Clause.” The class laughed.

“Settle down class,” Mrs. Taylor said sternly. “Mind your manners.”

A strawberry blond girl with blue eyes came up to Mark and said, “Don’t listen to them. I think your ambition is marvelous. Hi. I’m Annie. I’ll help you get settled in.”

* I sometimes read aloud sentences, just to make sure they sound correct.

Saying Words

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Anger   * Grumbled * Complained * Protested * Griped * Hissed * Retorted * Shouted * Sneered * Yelled   Threatened   * Goaded * Insinuated * Taunted * Threatened * Growled * Snarled * Commented   Grateful | Making a Request   * Asked * Demanded * Requested   Plead   * Begged * Groveled * Implored * Pleaded * Whimpered * Whined * Urged   Correcting   * Amended * Corrected * Told you/them/etc. * Admonished * Scolded   Hollered   * Lied | General   * Said * Exclaimed * Replied * Greeted * Stated * Clarified * Continued   Declarations   * Declared * Confirmed * Acknowledged * Affirmed * Admitted   Confessed  Muttered  Applauded  Intoned | Condensing Tone  Demurred  Dismissed  Denial   * Rejected * Denied * Questioned * Refuted * Noted * Observed * Stated   Postulated  Wondered  Gloated  Spat  whispered |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Debate   * Argued * Pronounced * Declared * Claimed * Contended * Debated * Disputed * Reasoned   Added  Included | * Mused * Contemplated * Speculated * Pondered * Noted   Excitement   * Bubbled * Enthused * Quipped   Quipped   * Quipped * Joked | * Exclaimed   Droned  mumbled  sympathized  murmured | Apologized  Declared  Applauded  Congratulated |