

# Year 8 – Detective Story Writing

## Creating Characters

**Creating characters:** think about age, gender, appearance, where they live, family & friends, job, hobbies & interests, personality. What has made them the person they are?

**Detectives:** Are they in the police, or are they a private investigator? Are they stereotypical (male, middle-aged, unmarried, super-intelligent, ironic, world-weary) or do they challenge conventions (female, elderly, frail but very clever)? Do they work alone or do they have a partner or side-kick. Are they your protagonist?

**Sidekicks:** Is your sidekick a long-term colleague of your detective, or is this the first case they've worked on together? Do they get on with the detective, or is their relationship antagonistic? Are they smarter or less intelligent than the detective? Could they be your narrator, like John Watson is for Sherlock Holmes?

**Villains:** What's your villain's motive for committing their crime? Are they stereotypical or will readers be shocked and surprised to find that they are the criminal?

**Victims:** Were they deliberately targeted or just an unlucky bystander? Did they know their killer? How much of their backstory does your reader need?

**Suspects:** Will there be red herrings that lead your detective to suspect someone other than the actual criminal?

**Witnesses:** Did anyone see anything that might provide your detective with clues. Who might your detective wish to interview?

## Literary Techniques

**Pathetic fallacy** – where the environment is given human emotions to reflect a character's mood.  
Example: *'The trees shivered in the chilly breeze.'*

**Simile** – where one thing is compared to another using 'like' or 'as'.  
Example: *'The dagger sank into his flesh like a knife into soft butter.'*

**Metaphor** – where an object is said to be something that isn't literally true but captures its essence. Example: *'He realised, in that moment, that a web of lies had drawn him here'.*

**Personification** – where something that isn't human is given human attributes.  
Example: *'The drain giggled as the blood trickled into it.'*

**Symbolism** – the use of objects to represent ideas  
Example: Dr Roylott's hunting crop symbolises his violent personality.

**Onomatopoeia** – where the sound of a word is very similar to its meaning.  
Example: *'She dropped the gun which thudded on to the floor.'*

**Oxymoron** – where two words with opposing connotations are combined.  
Examples: old news, deafening silence, open secret, living dead.


**Zeugma** – where a word is used to apply to two others in different senses.  
Example: *'She held his hand and her breath.'*

**Kenning** – a compound noun phrase.  
Example: blood-shadow (blood stain), winter's blanket (snow).


**Atmosphere** – the use of settings to create a particular feeling for the reader.  
Example: *'The alleyway was dark and silent.'*

## QR Codes

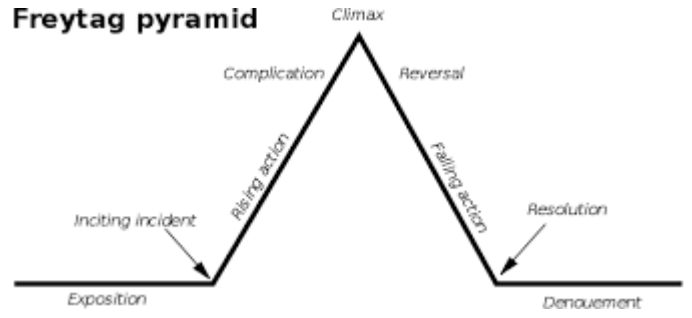
Punctuation Guide



How to plan a detective story – video with Robin Stevens



## Narrative Structures



## Crafting Sentences & Paragraphs

**Minor sentence:** an incomplete sentence that still makes sense.  
Example: *'Utter nonsense.'*

**Simple sentence:** a sentence with a single clause and a single subject.  
Example: *'She lifted the blind.'*

**Compound sentence:** A sentence that connects two independent clauses with a co-ordinating conjunction. Example: *'She lifted the blind and peered out of the window.'*

**Complex sentence:** A sentence that consists of a main clause and a subordinate clause.  
Example: *'Slowly and carefully, she lifted the blind.'*

**Imperatives:** sentences that are commands.  
Example: *'Don't get your fingerprints on the murder weapon.'*

**Declaratives:** sentences that are statements.  
Example: *'He looks guilty to me.'*

**Interrogatives:** sentences that are questions.  
Example: *'What are you planning to do to me?'*

**Exclamations:** sentences that use exclamation marks.  
Example: *'Run!'*

**ISPACED sentence starters:** ing words; similes; prepositions; adverbs; conjunctions; ed words, dialogue.

**TIPTOP paragraphs:** Start a new paragraph when you you change Time, Person, Topic or Place.

## QR Codes

Detective Stories – Recommended Reading List



**Hook Openings:** Start in mid-action; use direct address; begin with dialogue; introduce a puzzle; create an intense or intriguing atmosphere.

**Flashbacks:** jump back to a time before the main events of the story.

**Nested narratives:** create a story within a story.

**Satisfying endings:** use a cyclical structure; create a cliff-hanger; a solution to the crime.