



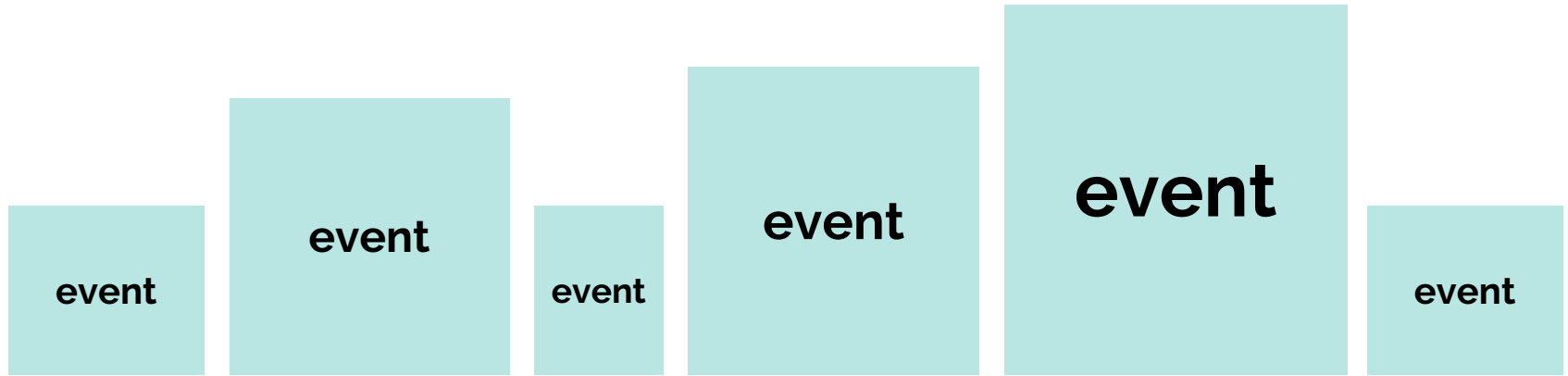
PACING

Narrative Writing





A good story doesn't just describe one event after another, with each event taking up exactly the same amount of time.



Instead, it takes some events and expands them to make them extra big and dramatic, and squeezes the less important parts so they're really small.

exposition

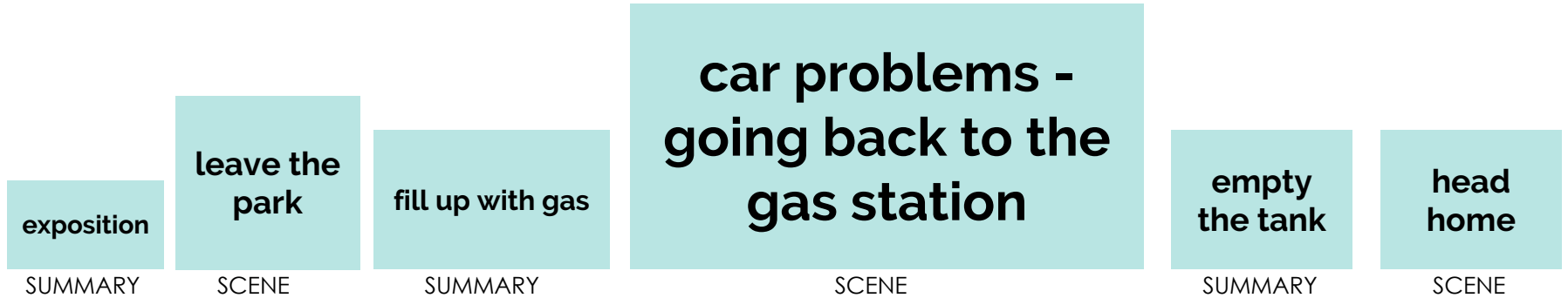
leave the
park

fill up with gas

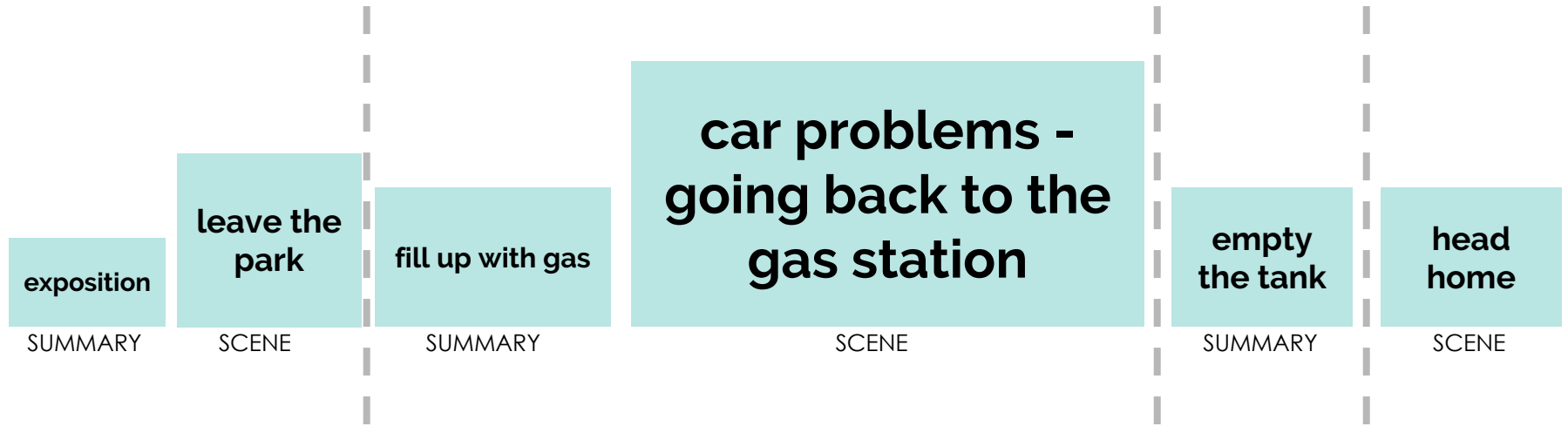
car problems -
going back to the
gas station

empty
the tank

head
home

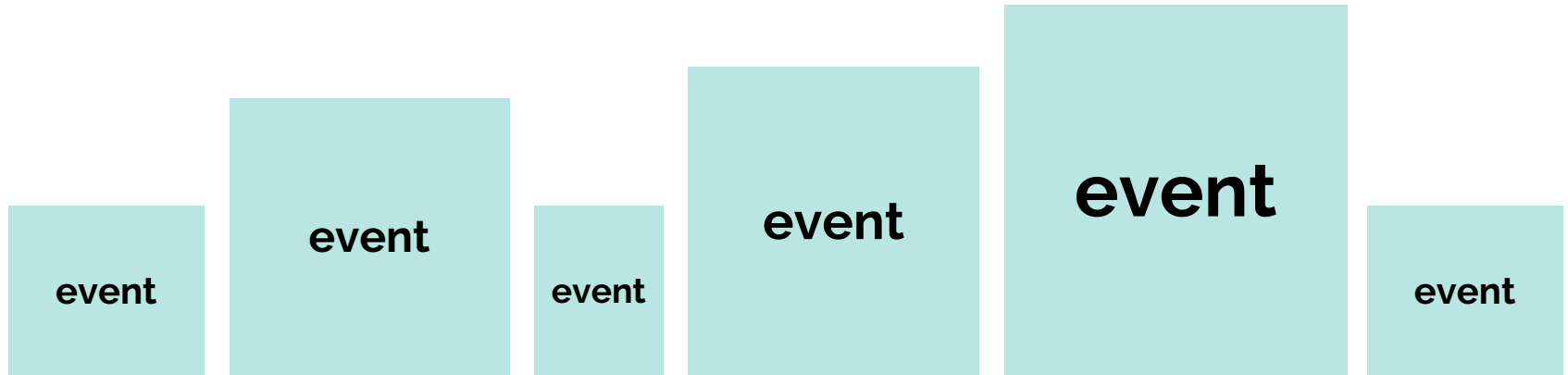


- There's another thing you should notice about the story: Each of these chunks is done in a different way.
- The exposition is written as a **summary**, but the part where we decide to leave is done as a full **scene**, with dialogue and more specific actions.
- Then the part where I fill the car is done again as a **summary**: We don't see every moment of my actions, just a summary of it.
- Then comes the big **scene**: the car problems. This part is done really slowly, so we feel every minute going by.
- Once that's over, we clean up: This part is done as a **summary**, too.
- Finally, when we head home, we get to see this again as a **scene**.



At three different times in the story, we also see a break in time: After we leave the park, there's a jump ahead in time, then another one after getting back to the gas station, and another one between emptying the tank and going home..

All of those breaks are there because readers don't really want to see every minute. Some chunks of time just aren't that interesting, so you can jump over them to get to the more interesting parts.



Activity: Now, think about the story you are writing. Create a diagram like this one, where you plan out which parts are going to be **big** and which parts are going to be **small**. Think about which parts will be **scenes** and which parts you can just **summarize**, and where you might put **time breaks**.