Andrew Stanton

*Toy Story*, *Wall-E*, *Finding Nemo*, *A Bug’s Life*

[www.ted.com/talks/andrew\_stanton\_the\_clues\_to\_a\_great\_story?language=en#t-581409](http://www.ted.com/talks/andrew_stanton_the_clues_to_a_great_story?language=en#t-581409)

Begin video at 1:20.

Elements of Good Writing excerpted/paraphrased from Stanton’s TEDTalk with some CCSS additions

* Know your punchline, your ending, before you begin.
* Establish your theme: Confirm some truth that deepens the understanding of who we are as human beings. A strong theme always runs through a well-told story. Capture a truth from your life. Help us experience the similarities between ourselves and others, real and imagined.
* Evoke natural, real wonder. Promise that the story will be worth our time. Provide mystery, suspense, growth and/or resolution (CCSS).
* Make us work for understanding, without making it feel like work: the Unifying Theory of 2 + 2, as well as show-not-tell, the rule of three’s and literary techniques listed in the CCSS: allusion, satire, sarcasm, irony or understatement. Implication and curiosity draw us in. Stories are inevitable but not predictable.
* Create anticipation for what will come next and how the story it will all end. Without change, the story dies. William Archer, author and theater critic, once said, “Drama is anticipation mingled with uncertainty.” Archer (1856-1924) promoted Henrik Ibsen and George Bernard Shaw.
* Build tension by creating honest conflicts with truth that creates doubt in possible outcomes. All well-drawn characters have a spine (a need or goal) and an itch they can’t scratch. Make us care.