

A writing activity from

Grimm & Co



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## Protagonist & Antagonist

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This writing exercise is designed to help you get to know your characters a little bit more depth, and especially to help with creating some really juicy adventure writing. You will need:

- A pen
- Some paper
- Your imagination
- Optional bow tie or sparkly jacket

Goodies and baddies. Heroes and villains. Some of the best stories feature a main character (that's the protagonist) and some kind of nemesis, rival or opposing force (that's the antagonist).

So where do we start?

Well, we don't want to start in any stories or books you already know- we want original characters!! If you already have someone in mind for your protagonist and antagonist then great! If you don't, take some time to draw them, or make notes about who they are before doing this exercise. If you need help creating characters from scratch, check out the videos on the adventure writing section of our activities page for inspiration.



## Step 1. The Interview

So by now, you should have a rough idea of who these two characters are. We are about to interview your hero and villain to grill them about their intentions, and find out a little bit more about their backstory. This interview takes place at the start of your story, so think about each character at that moment, and how they might answer.

1. Take a piece of paper, and draw two columns, one for your protagonist, and one for your antagonist and write their names at the top of each column, just like this:

Protagonist name	Antagonist name

2. Imagine yourself as a talk show host (feel free to grab a sparkly jacket or bow tie for this) and imagine your characters are sitting in the room with you. Ask each of them the same following questions, and write their answers in their own column:

- a. *What are you looking for/what do you want, and WHY?* Remember that they could both be looking for the same thing. Also, if your antagonist has an evil plan, it must be believable. If they want world domination, *WHY?*
- b. *When you were little, what did you dream you would grow up to be?* Of course, if your characters **ARE** little, they can just as easily answer this from where they are now.
- c. *Tell me something you don't like about yourself* No-one is perfect, even the goodiest of goodies. Think about how your hero and villain might answer this question.
- d. *What would be your dream day out?*

See if you can come up with any other questions to ask your characters- the weirder and obscure the better!

As you write your story, refer to these questions and try to stay true to your protagonist and antagonist personalities.

## Step 2. The Meeting

Close your eyes and try to dive into your story. It's not been written yet, so the setting might be blurry or foggy, but you can see your protagonist and antagonist very clearly. This is the first time they meet in your story. Perhaps they've met before, or maybe they don't even know each other yet. How do they greet each other? What is said between them (if anything). How do their bodies move- are they scared, angry, calm or something else? Have a go at writing this scene.





## Additional activity

If you're up for a bit more exploration of these two, you might want to try the next exercise. As a practice, write a chapter or paragraph from the perspective of each character after their first meeting. Try writing in the first person (for example 'I felt strangely uneasy after that encounter...').

Use what you have learned about your characters to help you start your pieces of adventure writing.

## Author of tomorrow award

This activity has been designed to help you create a fantastic piece of adventure writing for the Wilbur Smith Adventure Writing Prize, which is an annual competition open to young people and children age 21 and under across the world who have completed a short piece of adventure writing in English.

If you are between the age of 11 and 21, you can enter a piece of original adventure writing, and you could win up to £1,000 and/or book tokens for your school. In addition, 10 shortlisted authors will be published by *Worldreader*.

For details on the different prizes available, and how many words you'll need to write, look on the Wilbur Niso Smith Foundation website, and search 'author of tomorrow', or click the link below.

Admissions are open until 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021, and must be submitted via the Wilbur Niso Smith Foundation website, NOT through Grimm and Co, although if you want to share any of your work with us, please tag us at @grimmandco, or email [writerspad@grimmandco.co.uk](mailto:writerspad@grimmandco.co.uk)

If you need more help getting started with adventure writing, check out all the videos on our adventure writing page here:

<https://grimmandco.co.uk/activities/adventure-writing/>

Further information can be found on their website:

<https://www.wilbur-niso-smithfoundation.org/awards/author-of-tomorrow-2019>

Submit your entries

here: <https://wilburnisosmithfoundation.submittable.com/submit>