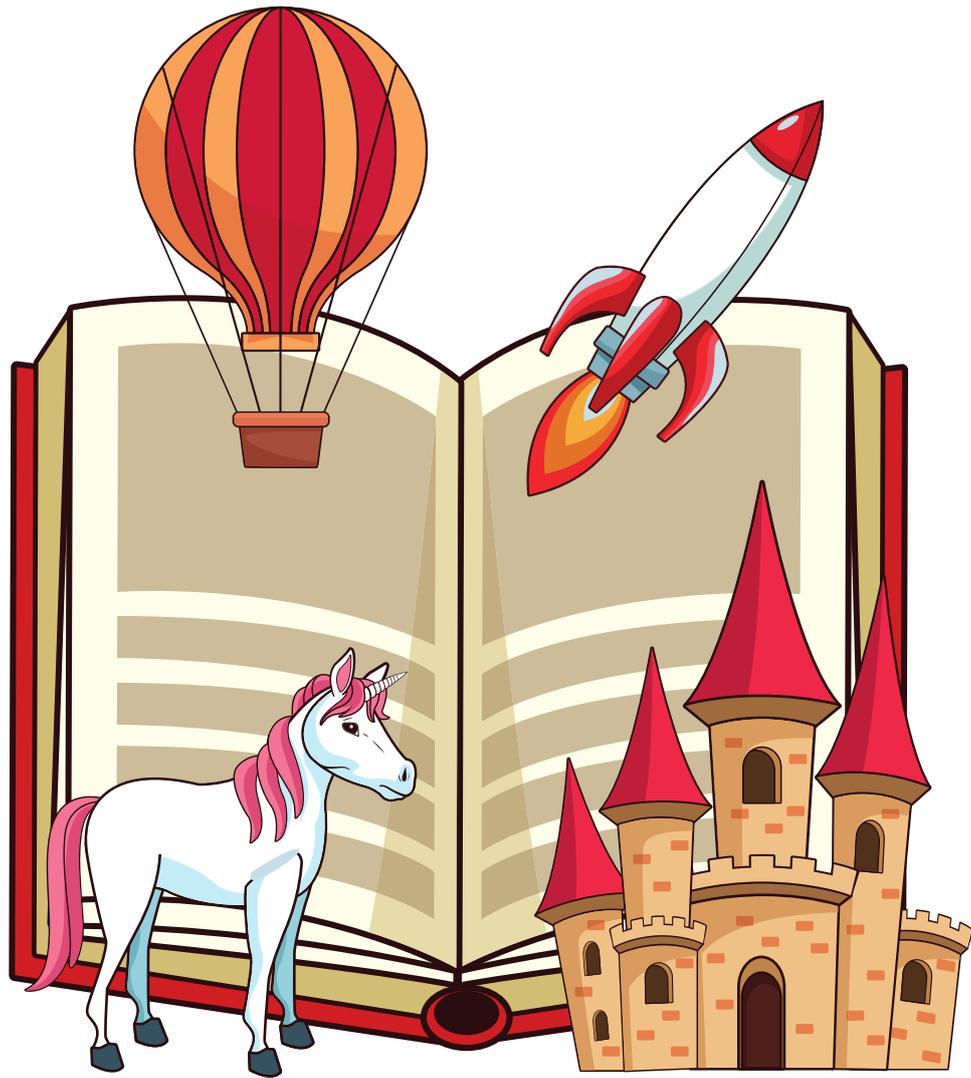


WRITE YOUR OWN BOOK



a step-by-step guide to writing
your best story ever

IDEAS

If someone wrote a book just for you, what would it be about?

Would it be funny, spooky, serious, or mysterious?
Would it take place today, or some time in the past or future?

Do you love talking animals, big explosions, magical lands or gross facts?

When you write your own story, you are in charge. You can include all of your favourite things. Before we begin, let's start with some ideas.

Here are some of my favourite things to include in stories.



GHOSTS



DARK FORESTS



MAGIC



BEST FRIENDS



STORMS



HISTORY

HAPPY ENDINGS

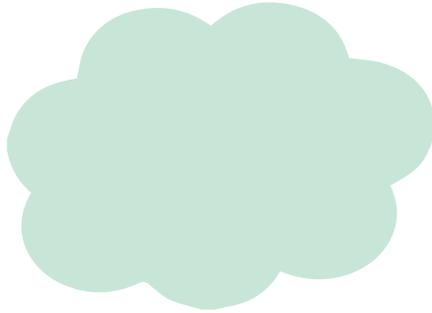
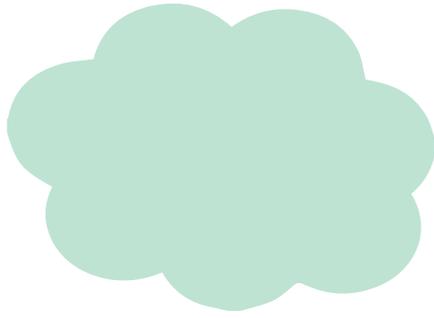


OLD BOOKS



Now it's your turn. On the next page, use the bubbles to note down things you'd like to read about. There are no wrong answers or bad ideas! Be as silly, as strange and as detailed as you like!

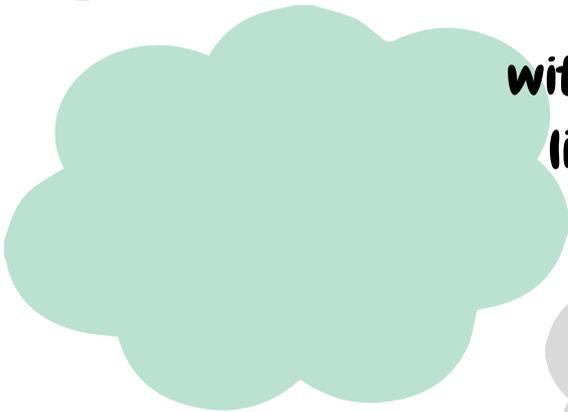
story ideas



Try to fill every bubble



**with something you'd
like to read about**



**Remember:
there are no
wrong answers!**



The Big WHAT IF

All stories start with a basic idea called the PREMISE. The premise is an interesting idea which makes us want to read a book, perform a play or watch a film or TV show. Usually the premise of a story can be written as a 'What if' question.

Can you guess the story from the premise?

- 1** What if a boy gets accepted to a school for witches and wizards?
- 2** What if two teenagers fall in love even though their families are enemies?
- 3** What if an iron man suddenly appears and begins eating all the metal it can find?
- 4** What if all the town's emergencies were fixed by dogs in special vehicles?
- 5** What if a woman could trap children in everyday objects and make them disappear on command?

Answers:

- 1) Harry Potter
- 2) Romeo and Juliet
- 3)The Iron Man
- 4) Paw Patrol
- 5) The Vanishing Trick

Can you think of a 'what if' question that describes your favourite book, film or TV show?

Title:

What if

.....

Title:

What if

.....

Your turn!

Make up your own 'what if' questions. Try to come up with as many ideas as you can. Later you'll pick your favourite to start a story. Use your idea bubbles for help!



What if aliens landed on the school playground?

What if a boy helps his grandma to solve a crime?

What if...

CONFLICT

So you've got some 'what if' questions - but how do you know which one will make the best story?

The answer is CONFLICT

When we're talking about stories, the conflict is any struggle or problem that your characters will have to face. Conflict can be small, like an argument over who ate the last cookie. Or it can be huge, like a supervillain trying to destroy the whole planet.

Without conflict, a story is boring. Here's an example.
Which book would you rather read?



Jade wants to win the big race. She joins a running club who help her practise. She runs the race, and wins



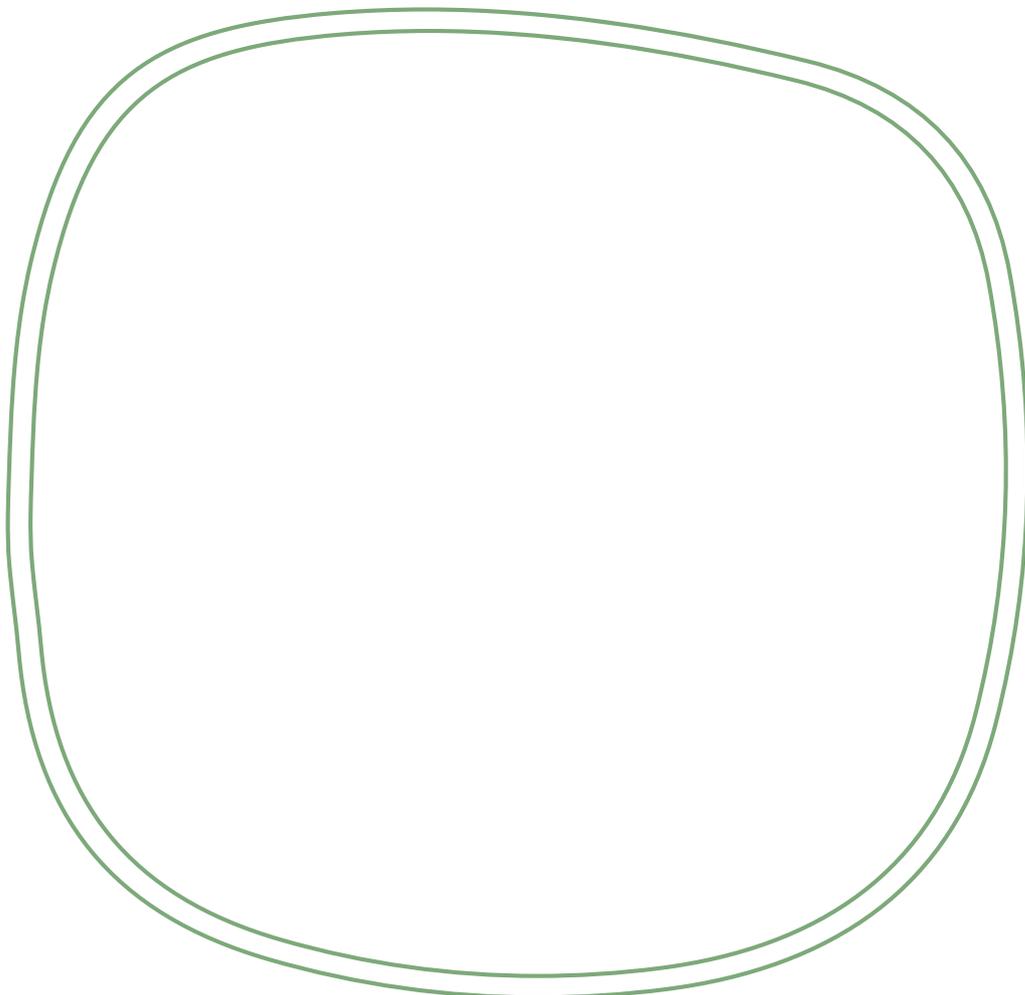
Rashmi wants to win the big race. She practises alone at home because she can't afford running club. On the day of the race, someone steals her trainers and she has to run in grandma's gardening shoes, but she doesn't give up and wins the race.

Most people would rather read story B. It has conflict. Rashmi has two problems - she can't afford to go to the running club, and she has to run the race in someone else's shoes. When Rashmi wins the race, we will feel happy for her, because we know how hard it was.

On the other hand, Jade has it easy. Everything goes her way. We're not surprised that she wins at the end. Her story has no conflict, so it's not very interesting.

How could we add conflict to Jade's story? What struggles might make it harder for her to win the race?

Scribble down some ideas here:



Now we know what conflict is, and why we need it, it's time to test our premises. Let's see what problems might come up in these stories. Here's one of mine:

**The aliens eat
all the chips and custard in
the canteen!**

**The head teacher
gets abducted**

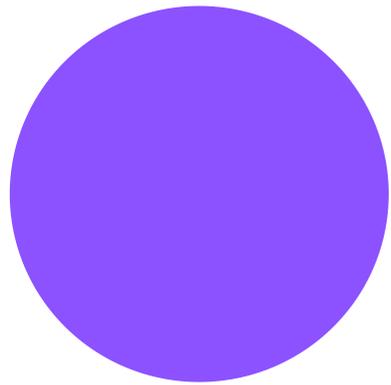
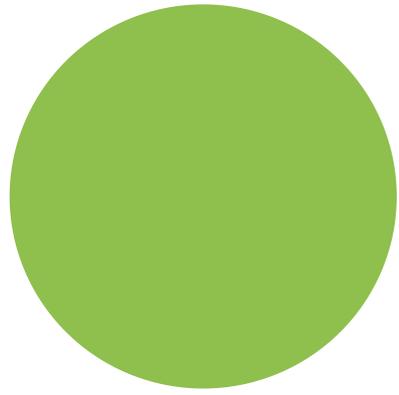
**What if aliens
land on the
playground?**

**The aliens are planning
to take over Earth and
turn it into a giant zoo**

**The police and scientists
surround the school
No one can go home**

**PE is cancelled because of
the giant spaceship blocking
the football pitch
Everyone gets extra maths
instead**

Now it's your turn. Pick your two favourite 'what if' questions and use the next page to write down some ideas for conflict. Any idea counts!





A note on ideas:

When you're planning a story, there's **no such thing** as a bad idea. Never hold yourself back or ignore an idea because you think it might not be good enough.

You don't have to keep or use every idea you come up with. Anything you decide can be changed later and made better.

This is a normal thing which ALL writers have to do. We call it **editing**.

For now, enjoy coming up with ideas without worrying about making them perfect!



Which premise gave you most ideas for conflict?

This is the story we are going to write! Now let's move on to the next important thing...

The Hero

The hero is the most important character. They are the one who will face all the challenges in the book. The personality you choose for your hero will change how the story unfolds.

Your story will be most interesting if you give your character some personality traits that HELP them deal with the conflict, and some traits which make it HARDER.

In *The Vanishing Trick*, the hero is 12 year old Leander.

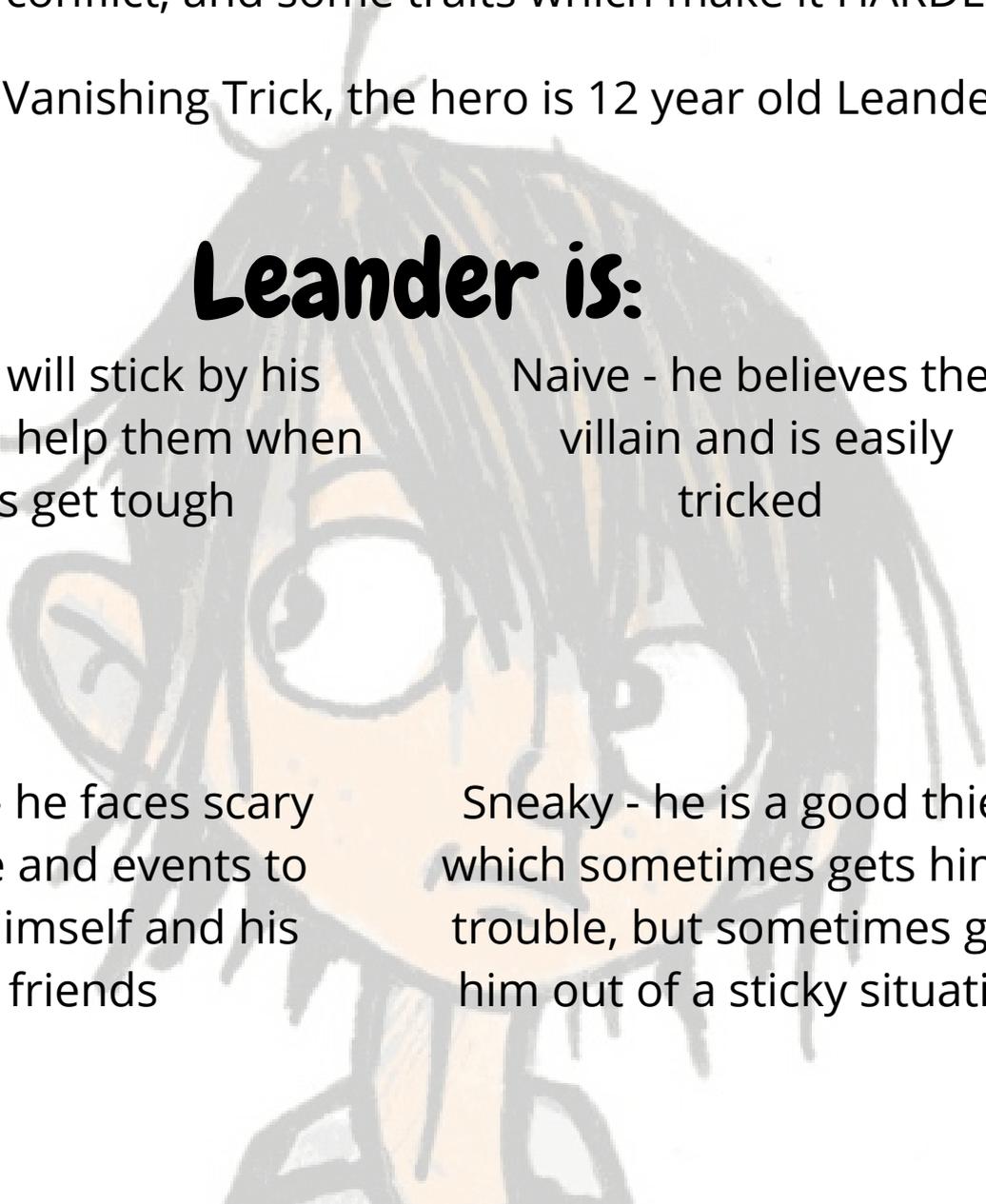
Leander is:

Loyal - he will stick by his friends and help them when things get tough

Naive - he believes the villain and is easily tricked

Brave - he faces scary people and events to save himself and his friends

Sneaky - he is a good thief, which sometimes gets him in trouble, but sometimes gets him out of a sticky situation



Think about the PREMISE you have chosen for your story, and the CONFLICT it will cause.

What kind of person would be GOOD at solving those problems?

What kind of person would be BAD at it? Let's make a list of helpful and unhelpful personality traits for your character.

Helpful

Unhelpful

The things in the 'helpful' column can be called STRENGTHS.

They make our character better at facing challenges.

The things in the 'unhelpful' column are WEAKNESSES.
They hold our character back and made things harder.

Wait a minute...

The hero is the good guy, right? Why does our hero need to have any weaknesses?

Perfect characters are boring!

Which story would you rather read?

A

Oh no! The pilot has fainted! Leo needs to land this plane. He's calm, sensible and has even taken flying lessons.

B

Oh no! The pilot has fainted! Jimmy needs to land the plane. He's clumsy, nervous and can't even drive a car! He spills orange juice on the control buttons.

In real life, we all want Leo to fly the plane!
We know he can do it.

But a story about Leo would be boring. Jimmy would be much more fun to read about. We know he is going to have a lot of problems along the way. We will spend the whole story wondering if he will succeed.

Jimmy's weaknesses create more CONFLICT.

Now that we've invented some possible strengths and weaknesses for our hero, let's add some more details.

On the next page you'll find a character sheet for the hero. Try to fill in as many details as you can.

**Remember! Your ideas don't
need to be perfect on the
first try! Anything that
doesn't work can be fixed
later in EDITING!**

Name:

Age:

Where they live:

Who lives with them:

Best friend:

Worst enemy:

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

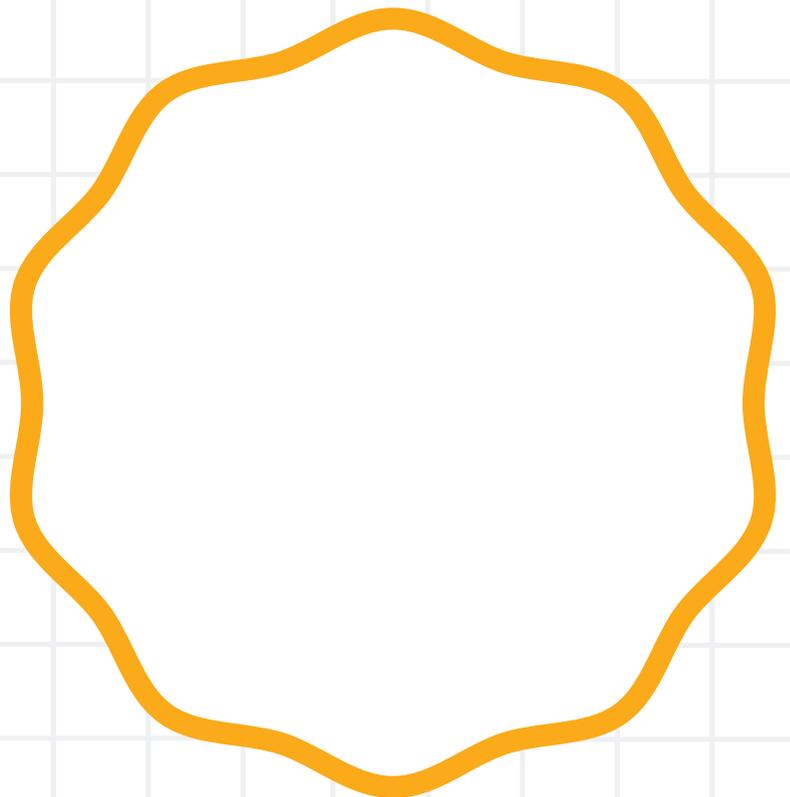
Hobbies:

Draw your character:

Skills and Talents:

Fears:

Favourite things:



We need one more thing to make a great hero:

MOTIVATION

Motivation is the reason WHY we do the things we do.

My motivation to write this booklet is to help you tell all the great stories that are bubbling in your brain.

Your motivation might be to write your best story ever. Or maybe it's to get a good mark in English class. Maybe someone told you to do this booklet, so your motivation is to not get in trouble.



In *The Vanishing Trick*, Leander steals a pie. His motivation is hunger - he has no money and nothing to eat.

Later, he agrees to work for Madame Pinchbeck. His motivation is to make enough money to survive, and to feel like he has somewhere to belong.

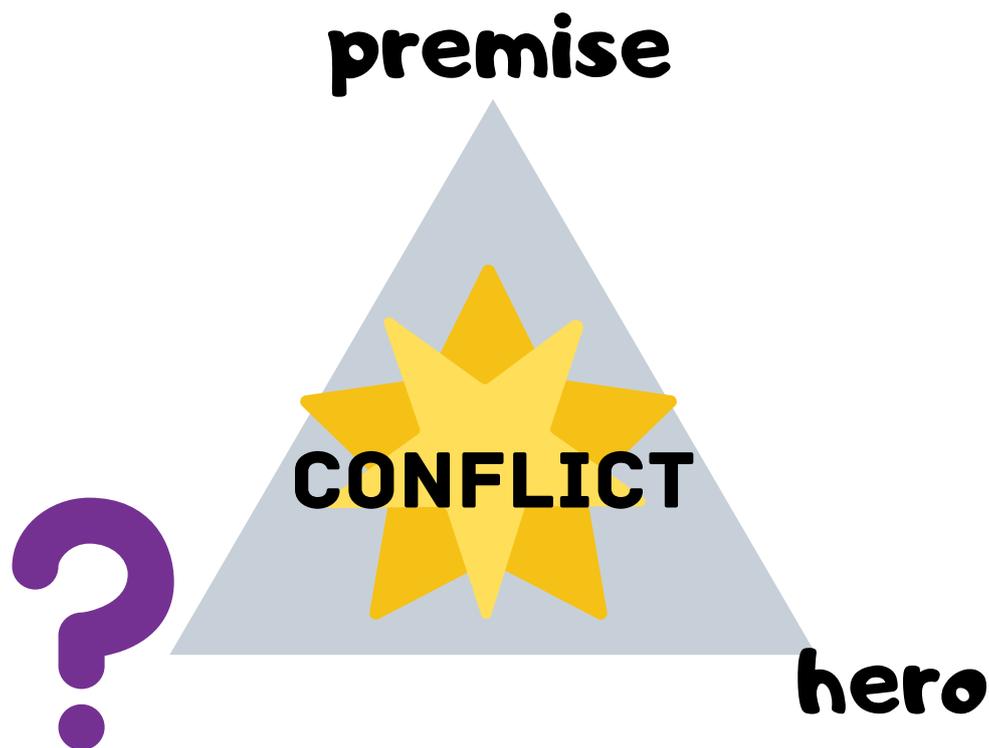
When things get worse he tries to break Madame Pinchbeck's spell. His motivation is to escape and save his new friends.

**Think about your hero.
What could their motivation be?
Do you think it will change
during the story?**

A large, empty rectangular box with a blue border, intended for writing a character's motivation. The box is centered on the page and has a simple, clean design with a thin blue line for the border.

Your character's motivation might also cause conflict. If there's something they want very badly and things keep going wrong, there will be lots of struggle and problems in your story!

Have you noticed how these story elements fit together?



The premise causes problems. Our hero's weaknesses cause problems. What's missing?

THE BIG BAD!

As if things weren't hard enough already for our hero, here comes the baddie to make things worse.

The fancy word for the baddie or villain is the
ANTAGONIST

Your antagonist will stand in the hero's way and do everything possible to stop them.

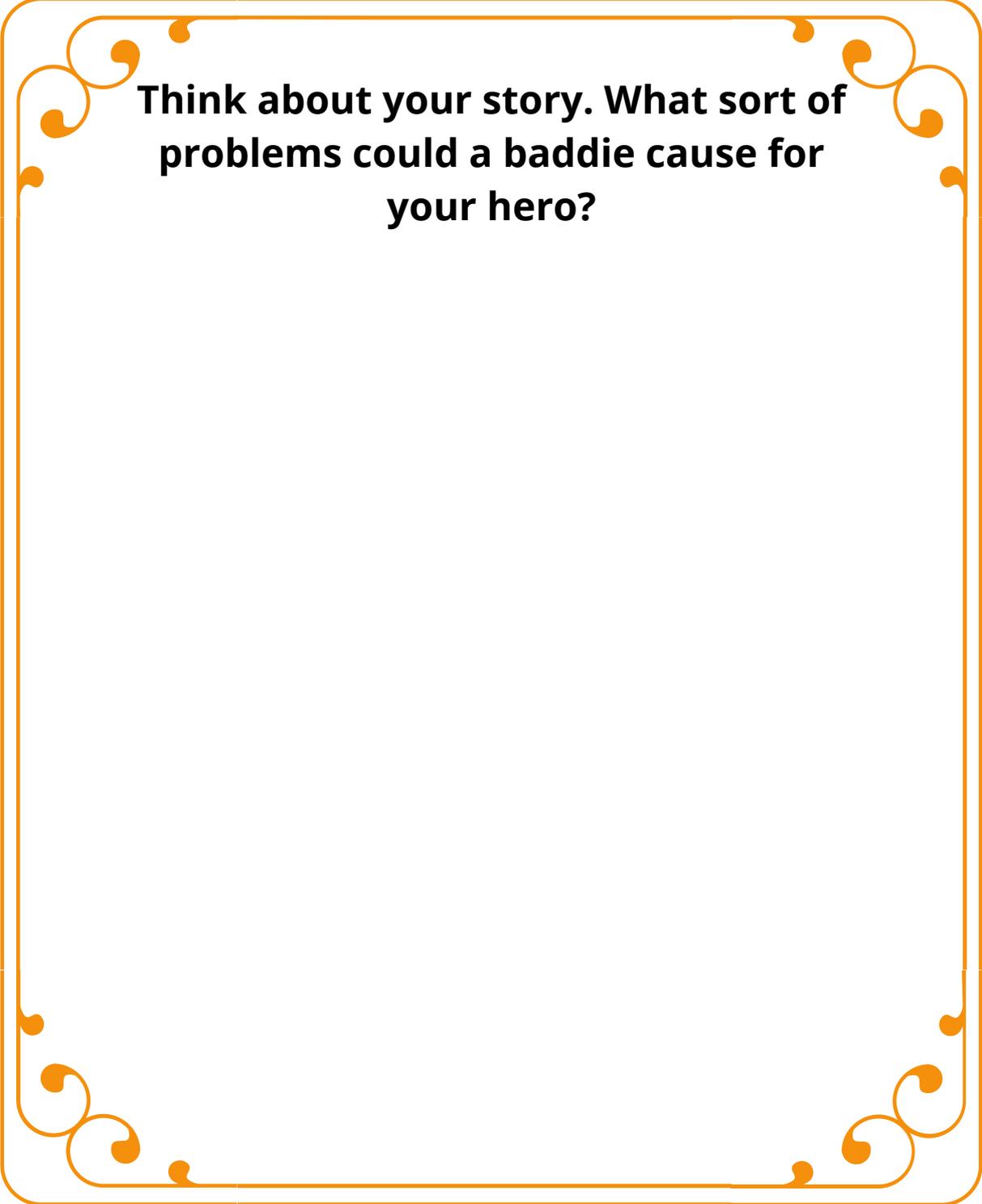
Think of your favourite book or film. Who is the antagonist? How do they make life hard for the hero?

Title:

Antagonist:

What they do:

In some stories the antagonist might be doing something huge, like trying to take over the world. In other stories, the villain might be doing smaller things, like stealing someone's homework. Both can make great stories!



Think about your story. What sort of problems could a baddie cause for your hero?

Just like the hero, your antagonist will have a motivation, strengths and weaknesses. Let's look at an example:

MOTIVATION

To become rich and famous with her magical travelling show

STRENGTHS

CLEVER

CUNNING

CAN CATCH
CHILDREN
USING MAGIC

GOOD AT
FOOLING PEOPLE

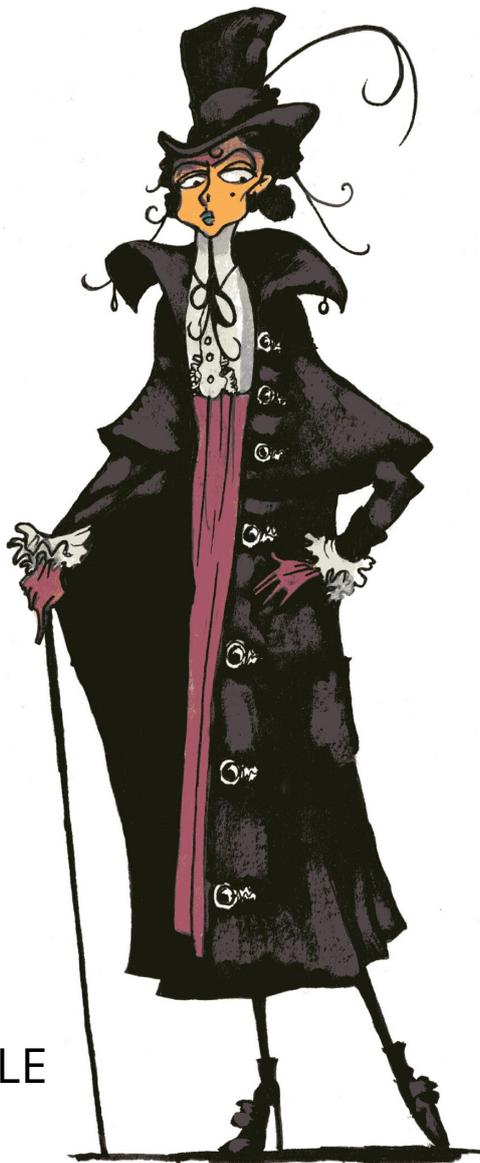
WEAKNESSES

GREEDY

UNKIND

USING TOO MUCH
MAGIC MAKES HER
WEAKER

THINKS SHE IS
SMARTER THAN
EVERYONE ELSE



Madame Pinchbeck

Your turn! Think of some motivations, strengths and weaknesses for your villain!

Motivation

Strengths

Weaknesses

Now let's make a character sheet for your villain

Name:

Age:

Where they live:

Who lives with them:

Best friend:

Worst enemy:

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

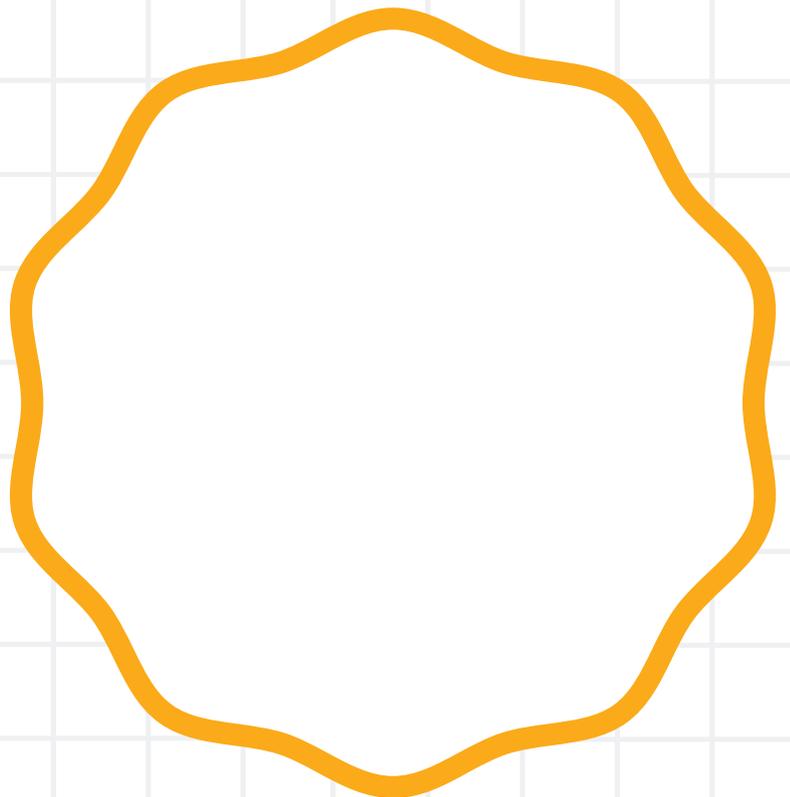
Hobbies:

Skills and Talents:

Fears:

Favourite things:

Draw your character:



WOW

You're almost there!

You've got an interesting PREMISE

Lots of CONFLICT

A great HERO

And an interesting ANTAGONIST

You've got characters with STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES
and MOTIVATIONS

At the end of the booklet you'll find some spare character sheets. You can use these for any extra characters you want. Why not consider:

A best friend or sidekick for the hero

A clever teacher or kind adult

A nosy neighbour or mean bully

An annoying sibling or cheeky pet

A helpful wizard or angry troll

One more thing...

SETTING

Setting is where and when your story takes place.

Past, present or future?

A real place, or a made up one?

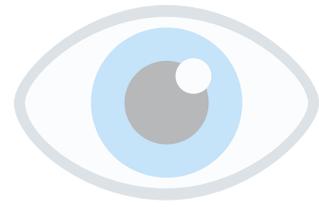
Which town, country and planet?

What's the weather like there?

You might already know where your story happens. If not, use this page to jot down some ideas.

List some describing words about your setting

What is there to see? Is it pretty or ugly? Big or small? Dark or light? Colourful or drab?



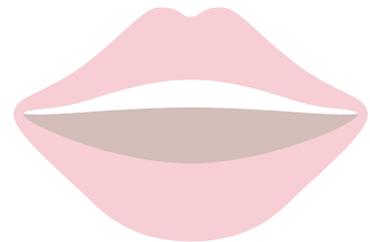
Loud or quiet? Music? Traffic? Machinery? Voices? Nature sounds?



Any smells? Flowers? Sun cream? Petrol? Food smells? Cow Poo?



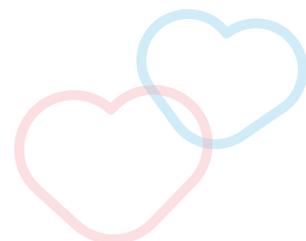
Is there anything to taste? Is it sweet, sour, salty, crunchy or slimy?



Hard and uncomfortable, or soft and welcoming? Cold or hot? What materials are things made from?



How does this place make your hero feel? Happy? Scared? Excited?



STRUCTURE

You've got all the building blocks - well done!
Now it's time to put them together and build a structure
for your story.

Story structure just means making sure your story has
an interesting beginning, middle and end. It gets more
exciting as the story goes on and CONFLICT builds up to
a big 'win or lose' moment called the CLIMAX.

The 3 Little Pigs

Three little pigs set off into the woods to
build themselves new homes

They build homes from straw, twigs and bricks.

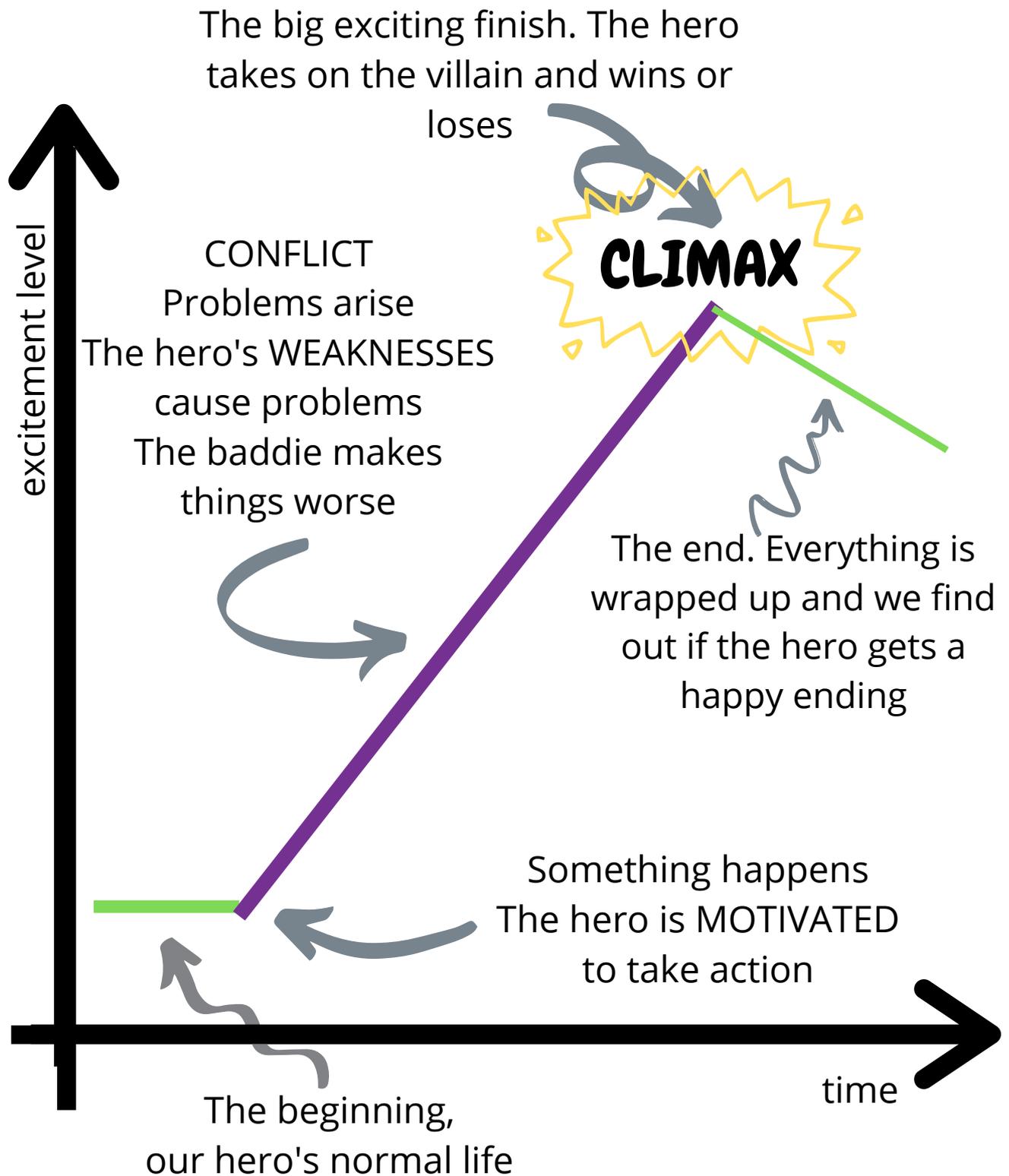
The wolf blows down the straw house.

The wolf blows down the twig house

The wolf tries to blow down the brick house

The wolf climbs down the chimney. The pigs light
the fire.

The wolf runs away and the pigs live happily ever
after

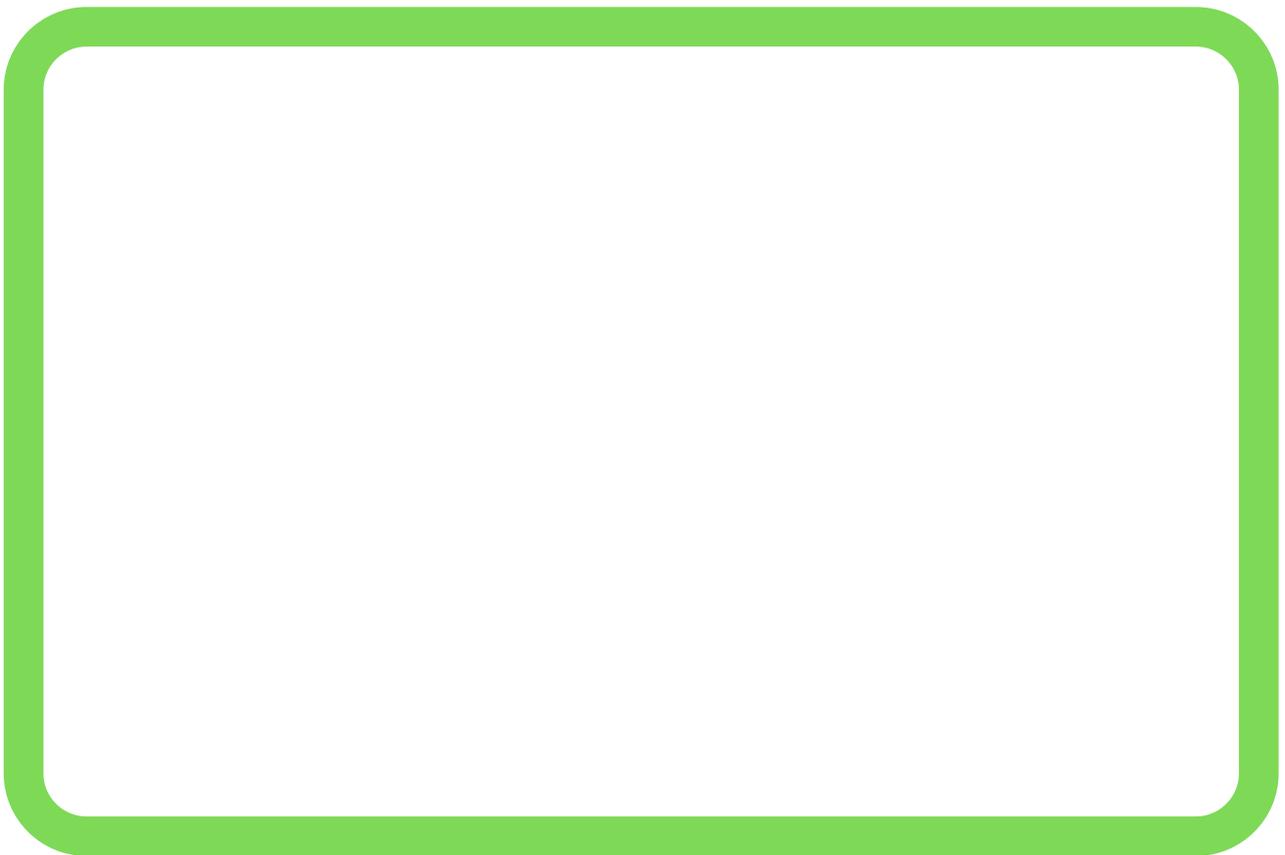


Here's another way to imagine story structure.
We'll keep this in mind while we move on to...

THE PLAN

It's time to put all your hard work together. Now we'll use everything you've created to plan your story. Fill in each box with your ideas.

The beginning. Introduce your hero and show us their normal world. What do they want, and what are they doing right before their story begins?



Something changes and your hero decides to take action! Perhaps they need to investigate a strange event or start working towards something they want. Remember your **WHAT IF and your **MOTIVATION****



Things get worse. Think of three things that could happen to add **CONFLICT and make things harder for your hero**

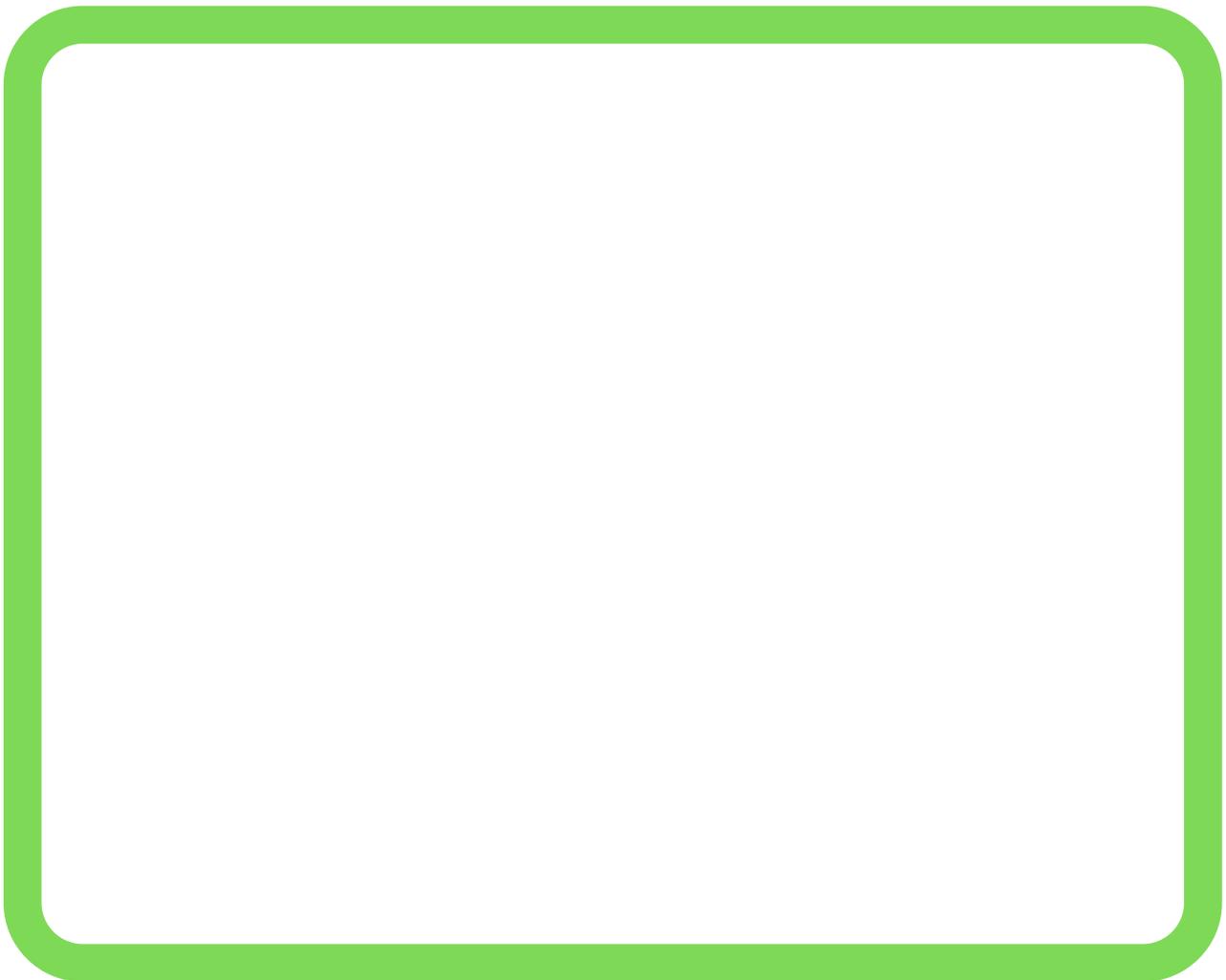
(Use your list of problem ideas for help)

(Perhaps the villain causes problems)

(Or your hero's weaknesses get them in trouble)

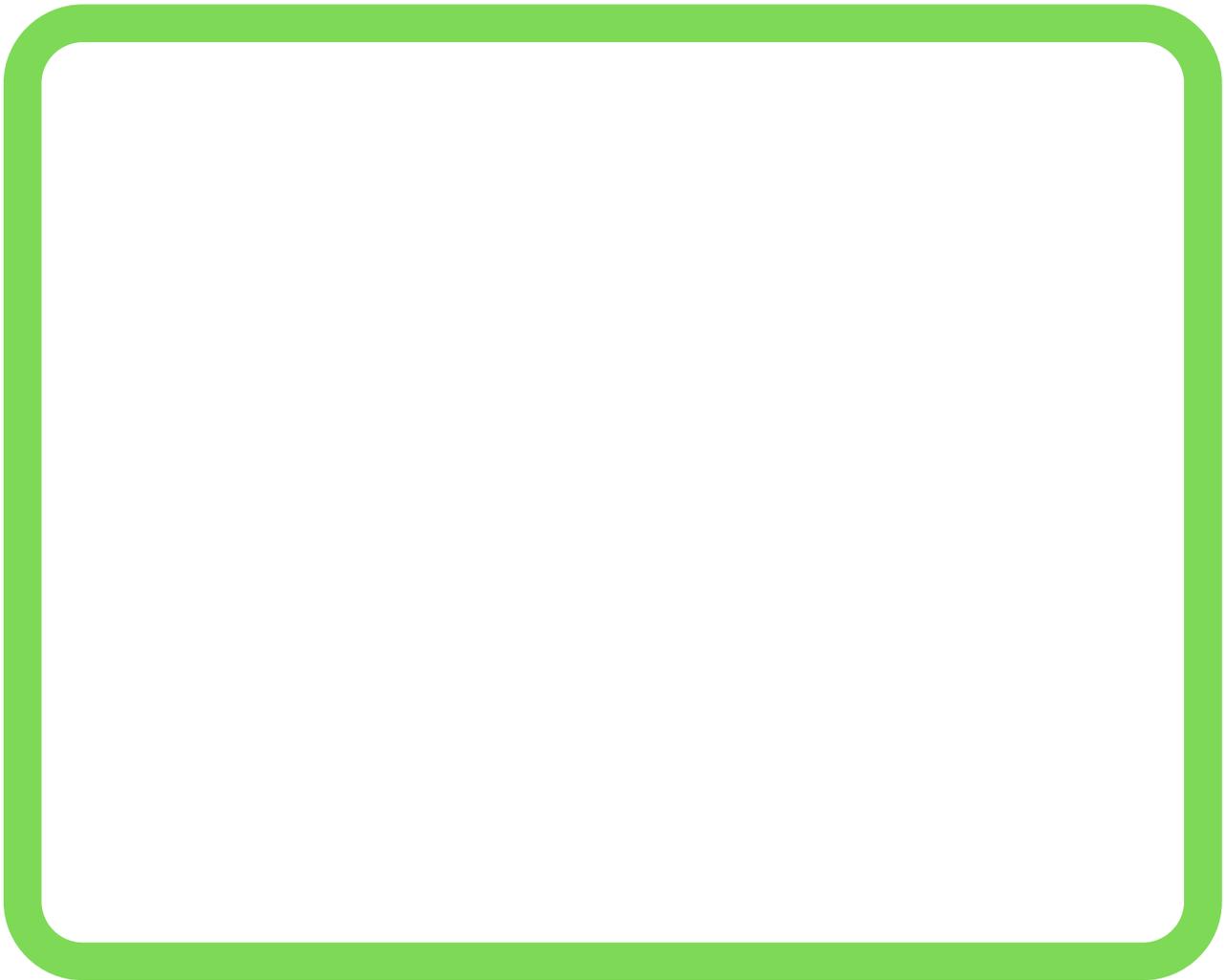
The climax. The big moment! Everything comes together. Will your hero win or lose? Will the villain be defeated? How will your hero try to save the day?

Look back at your character sheets for ideas – can you use the hero's strengths and the villain's weaknesses?



The end.

Tell us what happens once everything is over. Will your hero go back to their normal life? Is the villain gone forever? Or maybe there is more trouble on its way...



YOU DID IT!

Your story is all planned. Time to write it!

Good luck, and happy writing!!!

Name:

Age:

Where they live:

Who lives with them:

Best friend:

Worst enemy:

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

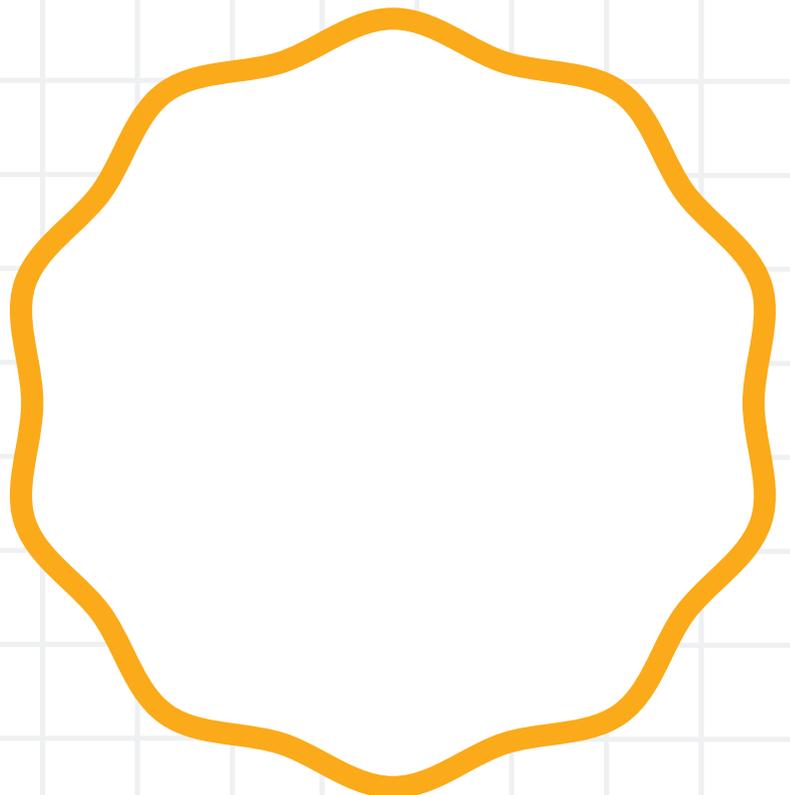
Hobbies:

Draw your character:

Skills and Talents:

Fears:

Favourite things:



Name:

Age:

Where they live:

Who lives with them:

Best friend:

Worst enemy:

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

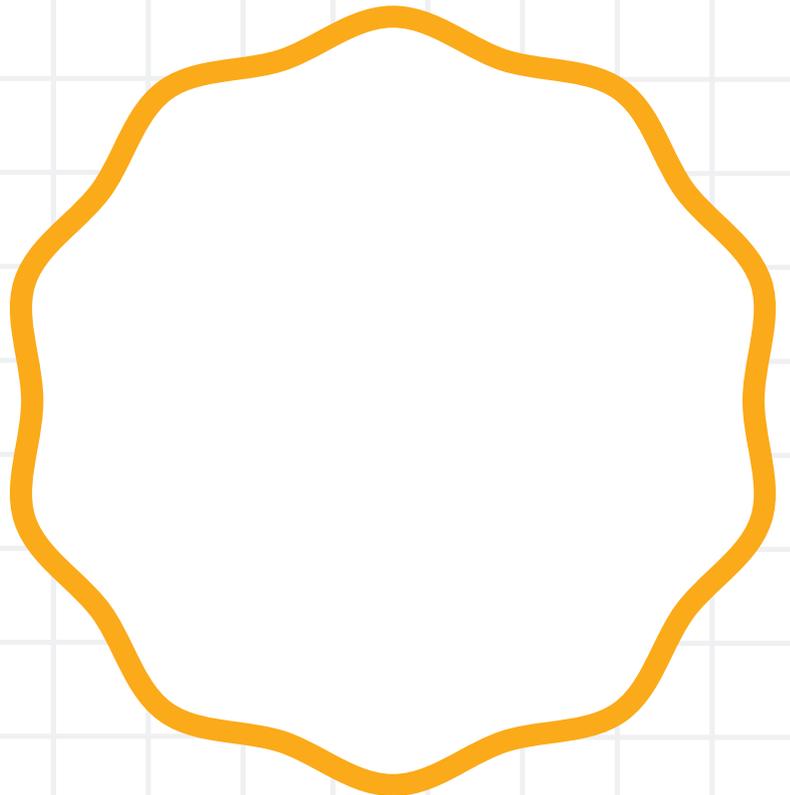
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Name:

Age:

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Who lives with them:

Best friend:

Worst enemy:

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Hobbies:

Skills and Talents:

Fears:

Favourite things:

Draw your character:

