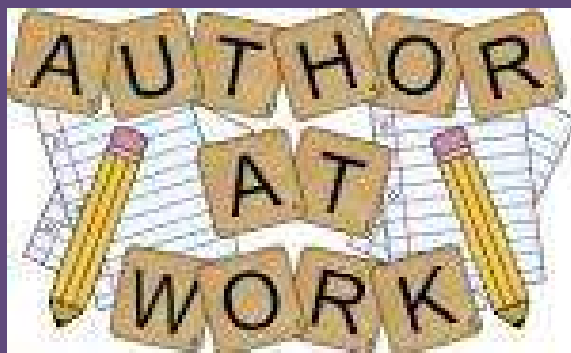




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Top tips for helping your child with writing





Is your child always making up stories about their favourite book characters, or characters they've invented? What happens when you suggest writing them down – does writer's block set in?

From fear of the blank page to worries over spelling, for many children writing a story can be a real challenge, asking them to use their new-found reading and writing skills to tell a gripping tale.

How to Write your Best Story Ever!

Top Ten Tips

Story sparks

Every story needs a spark of inspiration. Encourage your child to look out for story ideas in everyday life. Maybe a place you visit on a day out could become the setting for a spooky story, or a newspaper headline about a Jack Russell terrier who makes friends with a tiger could inspire an amazing animal tale. When you start looking, you can find inspiration everywhere!

All you need is a book

Give your child a creative space that's their own – a notebook or journal for them to scribble down story ideas, invent incredible characters or even draw pictures of the places where they want to set their story. A writer's notebook is a private place where they can gather their inspiration, so don't go sneaking a peek!

Reader to writer

Every writer is a reader and every reader can be a writer too. Talk to your child about the books they are reading. What are the best bits? What are the worst? Who's their favourite character and why? Encourage them to write down favourite lines and think about how the books they are reading could inspire their own spin-off stories and sequels.

Opening lines

Sometimes the hardest thing about writing a story is the fear of the blank page. Help your child to conquer this fear by giving them an opening line. Challenge them to take a book off their bookshelf and use the opening line as the first line of their own story.





Remix a story

Making a mash-up story that mixes together characters from different books, films and TV shows can be a lot of fun. Get your child to choose a favourite character from a book and create a story that puts them into their favourite TV show or videogame. How would Sherlock Holmes solve a Minecraft mystery? What would happen if Mr Gum entered *The X Factor*? Encourage your child to let their imagination run wild as they write their mash-up story.

A picture can inspire a thousand words...

A visit to an art gallery or even just looking at photos in a magazine can inspire a story. Encourage children to ask questions about the pictures they see – thinking about characters, settings and situations they can turn into a story. Wordless picture books such as *Journey* and *Quest* by Aaron Becker can help children to invent their own story to accompany the pictures.

Making a map

If your child is a big fantasy fan and loves stories about dragons, wizards and monsters, encourage them to create their own magical land. Look at maps of other fantasy lands such as Middle Earth and Narnia and think about the stories that are set there. Making a map can help to inspire fantastic adventures.

Comic books and coding

Writing a story isn't always just about the words. Creating comic books, picture books and illustrated stories can let your child use their artistic talents too. Or you could move from page to screen and get them coding to create an animated tale.

Share their stories

Make time in your day to listen to the story your child is writing. Type it up, print it out, make it look like a book and send it out to friends and family. Look out for creative writing competitions such as [BBC Radio 2's 500 Words](https://www.bbc.com/radio2/500words) competition that let your child share their story with the biggest possible audience.

Have fun

Why not join in and make up your own story too? The novel *Lionboy* was written by Louisa Young and her eight-year-old daughter Isabel under the pseudonym Zizou Corder. Work together to make up your own bedtime story and you might find you've written a bestseller! Good luck!

Of course, your child doesn't have to write a story! Don't forget shopping lists, letters, diaries, notes, poems etc. The list is endless!

More information:

<https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk>

<https://www.readingrockets.org/article/7-great-ways-encourage-your-childs-writing>





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