

The Six Elements to a Balanced Story

I walked over to Tommy and slapped him in the face.

“Argh!” he said. “Why did you do that?”

“You know why,” I said.

Some background: Tommy was telling us a story he had just written. It was really bad. He needed a slap.

On Tommy’s face was the red imprint of a hand.

My hand stung, but I felt good for standing up to bad storytelling.

Still, I wondered if I had gone too far.

The Foundation of Writing

Some people say there are five elements of story. Some say ten. I say (for now at least) six.

Here they are:

- 1. Action.** What are the people in your story doing?
- 2. Dialogue.** What are they saying?
- 3. Description.** What are they seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling?
- 4. Introspection** (also known as inner monologue). What are they thinking?
- 5. Emotion.** How do they feel?
- 6. Exposition.** What other information does the narrator (i.e. you) want us to know?

The Prompt

Write a story about a schoolyard fight. Try to use all six elements of storytelling. Go ahead and write for thirty minutes.

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Story Elements Example

I walked over to Tommy and slapped him in the face. **ACTION**

“Argh!” he said. “Why did you do that?”

“You know why,” I said. **DIALOGUE**

Some background: Tommy was telling us a story he had just written. It was really bad. He needed a slap. **EXPOSITION**

There was an outline of a hand on Tommy’s face. It was red. **DESCRIPTION**

My hand stung, but I felt good that I had stood up against bad storytelling. **EMOTION**

Still, I wondered what had come over me. **INTROSPECTION**

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