

Prepare for exam success: B1 Preliminary for Schools self-access learning

Writing

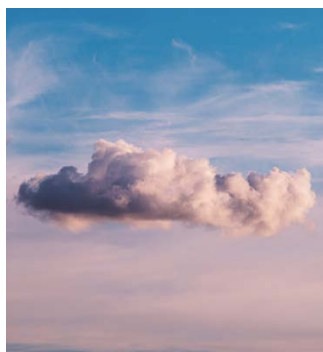
Exam Tip!

In B1 Preliminary for Schools Writing Part 2, you can choose to write an article or a short story. You should write 100 words. It's a good idea to plan and write short stories and articles regularly, both at home and in class. ¹

Summary

- Build your vocabulary related to stories and storytelling.
- Review the use of pronouns and possessive adjectives.
- Read an example story then write your own.
- Learn useful strategies for planning, writing and reviewing your written work.

Getting started



In this lesson you are going to use your imagination to write a short story.

What makes a story enjoyable for you? Check the words in **bold** in the **Cambridge Learner's Dictionary** if you need to.

Now put these things in order from most important to least important.

An unusual **setting**

A surprising **ending**

An exciting **plot**

Easy to read

Believable **characters**

Lots of **description**

²

Top tip! Make sentences with new vocabulary in your notebook

Recording new vocabulary with an example sentence can help you remember it. Writing sentences that mean something to you is even better.

Extension task: Make sentences with the words you checked in the dictionary.

For example: Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone has a really **exciting plot** about a boy who finds out he is a wizard.

¹ B1 Preliminary for Schools Handbook 2020

² Photo by **Wolf Zimmermann** on **Unsplash**

Prepare 1: Read an example story

Task 1: You are going to read a short story but first match these words from the story to their meaning. You can use the **Cambridge Learner's Dictionary** to help you.

1. burglar	a) an imaginary creature that is large, ugly and frightening
2. flour	b) the area of floor at the top of the stairs
3. monster	c) white powder used to make cakes and bread
4. landing	d) someone who steals things
5. tiptoe	e) to walk quietly on your toes ³

Check your answers in the answer key.

Tip! Use a dictionary to find out more information about these words.

Listen and repeat the pronunciation.

Note the syllables and stress:

 tiptoe

tiptoe

verb

US UK / 'tiptoe/

Write down the part of speech. The dictionary tells you when a verb is irregular. This verb is regular so the past tense is 'tiptoed.'

▶ tiptoe across/down/through, etc

The dictionary gives other useful information e.g. prepositions that are common with this word.

to walk quietly on your toes

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Task 2: Write any new words in your notebook. Include:

- the definition
- the part of speech
- the syllables and stress.

Listen to the pronunciation in the dictionary, and repeat.

Record your pronunciation and compare it with the dictionary pronunciation.

Write a sentence for each new word in your notebook. Practise saying the word in a sentence.

Task 3: Think about the words you matched in Task 1 and read the opening sentence below. What do you think happens in the story? Write your answer in your notebook.

Peter woke up suddenly that morning because there were strange noises coming from downstairs.

³ Source for definitions: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>

⁴ **ibid**

Task 4: Now, read the story. Were any of your ideas from Task 3 correct?

The Monster in the Kitchen



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Peter woke up suddenly that morning because there were strange noises coming from downstairs. Bang! Crash! "Mum?" he shouted. But no one answered him. The noises were coming from the kitchen. "It might be burglars...or a monster," he thought. He got out of bed and tiptoed quietly to the landing. As he stood there, his black cat, Jennie, ran out of the kitchen. But she wasn't black anymore – she was completely white! He walked down the stairs and slowly looked round the kitchen door. His 3-year-old sister was sitting on the floor. She had a big jar of flour and was hitting it with a spoon. There was flour everywhere! "You really are a little monster," said Peter.

(118 words)

Task 5: Read the story again and write the answers to the questions in your notebook.

1. Why did Peter tiptoe to the landing?
2. Why do you think his black cat had turned white?
3. Was there really a monster in the kitchen?

Check your answers in the Answer Key.

Prepare 2: Opening sentences

Exam Tip! Writing Part 2

When you write your story, pay close attention to any names or pronouns used in the opening sentence, and make sure your story follows the same pattern.⁶ For example, if the story begins in the 3rd person, e.g. 'Jamie got up...', it should continue that way using pronouns or possessive adjectives like he, him and his.

Task 1: Pronoun and possessive adjectives review.

Fill the gaps in the table then check your answers in the Answer Key.

Subject Pronoun	Object pronoun	Possessive adjective
I	me	my
you	you	_____
he	_____	his
she	her	_____

⁵ Made with Storyboardthat.com

⁶ B1 Preliminary for Schools Handbook 2020

it		its
	us	our
they	them	_____

Task 2

1. Circle the names, subject and object pronouns and possessive adjectives in the opening sentences in the table below. The first one has been done for you.
2. Now use this information to help you match the first half of the sentences (1- 5) with the second half (a – e).

1. Flying in a helicopter was a new experience for Sarah and Jenny.. ⁷ 	a) ...I heard a tiny voice coming from inside it.
2. Alice never studies but...	b) ...and they were very excited.
3. I was sunbathing in the garden...	c) ...her grades are always so good.
4. I knew it was a magic lamp when... ⁸ 	d) ...when suddenly a spaceship landed in front of me. ⁹ 
5. Jamie got up in the middle of the night, so...	e) ...no one saw him leave the house.

Check your answers in the Answer Key.



Take a short break if you need one.

Get ready to write

Top tip! Use the P.O.W.E.R. process to write your story:

P = Prepare – look at the opening sentence and brainstorm some ideas.

O = Organise – choose your best ideas, write a plan of your story, think about the beginning, middle and end.

W = Write it!

E = Edit your work - check carefully for mistakes using the common mistakes checklist below.

R = Review and Reflect - give your story to someone else to read. Ask for feedback.

⁷ Mona Masoumi on Unsplash.com

⁸ This photo by unknown author is licensed under CC-BYSA

⁹ Ibid

Step 1: Prepare

You are going to write a short story (around 100 words). Choose one of the opening sentences from Prepare 2 Task 2 to begin your story. Brainstorm some ideas.

Step 2: Organise

Look at the example plan below for the 'Monster in the Kitchen' story. Copy the table in your notebook and make some notes in each column. Write all of your ideas down first then choose the best ones. Decide what you will include in the beginning, middle and end of your story.

Setting	Plot	Characters	Ending
Example: <i>Peter's home – his room (beginning)</i> <i>on the stairs (middle)</i> <i>in the kitchen (the end)</i>	<i>What is the noise? (beginning)</i> <i>feels scared</i> <i>thinks monster? burglar?</i> <i>sees cat – covered in flour – looks white (middle)</i>	<i>Peter – a boy, age - about 11</i> <i>His sister – age – 3</i> <i>Mum?</i> <i>His cat</i>	<i>Burglar in the kitchen</i> <i>Sister is making the noise – banging flour / not a real monster (ending)</i>
Your story ideas			

Step 3: Write

Now write your story.

Exam tip!

In the B1 Preliminary for Schools Writing exam you should spend 20 to 25 minutes on the story-writing task including planning and checking time.

It's a good idea to time yourself when you write your story but don't worry if it takes you longer than 25 minutes at first. Each time you practise, write how long it takes you to write your story in your notebook to measure your progress.

Step 4: Edit

Use this list to help you identify mistakes.

1. **Circle** the pronouns you have used in your story. Think about who or what they refer to and look back at the table in Prepare 2 Task 1. Use the table to check you have used the correct pronoun or possessive adjective.

2. Is your story about the past, present or future? Be careful not to mix up the tense/time e.g.

⊖ ...A spaceship landed in front of me. I am very frightened. X

o ...A spaceship landed in front of me. I was very frightened. ✓

3. Spelling – it's a good idea to type your story and use Tools/Spelling to check your work when you are practising. This will help you notice your common spelling mistakes. Write these words in your notebook and review them regularly.

Top tip! Create your own spelling tests

'Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check' is a good way to memorise spelling.

1. Fold a page of your notebook in half.
2. On one side write a list of 8 to ten words you want to practise.
3. Look at each word and say it aloud.
4. Then cover it with your hand and try to spell it on the other side of the page.
5. Uncover the word and check your spelling.
6. Repeat steps 3 to 5 until you can spell all of the words correctly.

If you prefer to use online tools to practise spelling, try these free websites:

Make your own spelling tests on the **AAAspell.com** website.

Create **Cambridge Dictionary +Plus** word lists and quizzes to practise spelling and matching words to meanings.

Quiz: Monster in the Kitchen

→Plus > Word lists > Monster in the Kitchen > Quiz

Your score: 0 / 1 1 / 5 [Next >](#)

Which word or phrase matches the definition?

noun
a person who illegally enters buildings and steals things

Sorry, you didn't get this one right.

Your answer: ✗ burgler

The correct answer: ✓ burglar

Step 5: Review

After you have checked your work, submit your essay to the Cambridge **Write and Improve** website to get immediate online feedback. Note down any corrected errors in your notebook.

Top tip! Find a study partner

Working together with other students is also a really good way to share ideas. If you have a classmate or friend who is also preparing for B1 Preliminary for Schools, you can swap stories. Check each other's work and give feedback on:

- Simple grammar mistakes like the ones listed in Step 4.
- The things that make a story enjoyable that you listed in Getting Started Task 1.

Step 6: Reflect

Put a cross X in the box to show how easy or difficult you found each step.

	Very easy	Easy	OK	Difficult	Very difficult
Thinking of good ideas for the story.					
Planning, writing and reviewing the story in 25 minutes or less.					
Having enough vocabulary to write the story clearly.					
Using pronouns correctly.					

Action Plan

Look at your answers from the Reflect section and the ideas in the Ideas for Further Study box below to help you to make an Action Plan.

1. Copy this table in your notebook.

I need to work on...	I will...	By [date]
<i>Example:</i> Thinking of good ideas for my stories	<i>Make a comic book story using Storyboardthat.com and send it to my study partner to read. I will ask for feedback on how I can make the story better.</i>	<i>The end of this week.</i>

2. Now look at the list of study ideas below and **choose at least 2** that would help you improve your story writing, vocabulary or use of pronouns. Add them to your Action Plan.

Ideas for Further Study

- Use this **First Line Generator** to give you opening lines for stories. Try to write a short story once a week using Steps 1 to 5 above to help you organise your ideas and review your work.
- Get creative by adding pictures to your stories. You can draw your own pictures or use a free online comic book creator like **Storyboardthat.com**.
- Read lots of short stories, for example simplified readers in English or try this one on the British Council Learn English website: **Alberto's new neighbours**
- Download the B1 Preliminary for Schools Exam Lift App **here** to find useful games to build vocabulary and useful language for writing.
- Try these B1-B2 level **activities** for writing practice.
- Practise using pronouns **here**.

Answer Key

Prepare 1 Task 1

1 – d, 2 – c, 3 – a, 4 – b, 5 – e

Prepare 1 Task 5

1. Peter tiptoed to the landing because he was scared there was a monster or a burglar in the kitchen.
2. The cat was covered in flour.
3. The 'monster' was Peter's little sister. (Note: calling small children 'little monsters' when they are naughty is common in British English.)

Prepare 2 Task 1

Subject Pronoun	Object pronoun	Possessive adjective
I	me	my
you	you	your
he	him	his
she	her	her
it	it	its
we	us	our
they	them	their

Prepare 2 Task 2

1. Sarah and Jenny had never been in a helicopter before...	a) ...I heard a voice coming from inside it.
2. Alice never studies but...	b) ...and they were very excited.
3. I was sunbathing in the garden...	c) ...her grades are always so good.
4. I knew it was a magic lamp when...	d) ...when suddenly a spaceship landed in front of me.
5. Jamie got up in the middle of the night, so...	e) ...no one saw him leave the house.