



FAMILY CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP

Imagine and Believe. Inspire and Achieve



PIXAR'S

22 Rules of Storytelling

#1: Admire characters for attempting more than what their successes have been.

#2: Keep in mind what's interesting to you as an audience, not what's fun to do as a writer. They can be very different.

#3: Trying for theme is important, however you won't see what the story is about until you're at the end of that story. Got it? Now rewrite.

#4: Once upon a time there was _____. Every day, _____. One day _____. Because of that, _____. Because of that, _____. Until finally _____.

#5: Simplify. Focus. Combine characters. Hop over detours. You'll feel like you're losing valuable stuff but it sets you free.

#6: What is your character good at or comfortable with? Throw the polar opposite at him. Challenge him. How does he deal with it?

#7: Come up with your ending before you figure out your middle. Seriously. Endings are hard. Get yours working up front.

#8: Finish your story. Let go even if it's not perfect. In an ideal world you have both, but move on. Do better next time.

#9: When you're stuck, make a list of what wouldn't happen next. More often than not, the material that gets you unstuck appears.

#10: Pull apart the stories you like. What you like in them is a part of you. Recognize it before you use it.

#11: Why must you tell this story in particular? What's the belief burning within you that your story feeds off of? That's the heart of it.

#12: Discount the 1st thing that comes to mind. And the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th - get the obvious out of the way. Surprise yourself.

#13: Give your characters opinions. A character being passive or malleable is easy for you as a writer, but it's poison to your audience.

#14: What's the essence of your story? What's the most economical way of telling of it? If you know that, you can build out from there.

#15: If you were your character, in this situation, how would you feel? Honesty lends credibility to unbelievable situations.

#16: What are the stakes? Give us reason to root for the character. What happens if he doesn't succeed? Stack the odds against him.

#17: No work is ever wasted. And if it's not working, let go and move on - if it's useful, it'll show up again.

#18: You have to know yourself, and know the difference between doing your best & being fussy. Story is testing, not refining.

#19: Coincidences that get characters into trouble are great. Coincidences that get them out of it is cheating.

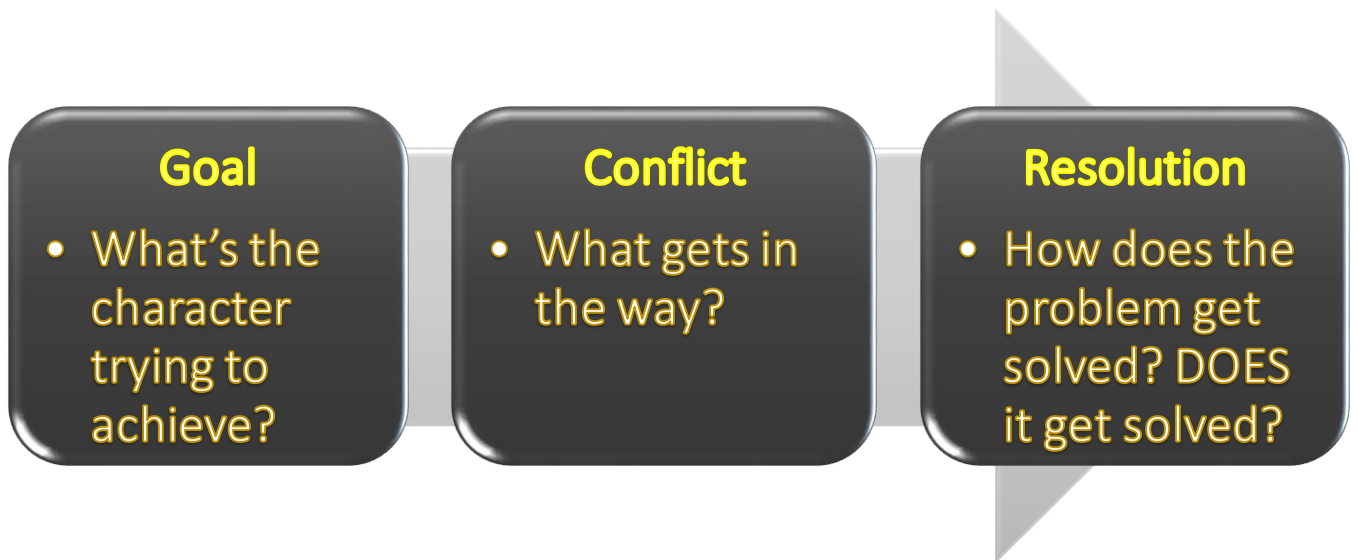
#20: Exercise. Take the building blocks of a movie you dislike. How would you rearrange them into what you DO like?

#21: Identify with your situation/characters. Don't write "cool." What would make YOU act that way?

#22: Putting it on paper only allows you to start fixing it. If a perfect idea stays in your head, you'll never share it with anyone.



Effective models for planning stories



This model is effective because it enables you to look at the motivation of a character and consider the ultimate outcome of the story. It ties in with many of the Pixar rules about why we care for characters (relatability) and the journey we go through with them in a story.

The character doesn't **have** to achieve their goal!

Using Show not Tell

Using "Show not Tell"

HE WAS SAD.

- **Eyes**
- **Mouth**
- **Other**

A tear rolled from the corner of his eye as his lip curled and a little whimper sounded.

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The purpose of show not tell is to use description, including imagery, to convey the emotion of a character rather than directly tell the reader. Children build up this repertoire as they progress through school, developing empathy skills and considering similes, metaphors and inference.

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Exciting Sentence types - Alan Peat Ltd



DE:DE

The playground **was a death-trap**: rough, broken slabs of concrete were **littered** across as far as the eye **could see**.

1. A simple, main clause. 1 idea. The what was what?
2. Colon
3. A complex, clause which gives more information about the first bit.
4. **Extra challenge, use a simile.**

The children were devils: cruel, judgmental glances left their eyes like shards of glass falling from a shattering jar.



His father was livid – a face like thunder stared back at him.

1. A simple idea to describe a character's emotion
2. DASH
3. A simile or metaphor using show not tell.

Extra challenge – can you address the reader?

His TA was astonished – her eyes danced about the room and you know that's not good!