

## MINI-LESSON

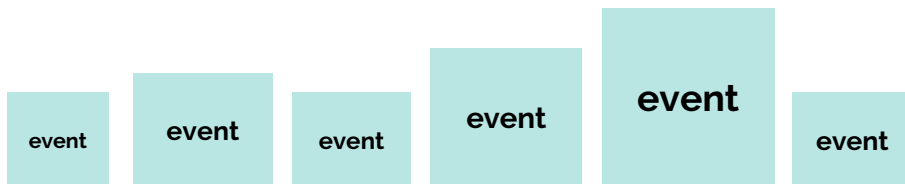


## PACING

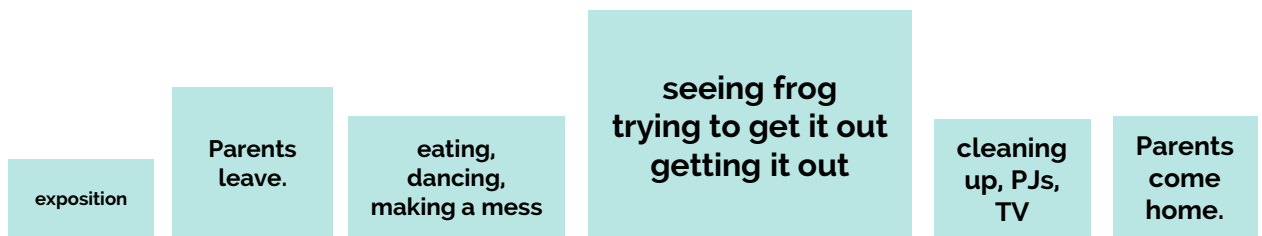
A good story doesn't just describe one event after another, with each event taking up exactly the same amount of time.



Instead, it takes some events and expands them to make them extra big and dramatic, and squeezes the less important parts so they're really small.



Here's how it looks for the story "Frog": It starts with some exposition about why the character never gets to stay at home, then shows the parents leaving. Next, we see the character eating, dancing, and making a mess in the house—this part is a little longer, because she's really enjoying her time alone.



Next is the biggest part, where she sees the frog, tries a few things to get it out, and finally gets it out. Because this part is the most dramatic, it takes up a big part of the story.

Once that's over, she cleans up, gets into her pajamas, and watches TV. This part is not so dramatic, so it's quicker. Finally, her parents come home. At this point, the story is just about done, so this part doesn't take up a lot of time, either.

There's another thing you should notice about the story: Each of these chunks is done in a different way. The exposition is written as a **summary**, but the part where the parents decide to leave is done as a full **scene**, with dialogue and more specific actions—it's like actors have actually come on stage and are acting this part out. Then the part where the character is eating, dancing, and making a mess is done again as a **summary**: We don't see every moment of her crazy behavior, just a summary of it. Then comes the big **scene**: the frog part. This part is done really slowly, so we feel every minute going by. Once that's over, the character cleans up: This part is done as a **summary**, too. Finally, when her parents come home, we get to see this again as a **scene**.



At three different times in the story, we also see a break in time: After the parents leave, there's a jump ahead in time, then another one after she gets rid of the frog, and another one between her settling back down and when her parents come home. All of those breaks are there because readers don't need to see every minute. Some chunks of time just aren't interesting, so you can jump over them to get to the more interesting parts.

### What to Do Now

Think about the story you are writing. Create a diagram like the one above, where you plan out which parts are going to be big and which parts are going to be small. Think about which parts will be scenes and which parts you can just summarize, and where you might put time breaks.