

From Boring to Brilliant!

Climb the Story Pyramid and turn any ordinary moment into a story

"I missed the bus. I took an auto. I reached late." True? Yes. Interesting? **Not at all!** That's a **report**. A **story** makes the reader feel something and wait for what happens next.

1 The four magic ingredients

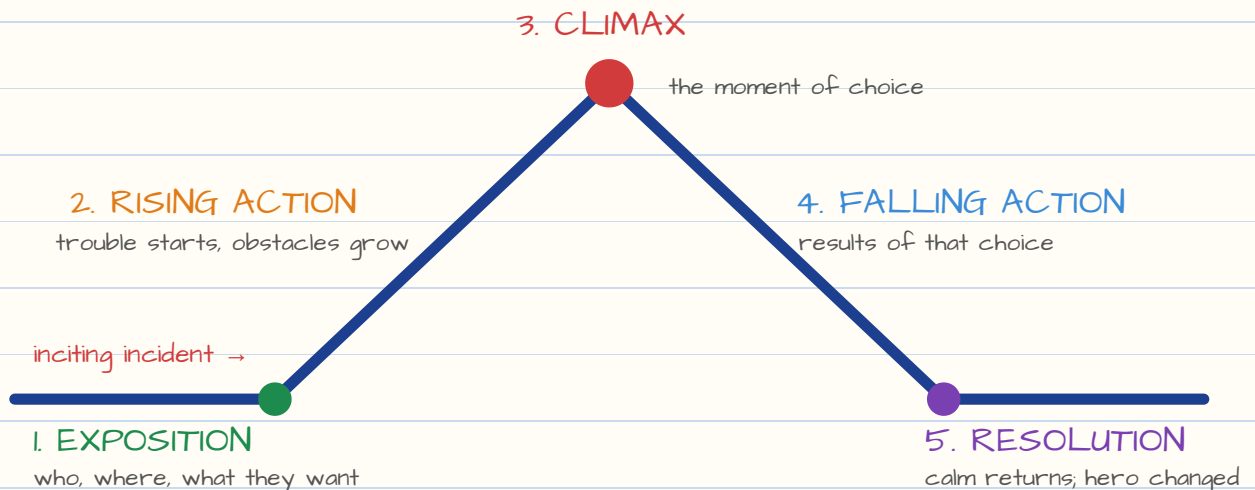
1. **A character** we care about

2. **A want**: something the character badly wants

3. **An obstacle** that blocks the want

4. **A change**: by the end, someone is different

2 Freytag's Pyramid: the shape of every great story



Did you know? The German writer Gustav Freytag drew this pyramid in 1863 after studying ancient Greek and Shakespearean plays. More than 160 years later, film-makers and novelists still use it, and you can spot it in almost every movie you watch!

Short story in an exam? Give about **one short paragraph** each to exposition, rising action and climax, and keep falling action and resolution **brief**. Most marks lie in the climb!

3 Hook your reader in the first line

Hook type	Instead of...	Try...
Action	One day I went to the market.	I sprinted through the market, my heart hammering, clutching the stolen note.
Dialogue	My mother called me.	"Aarav! Where is my phone?" Mum's voice shook the walls.
Question	It was a strange day.	Have you ever been followed by a puppy all the way to school?
Setting / mood	It was raining.	Rain hammered the tin roof like a thousand impatient fingers.

4 Show, don't tell

Telling (flat)	Showing (alive)
She was nervous.	Her fingers would not stop tapping the strap of her bag.
It was very hot.	The tar on the road melted and stuck to my sandals.
He was angry.	He slammed the door so hard that the calendar fell off the wall.
The house was old.	Paint peeled from the walls like dry leaves, and the stairs groaned under every step.

Use the five senses

sight · sound · smell · touch · taste

The smell of wet earth rose as the first drops fell.

Dialogue rules

- New speaker → new line
- Punctuation inside the inverted commas

"Hurry up," said Riya, "or we'll miss it!"

Power tools: a **ticking clock** (the exam starts at 9!), **rising stakes** (each problem worse than the last) and **one tough choice** at the climax.

5 Watch the transformation!

~~I missed the school bus. I took an auto. I reached school late.~~ → "The Day the Notes Drowned"

E	Riya had practised her debate speech forty times. Today was the inter-school final, and her notes were tucked safely in her bag.
RA	At 7:42 she reached the corner just in time to see the yellow bus turn away. Rain began to hammer the road. No auto would stop, and her phone flashed one per cent. The debate started at nine.
C	She burst into the hall as her name was called and opened her bag. Her notes were a soggy blue blur. Walk away, or speak without a single word on paper?
FA	She took a breath, left the paper on the table, and told the judges about the rain, the bus and why young people never give up.
R	She didn't win the trophy. But that evening a 'Best Speaker' certificate sat on her desk, and Riya knew she would never again fear losing her notes.

E = Exposition · RA = Rising action · C = Climax · FA = Falling action · R = Resolution

6 Plan in 2 minutes before you write

Title	Character + want	Problem(s)	Climax choice	Change at the end

Exam checklist

- ✓ Catchy title
- ✓ Hook in line 1
- ✓ Past tense, used consistently
- ✓ Dialogue and senses
- ✓ A clear climax
- ✓ Word limit followed

Try these prompts:

- The power went out during dinner.
- A stray puppy followed me to school.
- I found an old letter in Grandpa's trunk.

Avoid: "It was all a dream", too many characters, and endings that just stop.

Now go and write something brilliant! ✍️