

STEP 1  
INTRODUCE

We don't only write to teach information or share our opinions. Sometimes we write to share stories or narratives.

When we write narratives, we are writing to entertain our reader, aiming to engage them emotionally (show icon).



Writers, today I am going to teach you how to plan the main idea of a story—the problem. The problem is the heart of the story & makes it exciting. Planning this first will improve the trait of ideas.

STEP 2  
INSTRUCT

## STEP 2A | TELL THE CHILDREN | 5 MINUTES

**WHAT the skill is** | All writing—whether it be persuasive, informative, or entertainment— has three parts: a beginning, a middle and an end. For each type, the middle looks different. The middle in a *narrative* is where the writer introduces the problem. Show problem flag. Every narrative has a problem— something happens to someone. Point to anchor chart skill.

**WHY this skill is important** | Writers plan the problem first. Without a problem, the writer is just telling the reader information about a character. And that wouldn't be a narrative. So, to ensure we are writing a narrative, we start by planning the problem.

**HOW this skill works** | The writer does 2 things to pick his story's problem.

1. **LIST** possible problems for your story. These fall into 3 types. Reveal icons, emphasizing the same problem flag has a unique emoji added to it to help us remember our 3 choices.

- **Problem with Self** - This is when the character has a problem with himself. Like in *A Bad Case of Stripes*, where Camilla doesn't want to admit that she loves lima beans.
- **Problem with Someone** - This is when the character is having a problem with another character in the text. Like in *Three Little Pigs* when the pigs had a problem with the Big Bad Wolf blowing down their houses.
- **Problem with Something** - This is when the problem wasn't anyone's fault. Like in *The Snowy Day* when the weather causes many challenges for the little boy.



2. After listing possible problems for each type, the writer **CHOOSES** the STRONGEST problem for his story. Define strongest as the problem you know the most about, the most realistic for the situation, and/or the most interesting.

## STEP 2B | SHOW THE CHILDREN | 5 MINUTES

I do;

You watch &amp; listen.

Let me show you how I do this. Let's pretend I had to write a narrative using these characters and this setting (reveal beach photo).

So I want to think about what is happening in the picture. Okay, I see two boys at the beach. It's a sunny day, and they look happy. To come up with a problem for my story, I first have to **LIST** possible problems. Reveal the template.

1. **Problem with Self** (point to icon) - I remember this is when the character has a problem with himself. Hmm... What could one of the boys struggle with at the beach? I've been to the beach, and I know the sun can be really hot. What if one of the boys didn't put on sunscreen? OUCH! He could get a sunburn. That would be a problem for him! Write "sunburn" on a sticky note and put it next to the icon on the template.

Now, this is just an idea for the story, so I am just writing a quick phrase, not a full sentence. And before I start writing about that, I need to consider if there is a BETTER problem for these characters.

2. **Problem with Someone** (point to icon) - I remember this is when the character is having a problem with another character. I see there

are two boys and they are digging. So, what if one accidentally flicked sand into his brother's eye. That WOULD be a problem! Jot "sand in brother's eye" on sticky note and place next to icon. Again, this is just an idea, so I am just writing a couple words. There is a third type of problem.

3. **Problem with Something** (point to icon)- I remember this is when the problem isn't anyone's fault. Looking back at the picture, what is something that wouldn't be anyone's fault? Oh! The tide. The water moves closer in the evening, and it could ruin their sandcastle. That would be a problem! Write "tide ruins sandcastle" on a sticky note and put it next to the third icon on the template.

In Step 1, I had to list possible problems. It's time for Step 2: **CHOOSE** which is the BEST one for MY narrative. Reread and think about each one. So, I know about the tide, but I don't know much. So that's not the best problem to write about. And the sunburn problem is pretty good, but he wouldn't know how bad it is until much later. So I think the best problem for this character in this setting is "sand in eye." All stories must have a problem, and that is what we plan first.

STEP 3  
INTERACT

I want to show you how to determine a problem for a narrative story, but this time I want your help. Remove the sticky notes from the template as you reveal a new photo (bike riding). Identify the obvious character(s) and setting. Guide students to **LIST** (STEP 1) possible problems using T&T. Eavesdrop and note what you heard. Provide a final T&T to **CHOOSE** (STEP 2) the strongest problem. Eavesdrop and note what you heard.

**Problem with Self** | too scared to try alone OR rides alone and gets lost

**Problem with Someone** | parents let go & he falls OR a dog starts chasing him

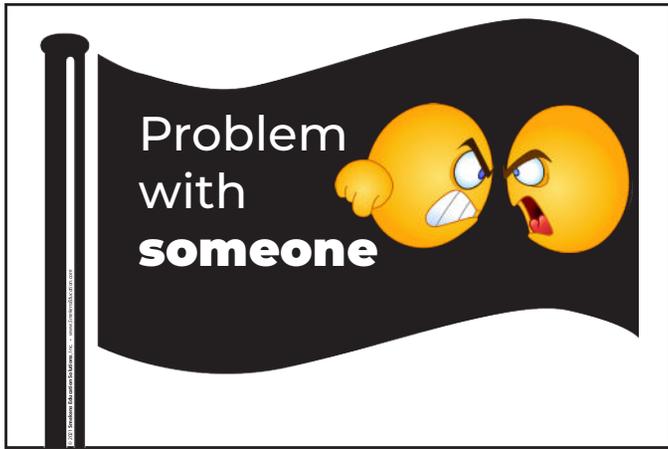
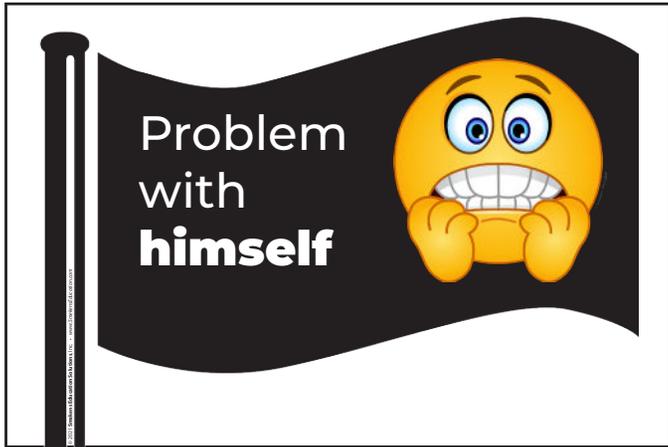
**Problem with Something** | the tire pops OR the chain snaps

**We do** I do again; you

STEP 4  
CLOSE

Writers, today we learned that all narrative writing contains a problem. You begin planning narratives by thinking about the problem in the middle first. You do this in 2 steps: **LIST** then **CHOOSE**. We do this to improve the trait of ideas. Today for Independent Writing Time, I will give you 2 more photos AND the same template for you to **LIST** problems and then **CHOOSE** the strongest one.

**(You do;**  
I help.)







# NARRATIVE WRITING

## Plan the Story's Problem | 1. List & 2. Choose



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