Congratulations! Now that you have made the decision to write your story, where do you begin? Here are five basic features to consider when writing a short story or even a novel:

**Setting**

The setting is the world you create for your characters to fill. Setting is important because the environment your characters inhabit gives them their context. The places where characters eat, sleep, and move makes them come alive. Where is your story taking place? When is your story taking place? Is it in the past, is it modern day, or is it set somewhere in the future? Is your setting a real location or is it a fantastical one? When and wherever you decide, make sure that the setting is realistic enough for your readers to believe, even if it is one you created for your characters.

**Plot**

What are the events that will take place in your story? At the beginning stages, you may not have all of the details figured out, but you need to have at least one major event in mind that will be a catalyst, a major change or shift, for your characters.

**Characters**

Who are the people (or animals, creatures, monsters, cyborgs, or half-human beings) that bring your story to life? Think about them and their tangible (or slightly otherworldly) forms. Even if you provide details, you do not want to give too much away because you want your audience to engage their imaginations as they read along.

**Point of View**

How do you want to tell your story? Will your story come from inside the mind of one of your characters? Or will your story have a narrator that tells the story of
your characters for your readers? Will the story be more effective in first person, third person, or even multiple persons?

**Theme**

What is the impression that you want to leave your audience after they have finished reading what you have written? What is the message you want your readers to take away? Challenge yourself to steer clear of clichés. When your audience finishes your story, leave them with an impression that they will not soon forget! 

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