

1. A story has a **beginning**, a **middle**, and an **end**. Things often happen in order in a story. Sometimes clue words, such as **first**, **then**, and **finally**, tell you when things happen. At other times, you must read carefully in order to follow the **sequence of events**, or the order of events, in a story.

A story is usually about a particular person. The most important person in the story is called the **main character**. The main character is often involved with the sequence of events. The main character may have a problem, or a **conflict**, that needs to be solved. The sequence of events takes the reader through the conflict and the **solution**.

A story also has a **setting**. The setting is the place where a story takes place.

Some stories take place in the past, some stories take place in the present, and some stories take place in the future.

2. Not all things you read are made-up stories, or **fiction**.

Many things you read are true, or **nonfiction**.

If you read a biography—a story about a real person—you are reading nonfiction.

A description of a place or an informational passage about animals is also nonfiction.

Nonfiction also has a sequence of events. Events happen in order. Instructions for completing a task have a sequence. Recognizing what comes first, next, and last helps readers follow along and understand nonfiction.

3. Now, practice following a sequence of events.

Read this story.

The Bowling Party

Bowling! Janine couldn't believe it. Her friends were having a bowling party.

As Janine rode in the car with her friends, she dreaded getting to the bowling alley. She got out of the car and walked behind the others, and she was the last one to get her bowling shoes.

"You guys go first," she said as they argued about the order in which they would all bowl. Tracy bowled first. She knocked down seven pins on her first roll and two more on her second. Tanya went next. She missed a strike by one pin, but she nailed it with her second ball. Then, it was Melissa's turn.

She giggled and looked over her shoulder. "You know, I'm a terrible bowler," she said.

Janine sat up. She watched as Melissa took three slow steps and then rolled the ball. It landed with a hard *thunk*, then rolled into the gutter.

Suddenly, Janine didn't feel so awful.

4. Let's take a look at the sequence of events.

What happens first? What event follows the first one? What event follows that event? What is the last thing to happen?

Events happen in an order that makes sense. First, the friends get to the bowling alley. Then, they rent shoes. Then, they decide the order in which they will bowl. Tracy bowls first, followed by Tanya, and then Melissa.

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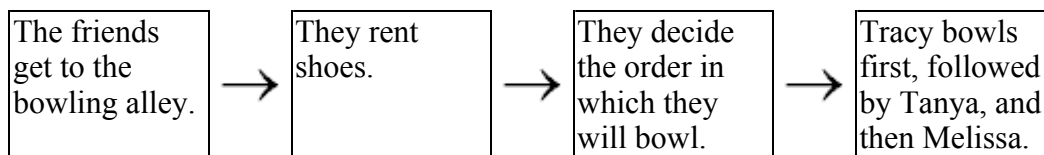
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5. You can show the sequence of events by using a timeline.

Think about the order in which things happen in the story.

First, the friends get to the bowling alley. Then, they rent shoes. Then, they decide the order in which they will bowl. Tracy bowls first, followed by Tanya, and then Melissa.

Now, let's put the events in a timeline.



6. Let's identify the main character.

The main character:

- does most of the action
- sometimes tells the story

From whose point of view do we see the events in this story? Whose emotions and conflict do we experience?

We experience the story from Janine's point of view. Janine is the main character of this story.

7. Now, let's think about the problem, or conflict, that Janine faces.

Read this part of the story.

Bowling! Janine couldn't believe it. Her friends were having a bowling party.

As Janine rode in the car with her friends, she dreaded getting to the bowling alley. She got out of the car and walked behind the others, and she was the last one to get her bowling shoes.

What is Janine's conflict?

Janine dreads bowling with her friends. We're not sure why, but Janine's actions tell us how she feels.

She walks behind her friends, and she is the last one to get her bowling shoes. She does not want to go bowling.

8. How does Janine solve her problem?

Read this part of the story.

"You guys go first," she said as they argued about the order in which they would all bowl. Tracy bowled first. She knocked down seven pins on her first roll and two more on her second roll. Tanya went next. She missed a strike by one pin, but she nailed it with her second. Then, it was Melissa's turn.

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Suddenly, Janine didn't feel so awful.

What is the solution to Janine's conflict?

Janine realizes that Melissa is not a very good bowler. Janine now knows that she won't be the only one who can't bowl well. She feels better about bowling.

Now, try to work through the next problems step by step.

1. Now, let's practice looking at the order of events.

Read the story below.

A New Business

It's the first day of Dave's new business, and he already has five clients. "Dave's Dog-Walking Service" is sure to make enough money to buy the new mountain bike Dave has his eye on.

Dave goes to his first client, an elderly man with an overweight beagle. The beagle sniffs under every bush.

"This isn't so bad," says Dave.

Next, Dave stops at the home of a dad with two young children. The family has a large golden retriever with plenty of energy. Both dogs pull Dave down the sidewalk.

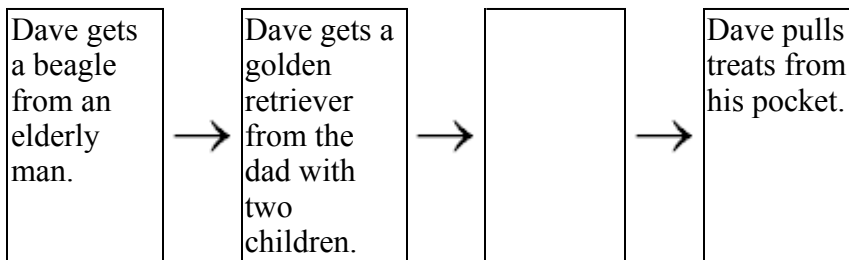
"This is getting tricky," says Dave.

Dave's third client is a woman who works at home. She has a boxer who needs some exercise. All three dogs drag Dave down the block.

"I don't know whether I can handle five dogs!" Dave says.

Dave stops and pulls some treats from his pocket. Suddenly, all of the dogs sit quietly.

Here is a timeline of what happens in the passage.



Which of these events should go in the empty box?

- A. Dave buys a mountain bike.
- B. All of the dogs sit quietly.
- C. Dave gets a boxer from the work-at-home client.
- D. Dave starts a dog-walking business.

Read each answer choice. Think about the order in which things happen in the story.

Look at **choice A**.

Does **Dave buy a mountain bike** right after he takes the golden retriever for a walk?

- A** yes
- B** no

2. Let's look at the choices again.

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It's the first day of Dave's new business, and he already has five clients. "Dave's Dog-Walking Service" is sure to make enough money to buy the new mountain bike Dave has his eye on.

Dave goes to his first client, an elderly man with an overweight beagle. The beagle sniffs under every bush.

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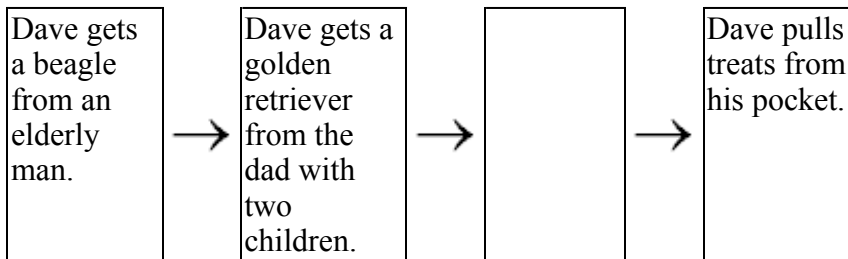
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- C. Dave gets a boxer from the work-at-home client.
- D. Dave starts a dog-walking business.

Think about the order in which things happen in the story.

We know that Dave does not buy a mountain bike in the story, so **choice A** is not the answer.

Look at **choice B**.

Do **all of the dogs sit quietly** after Dave gets the golden retriever?

- A** no
- B** yes

3. Let's look at the choices and answer the question.

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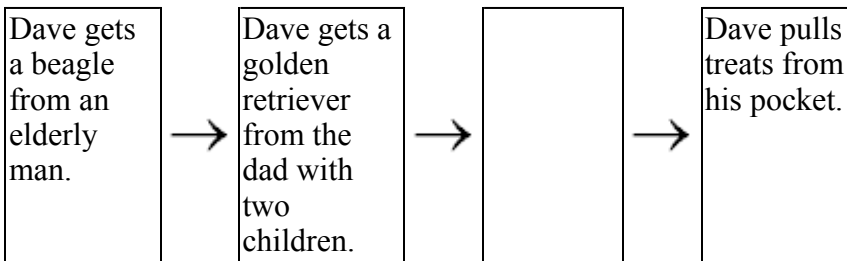
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- D. Dave starts a dog-walking business.

Think about the order in which things happen in the story.

Does **Dave** get a **boxer** from the **work-at-home client** after Dave gets the golden retriever?

- A** no
- B** yes

4. Now, let's identify the main character.

Read this passage.

George Rodrigue, Blue Dog Artist

George Rodrigue was born in 1944 in Louisiana. Even when he was a child, he loved to paint and sculpt. He went to college to study art. Rodrigue became interested in Pop Art, such as the art that Andy Warhol was creating. Using that interest and the skills he had learned in school, Rodrigue continued to paint the things he knew. Being from Louisiana, he captured many images of his home.

One much-loved tale from Rodrigue's childhood concerned a ghostlike dog that lived in a bayou, or swamp. Rodrigue wanted to paint this dog. To do so, he used a photograph of Tiffany, a dog he had once owned. However, Rodrigue's many paintings of the "Blue Dog" include dogs of various colors.

Who is the main character of this passage?

- A. the "Blue Dog"
- B. George Rodrigue
- C. Andy Warhol
- D. the bayou

The main character is the most important person in the passage. Read each answer choice and decide who is most important in the passage.

Is the main character **the "Blue Dog"**?

- A** no
- B** yes

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Who is the main character of this passage?

- A. the "Blue Dog"
- B. George Rodrigue
- C. Andy Warhol
- D. the bayou

The main character is the most important person in the passage.

Is the main character **George Rodrigue**?

- A** no
- B** yes

6. Let's look at the order in which things happen.

Fixing a Flat Tire

Sometimes your bicycle can get a flat tire. Here's how to fix it!

1. First, remove the wheel from the bike.
2. Then, take the tire off the rim. Use tire levers to help you pry off the tire.
3. After you have removed the tire, take out the inner tube. Can you see where the hole is? If you put the tube under water, you might notice tiny air bubbles coming from the hole.
4. Using a ballpoint pen, make an X where the hole is so that you can find it again.
5. Gently sand the area around the hole with emery paper.
6. Apply a thin layer of tire glue.
7. Put the patch on the hole and hold it there for a few minutes.
8. Put some air in the tube to be sure that the hole is properly patched.
9. Then, put the tube back into the tire and put the tire back on the rim.
10. Finally, put the tire back on the bike and pump it up!

What should you do right after you "sand the area around the hole with emery paper"?

- A. Hold the patch on the hole.
- B. Make an X where the hole is.
- C. Apply a thin layer of glue.
- D. Put some air in the tube.

Look at **choice A**. Look at the passage again.

Should you "**hold the patch on the hole**" right after you sand the area?

- A** no
- B** yes

7. Let's look at this passage again.

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8. Put some air in the tube to be sure that the hole is properly patched.
9. Then, put the tube back into the tire and put the tire back on the rim.
10. Finally, put the tire back on the bike and pump it up!

Look at **choice B**.

After you sand the area around the hole, would you "**make an X where the hole is**"?

- A** yes
- B** no

What should you do right after you "sand the area around the hole with emery paper"?

- A. Hold the patch on the hole.
- B. Make an X where the hole is.
- C. Apply a thin layer of glue.
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- A. Hold the patch on the hole.
- B. Make an X where the hole is.
- C. Apply a thin layer of glue.
- D. Put some air in the tube.

Look at **choice C**.

According to the passage, should you "**apply a thin layer of glue**" right after you sand the area around the hole?

- A** yes
- B** no

Now, work these practice problems on your own.

1. **Saving the Sound**

The water in Alaska's Prince William Sound was as dark as night. Only a few days before, the waters had been peaceful and blue. Then, soon after midnight on March 24, 1989, a ship called the *Exxon Valdez*, an oil tanker, hit a reef. The sharp edges of the reef scraped a hole in the ship's hull. Soon, gallons and gallons of oil rushed into the water, polluting it and killing the plant and animal life that lived there.

Thousands of people went to help save as many animals as they could. Many otters, seals, bald eagles, and fish died. Even years later, many populations of animals, such as salmon, sea otters, and ducks, have not entirely recovered. The Exxon Corporation spent some money to help with the cleanup effort, but no amount of money could make up for the damage that the oil spill caused.

What was the first thing that happened when the ship hit a reef?

- A Oil poured out of the ship.
- B Plants and animals began to die.
- C The reef scraped a hole in the ship.
- D People went to Alaska to help.

2. **Opening Day**

Allison was as nervous as her mom and dad. Today was the grand opening of their new family restaurant. She finished polishing the silverware and then watched as her father opened the doors.

"Welcome, Mr. and Mrs. Walker!" Allison's father said.

Allison watched her father escort the Walkers to a booth and hand them menus. Allison waited near the kitchen to see what the Walkers ordered.

"The Walkers want something not on the menu!" Tim, the waiter, gasped as he came into the kitchen.

"What is it, Tim?" Allison's mom asked.

"They said they ate these great stuffed peppers at your house one time, and that's what they want."

"Mom, don't we have some stuffed peppers at home in the freezer?" Allison asked.

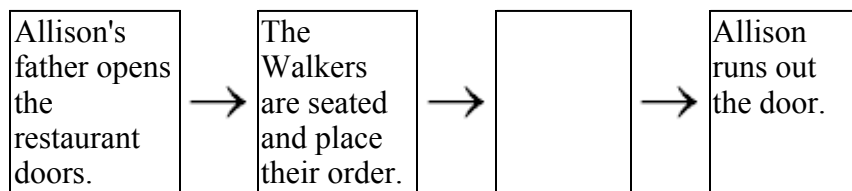
Allison's mom twisted her hands. "You're right, Allison, I think we do! Quick, run home and get them!"

Allison was already out the door.

Which of these events should go in the empty box?

- A The Walkers ate stuffed peppers at Allison's house once.
- B Allison's father greets the Walkers.
- C Tim says that the Walkers want stuffed peppers, which are not on the menu.
- D Allison polishes the silverware.

Here is a timeline of what happens in the story.



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Allison's mom twisted her hands. "You're right, Allison, I think we do! Quick, run home and get them!"

Allison was already out the door.

What is the setting of the story?

- A the Walkers' table
- B Allison's family's house
- C Allison's family's restaurant
- D the kitchen

4. **The Talent Show**

Mira stood backstage and waited for her turn. She clasped her hands and tried to get her heart to stop beating so fast.

"I don't know why I let Mom and Dad talk me into entering the talent show," she said to herself. "I'm not talented. I can't play the piano."

She gulped and peeked around the curtain. The gym was packed with people.

"I can't play in front of all these people!"

Mira watched as two girls did a dance routine. "At least they have each other out there," Mira said to herself. "I'll be all alone."

Next, a boy who played the trumpet took the stage. He smiled and bowed at the end of his song.

"You're next, Mira," said the teacher in charge.

Mira nodded, but she was too afraid to speak. Slowly, she made her way onto the stage.

What is the conflict in this story?

- A Mira is afraid of embarrassing her parents if she makes a mistake.
- B Mira wishes that she could dance.
- C Mira is nervous about playing the piano for the talent show.
- D Mira's duet partner has not arrived and it is time to play in the talent show.

5.



Baking Bread Is Easy

Ingredients:

water
flour
yeast
sugar
salt

Instructions:

1. First, mix the yeast with warm water and a little bit of sugar. Then, add some salt to the flour. Add the yeast and water to the flour and mix well.
2. Knead the dough for 8–10 minutes. This will mix the yeast evenly throughout the dough. The dough should be elastic and slightly shiny when you have finished kneading it.
3. Lightly oil a bowl. Put the dough in the bowl, turning it over once to oil all sides. Place a clean dishtowel over the bowl and then put the bowl somewhere warm, with no drafts.
4. Let the dough rise for about an hour. Then punch it down. You can form the dough into loaves now. Put a clean dishtowel over the loaves and let them rise until they have doubled in size. This will take about an hour.
5. Bake the loaves for about 50 minutes.

Enjoy your fresh bread!



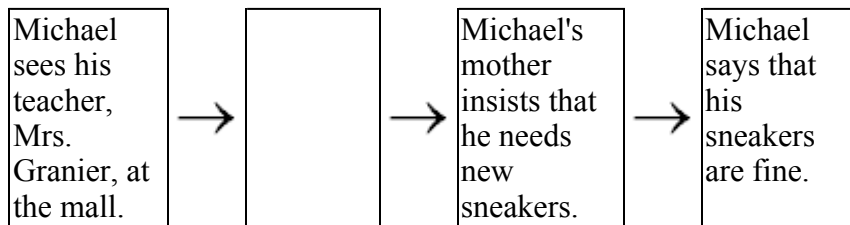
What should be done just before you oil the bowl?

- A** Mix the yeast with water and a little bit of sugar.
- B** Put the dough in the bowl, turning it over once.
- C** Knead the dough for 8–10 minutes.
- D** Let the dough rise for about an hour.

6. **Please Don't See Me!**

Michael thought his eyes were playing tricks on him. He was at the mall with his mother when suddenly he saw his English teacher, Mrs. Granier, in the sporting goods store. Michael walked quickly past the store, but his mom stopped. "Don't you need new sneakers?" she asked him. "No, Mom, these are fine," Michael said. There was no way he was going into that store with Mrs. Granier in there. "Come on," his mom said, pulling him by the hand. "You always need new sneakers." Michael didn't know which would be worse, seeing Mrs. Granier at the mall or having his mom drag him into the store as though he were two years old. He put his head down and followed his mom, hoping Mrs. Granier wouldn't see him. "Why, Michael Ashton," Mrs. Granier said. "Imagine seeing you here!"

Here is a timeline of what happens in the story.



Which of these events should go in the empty box?

- A** Mrs. Granier greets him.
- B** Michael's mother pulls him by the hand.
- C** Michael walks quickly past the store.
- D** Michael follows his mother into the store.