

Can YOU Write a 25 Word Story?

Yes – you read that right. People really ARE writing 25 word stories! Why 25 words? Because that’s about the length of one good text message – which means sharing your stories with parents and peers is really easy to do. But writing 25 word stories isn’t as easy as you think it is. Just like a regular story, they need a clear beginning, middle and ending. And just like a regular story, they need to force readers to think. Use this handout to begin crafting YOUR first 25 word story.

Task	Your Response
<p>Take a look at these 25 word story samples:</p> <p><i>Understand me, John: The next time you talk about ‘dropping deuce’ in front of Grandma, you’ll be grounded for longer than you can possibly imagine!</i></p> <p><i>He sat surrounded by people yet completely alone. “Why can’t I just be normal?” he muttered to no one, tears streaming down his teenage cheeks.</i></p> <p>Reflection Question:</p> <p>Which of these sample stories do you like the best? Why? What is it about the topic of the story that caught your attention? What is it about the language or sentence structure in the story that caught your attention?</p>	
<p>All good stories share a few things in common. First, they tackle topics that readers can relate to. Second, they give readers enough information to make sense of the story while leaving room for the reader to make their own inferences and predictions. Finally, they often include powerful emotions and/or unexpected surprises.</p> <p>How has the author of the 25 word story samples shared above incorporated these characteristics into his samples? What emotions is he trying to tap into? Who do you think will be able to relate to his writing? What surprised you? What are you left to wonder?</p>	
<p>Now, start planning your own 25 word story by answering the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What common topic/event do you want to tackle in your story? Who will be able to relate to your common topic/event? Who will your audience be? 2. How would most people feel if they were experiencing the common topic/event that you want to write about? What kind of emotions will you need to incorporate into your story? 3. Is there anything unexpected or surprising that you can incorporate into your 25 word story? 	

<p>Now, write a first draft of your 25 word story. Don't worry too much about how many words are in your story right now. Just get your basic ideas and emotions down on paper.</p> <p>Try to remember, though, that 25 words are equal to about 1 long sentence or two shorter sentences.</p> <p>When you are finished with your first draft, count the total number of words that you've used and write it down. Put a circle around it. Doing so will help you to get a better sense for how many words you have to play with or remove.</p>	
<p>Next comes the hard part: Revise your first draft and get it down to 25 words or less. That might mean cutting out adjectives from your first draft. That might mean finding ways to combine two sentences into one. That might mean deleting ideas completely.</p> <p>Here's a sample:</p> <p>First Draft - <i>Even though he sat at a table surrounded by people, he couldn't help feeling completely alone.</i> (16 words)</p> <p>Final Copy - <i>He sat surrounded by people yet completely alone.</i> (8 words)</p>	
<p>After you've revised your piece to 25 words or less, look carefully at the words and phrases in your story. Which ones do the best job communicating the emotion that you're trying to express? Which ones can be changed to incorporate more emotion into your piece?</p> <p>Remember to carefully consider EVERY WORD in your piece. When you only have 25 words to use, every crummy choice will really weaken your work.</p> <p>Here's a sample:</p> <p>First Draft: <i>...he said to himself as he began to cry.</i></p> <p>Final Copy: <i>... he muttered to no one, tears streaming down his teenage cheeks.</i></p>	
<p>Finally, it's time to get some feedback! Get out your cell phone – or type your story into Twitter – and share your most recent version with an audience.</p> <p>Record their reactions here. Did your story catch their attention? Did it make them want to know more? Did it make them laugh? Cry? Feel? What words did they like? What words would they change?</p>	