

Story Elements Checklist

Below are the basics of various elements you can use in developing a story for instruction. Use all the elements, some of the elements—and even add your own elements. It is important to map out your story, especially if you are new to developing stories, to ensure you have at least the basic elements in your story. You can make a written outline or a visual story map—either of these methods can help you in developing your story effectively.

	Story Elements	Description
<input type="checkbox"/>	Plot	A plot is a causal sequence of events, the "why" for the things that happen in the story. The plot draws the learner into the character's lives and helps the learner understand the choices that the characters make.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Point of View	Someone is always between the learner and the action of the story. That someone is telling the story from his or her own point of view. This angle of vision, the point of view from which the people, events, and details of a story are viewed, is important to consider.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Characters	Characters are either major or minor and either static (unchanging) or dynamic (changing). The character who dominates the story is the major character.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Setting	The location of a story's actions, along with the time in which it occurs, is the setting.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Theme	The theme is extracted from the characters, action, and setting that make up the story. When writing a story for instruction, the theme must tie strongly to learning objectives for the story to be successful.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Media/Graphics	Media/Graphics visually help the learner to understand the story—if appropriate graphics are used.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Resolution	The resolution tells the learner what happened or what the moral of the story is. In instructional design we do not always tell the learner what the resolution is—especially in scenarios where we want them to problem solve and figure out the solution themselves.

Questions to Ask When Writing Stories for Instruction

1. What is the problem being solved?
2. Why is this story important to the learner?
3. Ask—Who, What, When, Where, Why and How—when addressing the learner's problem to ensure the story addresses all the issues.

Types of Stories

1. **Knowledge stories** tell the learner another person's way of accomplishing a task. This gives the learner the benefit of the other person's experience without that person actually being present.
2. **Narrative stories** tell the story or account itself (narration is a sequence of events, often in chronological order, or alternatively, any story, whether in prose or verse, involving events, characters, and what the characters say and do). Some narrations are reportorial and historical, such as biographies, autobiographies, news stories, and historical accounts.
3. **Dialog stories** are essentially narrative stories that tell the story by showing lines spoken by a character or characters in a story, especially a conversation between two characters.
4. **War stories** tell about the experiences of your subject matter experts (SMEs) real world applications or work.
5. **Scenarios** are short problem-based stories that help learners solve difficult issues from realistic settings.
6. **Case studies** tell a story that allows the learner to learn from a scenario problem.