How to Plan a Good Story Activity Sheet

Plot	Structure	Setting	Characters
Which of the seven basic Plots would you choose? Jot down your ideas here.		When and where would your story be set?	Try to think of at least two characters and not more than four.
	Opening		
	Problem		
	Crisis		
	Resolution		
	Narrator		

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How to Plan a Good Story Peer Assessment

Name	One of the seven plots? Yes/No Comments.	Opening? Problem? Crisis? Resolution?	Setting? Yes/No Comments.	Characters? Yes/No Comments.	Narrator? Yes/No Comments.

How to Plan a Good Story Peer Assessment

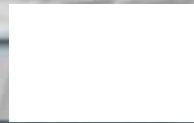| Name	One of the seven plots? Yes/No Comments.	Opening? Problem? Crisis? Resolution?	Setting? Yes/No Comments.	Characters? Yes/No Comments.	Narrator? Yes/No Comments.

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How to Plan a Good Story

Lesson Objective

To investigate how to plan a good story.

Success Criteria

- To investigate the key elements a story needs.
- To share ideas about the seven basic plots.
- To plan a basic story.

Starter Activity

As well as having a structure, what other features do stories contain?

Write down your ideas.

Plot – this covers the main events in the story. This is not the same thing as narrative.

Narrative - this is how the writer chooses to present these events. These can be chronological, include flashbacks and have different types of narrators.

Narrator – narrators can be first or third person.

Setting – the setting is very important and involves where and when the story is set. These can vary according to genre.

Characters - well-written characters are vital to make a story interesting and believable.

These will be covered in more detail in the lessons to follow.

The Seven Basic Plots

Most people agree that there is only a set number of stories that we can tell. It is how we choose to tell them that makes them interesting.

In our last lesson, we talked about every story plot needing some kind of problem or conflict.

Arthur Quiller-Couch suggested that there were only seven types of plot and all of them revolved around conflict:

_____ versus _____

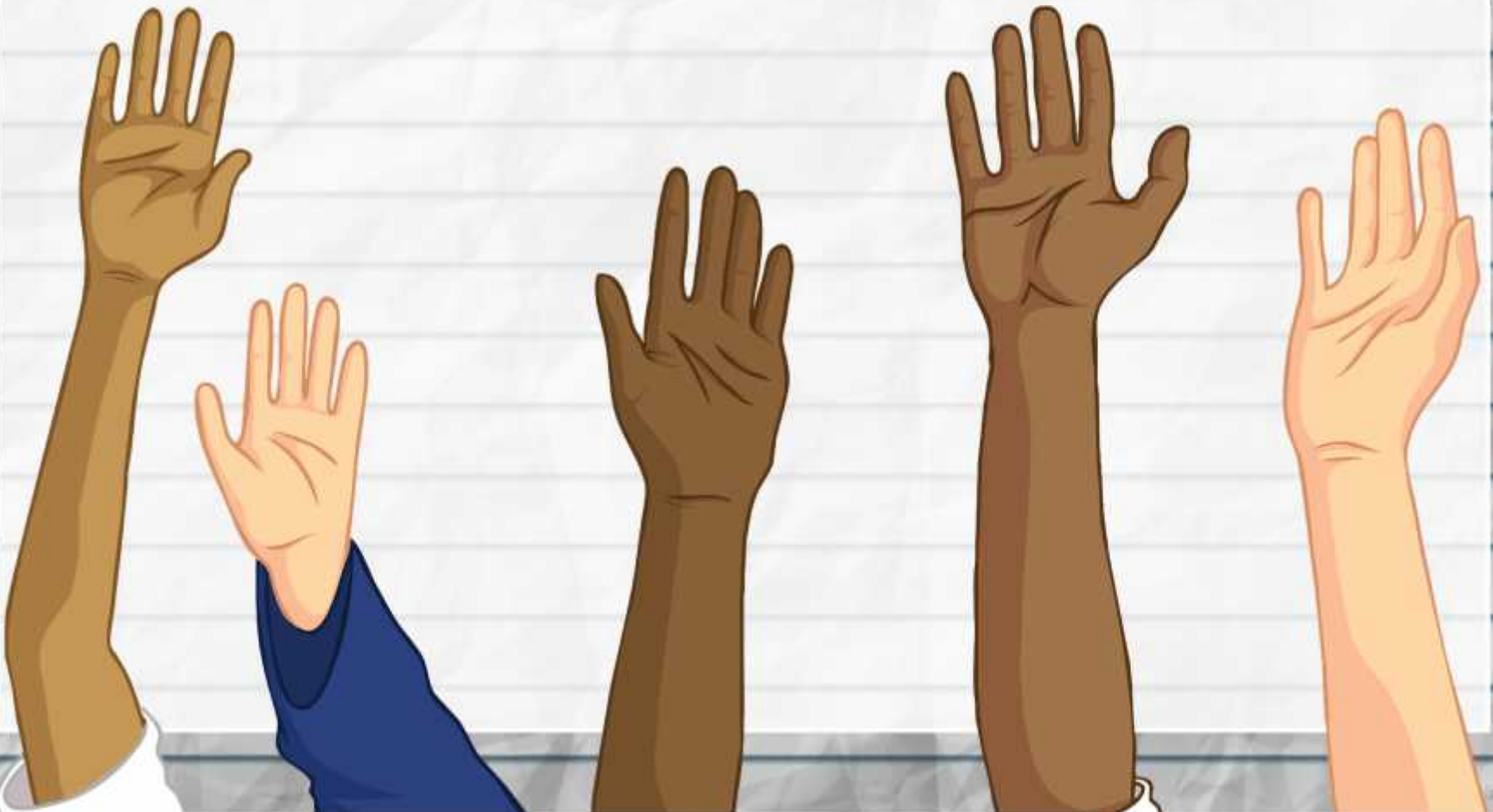**Can you guess what any of them are?**

The Seven Basic Plots

1. **Man (or woman)** versus **nature**

2. **Man (or woman)** versus **man (or woman)**

3. **Man (or woman)** versus **society**

4. **Man (or woman)** versus **machines/technology**

5. **Man (or woman)** versus **the supernatural**

6. **Man (or woman)** versus **self**

7. **Man (or woman)** versus **god/religion**

The Seven Basic Plots

Try to come up with an example of one of each from stories or films you have read/seen. Some of them may fall into more than one category and genre.

Feedback

Planning a Story

Using your ideas from today's discussions, try to come up with a plan for a story using one of the seven basic plots.

Use your planning sheet to help you to come up with an idea, consider the setting and characters and start to plan its structure. Consider whether you would use a first or third person narrator.
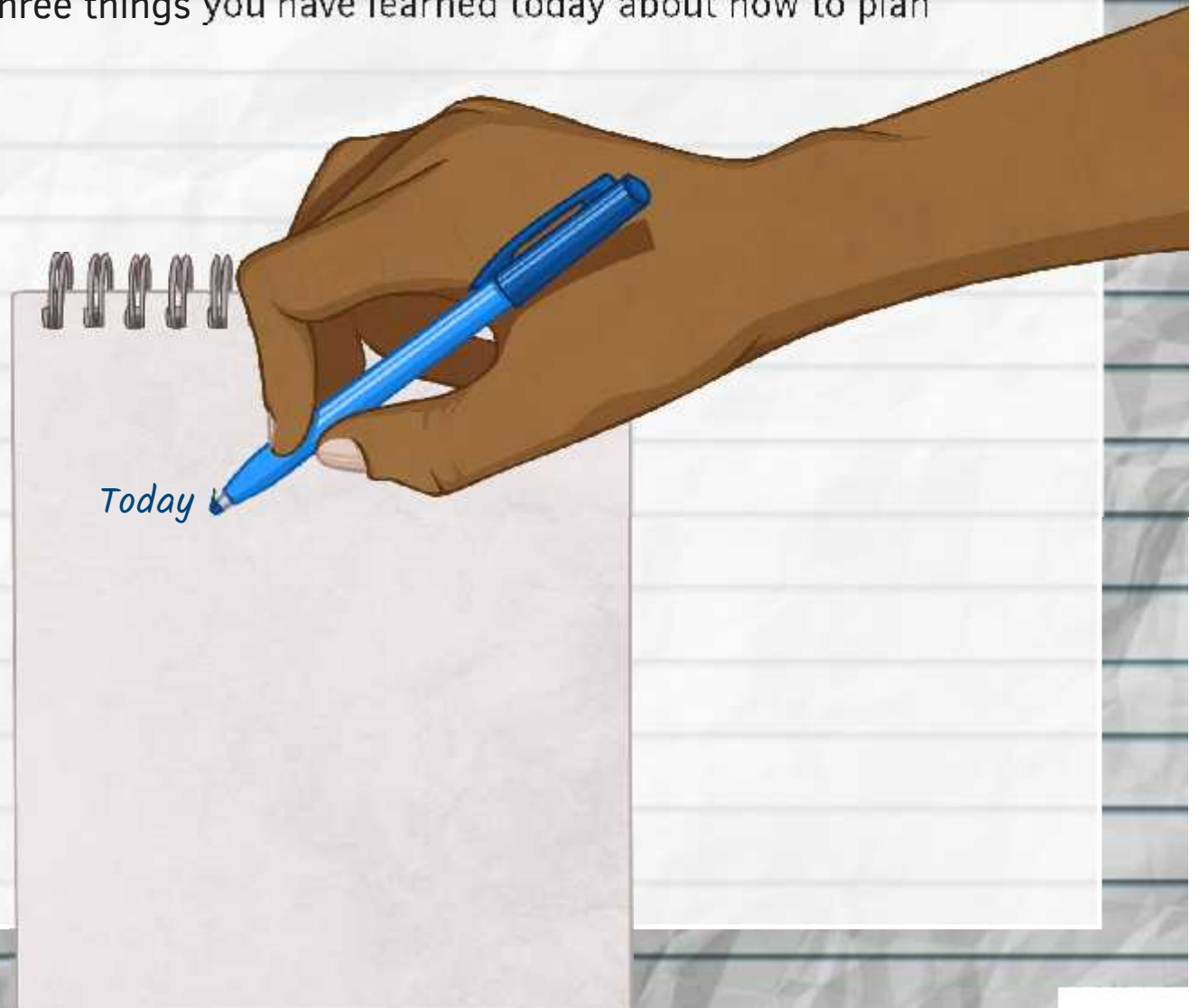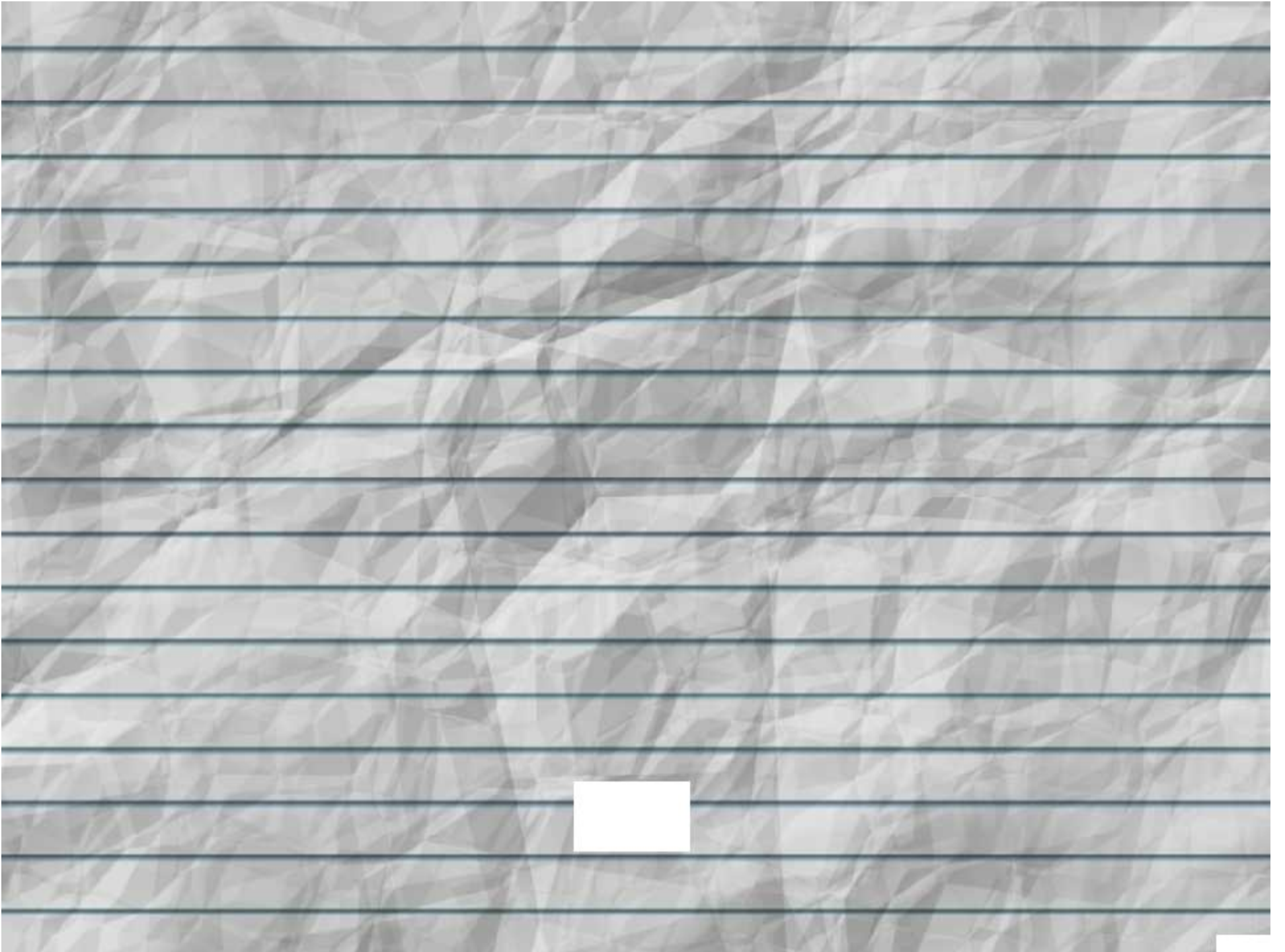
Peer Assessment

Using the sheet, assess how well your partner has planned their story.

Plenary

Write down at least three things you have learned today about how to plan a story.

Today

How to Plan a Good Story
Teaching Ideas

Lesson Objective:	To investigate how to plan a good story.
Success Criteria:	• To investigate the key elements a story needs.
	• To share ideas about the seven basic plots.
	• To produce a basic story plan.

This lesson follows on from the **Introduction to Narrative Writing Lesson Pack**. The idea is to get students to produce their own story plan within a lesson using a combination of brainstorming individually and in pairs and introducing the idea of the seven basic plots. You may also find it useful to have first taught the **Introduction to Genre Lesson Pack**.

Starter

Starter Activity

What are the main features of stories? Here you are asking students to brainstorm the main things all stories should contain. They may do this individually, in pairs or in groups. There then follows a list, with explanations, of the main features of stories. Students may come up with other interesting ideas. You may want to ask students to copy these into their books. They will also be provided with a sheet covering these terms on which they can plan their story.

Main Activities

The Seven Basic Plots

Although there are several different theories and publications about the range of plots that exist and what to call them, this list of seven plots, all entailing conflict, produces a lot of good feedback from students. Originally developed for A Level and beyond, it is an excellent way to stretch and challenge the students. They can relate it to books and films they have experienced and it fits in well with the **Introduction to Genre Lesson Pack**. The seven plots they have to consider gives them plenty of food for thought for their own narratives too. You will probably need to explain the term 'versus' first. You could illustrate it by coming up with an example of your own or just relating it to popular culture, such as 'Man v. Food'. You may actually have to give the students one of the examples to guide them. However, this is an activity that always generates interesting discussion.

The Seven Basic Plots

This works well as a pair/group activity. Students are generally able to come up with some excellent ideas using movies and books. Students then need to feed back to the class. This often generates discussions and disagreements over which categories of plots the books and films fit into. You may want students to write more of this in their books or even turn it into a research homework.

Planning a Story

As per the PowerPoint, students should use their ideas from the previous and current lesson, along with the **How to Plan a Good Story Activity Sheet**, to come up with some ideas for a story. You could choose to let students work in pairs or groups, according to levels of ability, provided that they each write their own version of the story.

Peer Assessment

Students/groups can feed back some of their ideas for their stories. The **How to Plan a Good Story Peer Assessment** sheet is provided to gauge how many of the features students have included.

Plenary

Plenary

Students should write down at least three things they have learned on how to plan a good story.