

A. Writing a story

Stories can be written either in the first or the third person and present a series of events, real or imaginary. The events in the story should be written in the order in which they happened. Stories include:

- an **introduction** which sets the scene (describes the time, place, people, activity, weather etc)
- **main body paragraphs** (describe events leading up to the main event, the main event itself and its climax)
- a **conclusion** (describes what happens in the end, people's reactions/feelings etc)

Stories are characterised by:

- the use of **past tenses** (past simple/continuous, past perfect simple/continuous, used to)
- **linking words/phrases that show time and the sequence of events** (at first, to begin with, it all began when, before, after, during, when, while, until, meanwhile, then, afterwards, as soon as, immediately, before long, suddenly, finally, in the end, eventually etc)
- **adverbs/adjectives** that describe the atmosphere and people's feelings to make the story more interesting
- **direct speech** ("Please, help me!" I yelled)
- **reporting verbs**

B. Read the sample story and put the verbs into the correct tense.

Topic

An English magazine is holding a short story competition and has asked its readers to send in short stories with the title: **A Narrow Escape**. Write your story for the competition.

A Narrow Escape

Jean and I (go) hiking yesterday. The sun (shine) and a cool wind (blow) as we set off. By midday, we (walk) for hours and my feet hurt, so we stopped for lunch.

While we (eat) our sandwiches, we (smell) something burning. Jean quickly (climb) to the top of the next hill and (see) that there was a forest fire in the valley - and it (come) our way! She remembered that we (cross) a river earlier and we headed back towards it. I wasn't sure we could make it, though.

I (see) a documentary about forest fires the week before, so I (know) that fire could travel very fast, especially in windy conditions.

We (be) terrified!

Suddenly, I (feel) a raindrop fall on my head. Soon, it was pouring with rain. It (rain) hard for two hours, before it stopped. Feeling relieved and grateful, we walked back home. "A life-saving rain, indeed!" I exclaimed as soon as I saw my parents.

C. Give the story a different ending rewriting the last paragraph. You can also change its title depending on the twist you add to your version of the story.