

# Do's and Don'ts for Writing Flashbacks

*This is an extra resource to go along with the original article:  
[How to Write a Flashback \(Without Disrupting Your Momentum\)](#)*

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**Do have a reason for inserting a flashback into your story.** Your flashback needs to move the story forward or aid in characterization.

**Do use the past perfect tense in your flashback.** This eases the transition.

**Do use flashbacks sparingly.** Too many flashbacks will slow the pace of your story.

**Do find the emotion in your flashback and make it obvious to your reader.** They can carry that emotion into the rest of the story.

**Do edit your flashback.** Cut out anything that makes the flashback longer than it absolutely needs to be.

**Don't introduce the flashback too early.** You need the reader to be invested in the story before asking them to pause the forward momentum.

**Don't make the flashback last too long.** Ideally, your flashback shouldn't last longer than one day.

**Don't forget to add a trigger.** Give the reader a cause that jumpstarts your flashback.

**Don't use italics for your flashback.** This may confuse readers into thinking that you're describing a dream, not a flashback.

**Don't try to tackle too many events in one flashback.** Choose the most important event or spread them out over multiple flashbacks.