

Create a MG or YA Framework



Main Idea

Logline: Describe your story idea in one to two sentences.

Blurb: Describe your story idea in a short paragraph

Motivation

Why do you want to tell this story?

Why are you the best person to tell this story?

Audience

Who are you writing this book for?

How old are they?

What topics interest readers in this demographic?

Interests	Issues	Other

How does this story idea appeal to your target readership?

What are some topics your story might explore?

High Interest Topics:

Tough Topics:

What makes these topics suitable for your readership? If your story will include tough topics, how will you handle these in an appropriate way?

Format

Is this a Middle Grade or a Young Adult, or is it perhaps more specific such as Early MG, Early YA, High Low (High Interest with mature content with an easy reading level), or a New Adult (an emerging category just above Young Adult). Be sure to do some research and ensure you have a rough idea.

Format:

Character-Specific Issues and Topics

Main Character

What motivates your main character throughout the story? What keeps them going?

Internal motivation:

External motivation:

Other motivations:

Why they can't have what they want (without advancing all the way through the plot):

Secondary Character 1

Is this character a mentor or authority, a peer, or a dependent?

What role do they play? An Obstacle maker/villain? A helper/ally? A Damsel/the Saved? A non-villainous Rival/Conflict-Maker? A Love Interest/Potential Friend? Or a combination of these roles? (If they do none of these things, they are likely not a secondary character).

How does your main character define their relationship with this character?

How does this character define the relationships they have with the main character?

2nd Character 1 Issue(s) and goal(s):

How will their issue(s) and goal(s) affect the main character and what the main character wants?

Secondary Character 2

Is this character a mentor or authority, a peer, or a dependent?

What role do they play? An Obstacle maker/villain? A helper/ally? A Damsel/the Saved? A non-villainous Rival/Conflict-Maker? A Love Interest/Potential Friend? Or a combination of these roles? (If they do none of these things, they are likely not a secondary character).

How does your main character define their relationship with this character?

How does this character define the relationships they have with the main character?

2nd Character 2 Issue(s) and goal(s):

How will their issue(s) and goal(s) affect the main character and what the main character wants?

Secondary Character 3

Is this character a mentor or authority, a peer, or a dependent?

What role do they play? An Obstacle maker/villain? A helper/ally? A Damsel/the Saved? A non-villainous Rival/Conflict-Maker? A Love Interest/Potential Friend? Or a combination of these roles? (If they do none of these things, they are likely not a secondary character).

How does your main character define their relationship with this character?

How does this character define the relationships they have with the main character?

2nd Character 3 Issue(s) and goal(s):

How will their issue(s) and goal(s) affect the main character and what the main character wants?

Inventory of Words

General Words	Main Character	Secondary Characters	Topic Specific Jargon	Vernacular/ Other Languages
Avoid:	Avoid:	Avoid:	Avoid:	Avoid:

Main Character

Age:

Gender:

Most noticeable aspect:

Social standing:

Family dynamics:

Interests and areas of focus:

Think about most:

Biggest goal:

Biggest issue/problem:

Biggest fear:

Most confident about or proud of:

Character and Plot Progression

Beginning

Describe your main character at the beginning of the story.

Who are they?

What do they like about themselves?

What do they dislike?

If nothing changes for them, what will the future look like?

Describe your main character's ordinary world:

What do they want to change?

How do they think their future would be different if they could change that one thing?

Why haven't they made this change happen yet?

Middle

Something major has now changed or is about to change.

What changes?

How much control does your main character have over this change?

How do they feel about this change?

How do others feel about this change?

Does this change bring them closer to or further away from what they really want?

Do any characters leave them at this point?

Do any new characters join them at this point?

Describe your main character thinking they are about to get what they want. Have them fail in succeeding.

End

Your main character finally gets what they want. Or they don't, but they get something better. (There are almost no bitter endings in MG and very few in YA).

Does your main character get what they want in the end? Or do they get something else?

Who helped them get there?

Who held them back from getting there?

What strengths did they use to achieve this outcome?

What weaknesses caused them to stumble along the way?

How do they feel about their life now?

How does your main character's life look now? Describe how their new reality is different from the ordinary world at the beginning.

Book Ends

Your introduction to your issue/problem should have parallels to your conclusion so readers can clearly see the main character has achieved their goal.

Introduction to the Issue:

Describe a scene where your character wrestles with the issue/problem in the beginning? Show us why they are not ready to solve the problem or get what they want.

Satisfying Conclusion

Describe a scene where your character gets what they want. Show how the skills they gained and lessons they learned along the way helped them succeed. (You can tell now, but remember, when you write your story you will need to show this in the scene and demonstrate through action. You will also need to avoid being didactic).

Genres, Subgenres & Tropes

What kind of a story do you want to tell?

Is it about friendship? Does your main character solve a mystery? Do they battle a corrupt government? Do they travel to other galaxies? Practice magic?

Genre

This describes the feel of your story world and what readers can expect from it. Will there be elves? Spaceships? A mystery to solve?

Action	Science Fiction	Fantasy
Myth	Crime	Mystery/Thriller
Memoir	Comedy	Romance/Kinship
Coming-of-Age	Western	Horror

Your story may blend more than one of these genres.

List some key elements in your story that belong to this genre(s).

Plot Trope

In this instance we are talking about the overall feel of your plot structure and how your main character interacts with it:

To determine this complete the [Save the Cat!® Genre Mapper](https://savethecat.com/genre-mapper)
<https://savethecat.com/genre-mapper>

Monster in the House	Rites of Passage	Institutionalized
Golden Fleece	Buddy Love	Superhero
Out of the Bottle	Whydunit	
Dude with a Problem	The Fool Triumphant	

Describe how your story fits this plot trope/ Save the Cat!® Genre. Include a few key plot points.

What makes your story unique from others of the same genre and with the same tropes?

Outline

How many words will your story be?

MG: 20 000–50 000 words, except for Sci-Fi and Fantasy

YA: 50 000–80 000 words, except for Sci-Fi and Fantasy

How many pages will your story be?

MG: 150–250 words per page

YA: 250–300 words per page

$$\frac{\text{word count}}{\text{words per page}} = \text{page count}$$

Map the Milestones

Complete the [Save the Cat!® Beat Sheet Mapper](https://savethecat.com/beat-mapper).

<https://savethecat.com/beat-mapper>

For MG and YA some of these beats may be condensed or almost invisible. If you are unsure what should be happening for each beat, click on the square for an explanation. And remember, these are general guidelines. Your story doesn't need to match exactly, but if it is way off in places, you will want to examine those parts of the story to ensure the pacing still works.

Opening Image

Pages:

Describe:

Theme Stated

Pages:

Describe:

Set-Up

Pages:

Describe:

Catalyst

Pages:

Describe:

Debate

Pages:

Describe:

Break Into 2

Pages:

Describe:

B Story

Pages:

Describe:

Fun and Games

Pages:

Describe:

Midpoint

Pages:

Describe:

Bad Guys Close In

Pages:

Describe:

All is Lost

Pages:

Describe:

Dark Night of the Soul

Pages:

Describe:

Break Into 3

Pages:

Describe:

Finale

Pages:

Describe:

Final Image

Pages:

Describe:

Comps

What other books appeal to your target audience/readership?

What other books deal with the same topics and issues as your story?

What other books have use similar genre and trope combinations?

What books are similar to your story?

How is your story unique? What sets it apart from existing books on the market?

Summary

Somebody wanted, but, so then...

Summarize your story using the SWBST method.

_____, but _____, so
Somebody/your main character wanted something happened

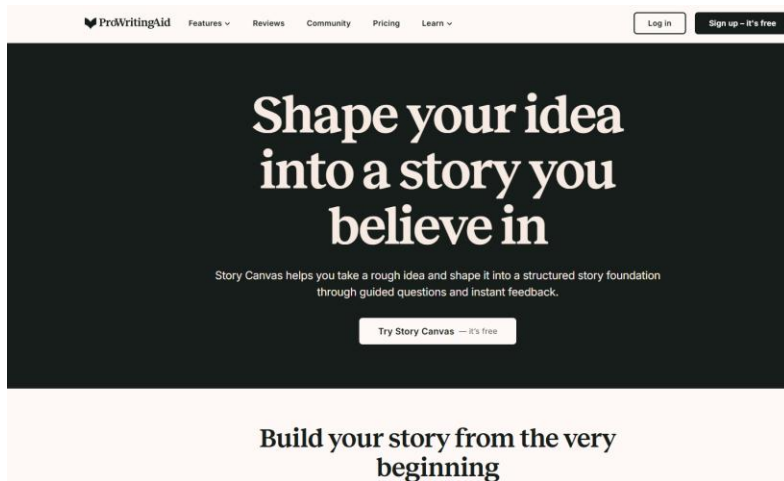
then _____.
they responded by or were forced into action to do something

Test Your Story Idea

Using the answers from the previous pages to help you, complete [the ProwritingAid Story Canvas](#).

<https://prowritingaid.com/features/story-canvas>

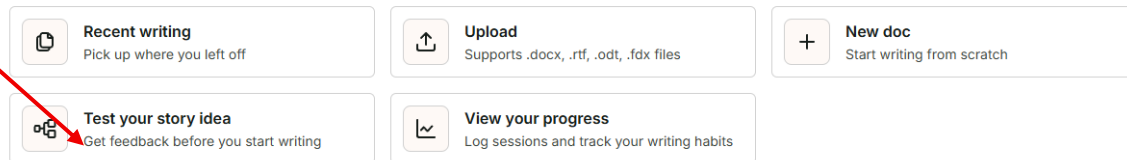
Or find it under “Features” in the menu bar:



Or here on the PWA Dashboard

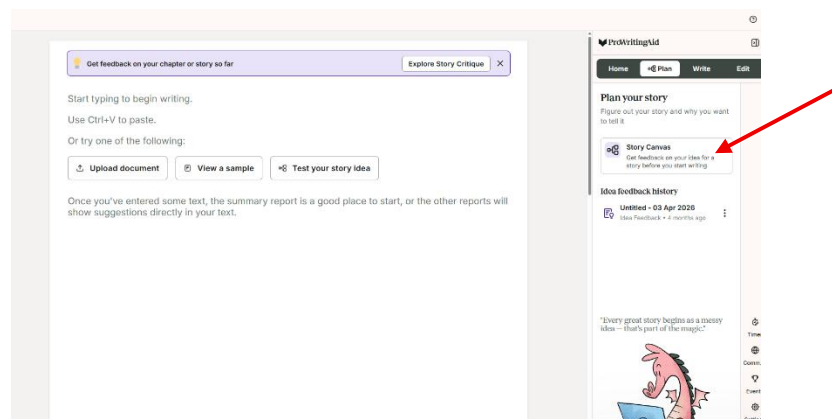
Welcome back, Cjordanfenton

Select an option to continue



Featured event

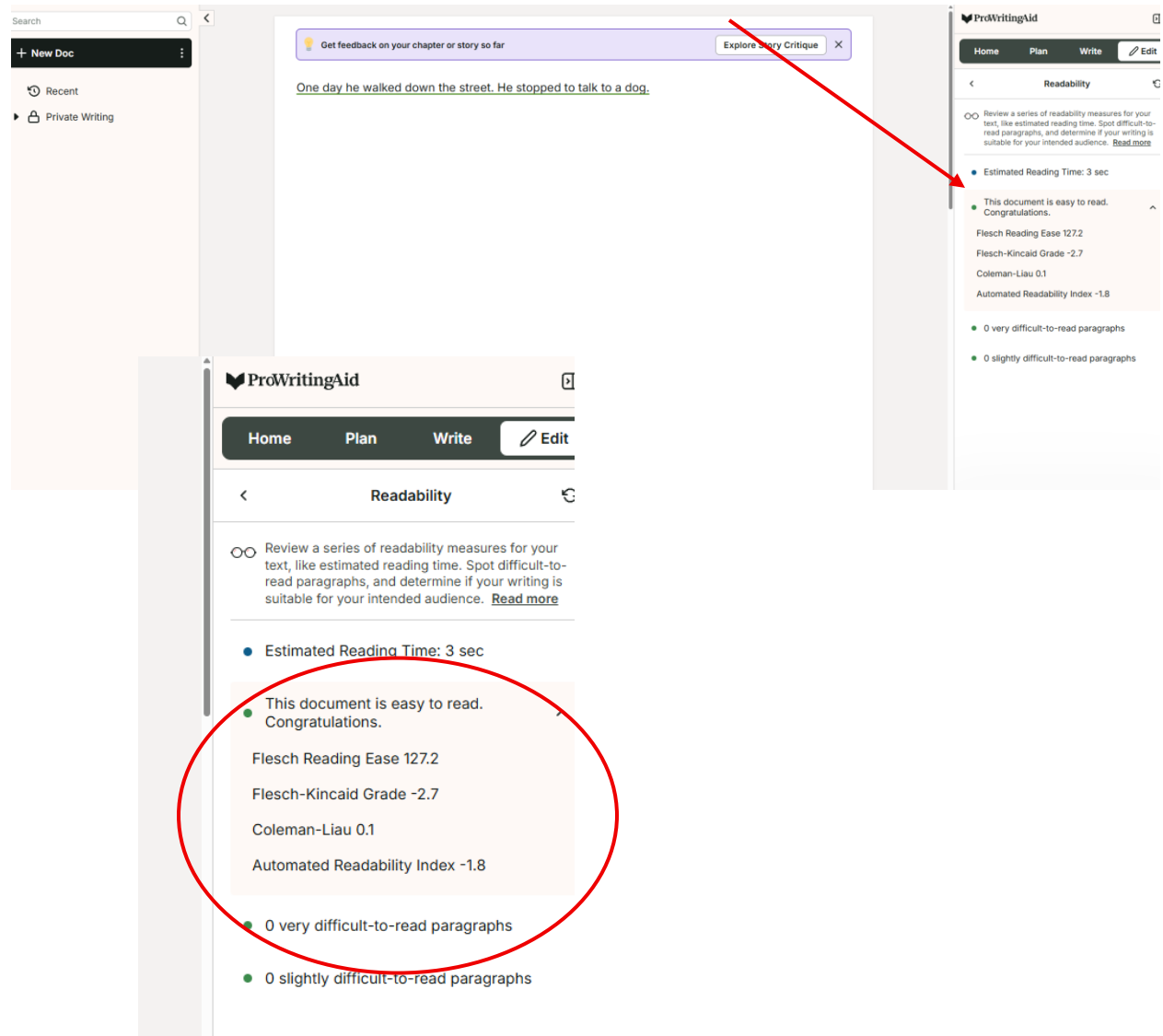
Or on the sidebar with an open document



Helpful Tool

Use the **Readability Reports** in **ProWritingAid**

These reports will help you keep your vocabulary and sentence structure at an appropriate reading level and will provide you with valuable information you can use for querying or marketing.



Story Tear Sheet

Use this information to keep your story focussed, for creating a query letter, and for marketing. Adjust as needed.

Logline:

Blurb:

Word Count:

Genre and plot trope:

Format:

Readership Age:

Target Audience:

Topics (include relevance, appeal, expertise, plan to handle tough topics, content alerts, etc.):

Why this story at this time written by you?

Comps:

