

Roald Dahl *Writing Guide*

The key to writing like Roald Dahl is to think outside of the box, and to not be afraid to write a story that is completely unique and imaginative! This guide will help you write a short story that would make Roald proud!

Main character



Firstly, come up with your **main character** so they're ready to take centre stage in your story – just like Roald Dahl created Matilda, James, Charlie and all the others.

Create a factfile about your new character to help you get to know them a little better.

Don't forget, as the writer, it is your job to help the reader

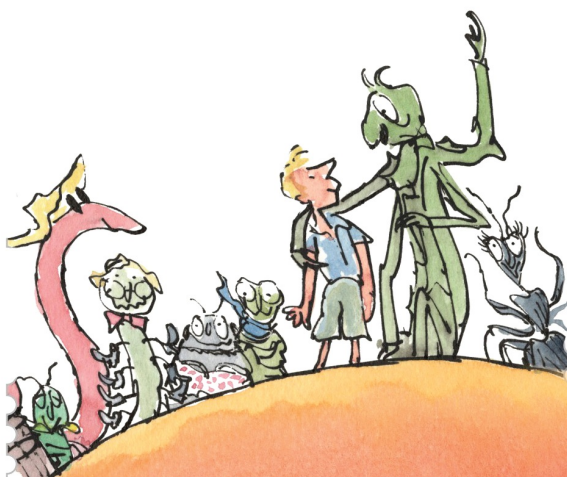
visualise the character in their heads as they read.

Here's how Roald Dahl's factfile may have looked for the main character in Matilda:

Name	Matilda Wormwood
Age	4 – 6
Appearance	A very young, small girl. More to her than meets the eye!
Personality	Exceptionally intelligent, loves reading, amazing at sums. Brave and mischievous.
Family	Two silly parents who either pay no attention to Matilda, or are mean to her. They adore her brother Michael. Mr Wormwood is a crook mechanic and Mrs Wormwood plays bingo. They all love watching TV and hate reading.
Special Characteristics	Supernatural powers!

Setting

Think about an imaginative **setting** for your story. Remember that your story will be quite short, so try to keep to just one setting. Next, write a short description of this place to help you when you come to writing your story. Think about what your setting might look, taste, sound, feel and smell like.



Example of how Roald Dahl may have described the main setting for James and the Giant Peach:

Setting: Inside a humungous peach. It looks orange and massive and bulging. The peach is so large, it catches the eyes of all the of all the neighbours. It is shiny and round. It tastes like a peach! It is squashy and sweet in my mouth. I'd like to eat more! There's peach juice dripping in my mouth. Yum!

When you jump up and down on the peach, it makes a squelching noise like walking in sticky mud. The peach feels soft and warm on the outside, and a little furry too. Inside, the peach feels soft and squishy, like

stroking an octopus or sticking a hand in a bowl of jelly. It is damp and murky. I can smell a fresh, sweet aroma that tingles my nostrils.

Supporting characters



Roald Dahl is also famous for the unique **supporting characters** in his stories. (Remember the large talking insects in *James and the Giant Peach* and the big, friendly giant from *The BFG*!)

So next, create a couple of fantastic supporting characters, remember, they can be anything or anyone! Write a very short description of your imaginative new creations whilst they are doing their favourite activity.

Example of how Roald Dahl may have written a description of the Oompa-Loompas from *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*

doing their favourite activity:

They are tiny, odd-looking people with long golden hair, all in a big group. They are hand-painting pictures onto each individual blue sweet that's part of a new range of sweets. They are singing, as they love to do whilst they work. They are working as a team, helping each other, as the sweets move along a conveyor belt deep in the belly of the chocolate factory. A snack of cacao beans, yum! Their favourite food. Oh - they've just spotted a naughty child who has been misbehaving in the factory; time to teach them a lesson ...

Plot

Now it's time to think about your **plot**. How does the main character you have created interact in your imaginative setting with your new secondary characters ... and what happens?

Remember to think about your beginning, middle and end - and every good story has a conflict (a problem to be solved!) and then a resolution.

In Roald Dahl's *The Witches*, a broad outline of the story could look like this:

Beginning: A boy lives with his grandma after his parents are killed.

Middle: After being warned about witches, the boy stumbles upon their annual meeting. He learns they plot to kill all of England's children. He is captured and turned into a mouse.

End: The boy manages to turn the witches' plans against them, and turn them all into mice instead.

The conflict: The witches' evil plans!

The resolution: Stopping the plans and ridding the world of evil witches.



The Fox: Heptonstall Festival July 4th 2015

This guide is taken from www.youngwriters.co.uk. There you will find lots more advice on writing and details of their Roald Dahl competition (closing date. 25th September) Why not take a look at the website and enter a story in that one too?