

The writer used paragraphs to separate different parts of the story and to show when a new person is speaking.

The writer showed *why* characters do what they do by including their thinking and their responses to what happens.

The writer slowed down the heart of the story, making it longer and more developed than others. Less important parts are shorter and less detailed and may even have been summarized.

The writer included precise details and used figurative language so that readers can picture the setting, people, and events. She may have used objects or actions as symbols to bring forth her meaning.

The writer used commas to offset introductory parts of sentences (such as "One day at the park, I went on the slide."). She also used commas to show when one person was speaking directly to another.

Big Sister

"Hurry up you guys, you'll be late for school!" called Mom. We ran downstairs and ate our breakfast. I was eating my favorite VERY sweet cereal, and Sara was having eggs. When I got up to wash my bowl, mom said, "You know you need to be careful today when you're walking Sara to school. It's your job to make sure she gets there O.K." Then she gave me a very serious look. I thought to myself, I wonder why Mom is making such a big deal out of this? It's Sara's first day of Kindergarten, but I can do it. I wish Mom wouldn't treat me like such a baby.

"Goodbye, Mom!" Sara yelled. She ran out the door, and I went behind her.

"Be careful!" my mom yelled.

"I will!" I said back and I ran outside. Sara was skipping down the front walkway to the sidewalk.

I grabbed Sara's hand. "Are you excited for your first day of school?" I asked, trying to sound like a grown-up. Sara smiled and nodded her head yes. Meanwhile, my mom was staring at us from the window. "When will she stop treating me like a little kid?" I thought.

"I'll show you the way," I said. I felt proud to be the older sister. We walked past beautiful gardens and big, leafy trees. Suddenly, I heard a growl and saw a dog walking towards us. He was big and fierce looking, with long sharp teeth. "GRRRRR!!!" the dog growled. I didn't see its owner or anyone who could help us.

My hand became sweaty and Sara stopped walking. "I'm scared, Julie," she said. I didn't want her to be scared. I wanted to seem brave. "Everything will be okay," I said. I was trying to make my voice sound calm.

"GRRRRR!!!" The dog stepped closer and we could see it was the size of a small horse—with red eyes and sharp teeth.

"Be brave, be brave," I thought to myself. I grabbed Sara's hand and shouted: "RUN!"

We took off down the sidewalk as fast as we could. I could hear Sara breathing hard. I looked back, and I saw the dog coming behind us.

"Come on," I said. I wanted to make Sara go over faster. I thought, "Please let us make it. Please let us make it." Then we saw the bright red door of the school. Mrs. Crowley held it open as we threw ourselves inside, then we bent over and tried get our breathing back to normal.

"We made it!" I said to Sara, giving her a high-five.

Then I said, "Let's not tell mom, about this, okay? I think we'll go to school a different way tomorrow."

The writer maintains a storytelling voice throughout, varying the sentence structure to affect the pace and tone of the narrative.

The writer used transitional phrases to show the passage of time, sometimes in complicated ways. For instance, she might have showed things happening at the same time (*meanwhile, at the same time*) or created a flashback or flash-forward (*early that morning, three hours later*).

The writer developed characters, setting, and plot throughout the story, but especially during the most important parts. She did this by using a blend of description, action, dialogue, and thinking.

The writer connected the ending back to the main part of the story. The character says, does, or realizes something at the end that comes from what has happened in the story. She gives the reader a sense of closure.