

Write an Unnecessary Sequel

Does every story need a sequel? Who cares—you're giving it one anyway!

Sometimes, it seems like every movie coming out these days is a sequel. If you look at the top 10 movies of 2019, 6 of them are sequels. The others are remakes or include well-known characters. In fact, only 2 of the top 20 films are original stories.

And when was the last time you read a book that isn't part of a series? Some of the best-selling fiction titles of all time are part of a series, including *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and *Harry Potter*—which is the best-selling book series in history!

However, not every story needs a sequel, especially if all of the conflicts are resolved. Some stories can be told in a single, self-contained book or movie. Take the blockbuster *Titanic*, for example, which tells a story based on a real, historic event. The boat sailed. The boat sank. That's it. There's no further story to be told . . .

. . . Or is there?

Sometimes, even when there's no compelling need for a sequel, an author will write one or a Hollywood studio will produce one. And now, *you* get to be part of that process! You're going to write an unnecessary sequel!

First, think of a story that doesn't really require a sequel. Then write three short paragraphs explaining how you think a follow-up to that story might unfold. Dedicate the first paragraph to the setup, the second to the characters' journeys, and the third to the resolution of the conflict.

You can use the graphic organizer on the next page to help you brainstorm "what if?" scenarios. Make sure you give your story a title and describe which characters (old and new) will be in the sequel, what problems they will face, and how they will resolve those problems. Also consider which themes or ideas your sequel will share with the original.

You can pick any story you want, but here are a few possible ideas to get you started:

- *Titanic* directed by James Cameron (movie)
- *The Crossover* by Kwame Alexander (book)
- "Dark They Were, and Golden-Eyed" by Ray Bradbury (short story)
- *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson (book)
- If you are having trouble thinking of a story without a sequel, pick a series and add an extra book or movie to it. What does *The Lord of the Rings*, Part 4 look like? Or Harry Potter's first year after Hogwarts?

WHAT IF? CHART

What if? (Cause)

Possible Effects

1. What if?

2. What if?

3. What if?