

三支铅笔三个情节：把借还故事写完整的三步法

借铅笔、忘记归还、多年后归还，这三个情节就是故事的骨架。写之前先分字数：四百字的故事，起因大约八十到一百字，经过大约一百八十字，结果大约一百二十字。分配好了再动笔，不容易写偏。

起因要短。不少同学习惯先写天气和心情，写了一百多字铅笔还没出场。改法是从一个具体动作开始：下课写字，笔尖断了，同桌的铅笔正好摆在桌角。时间、地点、人物一句话交代完，马上进入借的动作。铅笔的样子挑一个特征写，笔杆上有个小缺口，或者漆掉了一小块，后文归还时还能用上它。

经过的重点是把忘写具体。只写后来我就忘了，读者不知道忘在哪里。要写忘的过程：第二天想把铅笔还回去，同桌正好去交作业，人不在座位；刚要放下去，上课铃响了，铅笔又回到自己手里。一次没还成，两次没还成，铅笔就留在了文具盒里。再补一句换座位、换文具盒，铅笔滑到笔袋最底层，忘得就有了道理。

结果要写重逢。多年后再见到铅笔和人，需要一个合理的场合：整理笔袋时铅笔从夹层里滑出来，或者在校门口遇见多年没见的同学。开口还铅笔的那一刻要写紧张，手心里出汗，话在嘴里排练了两遍。对方的反应决定故事的温度，一句我记得你借过我一支笔，比任何大道理都有力。

三个情节之间要用物来串联。铅笔是线索，它的状态要跟着时间变化：借的时候笔尖是新的，留下的时候笔杆磨出了手汗的痕迹，多年后再见到时漆掉了但笔杆上的名字还看得清。物变了，时间就过去了，读者不用看年份也能感觉到三年。

写完后检查三件事。删掉第一段，故事还能不能开始，能就说明起因不啰嗦。经过里有没有至少两个具体的动作或对话，没有就补。结果里对方有没有反应，没有就补一句对话。三处都过了，这个借东西守信的小故事就立住了。

Three Plots, One Pencil: A Three-Step Method for Writing a Complete Borrow-and-Return Story

Borrowing the pencil, forgetting to return it, and giving it back years later are the three plots that form the skeleton of the story. Before writing, divide the word count: for a four-hundred-word story, the cause takes about eighty to one hundred words, the process about one hundred and eighty, and the result about one hundred and twenty. Once the division is set, start writing, and the story is less likely to drift.

The cause should be short. Many students begin with the weather and their mood, writing over a hundred words before the pencil even appears. The fix is to start with a concrete action: writing after class, the pencil tip snaps, and your deskmate's pencil happens to sit on the corner of the desk. Time, place, and characters are covered in one sentence, and the borrowing action begins right away. Give the pencil

one distinguishing feature, a small chip on the shaft or a flake of paint missing, so it can be recognized again when it is returned later.

The key to the middle is making forgetting concrete. If you only write later I just forgot it, readers never know where the forgetting happened. Write the process instead: the next day you mean to return it, but your deskmate is out handing in homework; just as you are about to place it on the desk, the class bell rings, and the pencil ends up back in your hand. One failed attempt, then another, and the pencil stays in your pencil case. Add a line about changing seats and switching pencil cases, and the pencil slides to the bottom of the pouch, so the forgetting makes sense.

The ending should be a reunion. Meeting the pencil and the person again years later needs a believable setting: the pencil slips out of a hidden pocket while you tidy your pouch, or you run into a classmate you have not seen for years at the school gate. Write the nervousness of the moment you offer it back, palms sweating, the sentence rehearsed twice in your mouth. The other person's reaction sets the warmth of the story; one line like I remember you once lent me a pencil carries more weight than any moral lecture.

Link the three plots with an object. The pencil is the thread, and its condition should change with time: the tip is new when it is borrowed, the shaft shows marks of sweaty hands by the time it stays behind, and years later the paint is worn off but the name on it is still legible. When the object changes, time has passed, and readers can feel the three years without seeing a single date.

Check three things after writing. If you delete the first paragraph, can the story still begin? If yes, the cause is not bloated. Does the middle contain at least two concrete actions or lines of dialogue? If not, add some. Does the other person react in the ending? If not, add one line of speech. Pass all three checks, and this little story about keeping a promise stands firm.