Sevensteps





Step 1: Plan for Success

Books about Natural Disasters on the Story Graph

One of the best ways to learn is to see examples, like these story graphs.

How to use them:

- Explore favourite stories and how they work
- Look for moments of tension (the pebble, rock and boulder)
- Compare the many ways stories start and end
- Inspire students to create their own story graphs!



There are many more sets of story graphs available, covering books with themes from friendship and belonging to sustainability and First Nations histories and cultures, as well as secondary texts. Members can find them on *Teacher Hub*.

The story starts with rhyme and makes the reader curious: 'My parents are farmers. We needed the rain. So I went to town on a long shiny train.'

All I Want for Christmas Is Rain

by Cori Brooke & Megan Forward

(CBCA Book of the Year: Early Childhood, 2017 - Shortlisted)

Exciting Ending

(Action climax)

On Christmas morning Jane wakes up to hear it raining! The family celebrates and they all dance in the rain. It's better than any Christmas present.

Character Wrap-up

(Emotional resolution)

The story ends with a picture of the farm looking green again. Jane and her dog watch the cattle grazing on fresh grass.

Gradual build-up of tension

Backfill

WHO: Jane, her family, and Santa.

WHAT: Jane asks Santa to send rain for the farmers. WHERE: Rural Australia – on a farm and in town.

Pebble (Small problem)

The countryside is in drought and Jane's family needs rain for the farm. Jane is on a mission to get help from someone special.

Rock (Medium problem)

Jane visits Santa in town with the other kids. She tells him that the farmers need help and that her Christmas wish is for rain.

Boulder

(Main tension scene)

It's getting close to Christmas and it still hasn't rained. We can see in the picture that the farm is still in drought. Will Santa be able to grant Jane's wish?

Ash Road

by Ivan Southall

(CBCA Book of the Year, 1966 - Winner)

Exciting Ending (Action climax)

The fire blasts down Ash Road. Everyone has to find somewhere safe. Grandpa Tanner puts the baby and Julie down his well and lies down on top, expecting to die.

Character Wrap-up

(Emotional resolution)

The children are alive but feel their childhood is over. Grandpa Tanner survives (to his surprise) and hears Julie say, 'Here I am, everybody. Down the well. Safe and sound.'

Sizzling Start

Interest level

The story begins at a moment of change – three teenage boys find a place to camp in the bush.

Gradual build-up of tension

Rock (Medium problem)

Lorna's father has a stroke. Her brother has gone to fight the fire and she is unable to get an ambulance or anyone on the phone.

Boulder (Main tension scene)

Everything becomes more chaotic. Gramps finally gets his car started and takes Lorna's father and two of the boys towards the hospital. The car is over-run by the fire and they crash. They barely survive.

Backfill

WHO: Harry, Graham and Wallace, other children, and Grandpa Tanner.

WHAT: The boys go camping in the summer holidays and accidentally start a bushfire. WHERE: Ash Road in country Victoria.

Pebble (Small problem)

The boys drop the fuel bottle for their camp stove. It bursts into flames and the fire soon gets out of control. They run.

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The novel starts with action: Juliet wakes up in the middle of the night to discover there's a bushfire nearby. Her mum, the vet, is getting ready to help the hurt animals.

Bush Baby Rescue

by Rebecca Johnson

(Juliet Nearly a Vet series, Book 4)

Exciting Ending

(Action climax)
Juliet's brother is feeding
crickets to a lizard he
is looking after, and the
crickets escape and hide
all over the house!

Character Wrap-up

(Emotional resolution)
Months later, the rescued
possums are ready to be
released into the wild
again. Button is okay and
will go to a wildlife shelter.

Gradual build-up of tension

Backfill

WHO: Juliet (nearly a vet) and her friends and family. WHAT: They rescue baby animals that have been injured in a bushfire. WHERE: Suburban Australia.

Pebble (Small problem)

Juliet's mum doesn't have enough time to get ready for the large number of animals expected at her clinic. Juliet convinces her that she and her friends can help.

Rock (Medium problem)

There are too many animals to look after at the vet clinic, so Juliet and her friends take a few to care for in their rooms. They learn how to feed and clean them.

Boulder

(Main tension scene)

An orphaned baby koala is badly burned and Juliet's mum is afraid he won't survive. Juliet finds a teddy bear for him to cling to. They call him Button.

Interest level

Interest level

The novel starts with

is on TV!' We learn that

dialogue: 'Mum, Gran's house

Gran's old house burnt down

in a bushfire five years ago.

Bushfire: Surviving Black Saturday

by Sally Murphy

Exciting Ending

(Action climax)

Gran is in shock. Amy has to drag her to the car and force her to drive. They have a terrifying drive to the oval where they shelter with a few other survivors. Jackson is scared that his parents are dead.

Character Wrap-up

(Emotional resolution) Jackson talks to his parents. Amy talks to her dad. Amy's mum comes home. Amy gets a medal for her bravery. Gran might find new happiness.

Gradual build-up of tension

Rock (Medium problem)

The weather gets hotter and more dangerous. Amy goes to stay with Gran in Marysville while her dad is fighting fires.

Boulder

(Main tension scene) The massive bushfire hits

Marysville. Gran has fallen asleep and Amy and Jackson realise at the last minute they must leave. Amy sees the house begin to burn.

Backfill

WHO: Amy, her family, and her friends Jackson and Trudi.

WHAT: Surviving the Black Saturday bushfires.

WHERE: Marysville, Victoria.

Pebble (Small problem)

Amy's brother leaves on his gap year and her mum goes to Europe for work. Amy's dad is a volunteer firefighter and she worries about him.

The book starts by making the reader curious: 'Fabish was a handsome grev racehorse ... he wasn't the fastest, but he was brave and always tried his best.'

Fabish: The Horse That Braved a Bushfire

by Neridah McMullin & Andrew McLean

(Eve Pownall Award for Information Books, 2017 – Shortlisted)

Exciting Ending

(Action climax)

The trainer goes to look for Fabish. He has given up hope when suddenly he hears footsteps. Fabish is alive! He has made it home and brought all the yearlings with him.

Character Wrap-up

(Emotional resolution)

The trainer is amazed that not a single horse was harmed. He heads back to the farm and Fabish and the yearlings follow him home.

Gradual build-up of tension

Backfill

WHO: Fabish, a retired racehorse in charge of seven skittish yearlings.

WHAT: Racehorses try to escape a bushfire.

WHERE: A farm in Victoria.

Pebble (Small problem)

The summer is extremely hot. One afternoon a hot, blustery wind blows and makes the yearlings nervous. Fabish smells smoke.

Rock (Medium problem)

The fire roars up to the farm, and the trainer opens the gates and tells Fabish to GO and take the yearlings. They run.

Boulder

(Main tension scene)

The trainer takes the rest of the horses into the stone barn to protect them. He fights all night to keep them safe while the farm burns. When the skylights blow out, the trainer thinks they will all die, but then fire front passes.

Interest level



Fire

by Jackie French & Bruce Whatley

Exciting Ending

(Action climax)

The fire has devastated the land. But there are many people who help in the aftermath – 'friendship fills what has been lost'.

Character Wrap-up

(Emotional resolution)

The story ends with hope as the land heals over time. Rain comes, and life grows once again.

Sizzling Start

Interest level

The story starts with a word picture: 'Hills bleached gold, a baked blue sky. Leaves lay limp in air sucked dry.'

Gradual build-up of tension

Rock (Medium problem)

The fire grows into 'a bloodred wall'. The family must try to escape – it's time to run, but it is hard to see in the smoke.

Boulder (Main tension scene)

The house burns as the family drives away. Helicopters and the fire brigade battle the 'red monster'. The family is grieving and in shock, but they are grateful to have each other.

Backfill

The text is written in rhyme and does not add backfill. The illustration shows a house on a hill and a cockatoo in a tree; we can infer that this is rural Australia.

Pebble (Small problem)

One small spark starts the fire. The flames grow and form a bushfire.



Flood

by Jackie French & Bruce Whatley

Exciting Ending

(Action climax)

The people come together to help each other. The water starts to go down. Everyone works together to rebuild the community.

Character Wrap-up

(Emotional resolution)

The dog and its family stand looking at the city. It's back to normal and the river is 'a friend again'. The final illustration is of a boy giving the dog a big hug.

Sizzling Start

Interest level

The story starts at a moment of change: 'The rain fell gently ... It was strange not to play outside.'

Gradual build-up of tension

Rock (Medium problem)

The river has become the enemy. It flows through the town swallowing everything in its path.

Boulder (Main tension scene)

The boardwalk breaks and now there is a dangerous weapon in the water! A tiny tugboat comes to the rescue - it pushes the boardwalk away, bit by bit, until the river sweeps it out to sea.

Backfill

The text doesn't add backfill. The illustration shows a cattle dog on a verandah looking out at a farm as it rains. The watercolour pictures make everything feel wet.

Pebble (Small problem)

The rain gets stronger and the river rises. The river starts to burst its banks and water flows into the streets.