

1. Before you read, **match** each word with its opposite. **Write** the correct letter on the line.

Word		Opposite
1. afraid	_____	a. unswollen
2. alive	_____	b. brave
3. huge	_____	c. current
4. puffy	_____	d. tiny
5. previous	_____	e. dead

2. While you read, **underline** the different fears mentioned.

The King of Fear

Stephen King writes some of the scariest stories in the world. What makes his stories so scary?

The answer is simple. The best way to write a good story is to start with what you know. Mr. King knows fear very well. He has a long list of fears. Many of his fears appear in his stories. For example, he is afraid of cars. In some of his stories, there are cars that come alive and become deadly. The novel *Christine* is about an old car called Christine that becomes possessed by the vengeful spirit of a previous owner.

Mr. King is also afraid of fire. In one of his stories, *Firestarter*, a young girl has frightening pyrokinetic abilities, which means she can start fires. King is also terrified of the dark. In another story, this one called *The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon*, he writes about a girl who gets lost in the woods and has to spend many nights there.

She is afraid of the darkness and the animals in the woods. She hears scary noises all night long. Mr. King is afraid of death and violence, too. His novel *Cujo* tells the story of a dog named Cujo that becomes vicious.

Why is he so interested in horror? It started at a young age when he used to read horror comics. When he started writing short stories they were mysteries and horror stories. He usually begins a story by imagining a “what if” scenario, like what if a haunted hotel drove its new owner insane? This is the plot of one of his most famous books, *The Shining*, which was turned into a successful movie.

Mr. King tells interviewers that he writes scary stories to get these fears out of his mind. When he writes about things that scare him, he feels less afraid. His readers get to be scared instead!

3. How do you write a good story according to Stephen King?

4. What is Stephen King afraid of?

5. What fears do each of the following stories talk about?

Story	Fear(s)
<i>Christine</i>	
<i>Firestarter</i>	
<i>The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon</i>	
<i>Cujo</i>	

6. Why does Stephen King write scary stories?

7. How does Mr. King start writing his stories?

8. Do you like scary stories? **Explain** your answers.

9. What do you like or dislike about scary stories?

10. **Imagine** your own “what if” scenario. **Describe** it below.
