

# Types of Endings

“Don’t write endings, find them,” novelist Thomas Williams used to say. Endings grow from beginnings, and reveal themselves through clues within the story, characters or ideas. One way to learn about endings is to observe the different ways authors end a story. See appendix 4 for books with each ending.

## **The Loop ending**

A loop ending ends at the same place it begins. A good children’s book to illustrate this is *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* by Laura Numeroff. Does your story want to end the same place it began?

## **The Surprise Ending**

A surprise ending usually has a twist to it that takes the reader by surprise. In the “Wizard of Oz” movie, we think Dorothy is going home in the balloon with the wizard, then the balloon flies away. How will she get home now? The good witch Glinda comes and shows her the true power of the slippers.

A good mystery story must have a surprise ending. The least likely suspect must be the one who did it. Is your story one that wants to throw the reader a curve ball in the last inning? If so, try writing a surprise ending?

## **The Summary**

And to round off tonight’s newscast, here are the highlights once again. A summary ending repeats the main points of a story trying to tie together any loose ends. This type of ending works well in speeches that are trying to hammer home a point. Is your piece trying to persuade the reader? If so, you may want to end by summing up your best points.

## **The Happy Ending**

Most fairy tales have happy endings (depending on whether you are a wolf-lover, of course). A happy ending such as the one in Cinderella leaves the reader with no feeling of sadness. Like a good warm blanket, it covers us from the cold of life. Is your story a fairy tale? Does it want to end happy, or would it be stronger and more real if it ended sadly?

## **The Sad but True Ending**

When Charlotte dies at the end of *Charlotte’s Web* we are sad when we read it. But it has to end that way. Try saving Charlotte and the story loses its power. It becomes a lie. I call this the “sad but true” ending. Does your story need to end sadly? Does your happy ending have a false ring? If so, you may want to write a sad but true ending.