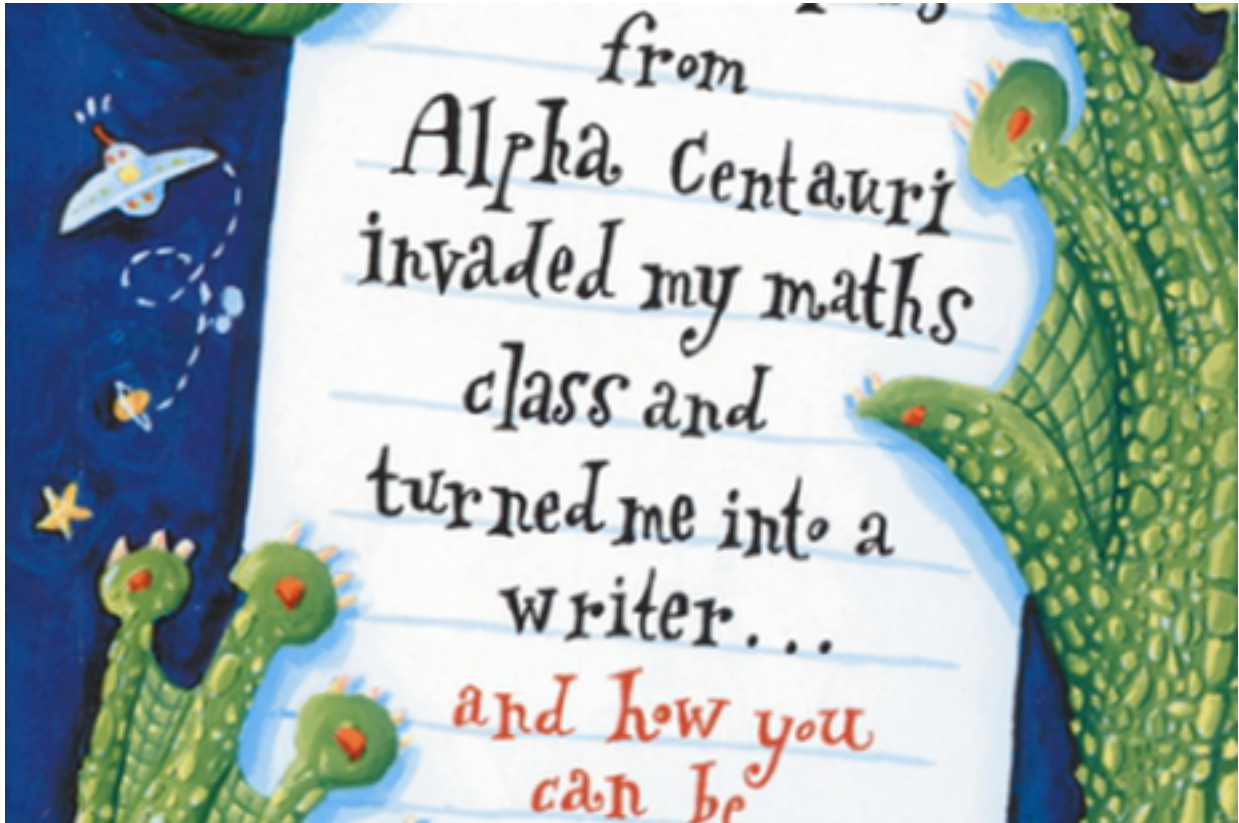


I can't finish my stories!



See also: [How the Aliens From Alpha Centauri Invaded My Maths Class and Turned Me Into a Writer ...and how you can be one too.](#) It should be in your local library.

I can't finish my stories!

Answer: If you are under 20, don't worry. You probably don't have time or brain space due to school; and also your writing ideas will be changing and developing very quickly. It's probably best to write lots of bits of stories, rather than work on one long one, so you can play with ideas and ways of using words.

If you hurry a book or story to finish it, you'll be teaching yourself very bad writing habits that will be difficult to break. (One of the most common faults beginning writers make is to hurry their stories, and do too much in them too fast.)

But if you just come to a stop in a story, you either:

Haven't thought about it enough

go for a walk, or listen to music for an hour with a cup of coffee and a piece of chocolate and just THINK about it

OR

May know that you need to change your story

... or do a heck of a lot more work to it -- and you can't bring yourself to do it.
Solution: accept that the better the book, the more sheer hard work it will involve.
Take a deep breath and do what the book needs

OR

May be scared it won't be as good as it should be.

Well, it probably won't be. Doesn't matter. Just write it -- then you can rewrite and rewrite and rewrite. it is much easier to work with something already down on paper than something in your head. So get writing- but be prepared to trash it when it doesn't work.

I can't get any ideas!

Answer: There is no such thing as inspiration! Just years of THINKING and looking and listening and analysing- then suddenly it all comes together and you know what your story is going to be about.

And then you REALLY start thinking.

Yes, there is a point when a story idea comes together -- but if you haven't done lots of thinking about all sorts of things first, it won't happen.

Ideas don't just drift out of the sky. I wish they did. They have to be worked for.

So..what are you really interested in?

(If you say 'nothing' then there is no way you are going to be a writer)

Think about the last two weeks.

What did you feel passionate about? And yes, this can be as simple as playing with your dog --write a doggy book -- or gossiping with friends. Write about what you care about.

Think about the most vivid scene you can create in your mind.

Your own home? An alien planet? A tropical island? That is where you set your book.

My ideas are like the last movie I watched/ book I read!

Answer: See above.

Stories need thinking about. You can't spin a story out of nothing, no matter how brilliant you are with words.

If your ideas are always secondhand ones, stop being lazy and WORK at your writing.

I'm an amateur violin player. I love playing, but not enough to practice. Amateur writers write because it's fun, but they don't love it enough to work and sweat over it.

I'm not saying you have to be a professional writer -- you will still get enormous pleasure being an amateur writer, and give pleasure to others too, not to mention finding useful skills.

But if you want to be a good writer, you need to put a heck of a lot of work into it- at least as much as if you wanted to become a doctor or teacher.

Talent is not enough!

I don't know where to start!

Answer: Write the ending first. I 'm serious.

it's easy to write the beginning of a story and then stop, as you run out of ideas.

But if you write the ending first you have to THINK about the story.

What is it about?

Who is it about?

What do they want more than anything else?

Will they find it?

Where will this story end up?

You may not stick to the ending.

But it WILL make you think before you write.

ps It's much easier to write a GOOD beginning when you've already written some of the book. The beginning is the bit that will haul the reader in- so it must be vivid. But it doesn't have to be written first,.

My teacher hates my stories!

Answer: No one has ever written a story that all the world loves.

And also teachers sometimes think kids shouldn't write books with sex, swords or any of the other things you'll see in most movies or read in just about every book on the airport shelves.

But don't worry about it too much. You'll have another teacher next year; and even though it doesn't seem like it, school days do pass. And then you'll be able to write what you want ... and find you have to please 100,000 people, and not just your teacher!

How can I make my story better?

Answer:

1. THINK about your story before you write it: no matter how good your writing is

2. Don't over write.

It took me years to realise that being good with words can actually be a handicap if you want to be a good writer!

I'm very good with words. I can make words stand on their heads and wiggle their toes. But beautiful writing doesn't make a good story.

IDEAS make a good story- and if the story itself isn't good, no amount of good writing will make it interesting.

Sometimes too people who are good with words over write- they use more words than they need to tell the story.

Use **AS FEW WORDS AS YOU CAN**, even if every one of them is beautiful. Words can really get in the way of the story.

(On the other hand someone who is brilliant with words can weave a story out of almost nothing... but that's **ALMOST** nothing...the story must be there, and the words will just be doing a perfect job of telling it).