

To write your own short story, begin brainstorming. Use this page and/or another paper to capture your thoughts.

Write down 5 science fiction stories (film, novels, short stories, animations, games, etc.) that you *really* like:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What do they all have in common?

Which categories and themes of Sci Fi interest you most?

List a few possible settings for your story. Setting includes time, place & circumstances. Don't limit yourself. It could be anywhere, anytime!

Where might it take place?

When might it take place?

What might happen?

Describe the possibilities for your main character(s). Human? Non-human? Male? Female? Old? Young? Big? Small? History? Family? Etc.

What might be the problem or situation that your story will focus upon?

Do you want the story to be light-hearted and fun? Serious? Tragic? Humorous? Philosophical? Symbolic? A Metaphor?

Do you want there to be a specific moral or lesson?

What is your story-telling style?

Who is your target audience?

Science Fiction Short Story Writing Workshop

Complete as much of the following as possible to help you spark an idea for your short story. There may be a few sections that do not apply to your particular story.

Time(s): When is your story happening?

Place(s): Where is your story happening?

Energy: What energy sources are used?

Transportation: How do the characters get around?

Families: How are children raised? How are families structured?

Daily Life: Describe education, housing, food, recreation, society, religion.

Technology: Advances, medical, conveniences...?

Economics: What is used for money? How do characters obtain it?

Government: Who leads? Describe courts, law enforcement, government services...

Leisure: Is there any leisure time, sports, arts, hobbies...?

Vocabulary: Will you need special vocabulary or terms for your story?

Your Characters: Name of your main character(s)? Sex? Age? Describe.

What is the main character's back story? Origins?

Describe the character's personality.

Likes? Dislikes? Phobias?

Strengths? Weaknesses?

What is the character's occupation or purpose? What do they do?

What are your character's values? What is most important to them?

Describe the character's family &/or friends, if any.

What motivates the character?

Describe some of the character's past experiences or adventures.

What is the conflict that creates your story?

Other details you'd like to add or mention?

Story Template: The essential elements of your world

Concept

Themes of the world

Environment

Technology/ and or Magic System

Character

People/organisms of the world

Culture

Primary Characters

Primary Conflicts

The major conflict of the world?

What individuals and major forces have been influential in these conflicts?

What tensions in the world now exist? Consider forces, social, political, material, etc.

Story-building questionnaire

1. Writers often "write what they know". What do you know well?
2. What themes or questions are you interested in exploring?
3. What message or emotion are you interested in sharing?
4. In what time period do you imagine your world taking place: historical, futuristic, or fantastical?
5. Think about the environment of your world. What are the important geographical features, climate elements, and other natural particularities that shape your world?
6. Considering the environment and conditions of your world, what resources are available? Which are valuable and how are they distributed?
7. Imagine the technology / magical / surreal elements of your world. Use this space to expand on their possibilities and limitations.
8. Imagine the people and/or organisms of your world. Use this space to expand on their unique features and/or history.
9. Think about the cultural elements of your characters, including dress, technology, and customs. What are the important cultural features of the characters in your world?

10. Think about possible government structures and their implications. How do your characters organize and govern themselves?
11. Who (or what) are possible main characters or groups in your world?
12. Who (or what) are possible antagonists in your world?
13. What are some of your characters' needs and wants?
14. What are some challenges your characters face?

The anthology will be titled, "Letters from the Future and Other Speculative Fiction"

Alexis Pauline Gumbs is the author of "Evidence" in a collection called *Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements*. Here is an excerpt which includes a "letter from the future." You may use this as a sample for your own "letter from the future" if you choose this format for your story.

Exhibit B: Be Is for Brilliant

by Alexis Pauline Gumbs

Letter from Alandrix, age twelve, sent via skytablet during dream upload, third cycle of the facing moon, receipt unknown:

Ancestor Alexis,

I've heard about you. I've even read some of your writing. Everyone says I have an old soul, and I'm really interested in what it was like back when you lived. It seems like people were afraid a lot. Maybe every day? It's hard to imagine, but it . seems that way from the writing. I have to remember that no one knew that things would get better, and that even people who were working to make it happen had to live with oppression every day. I read your writing and the writing of your other comrades from that time and I feel grateful. It seems like maybe you knew about us. It feels like you loved us already. Thank you for being brave.

I'm twelve and last year I did a project for our community about your time, the time of silence-breaking. I made a poster and everything and an interactive dance. A friend of mine did one on the second abbreviated ice age instigated by oil on fire, but I thought writing about the time of silence-breaking would be harder. The ice continents were in your imaginations, the limits of your memory melted, you spoke about the hard things and you could see your own voices. It must feel almost like a force of nature when you live. I'm 12 and you would have thought of me as part of your family, even though now we do family differently; we have chosen family now, so maybe we would just be comrades if you lived here in this generation. Who knows? But I think that if you met me, you would feel like we have some things in common. I'm a poet and I use interactive dance so maybe you would choose me as family. I know I would choose you. You could have been at my wow kapow ritual that happened recently. In our community, 12 is an important accountability age. We named this ritual for how it feels in our bodies around now. Wow kapow. I think you used to call it the pituitary gland.

We are here five generations after you and a lot has happened. A lot of the things that used to exist when you were 12 and even when you were 28 don't exist anymore. People broke a lot of things other than silence during your lifetime. And people learned how to grow new things and in new ways. Now we

are very good at growing. I'm growing a lot right now and everyone is supportive of growing time, which includes daydreams, deep breaths, and quiet walks. No one is impatient while anyone else is growing. It seems like people are growing all the time in different ways. It was great to learn about you and a time when whole communities decided to grow past silence. It is hard to read about the fact that sexual abuse, what we would now call the deepest violation of someone else's growing, used to happen all the time. It is hard to imagine what it felt like for people to walk around with all that hurt from harming and being harmed. But I can tell from the writing that people were afraid so much. History was so close. But the amazing thing is how people spoke and wrote and danced anyway. Imagine being afraid to speak.

Anyway. I wanted to say thank you. Now in the 5th generation since the time of the silence breaking we are called hope holders and healers. There are still people doing a lot of healing, but it seems like generation after generation people got less and less afraid. People took those writings and started to recite them and then another generation hummed their melodies and then another generation clicked their rhythms and then another generation just walked them with their feet and now we just breathe it, what you were saying before about how love is the most powerful thing. About . how everything and everyone is sacred.

I read a really old story where the character believed that time travel was dangerous because if you change one thing in the past the whole future changes and then you might never get born. I am still here writing this though so I think it's okay to tell you that everything works out. That it's okay. And it's not easy all the time, not even here, because so much has been broken, besides silence, but it is possible, it does feel possible. My friends and I feel possible all the time. So when you get afraid to speak, remember that you all were part of us all learning how to just do it. And most . . . take it for granted. Except poets like me. I remember you. I feel it. Wow. Kapow.

love,
alandrix