

The writer's beginning not only sets the plot in motion, but it also hints at the larger meaning the story will convey.

The writer developed realistic characters and developed the details, action, dialogue, and internal thinking that contribute to the deeper meaning of the story.

The writer developed character traits and emotions through what characters say and do. She also developed some sense of relationship between characters to show *why* they act and speak as they do. In this way, she told the internal as well as the external story.

The writer used punctuation to help set a mood, convey meaning, or build tension in the story.

The writer wrote an ending that connects to what the story is really about. She gave the reader a sense of closure by showing a realization or insight or a change in the character/narrator.

My One Chance

It was the first day of school, and my sister Sara was going to her very first day of Kindergarten. She looked grown-up in her new clothes. I thought about when she was just a baby, and now she was in school.

"Come on down here and eat your breakfast!" yelled mom. We went downstairs and we got to pick out what we wanted to eat because it was the first day of school. I picked my favorite cereal with lots of sugar and Sara had eggs. My mom said to me that I had to be very careful and look before I crossed the streets, and hold Sara's hand the whole time. "OK," I said to my mom, but inside I felt annoyed. Then she kept talking about how she could trust me. I thought, "Why does she keep saying how she can trust me? It makes me think maybe she doesn't really trust me."

Then it was time to go, and we put on our new school shoes and got our bags. We hugged mom and said good-bye.

"Don't worry, Mom," I said. "I promise I'll take care of Sara."

Sara was already outside. She was skipping across the front yard. Mom was watching us from the kitchen window. I felt like she was watching because she didn't trust me. I grabbed Sara's hand so mom could see I was being responsible.

"Are you excited for your first day of school, Sara?" I asked, trying to make my voice sound like Mom's. Sara smiled and nodded her head yes. Her bow shook up and down. "Come on. I'll show you the way." I thought about my first day of school. Mom and Dad walked me and I was really nervous. I wondered if Sara felt nervous too.

We walked and saw trees that were bright green and flowers blooming. I felt happy and proud. I thought that I would finally prove I could be treated like a grown-up. But then suddenly I heard a growl.

We both saw it.

It was a large dog, with black hair and a big chain around its neck. It came closer and growled even louder. "GRRRR!!!" Sara jumped behind me.

I grabbed her hand again, hoping she wouldn't feel that my palm was sweating with fear. "I'm scared, Julie," she said.

"Everything will be okay," I said in my calmest voice. "I've got you."

"A plan. I need a plan," I thought to myself. "Be brave."

As the dog got closer I could see it was the size of a small pony, its fur standing up on its neck. "Maybe I'm not ready to be in charge," I thought.

I whispered to Sara. "When I say 'run,' run! Okay?"

I said, "Ready, set, RUN!"

We ran down the sidewalk. My feet hurt because I had new shoes. I yelled for Sara to go faster. "Run! Run!" Just then the bright red door of the schoolhouse came into view. Mrs. Crowley held it open as we ran in. We threw ourselves through the door and practically fell over trying to catch our breath.

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

I thought back to Mom's words earlier that morning. *I'm trusting you to get your sister to school safely.* "Maybe this whole grown-up thing is over-rated," I thought to myself.

Turning to Sara, I smiled. "Hey, Sara, I bet Mom will give us a *ride* to school tomorrow!"

The writer wove together precise descriptions, figurative language, and perhaps even symbolism to help the reader picture the setting, actions, and events and to bring forth meaning.

The writer used language that fits the story's meaning (e.g., in parts that have dialogue, different people use different kinds of language).

The writer chose several key parts to stretch out and others to move through more quickly.

The writer used paragraphs purposefully (perhaps to show time or setting changes, new parts of the story, or to create suspense for the reader). The sequence of events is clear.

The writer used transitional phrases to connect what happened to why it happened.