

## U3 Writing Practice

Practice writing using literary devices that you learned in U3 Reading and U3 Listening.

### Flashback

Flashback is a short part of a story that tells what happened in the past. When prewriting for a flashback, first consider the purpose of including the flashback. What information are you trying to tell the reader? Once you know what information you are trying to share, you can choose or create a past experience that shows the reader that information. If you can think of multiple possible past experiences, choose the one that is both short and shows rather than tells the information. You can even combine multiple ideas into one if they work well together and the flashback is still short. You may also have more than one purpose for giving a flashback. In this case, you will need to create one past experience that can address both purposes.

## Example

|               | <b>Information the Author Wants to Share about the Character or Situation</b>  | <b>Possible Past Events</b>   | <b>Chosen Flashback</b>  |
|---------------|--|---|--|
| Short Story 1 | Why the main character is afraid of dogs   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He was chased by dogs as a child.</li> <li>• He was bitten by a dog as a child.</li> <li>• He is really allergic to dogs and had a bad reaction before.</li> <li>• He had a conversation with a friend about how he doesn't like dogs.</li> </ul>  | The main character was chased by a dog and bitten.   |
| Short Story 2 | <p>The main character's motivation for wanting to solve a mystery</p> <p>How the main character discovered something they would need later but didn't realize at the time.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She was helping her grandmother clean her house when she found an old newspaper with an unsolved mystery.</li> <li>• She interviewed a cruel criminal about one crime and learned information about another crime that she then started to investigate as well.</li> <li>• She was inspired by a childhood visit to a local museum to solve a local mystery and didn't realize one of the museum displays she saw was a clue.</li> </ul> | She was inspired by a childhood visit to a local museum to solve a local mystery and didn't realize one of the museum displays she saw was a clue. |

When writing a flashback, start the first sentence with past perfect to show that the experience happened before the other events of the story and then use regular past tense and its related aspects where needed. While it is possible to use other tenses, using past tense to show a past event is a good place to begin in practicing writing flashbacks. You should also keep your flashback relatively short and do not disrupt the flow of your story<sup>1</sup>.

When revising, consider both the purpose of the flashback and the flow of the story. Flashbacks should be used sparingly and should be kept relatively short because jumping from your main story events to one back in time can disrupt the flow of the story. Therefore, only use a flashback if it is really needed and do so in a way that minimizes the disruption of flow. If you notice that a flashback is really long, then it may be better to move it to the beginning of the story so that it is in chronological order to minimize the effect on the flow. You may also need to add or delete detail to balance the need to adequately describe the past experience so that the reader understands the information you are trying to share and the need to keep things brief so as not to completely stop the flow of the story.

When editing a flashback, pay special attention to the verbs and verb phrases that are used. Use tense and aspect (See U3 Grammar) to control the order of events in the flashback and in the story as a whole.

1. <https://writetosellyourbook.com/the-5-rules-of-writing-effective-flashbacks/>

## Exercise 3.17

### Part A

Consider the situations below. Discuss which of these situations would benefit most from including a flashback in their story.

1. A woman is about to get married when she suddenly leaves the groom at the altar, and the wedding ceremony is in chaos.
2. A hero is about to win a fight with an evil villain when he decides to show mercy to the villain.
3. An aspiring chef is creating a dish for his culinary school final and is considering creating his own version of a family recipe.
4. An adventurer is lost in the mountains when she sees a rescue helicopter.

### Part B

Brainstorm ideas with a partner that you could use for the situation you chose from part A. Use the questions below to guide you.

- What is the purpose of including a flashback in this situation?
- What past experiences could show match that purpose?
- What is our favorite idea for the flashback?

### Part C

Write a 3-4 sentence summary of what would happen in the flashback. Use past tense/aspect in your summary.

## Exercise 3.18

Fill in the blank with a flashback that is 5-6 sentences long. Use past tense to show the flashback happened in the past.



Image: Min An, 2017

### The Theme Park

If you drive north along Highway 95, you will leave Coeur d'Alene behind. It will take you up past Hayden Lake and just regular Hayden and the airfield and just regular fields. Keep the old highway and the rail on your left and keep heading north. You can keep driving for a while, past Garwood and Chilco Lake. Just after the old road and the rail pull away from the new highway, you'll see a wooden wall of crisscrossing timbers and two tall green metal towers. It may surprise you to be suddenly greeted by two rollercoasters in a valley between Idahoan mountains, but it would surprise me. This is the theme park where I worked away all the summers of my teenage years.

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I haven't been back to the theme park for years, but it is mostly the same. I drive north along the new highway, past the towns, the airfields, and the lake. I exit right when the railroad goes left. I pull into the parking lot and my kids jump out as soon as we are parked. I manage to keep them from running through security. A quick walk through the tunnel under the highway takes us to the ticket counters. The ticket seller is some different high school kid. With tickets in hand, my family enters the park. My kids are too young to ride the roller coasters, so we ride the little kid rides. They still smile like I smiled when I worked here. It is good to be back.

### Exercise 3.19

Read the sentences below. Each past perfect<sup>1</sup> sentence is the start of a flashback in a different story. Write 1-2 paragraphs to complete the flashback. Use simple past tense to show the actions happened in the past.

1. Story: A person has an adventure after being accidentally locked into the library at night.

Flashback Starting Sentence: I had wondered what the library was like after hours.

2. Story: Two friends see an amazing sporting event.

Flashback Starting Sentence: Fred and Roger had never agreed on sports before.

3. Story: A man falls in love.

Flashback Starting Sentence: When the tree in front of the old courthouse was still young, my grandfather lived on Main Street.

1. <https://nybookeditors.com/2020/04/how-to-write-a-flashback-without-disrupting-your-momentum/#:~:text=Use%20the%20past%20perfect%20tense,t%20feel%20awkward%20to%20read.>

### Exercise 3.20

Revise and edit the sentences below so that they could be better used in a flashback.

1. It is eleven years ago, that we were in the accident.
2. They not had wondered before whether they would find a house.
3. In elementary school, Ash is playing with his friends.
4. Marvin will like to sit in the park when he lived in Chicago.
5. My mother's favorite apron will be blue, I remember.

## Foreshadowing

Foreshadowing is writing that hints at what will happen later in the story. In order to think of ideas for foreshadowing, you will first need to understand the overall plot of your story. You can not hint at the future if you do not have an idea

the author of what that future will be. Therefore, consider important events that will happen later in the story. Then, consider what hints or clues for those events you could include early in your story. For example, if you know that the story will end with the main character using a sports car to chase and catch a criminal, you can include detail about a sports car driving by the main character at the start of the story while the main character is enjoying a regular day before the crime even happened. You can brainstorm small details to act as clues.

When writing the foreshadowing, consider how much focus you want the reader to give to the foreshadowing. This will determine how long you make the foreshadowing and how direct. Indirect foreshadowing would be like the character seeing a sports car in the previous example; direct foreshadowing would be like the character reading a newspaper article about a car chase. While writing, decide how long and how direct, you want to be in your foreshadowing.

When revising foreshadowing, you will consider the same questions. You may also consider how the foreshadowing hint works within the sentence, paragraph, or story where it is placed. Is it smoothly integrated or connected with the ideas around it, or does it stick out because it is not connected with the ideas around it? You may need to revise the sentence or paragraph to more fully integrate the foreshadowing.

Foreshadowing can be done in many different ways, so when editing foreshadowing, you should edit for general English errors.

### Exercise 3.21

Brainstorm hints or clues for the endings below. Write words or phrases that you could include earlier in the story the ending belongs to.

1. A group of friends escapes the cave they were trapped in by following a soft breeze.

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2. A detective catches a criminal by staking out the building where evidence was found and reported to the police.

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3. A girl saves the world from an incoming asteroid by deflecting it with a rocket.

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4. A man proposes to the woman he has loved for eight years at the park they first met in.

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5. A woman discovers the cure for a disease that has caused nearly end-of-the-world destruction by studying the person first reported to have the disease.

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### Exercise 3.22

Write a sentence that could act as a hint to the future.

1. The hero will never return home.

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2. The two main characters will fall in love.

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3. A rainstorm will ruin the characters' wedding.

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4. The police detective will find out that his partner is actually the criminal.

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5. The town will be saved by the schoolchildren.

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### Exercise 3.23

Write a 1 paragraph prologue to **The Gift of the Magi** by O. Henry from U3 Reading. A prologue is a short section that comes before the actual story. You can use the prologue to hint at what will come in the actual story.

## Exercise 3.24

Revise and edit the sentences below to better use the underlined foreshadowing. The latter event being foreshadowed has been given in parenthesis. Write the improved version as a complete sentence.

1. (A woman saves her family business by working with a childhood friend on a new product)

When Imani arrived at work and went to get out of her car, she almost knocked over her old friend, Noah, who was a friend she had known for all her life and who she admired for his creativity, even though she had the better business sense.

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2. (An astronaut saves everyone living on the moon by using his knowledge of physics)

Carl had always wanted to live on the moon, ever since his days sitting in Mrs. McKinney's 10th-grade physics class listening to lectures on how to save moon colonies.

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3. (A boy helps a classmate escape bullies by using his ability to talk to animals)

Javier had never biked to school so fast before so he almost ran over chattering squirrel on sidewalk before swerving around it at the last second.

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4. (A police officer solves a decades-old crime using new DNA and genealogy technology)

Lou closed out of the genealogy program on his laptop. The search for his ancestors using the DNA he had sent in through that new DNA testing service would have to wait because he had just been called into the station.

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5. (A group of strangers manages to escape a haunted island by building a boat together.)

Ingrid was excite to start her island vacation.

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## Motif

Motif is a repeated pattern in a story. When brainstorming possible motifs to include, you can try two different ways. One is to consider important ideas you want to emphasize to the reader or a theme in your story that you want to hint at and then create a list of words that connect with that central idea. Another way is to actually draft your story first, look for any important ideas or repeated words, and add more to emphasize the motif that is already present a little in your draft. It is okay to do the steps of the writing process out of order. Regardless of how you choose the words or ideas to repeat throughout your story, you should do so with purpose. You do not need to tell the reader, but as an author, it is a good idea to know why you included the motif you did. The reader can guess what this reason is as they read your story.

When including a motif in your writing, decide how much to repeat the pattern in your story. You can use synonyms or words related to the repeated idea to add more examples of the pattern in your story. Motif examples are usually spread throughout your story.

When revising, you may add, delete, or change the wording of the examples of your pattern. This will depend on how obvious and how much of a focus you want the pattern to be. If the pattern or the central theme the pattern is about is very obvious, it may be called "too on the nose" meaning the pattern and the pattern's meaning is directly in front of the readers' face, so that they can not miss it, but also do not get to enjoy figuring it out. You may also want to change the wording to use synonyms or related words to the repeated idea to add variety and interest to your story.

When editing writing that uses motifs, you can edit for general English errors.

### Exercise 3.25

**Part A:** Brainstorm possible motifs or patterns that can occur in a story.

1. apples, pears, peaches, \_\_\_\_\_
2. breezes, ocean air, wind gusts, \_\_\_\_\_
3. red, crimson, scarlet, \_\_\_\_\_
4. trains, planes, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_
5. streams, faucets, waterfalls, \_\_\_\_\_
6. mirrors, calm lake surfaces, shop windows, \_\_\_\_\_
7. eggs, flowers blooming, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_
8. dust, grey, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

**Part B:** Create your own motif by writing four words that could be part of a pattern.

9. \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

## Exercise 3.26

Write three sentences that show the motif given. Your sentences should include words that show a pattern.

1. warmth

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2. blue

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3. time

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4. walls

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## Exercise 3.27

Revise the following sentences to make the underlined motif more obvious or less obvious. Hints about the central theme being hinted at are given in parenthesis. you may need a dictionary to look up the meaning of the theme words.

Make the motif more obvious

1. (freedom) The crows sat on the wires just outside the fence. They flew away while we went back inside.

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2. (questionable morals) The thief stole the yellow scarf as he passed the storefront.

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3. (good) The young man lifted his head as the light flickered on.

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4. (change) We crossed the river two at a time. It was just the halfway point of our long journey west.

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5. (challenges) The mountains rose before the group of heroes.

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Make the motif less obvious

6. (impermanence) Theresa sat wearing her flower print gown among the wilting flowers of the hospital's small landscaped area holding the roses her friends had brought her and wondering if the blooms would outlast her.

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7. (time) Clare and Oscar were cleaning their house because it was the start of spring. They started by folding and packing away their winter coats and bringing out their summer clothes although they did keep some sweaters, as spring was still a bit chilly.

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8. (strength) Arjun stood sturdy as an oak tree in the yard as he raked up the pine needles shed by the strong Ponderosa pine in front of him.

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9. (privacy) The paparazzi followed Ola everywhere with cameras. Smartphones, digital cameras, and even polaroid cameras were everywhere, always invading her privacy.

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10. (power) Montgomery spun the globe in the classroom before opening the map app on his phone. He could go anywhere in the world because he was so powerful.

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## Exercise 3.28

Edit the motif sentences below for general English errors.

1. The man watch the lion lounging in the sun. The big cat ruled the grasslands.
2. She walked past red balloon before entering the restaurant for her date.
3. On her way to meet an old friend Paula pass the old lady feeding dove in the park.
4. The open road lay before him, he turned up the radio and kept driving.
5. The sun peak out from behind cloud Ziva left the building.

## Paradox

Paradox is a situation that seems like it should be contradictory but is actually true. To prewrite for paradoxes, you can think of opposite ideas and try to combine them into one true idea. A paradox is more than just two opposing words; that is an oxymoron. A paradox is usually opposing ideas that work together and may be expressed using phrases, clauses, or whole sentences.

When writing a paradox, consider the idea that you want to highlight or bring attention to. Also, use words or phrases that clearly seem to oppose one another; the more direct the opposition, the more noticeable the paradox will be. Authors may sometimes use multiple paradoxes near one another to further increase the attention given to the issue being highlighted by the paradoxes.

When revising writing with paradoxes, consider the balance between the interest and attention a paradox can bring to your writing and the confusion it may cause in the reader. Paradoxes by their very nature can be confusing, so you may need to revise your use of a paradox or wording within a paradox to make the story more easily understood by the reader. It can help if you connect the paradox to the story's main theme<sup>1</sup>.

When editing writing that uses paradoxes, you can edit for general English errors. Some paradoxes may include seemingly contrasting clauses that work together to tell a truth, so it can be useful to check the punctuation and/or conjunctions that connect these two clauses.

1. <https://prowritingaid.com/paradox-definition#:~:text=Let's%20look%20at%20some%20classic,be%20more%20equal%20than%20another.>

## Exercise 3.29

**Part A:** Match each word below with its opposite.

- |                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1. ____ old      | A. deep        |
| 2. ____ after    | B. before      |
| 3. ____ light    | C. lazy        |
| 4. ____ active   | D. worsen      |
| 5. ____ shallow  | E. new         |
| 6. ____ wisdom   | F. friendly    |
| 7. ____ grumpy   | G. ancient     |
| 8. ____ improve  | H. heavy       |
| 9. ____ weakness | I. foolishness |
| 10. ____ modern  | J. strength    |

**Part B:** Use one of the pairs of opposites above to write a sentence describing a paradox.

## Exercise 3.30

### Part A

Work with a group to draft a paragraph about a paradox. Use this website (<https://eslforums.com/antonyms/>) to brainstorm possible opposites that might work together to make a surprising truth. Discuss the ideas with your group and then write the paradox on paper.

### Part B

Share your paradox with another group. Is there a situation or phrase in their paragraph that seems contradictory but is true?

### Exercise 3.31

Revise the sentences below to use paradoxes better. These sentences have been adapted from **The Tale of Two Cities** by Charles Dickens. Dickens uses these sentences to show that one time period was both great for some people and terrible for other people.

1. It was the epoch of belief; it was the epoch of faith.
2. It was the season of Light; it was the time period of Darkness.
3. It was the spring of hope, yet it was the cold season of ambition.
4. We had everything before us, yet we had few things before us.

#### Vocabulary To Know

epoch - period of time

### Exercise 3.32

Edit the paradox sentences below. Because the sentence structure of some of these paradoxes is complex, the errors have been underlined to help you.

The following sentences have been adapted from **The Importance of Being Earnest** by Oscar Wilde, **The Tale of Two Cities** by Charles Dickens, and **Romeo and Juliet** by William Shakespeare.

1. It are awfully hard work do nothing.
2. Well, one must be serious about something if one want to have any amusement in life.
3. It was \_\_ best of times; it were the worst of times.
4. it was the age of wisdom; it was \_\_ age of foolishness.
5. the earth thats nature's mother, is her tomb;  
What is her burying grave, that is her womb.

## Allusion

An allusion is an indirect reference to something, usually something famous or well-known by the readers. When prewriting, consider where you might want to add familiarity or humor to your story. What part of your story would benefit by including an allusion? Consider the purpose of including an allusion there. What message are you trying to express? Then choose a popular or well know topic to make a connection with. You may also find that making some allusions comes naturally and so does not need to be thought out so much. When speaking, you may often use allusions to express ideas using ideas you may have seen in pop culture such as movies, tv, or even memes. You may have a favorite movie that you reference all the time or a favorite book. To brainstorm using these references that you already use in your daily speech, write them down on paper and try using them in your story.

When writing with allusions, place them where they will best help convey your meaning. Whether they were thoughtfully brainstormed or more naturalistically chosen, write the allusion where it will contribute to moving the story forward or emphasize an important idea in your story.

When revising allusions, you will want to keep your audience in mind. Would your intended audience know what you are alluding to? If they would not know it, will they still understand the meaning of your sentence or paragraph? You may need to choose a different, more well-known thing to allude to or make the allusion more obvious through hints or explanations. The first suggestion is the better revising option as explaining the allusion can weaken it and take away from any humor it might give the writing. Try to revise the allusion to be concise—short and to the point.

When editing writing with allusions, you will need to give attention to where and how the reference connects with your other writing. Is the reference a noun? Do you use it as a noun? Does the reference start with a preposition or conjunction? Review the areas around the start and end of the allusion to check how it connects with the rest of the sentence or paragraph.

### Exercise 3.33

Brainstorm possible well-known examples you could make allusions to. Write down one famous example you could allude to for each category below.

1. movie: \_\_\_\_\_
2. song: \_\_\_\_\_
3. quote: \_\_\_\_\_
4. historical event: \_\_\_\_\_
5. TV show: \_\_\_\_\_
6. religious story or quote: \_\_\_\_\_
7. book: \_\_\_\_\_
8. person: \_\_\_\_\_
9. company: \_\_\_\_\_
10. fairytale: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part B:** Compare your list with a partner. Do you know of the examples they chose? Do they know yours?

**Part C:** Discuss this question as a class.

Why is it important to consider your audience when making an allusion in your short stories?

### Exercise 3.34

Write a 1-2 sentence allusion for each of the following famous things. If you do not know the famous thing, then you can ask your teacher or search for information about it online as research before you draft your allusion. Underline where you allude to the famous thing in your sentence(s).

1. the last World Cup

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2. the Mona Lisa

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3. The Great Wall of China

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4. Antarctica

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5. the last movie you saw in theaters

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7. self-driving cars

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8. the sinking of the Titanic

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9. a political group or person

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10. the most popular candy in your home country

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### Exercise 3.35

Revise the sentences below to better use allusions. You may add to, delete from, or change the wording of the allusions. You can even change the famous thing being alluded to.

1. My uncle is so cheap. He is like that old guy from *A Christmas Carol*.
2. She had a smile like the people in the painting *The Concert* by Lyster.
3. He was a great leader, a regular Josiah Quincy.
4. Finishing the project on time was a difficult task similar to that done by Hercules in ancient Greece according to Greek mythology.
5. Little did they know that there were icebergs ahead that could stop their plans just as the iceberg in 1912 stopped the ship Titanic on her maiden voyage.

### Exercise 3.36

#### Part A

Edit the following sentences that contain allusions. You may need to ask your teacher or research the allusions include in these sentences if they are unfamiliar to you.

1. We made oddessy to discover ourselves.
2. They had discovered that chocolate my one achillies' heel.
3. We shall become Ceasar and a sneaker empire like has never been seen before!
4. Our football team was David, their Goliath football team was.
5. "I can't decide on what to get. To order or not to be, that is the question," I told the cashier.

#### Part B

Reflect on your thinking. Consider these questions:

- What did you think about when you revised the sentences in part A?
- How did you approach revising them?
- Was your revising process effective (successful)?
- Was your revising process efficient (timely)?
- Would you change your revising process in any way next time?



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