



THE YOUNG WRITER

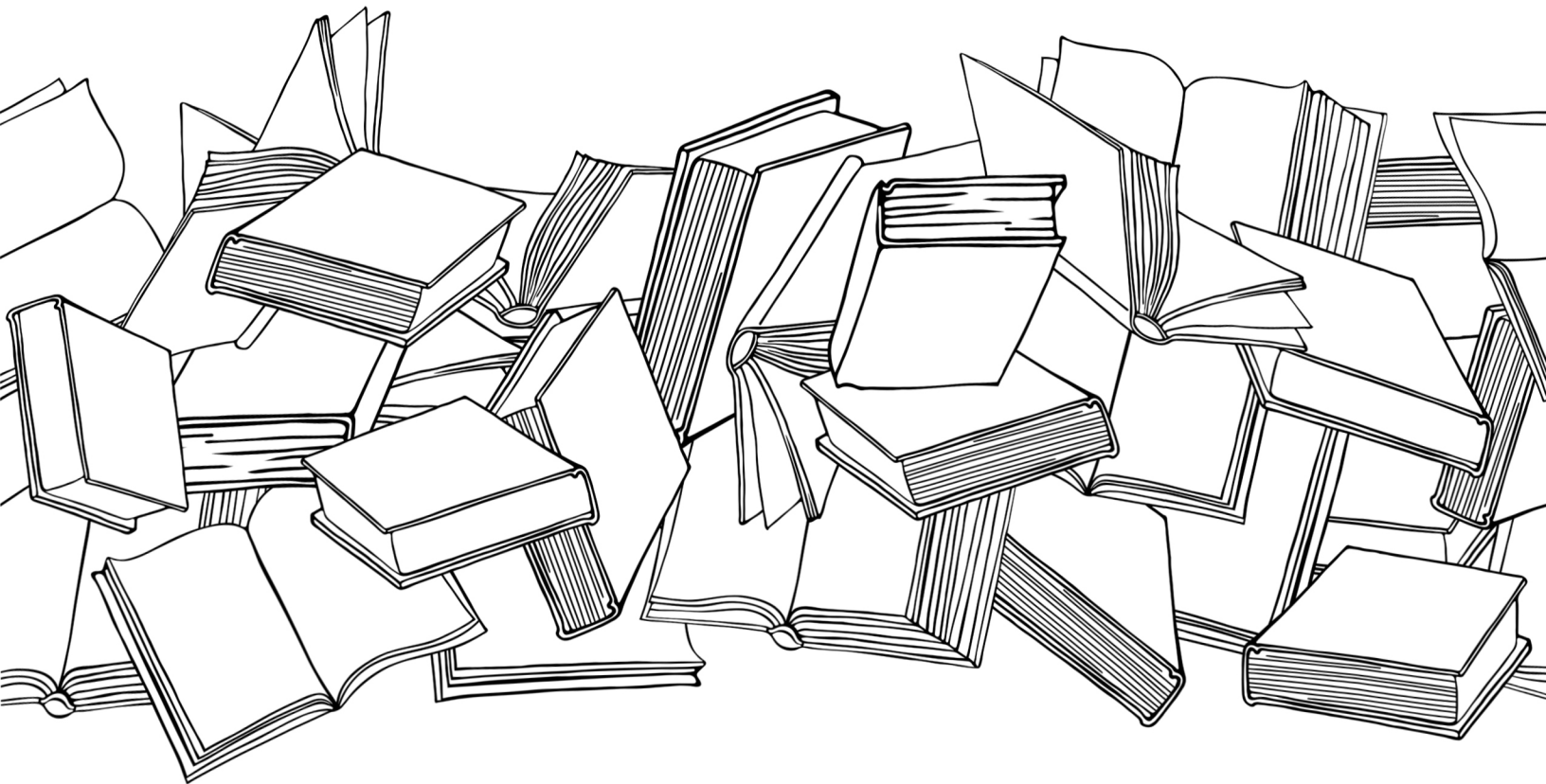
The Parent's Guide To

GIVING FEEDBACK ON fiction writing



The Parent's Guide To

GIVING FEEDBACK ON fiction writing



CREATED BY THE TEAM AT:

TheYoungWriter.com

Your child wants feedback on their story.

But you aren't a fiction writing expert.

It can be a challenge to help your child with a skill you haven't regularly practiced yourself. As a result, many parents aren't sure what advice they can give their young fiction writer.

However, despite this challenge, you have more to offer than you may think. While you may not have studied creative writing formally, you have experienced what a good story is like.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Whether it's a favorite film, beloved book, or even an engaging story told by a friend, most people know what a great story *feels* like. **And you do too.**

It turns out this is the basic skill you need to give good feedback.

The challenge is knowing how to precisely diagnose flaws you may sense, but not know how to put into words.

That's what we provide in this guide: some **key terms** and **concepts** you can use next time you review your child's story.



You can give your child great feedback!

You just need to know the key terms and concepts.

Fiction Feedback Overview

Feedback on a story falls into two main categories.
The first is **characters** and the second is **plot**.



characters



plot

Under **CHARACTERS**, make sure each main character
has a **desire**, a **weakness**, and a **fear**.



a desire



a weakness



a fear

Under **PLOT**, make sure the story includes
goals, **obstacles**, and **stakes**.



goals



obstacles



stakes



Desire

A character's desire is his central internal motivation to achieve something he currently lacks.

.....



In *It's A Wonderful Life*, **GEORGE BAILEY'S** desire is to do something big and important.



In *The Chronicles of Narnia*, **EDMUND PEVENSIE'S** desire is to be greater than his older brother, Peter.

.....

As You Read Your Child's Story

Ask Yourself These Questions:

Do I understand what this character desires?

Can I relate to this character's desire?

If the answer to either question is "no" — you might suggest they work on giving their character a more clear and relatable desire.

TIP: Even villains can (and should) have understandable and relatable desires despite their terrible actions!



Weakness

A character's weakness is a moral flaw which he needs to overcome.

.....



In *It's A Wonderful Life*, **GEORGE BAILEY'S** weakness is his lack of gratitude for what he has.



In *The Chronicles of Narnia*, **EDMUND PEVENSIE'S** weakness is needing to be the greatest and best.

.....

As You Read Your Child's Story

Ask Yourself These Questions:

Does this character have a clear moral flaw?

Does this moral flaw prevent the character from succeeding?

If the answer to either question is "no" — you might suggest they work on giving their character a more clear weakness.

TIP: Without a weakness, characters often feel unrealistic and unrelatable to readers.



Fear

A character's fear is the thing they would do anything to avoid.

.....



In *It's A Wonderful Life*, **GEORGE BAILEY** fears wasting his life away in Bedford Falls.



In *The Chronicles of Narnia*, **EDMUND PEVENSIE** fears always having to do what Peter says.

.....

As You Read Your Child's Story

Ask Yourself These Questions:

Do I understand what negative fate the character wants to avoid?

Does the character go to significant lengths to avoid that fate?

If the answer to either question is "no" — you might suggest they work on giving their character a more clear fear.

TIP: Fears are rarely mentioned explicitly in a story, but they should be clearly implied and powerfully influence each character.



Goals

A character's goals are external objectives he wants to achieve in the story.

.....



In *It's A Wonderful Life*, **GEORGE BAILEY'S** goal is to keep his company in business.



In *The Chronicles of Narnia*, **THE PEVENSIES'** goal is to help defeat the White Witch.

.....

As You Read Your Child's Story

Ask Yourself These Questions:

Do I understand what the character's main goal is in this scene?

Is the scene goal clearly connected with the story's main goals?

If the answer to either question is "no" — you might suggest they work on giving each scene a goal that connects to the story's main goal.

TIP: If a scene isn't helping the character achieve a goal — or is disconnected from the story's main goal — it will likely feel pointless.



Obstacles

Obstacles are anything that stand in the way of the protagonist and his goal.

.....



In *It's A Wonderful Life*, **GEORGE BAILEY** must overcome Mr. Potter's greed, Uncle Billy's loss of funds, and his own disappointment with his life.



In *The Chronicles of Narnia*, **THE PEVENSIES'** must overcome Edmund's betrayal, the wolves, the White Witch's army, and much more.

.....

As You Read Your Child's Story

Ask Yourself These Questions:

Is there an obstacle to the character's goals in this scene?

Does it take several attempts to overcome these obstacles?

If the answer to either question is "no" — you might suggest they work on creating more obstacles for their characters to overcome.

TIP: If a story doesn't feel suspenseful enough, the problem likely has to do with a lack of truly difficult obstacles.



Stakes

Stakes represent the cost of failure for the story's main character.

.....



In *It's A Wonderful Life*, **GEORGE BAILEY** risks everything he's worked for and Mr. Potter owning everything in Bedford Falls.



In *The Chronicles of Narnia*, **THE PEVENSIES'** risk Narnia being ruled forever by the White Witch and themselves being turned into stone.

.....

As You Read Your Child's Story

Ask Yourself These Questions:

Do I understand the stakes in this scene?

Do I care whether the character succeeds or fails?

If the answer to either question is "no" — you might suggest they work on creating more clear stakes for their characters.

TIP: Readers need to be given a reason to care about the main character's success or failure. Otherwise they will get bored.

We can help your child write better stories.



We provide private online tutoring to help your child apply these concepts to their writing.

Click To Learn More:

theyoungwriter.com/lessons



THE YOUNG WRITER

© Copyright 2019 TheYoungWriter.com
Do not reproduce or distribute without written consent.