

TITLE CLINCHERS (TIC)

Technique Number 10 is called a **Title Clincher** or **TIC** for short. A Title Clincher is a nifty way to make a title that is not bland and boring. In Writing Foundations we practice making titles that are Mysterious, Intriguing and Compelling (called **MIC TIC**). This is a creative writing technique – in Journalism and science classes, though, most teachers want boring titles. Just do it the way your teacher says – but remember, when you have the choice, you have options!

You want to do 3 things:

1. You want to keep the plot/topic/characters and ending somewhat secret (mysterious).
2. You want to catch the reader's attention (intriguing).
3. You want to make the reader **want** to read the story/essay (compelling).

How do you do this?

The title is **hiding** somewhere near the end of your story or essay. If it is a fable or summary, it will be in the last 2 or 3 sentences. If it is a 3-part narrative, it will be in the last part. If it is an essay, it will be in the last paragraph. Your job is to find it.

Go to the end of your story/essay and look for words that inspire a title. You can use any key words just as they are or use synonyms for them to make a title a bit more Mysterious and Intriguing.

For example, here is an ending to the narrative “Tom Thumb”:

When I was exploring one day, I decided to take a ride on a butterfly's back, one of the most magnificent flying creatures in King Arthur's entire palace. When I spotted a butterfly about to land on a dandelion, I ran over and jumped on. It flew high in the bright blue sky, and I enjoyed the ride. The creature moved so slowly that I dozed off. When I woke up, I was in a foreign place that seemed like a beautiful valley. Where was I? I realized it was the great American prairie known as Kansas. With its rolling hills and lovely sky, this was the greatest land I had ever seen or known. But how did I ever come to be in such a place as America? How would I ever get back to England, I wondered? Through the sixty years or more I lived, I never saw anyone I ever knew from my home country. Nevertheless, my life had too many adventures to tell in a single story.



There are a number of titles **hiding** in this paragraph. Some title ideas are:

A Few Magnificent Adventures – from *magnificent, adventures* – that works OK.

A Variety of Travels – from *many adventures* – another good possibility.

Enjoying Many Magnificent Adventures – from *many, magnificent, adventures* – OK.

Foreign Places – from *foreign places* – yes, everywhere Tom traveled was foreign to him.

Enjoying the Ride – from *enjoyed the ride* – yes, all his adventures were like a ride/journey.

The good titles are mysterious – they don't give away the story or the ending.

They are intriguing – they make the reader wonder.

And they are compelling – the reader has to read the story to find out what it's about.

Another title idea is **The Beautiful Valley** – it sounds like a good title, but actually is NOT because the whole story was not about a valley.

When you look at the end of your paper, think about the story/essay as a whole. It's easy to discover possible titles. Some ideas will be better than others; just **keep searching** until you find the best one. After you revise, sometimes your title often changes as well.

Here is the last line of a short fable, "The Donkey and the Dog":

Early in the morning, the stubborn critter pushed his way back into the house and joined his master at the table for lunch where they enjoyed a meal of potatoes and orange juice.



Here are some discoveries:

Pushing to Join - from the words *pushed* and *joined*.

The Craving Critter - from *stubborn* and *critter*.

The Stubborn Struggle - from *stubborn* and *pushed*.

These titles are mysterious – they don't give away the story, the ending, or the characters.

They are intriguing – they make the reader wonder.

And they are compelling – the reader has to read the story to find out what it's about.

Here are a couple more, but not so good, ideas:

The Morning Meal – this doesn't work because the story is not ALL about a meal, and the meal is only mentioned at the end.

The Determined Donkey – this gives away the main character in the story and pretty much tells what his problem is right away at the beginning of the story.

When you revise, find a new, original title for your story/essay and type it at the top of your paper. **At the end, highlight the area (just 2 or 3 words) where your title was hiding – make them pink.**