

It started like any other day. Tia woke to the buzzing alarm of her cell phone, stumbled sleepily to the shower, and got dressed in the murky light of early November. With a mumbled, “Morning,” to her father, she pocketed an apple from the basket by the front door, and made her way to the curb just in time to meet the school bus.

Still in a half-fog, Tia dragged her feet as she found her usual seat by the emergency exit. Slumping against the cold bus window, she thought she might steal a few minutes’ sleep on the way to school. At that moment, though, the bus jerked sharply to the left and came to a lumbering stop in the middle of the road. Tia’s ordinary day had ended.

“Just pass me the hammer, will ya!” John growled as he fumbled with the tent peg. “If we don’t get this thing tied down soon, we’ll *really* be sleeping under the stars.”

“I’m going as fast as I can!” Milly, who was John’s fifteen year-old sister--his “annoying little sister,” he told his friends—shouted in exasperation as she searched for the hammer while wrestling furtively to keep the wind-whipped nylon tent from becoming airborne.

At the best of times, Milly and John had little patience for one another, being only one year apart and highly competitive. In this moment, however, they could have been excused for their short tempers. They found themselves deep in an unfamiliar forest between the proverbial rock and a hard place.

“This isn’t going to be good,” Terri thought miserably. “Why didn’t I stay home to finish my English project like my mother told me?” She was standing at the back of Bates’ Convenience, almost hidden behind the greeting card display. Her best friends, Molly and Ted, were busy trying to look casual while they slipped two cans of Red Bull into Ted’s book bag. From her vantage point, it seemed impossible that they were going to get away with it. Mrs. Bates, from her stool behind the counter near the front door, had an almost perfect perch from which to survey her little kingdom. The only blind spot *might* have been the shadows of the Rainbow Slushie machine, which is where Terri’s friends crouched at that moment.

“Kids? Do you need any help back there?” Mrs. Bates called out. Terri’s heart jumped.

Take one of the above “starters” and develop it into your own 2-3 page short story. When you’re finished, you should be able to circle “Yes” in all of the columns below:

My story is double-spaced on one side of the paper.	yes	no
I have passed in my draft (in pencil or pen) and my revised story (in blue or black pen).	yes	no
My story has been edited for spelling.	yes	no
Each sentence begins with a capital, and ends with a period.	yes	no
Every time the speaker changes, I remembered to begin a new paragraph.	yes	no
I use descriptive language to help my reader to picture and feel events in my story.	yes	no
My story has a conflict, or problem, that the characters work through by the end.	yes	no