

Advanced Storytelling Techniques



Advanced storytelling techniques are powerful writing tactics that take short stories and novels to new levels of excellence. These captivating techniques create vivid images, memorable characters, and breathless tension - three hallmarks of great writing!

Attractive prose style and likable characters are essential, but the plot is the pillar on which all stories stand. This article covers essential advanced storytelling techniques every writer needs to master.

1. Preview

As the saying goes, 'a lion is the sum of all its meals'; similarly, for writers; to master and develop your craft it's essential that you read works of those already adept in it.

Reading and critiquing other authors' works can be an excellent way to increase storytelling techniques and develop your creative process. For example, many writers describe scenes using pictures or words so readers can visualize the setting and emotions associated with a story without actually witnessing it themselves.

Repetition can also be an effective storytelling technique; this involves returning to characters, places, and events repeatedly throughout a narrative. Repetition can serve to intensify a character's emotions or deepen scenes - for instance in *The Great Gatsby* this technique was employed repeatedly to portray Daisy Buchanan's dock being destroyed as part of Daisy Buchanan's dreams disintegrating. Successful stories typically follow clear structures: an inciting incident followed by rising action that leads to climax

before concluding into resolution - plot maps provide useful analysis and organization of these components.

2. Cliffhanger

When creating tension in a story, cliffhangers are an effective tool. This narrative technique is often employed in serialized TV shows and novels where season finales leave key plot points unresolved to draw readers back for more.

There are various techniques you can employ when it comes to narrative devices to keep your audience interested and engaged, from dramatic turning points to subverting reality itself.

One of the most effective cliffhangers features characters in danger. Physical danger (dangling from an edge of a cliff), as well as financial or spiritual threats, are excellent ways to keep readers intrigued while setting up for what will likely be an exciting next chapter, scene, or book. Just be careful not to overuse this literary device as doing so could cause your audience to lose interest - this is particularly important with longer books or serialized stories that span multiple parts.

3. Surprise



Surprise is one of the most powerful storytelling techniques, as it keeps readers engaged by forcing them to concentrate and encouraging them to keep reading. Furthermore, surprise can create emotional resonance with characters; for instance, being surprised by a bomb blast or jumpscare in a horror film will elicit an immediate emotional reaction from audiences.

Surprises should always raise the stakes and make it seem impossible for your protagonist to achieve his or her story goal and should come from any source imaginable. An action sequence offers ample opportunities for big surprises to occur and is an especially crucial setting in which this occurs. This

might be anything from new information revealing something to them about themselves or hurting them achieving it - or any combination thereof! Big surprises should add drama, making the outcome unpredictable for your story audience and increasing drama within it.

Reversing a character's motive can also be surprising for readers, which could involve either an instantaneous change or gradual transitions that change how readers interpret a character's actions. For instance, if someone accuses your protagonist of stalking only for it to turn out they were returning someone's wallet, this would likely come as quite a shock to your readers!

4. Mystery

Mystery writing involves depicting an incident as criminal or otherwise inexplicable, followed by its protagonist trying to solve it. Mystery writers use various techniques for maintaining suspense such as red herrings and alibi-inventors while foreshadowing is used to show readers what might occur in the future, both directly or indirectly.

When writing any novel, when creating a mystery, it is key to establish an engaging narrative thread that keeps readers turning the pages. This can be achieved through foreshadowing, well-executed twists, and an excellent finale. For example: if the detective discovers that one suspect has an alibi, this will disprove their guilt and increase the satisfaction for viewers during the reveal of who did it. For additional insight into writing mysteries, sign up for a MasterClass taught by Dan Brown - author of The Da Vinci Code and many other bestsellers - featuring video lessons by him and other literary luminaries on how to craft gripping tales and maintain suspenseful tension up until an exciting surprise finale.

5. Humour

Humor can be an effective storytelling device, helping to draw the audience's interest and maintain it throughout a narrative. Furthermore, humor can alleviate tension and stress while creating a pleasant environment.

Humor helps create an instantaneous bond with readers and allows them to identify with the characters, creating a personal experience for each reader. Humor works particularly well when used within lighthearted genres but this technique can be employed successfully across any narrative form.

As writers of humorous stories, writers must understand what makes jokes funny - although this can be difficult to articulate as it depends on both individuals and cultures. In general, humorous situations arise when expectations are violated unexpectedly and credibly, either due to language use changes, juxtaposing self-consistent frames of reference with those from another context, or other means - such as associative contexts such as Nested loops.

6. Wonder

Wonder is a storytelling technique designed to engage your audience through sensory details. By including sounds, scents, and tastes in your narrative storyline, it becomes easy for readers to imagine themselves immersed in its world.

Pixar has become well-known for using this technique when crafting animated movies like 'Finding Nemo' and 'Toy Story', helping audiences feel what the characters are going through and emotionally connect to them.

An alternative narrative technique is in media res storytelling, which involves thrusting your audience straight into the action and working well to build suspense.

Dr. Martin Luther King's iconic "I Have a Dream" speech fits this narrative structure perfectly, as it juxtaposes racism with his vision for an idealized society free from prejudice - an effective contrast that keeps his audience riveted while motivating their progress forward. See Nancy Duarte's article on in-medias res storytelling for further explanation.

7. Personal



Storytelling connects with audiences and gives your message substance. Use anecdotes that highlight personal obstacles you had to overcome to make your story more relatable and make your message more understandable for viewers.

Monomyth (or hero's journey), is a classic narrative structure that follows a hero as they leave their comfort zone to face a challenging obstacle. This motif can be found across cultures; including myths, folk tales, and religious writings from every continent. Leaders use this framework when communicating their ideas - take Simon Sinek's 'Start With Why' speech for instance; its petal-structure storytelling framework helped make his message resonate deeply.

Nested loops, an advanced narrative technique, involve interweaving three or more stories within one another to form one central story arc and supporting narratives to provide context and detail. This approach has been utilized extensively by popular television shows like Game of Thrones as well as speakers such as Martin Luther King and Elon Musk in their speeches.

8. Drama

Drama storytelling techniques allow you to craft engaging characters and plots that engage audiences. Successful stories consist of three basic components: an inciting incident, rising action, and climax (known collectively as the "arc of a story").

Some stories incorporate a frame narrative in which a narrator provides commentary on the events of the story. Writers may also create fictional characters to represent themselves and create backstories that mirror their personal experiences.

An effective metaphor can add dramatic tension to any story. Metaphors are comparisons that convey meaning and emotion between two objects or things - for instance, comparing your career journey to that of mountain climbing can demonstrate how far and higher than expected you have gone in terms of achievement and progress.

Repetition is a storytelling technique that involves repeated references to characters or objects. Writers may use sensory imagery such as hearing, seeing, smelling, and touching to describe scenes with multiple elements - for instance, they could use these terms to help readers imagine what their protagonist might be experiencing.

9. Villain

An antagonist is essential in any story; their antagonistic presence drives the narrative forward by creating conflict and moving the plot forward. At their best, these villains become inextricably linked with their hero and help shape his or her character development - becoming integral parts of the tale itself.

Traditional views of villainy define them as power-hungry antagonists who commit atrocious acts without regard for morals, but today's villains can often be more complex and nuanced; often having tragic backstories and internal demons that drive their behavior or even be considered antiheroes such as Walter White from Breaking Bad or Tony Soprano from The Sopranos.

An effective villain requires striking a balance between their inherent evil and relatable, realistic motivations. You want your villain to be believable, so sprinkle in some redeeming qualities such as humor or family love so audiences can see that motivations may change rapidly while remaining wrong; creating empathy with them while challenging their readers' moral compass in turn.

10. Metaphor

Metaphors, analogies, and similes are storytelling shorthand that effectively conveys big ideas by likening one thing to another. Their effectiveness lies in helping us comprehend complex ideas which would otherwise be difficult. Furthermore, metaphors serve as powerful emotional triggers - for instance, when Martin Luther King compares an intolerant society to a mountain, we feel emotionally moved to support his cause.

The personification of non-human things, for instance, the stars in the sky could be seen as dancers - this technique often used for comic effect or to add contrast - is another effective use of metaphor.

If you're using metaphor in your storytelling, it is crucial that your audience can easily comprehend it. A quick way of testing this is reading aloud to them or asking if they can relate. If they struggle, try

simplifying or expanding upon the metaphor if necessary; alternatively, you could also try creating visual or extended metaphors to aid understanding.

11. Goal

Storytelling's purpose is to engage, motivate and inspire. It sets vibrant brands apart from simple businesses and loyal consumers from one-time shopaholics alike. Storytelling requires creativity, vision, and practice - however, there are various techniques you can employ to perfect this craft and deliver an impactful presentation.

Telling stories using techniques such as in media res, which involves beginning the narrative midway rather than at its start, can keep audiences engaged throughout your narrative. Furthermore, too much detail must be shared without driving the plot forward or developing characters.

Storytelling techniques such as symbolism and motif can add depth and resonance to your narrative by using imagery such as measuring tape to add dimension to a project, making your tale more emotionally relatable for your audience.

12. Bright future

Making use of media res storytelling techniques, popularised by films like Pixar's Finding Nemo and Toy Story as well as Nancy Duarte's Sparklines, can help engage your audience at the very start of any narrative. By placing them right at the heart of the action from the very start of a narrative, your audience will eagerly anticipate discovering what happens next!

Advancements in digital design techniques and tools have opened up an infinite world of storytelling options. Being able to persuade with captivating narratives is an invaluable skill that any business professional should master.

13. Storylines



Storylines are events that unfold, shaping characters and plot.

As you draft your stories, think carefully about which details to include, then focus on those which will keep your audience interested and engaged.

Make use of sensory imagery to give your audience a richer picture of the scene you're depicting, whether that means simply describing what color your jacket was when climbing Mount Kilimanjaro or providing detailed accounts of weather in Wuthering Heights; whatever works for you will help transport audiences and stir emotion within them.

14. Time

Time can be a challenging aspect of storytelling, yet its passage can also be used as an invaluable tool to add tension and flesh out characters.

An important use of time in stories is highlighting a character's backstory. By employing shorter time markers like the sun rises, meals, and sleep cycles or mobile phone battery life as markers for action in real-time, authors can create more vivid and emotive character backstories without slowing down the storyline.

At some point in every story, there will come sections where long periods need to be described to keep the plot moving and readers interested. Though these segments may not be integral to the main plot they can help create an impression of reality and set-up that immerses readers further into the tale.

A distinctive character's view on time will alter the feel of their scenes, adding emotion and tension while showing differences in goals, motivations, expectations, and experiences between characters.

15. Highs & lows

storytelling can be an effective way to convey ideas on any occasion - be it an anecdote at cocktail parties or a business presentation. However, crafting compelling talks that captivate an audience is no simple task. Human beings have an inherent desire for stories - we love heroes, journeys, and surprises! Use classic storytelling techniques in your next speech for maximum effect.

An effective story must feature a hero with an undying desire and an opponent who stands in their way, which leads to conflict and keeps them from reaching it. Audience members should connect with and identify with this hero - sharing values or traits or seeing something of themselves within them. Furthermore, it's key that varying the action with quiet moments adds suspense for an engaging climax moment.

Storytelling has evolved for millennia, from cave paintings and hieroglyphs to hieroglyphics and now the web. Modern storytelling techniques are now used in everything from books and TV shows to TED Talks; advanced storytelling techniques can even be applied in corporate communications situations to inspire employees or deliver messages or create company culture.

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