

a recipe for creative nonfiction

Made from scratch by
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*Categorized by components and
specifics

Basic elements

Action, especially to begin a scene

Dialogue

Setting

Conflict

Facts and information

Advanced elements

Details to make reader feel part of story

Natural, comfortable voice

A focus on one moment

Strong imagery

Structure

Shape

Questioning and/or a sense of wonder

An emotional beat

A turn

Compelling title and satisfying ending

Inner voice that reveals the personal and
reflects a perspective

Literary Devices

Metaphor
Simile
Personification
Synecdoche
Metonymy
Alliteration
Symbolism
Onomatopoeia
A turn
Oxymoron
Invented words

Senses

Sight
Hearing
Taste
Smell
Touch
Kinesthesia
Intuition

Micro details

Strong words at end of sentences,
paragraphs, piece
A repeated image
An image that serves as metaphor
Interesting language
A surprise in each sentence or paragraph
Varied and interesting rhythms
Strong image for conclusion

Below the surface

A question to be explored

A connection to the world

A theme or essence

Author presence

Author vulnerability

Both microscope lens and mountain top view

Details that demonstrate vs. words that explain

Universality

A reason for the reader to care

Hook

Appear early

Use a question, mystery or problem, puzzle

Connect it to larger stakes

Stakes

Consider relevance to culture; what reader takes away;

Make the unexpected a truth

Illuminate a larger truth through a smaller experience

Questions to ask

What is this story really about?

What does the reader really need to know?