**SHORT STORY**

**A SHORT STORY** is a work of narrative fiction ranging in length from five hundred to fifteen thousand words. It has relatively small number of characters involved in a single action focused on a single conflict.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF SHORT STORY**

A short story is a narrative, that is, it consists of a series of events that are told by a narrator to a reader or a listener.

All short stories have a beginning, an ending and a general purpose.

The main features of short stories:

- **a setting** - the place and a time where the events take place. These can be stated directly or implied. The short story usually covers a short time span. It is unusual to have several settings in a short story because of its limited length.

- **characters** - the number of characters is limited. There may be only one main character (protagonist). We usually meet this character at a crucial point in his life. We may only come to know one or a few of his/her qualities. The other people in the story are usually minor characters.

- **events** - the facts that drive forward the action and form the storyline. The way they are arranged and presented by the narrator is called the plot. The short story has one main plot; there is no room for sub-plots.

- **a closure** - the “ending” of the narrative, which may solve the problematic issues. In this case the ending is closed or leave situations unresolved - in this case the ending is open and story ends with the climax.

- **a narrator** - the “voice” that tells the story. The narrator must not be confused with the author, who is a real person. The narrator is purely fictional.

Short stories very seldom have complex plots. Therefore, **intensity** is a very important feature of a short story. Narrative style is the way the writer uses language to express meaning. Short story writers usually let their reader work things out for themselves. The number of words is limited. Typical feature of the short story is its **economy**. The way something is said (form) influences what is said (content) and vice versa.

The short story is a newer form of literature than other genres, like drama, poetry, or novels. Edgar Allan Poe, who wrote his tales of horror in the 19th century, is usually acknowledged as one of the first short story writers. Since then, many writers have chosen the genre to express their ideas. Each writer focuses on different elements of the story. Some emphasize theme, and use the short story to teach a moral or a lesson. Others create atmosphere in their stories, or develop character or setting.
**TYPES OF SHORT STORY**

**The Horror Story**

- A horror story is a short fictional narrative centered around an unusual experience, designed to shock readers and cause feelings of alarm and fear. Its origin is in the 18th century. Typical characters include devils, vampires, werewolves, mysterious presences, and characters with split personalities.

**The Ghost Story**

- A ghost story is a short fictional narrative focused on the manifestation of a spirit or the spirit of a dead person in a place that becomes haunted by its supernatural presence. The setting is important in creating its typical atmosphere of mystery and expectation. Characteristic features are surprise endings and suspense. In the 19th century, ghost stories developed mainly thanks to Edgar Allan Poe and Victorian writers (Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, Wilkie Collins).

**The Crime Story**

- The term crime story includes detective stories, police stories, murder stories, and thrillers. The detective story is a genre of fiction in which a detective, either an amateur or a professional, solves a crime or a series of crimes. The most famous detectives include Auguste Dupin created by Edgar Allan Poe, Sherlock Holmes created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Hercules Poirot and Miss Marple created by Agatha Christie.

**The Humorous Story**

- A humorous story is a short fictional narrative which aims to entertain and amuse readers. The comic effect can be produced by funny characters or by sequences of misunderstanding.

**The Psychological Story**

- A psychological story is a short fictional narrative in which events are filtered through the mind of the thinking character.

**The Science Fiction Story**

- A science fiction story is a short narrative based on possible future scientific or technological developments.

“A short story must have a single mood and every sentence must build towards it.”

Edgar Allan Poe

Remember

Nothing is wasted in a short story. No character or detail of plot is there without a reason.

The most famous British authors of short stories are Rudyard Kipling, Roald Dahl, Saki, Agatha Christie, Wilkie Collins, and Margaret Drabble.

The most famous American authors of short stories are O. Henry, J.D. Salinger, Edgar Allan Poe, Francis S. Fitzgerald, Ray Bradbury, and Isaac Asimov.
THE HORROR STORY

Read the short story by William Wymark Jacobs Monkey’s Paw. While reading focus on the following tasks.

Part 1
While reading pay attention to:
1 where the characters are and what they are doing,
2 who Sergeant-Major Morris is,
3 what the monkey’s paw is,
4 what Mr White does with it.
1. In the grid below, sum up what you know about the monkey’s paw.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who put a magic spell on it</th>
<th>Why</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Its special properties</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Its previous owners</th>
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</table>

2. Morris ‘experience with the talisman does not seem to be positive. Find expressions in the text to confirm this, and then guess what may have happened.
3. Go through the text quickly and underline the expressions which show the three Whites ‘reactions to Morris’ story and to the talisman.
4. Fill in the grid below and study how various elements of the story introduced so far help create an atmosphere of suspense and expectation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The setting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The weather</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The characters involved</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The situation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The characters’ actions/reactions/behavior</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Part 2
While reading pay attention to:
1 what sad news is brought to the Whites’,
2 how they react to it,
3 what is given to them “as compensation”.

Part 3
While reading pay attention to:
1 the idea Ms White has one night,
2 how her husband reacts to it,
3 what happens afterwards,
4 what Mr White does next.

After reading the whole story answer the following questions.

1. Mr White’s third wish is not openly expressed. Can you say what it is?
2. At turn point, someone knocks at the door. Which different opinions and ideas about the visitor’s identity do the two characters have? Why does Mr White use the pronoun ‘it’ and the expression ‘the thing outside’ to refer to the visitor? Why does he seem so afraid?
3. Can you explain the conclusion of the story? Why is the road outside the White’s house ‘quiet and deserted’?
4. At which point of the plot does tension reach its highest point?
5. What makes this a horror story? Fill in the grid below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The events</th>
<th>Which aspect/details in particular</th>
<th>Why and how?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The characters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The setting</td>
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<tr>
<td>The atmosphere</td>
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<tr>
<td>The ending</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The moral</td>
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THE GHOST STORY

Read the article

Do you believe in ghosts? Some people do and others don’t. No one really knows what a ghost is! Some people have tried to photograph ghosts and sometimes ghosts appear in the picture. What are ghosts? Ghosts are spirits of the dead - of people and animals. Their death was violent or terrible, or they were murdered by someone. Ghosts haunt the places where they died because they cannot rest in peace. In England there are a lot of haunted places: houses, castles, churches, theatres and roads. Let’s take a look at a few.

The house at 50 Berkeley Square, London, was considered a haunted house in the late 1800s. There were strange noises at night and ghostly appearances. One room in the house was particularly dangerous. People who slept in this room went mad or were dead the next morning. One man, Lord Lyttleton, did not believe in ghosts, so he decided to sleep in the dangerous room. The next morning he was quite shaken and said, 'Something came into the room from a dark corner. It had a terrible smell. I fired my gun at it and the ghost disappeared. It was frightening! This house is haunted by a horrible ghost.'

Glamis Castle in Scotland is a big castle with over a hundred rooms. It has a long history of ghosts, murders, strange noises and terrible secrets. The Tower of London is a popular tourist attraction and many people believe it is haunted by royal ghosts. William the Conqueror built the Tower of London in 1078. King Henry VIII’s second wife, Anne Boleyn, was beheaded on Tower Green in May 1536. Her ghost, which is white and transparent, haunts Tower Green, the White Tower and the church in the Tower. Sometimes she appears with her head and other times she holds her head in her hand.

The most famous ghosts of the Tower are two young princes. In 1483, when Edward V became King of England, he was only twelve years old and his brother Richard was ten. Their uncle Richard, Duke of Gloucester, wanted to be King of England, so he took the princes to the Tower where they soon disappeared. People said that Richard was responsible for the murder of the two princes. In 1674 workmen found the skeletons of two children under the stairs and they were immediately buried. Many people still see the two ghosts of the young princes at the bottom of the stairs.

Borley is a small village about one hundred kilometres northeast of London, and it has more ghosts than any other village in England. Borley Rectory 2 is particularly haunted. Many strange things have happened at Borley Rectory: music that played in the empty church, lights that went on and off, furniture that moved, stones that fell from the sky, strange writing on the walls and a lot of ghostly appearances .(Clemen, 2009)

Answer the following questions:

1 What do people sometimes use to study ghosts?
2 Why do some spirits of the dead become ghosts?
3 Lord Lyttleton saw something in the room at 50 Berkeley Square. What did he do to it?
4 Where is Glamis Castle?
5 How old is the Tower of London? Why is it famous?
6 Who was Anne Boleyn?
7 Why is Borley famous?
The Crime Story

Detective stories
English detective fiction

English detective fiction owes a great deal to the American, Edgar Allan Poe. Poe’s detective character Dupin solves crimes by the relentless application of logic. Even when the conclusions that he reaches seem absurd, Dupin is shown to be correct. Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins also experimented with detective characters. But it was not until 1887 with the publication of Arthur Conan Doyle’s *A Study in Scarlet*, that the genre was really established in English fiction. Conan Doyle’s detective, Sherlock Holmes, has many features in common with Poe’s detective, Dupin. Both men are unemotional, solitary and intellectual. When Dupin relies almost exclusively on logic to solve crimes, Holmes uses both logic and scientific observation. The Sherlock Holmes stories were very popular in late Victorian England. Early in the 20th century the detective story began to change. Full-length detective novels began to replace short stories. This period of the genre is sometimes called “the Golden Age”. The dominant writers were Agatha Christie, Dorothy Sayers and Margery Allingham. Agatha Christie created two detective figures: Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple. Hercule Poirot follows the tradition established by Poe and continued by Conan Doyle. He relies on intelligence, “the little grey cells”, to solve crimes. On the other hand, Jane Marple, an elderly lady who lives in a picturesque English village, relies on her intuitive understanding of human nature. Part of the attraction of the “Golden Age” novels has always been that they give an idealised picture of English life in the first part of the 20th century. They are set in grand house staffed by devoted servants. Most of the characters do not have to work for a living. The “Golden Age” writers treated crime as a puzzle that the detective had to solve. This approach to detective fiction changed with the emergence of two important new writers in the 1960’s and 1970’s. P.D. James and Ruth Rendell broke away from the idealized social setting that had been so popular. They wrote about contemporary England, and struggled for greater realism. P.D. James created the character Inspector Dalgliesh. Like Dupin and Sherlock Holmes, Dalgliesh is an outsider in society: he is a poet as well as a detective, and he is emotionally detached. Ruth Rendell’s novels focus on the psychology of the criminal, as much as the process of crime detection. (Anderson, 2008)

Answer the following questions:
1. Who created the detective Dupin?
2. How does Dupin solve crimes?
3. How does Sherlock Holmes solve crimes?
4. Who are Agatha Christie’s two famous creations?
5. How do they solve crimes?
6. What part of English life did detective writers of the “Golden Age” describe?
7. How did P.D. James and Ruth Rendell change the classic British detective novel?

The story of Sherlock Holmes

When Sherlock Holmes moved to London in 1874 he did not have much money and his family had to help him. In 1881 he decided to share the cost of his rooms at 221B Baker Street with Dr John H. Watson, and this is how Holmes and Watson became good friends. Watson tells us a lot of things about Holmes: he is not a difficult person to live with because he is quiet and has regular habits. For example, he usually goes to bed around ten at night and gets up very early in the morning. He works on his cases with a lot of energy, but sometimes he gets very bored and sits in the living room and does nothing. Watson also tells us that he is untidy and his desk is always full of papers. Mrs Hudson is the housekeeper who tidies the rooms. We know that Holmes plays the violin and wears Persian slippers at home. He often uses chemistry equipment to help him solve cases. Holmes is an excellent detective and he often surprises Watson with his solutions to difficult cases.
A humorous story entertains and amuses the reader through comic characters and a single plot based on a series of misunderstandings. Comic characters often have a single dominant personal trait. Negative characters are defeated in humorous stories and positive ones rewarded. A final recognition or the revelation provides a happy ending that relieves tension and solves the conflict.

Authors of humorous stories
- the beginnings of the genre - Miguel de Cervantes - Don Quixote
- the greatest writer of satirical fiction - Jonathan Swift - Gulliver’s Travels
- modern humorous short story - Mark Twain
- one of the best British humourists of the 20th century - Saki (Hector Hugh Munro)
- master of the macabre mixed with wit and dark humour - Roald Dahl

Roald Dahl
Roald Dahl (1916-90) was a British writer who wrote some very famous children’s books, as well a large number of short stories for adults. Some of his works later became TV programmes or films. Dahl had Norwegian parents but was born in Cardiff, the capital of Wales. During the Second World War he was a pilot in the British air force, and his wartime adventures provided the subject of his first piece of published work. He tried to write his children’s books from the point of view of a child, and often included a lot of black humour in them. They include Matilda, James and the Giant Peach and Fantastic Mr Fox, but the most popular of all is Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, which he wrote in 1964. A film version of the book appeared in 2005, starring Johnny Depp.

Key literary element
Foreshadowing is an author’s use of clues to hint at events that will happen later in the story. The way an author describes certain events, characters, or objects can provide clues about what is to come. Foreshadowing often helps build excitement or interest in a story. It prompts readers to predict what will happen and encourages them to keep reading to see if their predictions are accurate. For example, the following sentence foreshadows that a burglar may enter Nathan’s apartment as he sleeps: Despite all the warnings about burglaries in the neighborhood, Nathan forgot to lock the front door of his apartment when he went to bed.

Humor
In short stories, humor may be verbal, situational and behavioral.

Verbal humor occurs when the characters say something unexpected or inappropriate to the situation.

Situational humor occurs when a character finds himself/herself in a situation he/she does not fully understand, while the readers do.

Behavioral humor occurs when a character behaves in a way that is clearly inappropriate to the situation.

Read the short story The Landlady written by Roald Dahl.
Complete the following chart with information from the short story. List the examples in the first column and what events they foreshadow in the second column. Find at least five examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of foreshadowing</th>
<th>What is being foreshadowed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

 ✓
 ✓ Complete the following chart with information from the short story. List the examples in the first column and what events they foreshadow in the second column. Find at least five examples.
Bibliography


The characters are the people presented in works of fiction. We know, of course, that these are not real people, but if they are portrayed skillfully by an author, they certainly will appear to be real and readers will identify with them and believe in them as if they actually existed.

**How does a writer create a character?**

1. **What a character says**
   Writers create dialogue and put words into the mouths of the characters they present. Words a character speaks will tell us a lot about his/her personality and motivations.

2. **What a character does or how he/she behaves**
   Writers describe in words how characters act and react to events. For example, a villain may be shown as “sneering menacingly” or a young heroine as “smiling sweetly”. Writers intentionally include descriptions of actions in their stories because they want the reader to pay attention to them and use them to interpret the characters’ personalities.

3. **What other characters say about him/her.**
   In some stories, we can't rely on the narrator to be truthful, but we will receive hints from what other characters say to him or about him.

4. **How other characters react to him/her.**
   Much can be learned about a character by judging how those around him/her react to his/her actions and words. For example, if a character the reader sees as honest and truthful is described as “raising her eyebrows sharply at his suggestion”, it is clear that the character is behaving in a rash or unacceptable way.

*In some works of fiction, especially ones using the third person point of view, the reader can detect a certain attitude the author may have towards a character he has created. This attitude will generally not be stated outright, but can be determined through subtle, clues, such as the choice of words used to describe a character.*
Characters can be classified into two main categories: MAJOR CHARACTERS and MINOR CHARACTERS

Major Characters

Major characters (also called central, round, dynamic, or main characters) are ones which are fully developed. We can see more than one side of their personalities. Often a major character has to fight to overcome some sort of difficulty in his life, a problem or situation he must find a solution to. How the character deals with this struggle reveals the type of person he is and what motivates him. Major characters often undergo some personality change between the beginning and end of the story. If they undergo a change, we expect to see a reason to explain that change.

Minor Characters

Minor characters (also called flat, stock, stereotype or static characters) are one-sided characters, usually built around a single quality. Think of the follow characters from children’s stories: the wicked witch, the handsome prince, the evil stepmother, the beautiful princess. These characters behave predictably in all stories; they are stereotypes. They don’t undergo major changes, and you could probably sum up the character in a single sentence. Even though these characters are one-sided, do not make the mistake of thinking that they have no real role in a story. Authors create characters, even minor ones, with a purpose in mind. The flat character may be present to help or hinder the main character in some way, or to add a complication to the plot. For example, if the minor character is a selfish and immature mother, her purpose in the story may be to show how the central character grows to understand this weakness and learns not to react to it any more.

CREATING CHARACTER SKETCH

focus on:

OUTWARD CHARACTERISTICS

Appearance
✓ age
✓ size (height, weight)
✓ coloring
✓ unusual features
  (e.g. scars, manner of walking, physical handicaps, etc.)

PERSONALITY, CHARACTER
✓ how the character reacts in various situations (what he does)
✓ speech patterns, dialogue (what he says)
✓ treatment of other characters
✓ how others react to him/her, what they think and say of him/her
✓ attitudes towards him/herself
✓ strengths
✓ weaknesses
✓ changes he/she undergoes

OPINION
✓ author/narrator’s reactions to the character
✓ your attitude to the character - do you like or dislike the character?
✓ how the character’s personality influences the outcome of events
How to Determine the Type of Narrator

- Look at the first page of the story. Find the pronouns.
- Look at the narrator's voice. **DO NOT** look in the dialogue for this. We do not take into account what the characters say.

  a. I, we = first person narrative
  b. He, she, they = third person narrative

If you determine that it is the third person narrative you need to examine text more carefully and decide if author uses third person **objective**, **limited** or **omniscient** narrator.

- Read more carefully to determine if the story is being told through the eyes of one particular character and only one character’s feelings and thoughts are revealed (**third person limited**). Try to determine who that one character is.
- If the events are reported from more than one character’s viewpoint, and more than one character’s feelings and thoughts are revealed, then the author is using the **third person omniscient** point of view. If the scene shifts and the reader follows from one place to another, from character to character, with no limitation, this confirms your choice.
- If nobody’s feelings and thoughts are revealed, author uses **third person objective** narrator.

**WHEN READING A BOOK THINK ...**

- How does the point of view influence the way you are able to relate to the characters?
- How does the amount of information the narrator knows about characters influence your reading experience?
- Do you prefer the narrator to be more objective or subjective?
- How does the point of view influence the overall mood and the atmosphere of the story?
FIRST PERSON NARRATOR

If an author chooses to write in the first person, then we see everything from the point of view of “I”. The first person narrator may be a major character, a minor one, or merely a witness to events. Since the character is actually a part of the story, we tend to believe what he is saying as a first-hand witness. Because the narrator appears to be directly involved in the narrative, the situations and people become more real. On the other hand, we can only know what this one character knows. The reader shouldn’t assume that the narrator is speaking with the author’s voice, simply because the pronoun “I” is used. Think of the narrator as a guide who is leading you through the story. Think of the author and the narrator as separate people.

THIRD PERSON OMNISCIENT NARRATOR

The third person omniscient narrator is not limited in viewpoint to any one character. The word “omniscient” means all-seeing, all-knowing. It is often called the god’s eye view of events in a narrative because this form of narrator is like a god who sits high above the action and knows everything about every character and event, including their fears, motivations, and innermost thoughts. “He”, “she” and “they” are the third person pronouns used, just as in the third person limited point of view. The narrator knows what is going on in any number of places at once, and how all the characters think and feel. He chooses what to reveal or conceal, and whose thoughts to relate, moving freely from one place to another, from one character to another.

THIRD PERSON LIMITED NARRATOR

In the third person limited point of view, the story is told by a narrator whose view of the events of the story is limited to what can be seen through the eyes of one character in that story. As in first person narration, the narrator describes only what that one character can see, hear, feel, or think, but by using the pronouns “he” or “she” instead of “I”. The reader knows the thoughts of the character and therefore comes to know that character better than the others. As in first person point of view, we must remember that the narrator/character may not always give us an accurate picture.

THIRD PERSON OBJECTIVE NARRATOR

In the third person objective point of view the story is told by a narrator whose view of events is completely detached. The narrator of the story is just a spectator of events. Objective point of view contains no references to thoughts or feelings; it only reports what can be seen and heard. One way to imagine this point of view would be to think of the narrator as a roving movie camera. Author uses pronouns “he”, “she”, or “they”.

Objective point of view has its own advantages and disadvantages. Of all the points of view available to an author, it offers the most speed and the most action. However, it doesn’t allow the writer any room to interpret events at all.
Activity

Choose a traditional fairy tale that you think your students will know.

Fairy tales are generally written using the third person narrator – omniscient.

Seat students in groups and tell them that they are going to rewrite the story using different narrators.

As an example I will use Cinderella.

One group may adjust the story to third person objective narrative – omitting all notions of thoughts and feelings of any character. (Or, if the story is originally written using the third person objective narrator, they should add thoughts and feelings of the characters into the original text.)

The other group may rewrite the story using third person limited narrator – here you may assign different characters to different groups – one may reveal thoughts and feelings of Cinderella, the other one can reveal the feelings and thoughts of stepsisters, or the stepmother.

The next group may rewrite the story using the first person narrator. Here, again, different characters may be used to tell the story. It can be interesting to have the story retold from e.g. the fairy godmother’s point of view, the prince’s point of view, the stepmother’s or the stepsister’s point of view.

Set the students a time limit and monitor their progress. Ask each group to tell their story to the rest of the class. Discuss the effects that change of narrators has on the story.
Once upon a time there was a widower who had a beautiful daughter. He was keen to marry again to give his daughter a mother, and he was overjoyed when at last he met and fell in love with a woman and married her. But his new wife was proud and evil. She did not love her step-daughter at all. She was cruel and jealous woman and her daughters were the same. They were particularly hateful to the widower’s daughter because she was beautiful and they were very envious. They made the widower’s daughter a slave to their wants, and sent her to work day and night in the kitchen. Because her clothes were dirty from the cinders of the oven which she sat next to most of the time, the woman and her daughters called her Cinderella.

One day there was much excitement in the house, because the Prince of the city announced that he would be holding a ball and all the women in the city were invited. Cinderella’s two stepsisters were particularly happy as their mother bought them both beautiful dresses and shoes and spent hours getting them ready. When Cinderella asked if she could go too, the stepmother and stepsisters laughed at her. “What do you plan to wear? Do you think the Prince would let you in the door wearing those rags?” they said.

Alone in the kitchen by the fire, Cinderella cried not to cry as she heard the sisters, and the stepmother leave for the ball. Finally she fell to the floor sobbing: “Oh, how I wish I could go to the ball.”

All at once, there was a large puff of smoke. Cinderella leapt to her feet in surprise. In front of her stood a tall woman with the kindest expression she had ever seen in her life. The woman was carrying a wand and had wings on her back. Cinderella was almost too shocked to speak.

“Wh... who are you?” Cinderella asked.

“I’m your fairy Godmother,” she answered. “I heard your wish, and it will be granted. Go and get me a pumpkin, six mice and six lizards, and you will go to the ball.”

Not knowing why she should get these things, Cinderella nevertheless did as she was told and brought a pumpkin, six mice and six lizards to the fairy Godmother. The Godmother waved her wand at the pumpkin and white mice and there appeared a beautiful coach drawn by six white horses. She then tapped each of the lizards and there appeared six handsome footmen. “Oh, Godmother!” Cinderella exclaimed. “But... what will I wear...?”

The fairy Godmother tapped Cinderella on the head and suddenly she was dressed in a beautiful gown with matching jewelry and glass slippers on her tiny feet. “How can I ever thank you enough, Godmother!” said Cinderella, throwing her arms around the fairy. “Just one warning!” said the fairy Godmother. “Be sure to be home before the clock strikes twelve, for the spell will wear off at this moment.”

Cinderella promised she would, then climbed into the coach and was taken to the ball. When she arrived, everyone was looking at her and commenting on how beautiful she was. The Prince could not take his eyes off her, and soon Cinderella was dancing in his arms. A few hours later, Cinderella heard the clock chiming. She looked up at the clock in fright. It was chiming twelve! Cinderella dashed out of the great ballroom. The Prince saw her running away and followed her. But by the time he had reached the street, she had vanished. On the footpath, he found a tiny glass slipper that she had been wearing. The Prince declared: “I will travel around the kingdom. Whoever’s foot shall fit this shoe will become my wife!”

The news of the Prince’s plans to marry reached the city very next day, and all the eligible young women in the town were very excited, hoping that they would fit the slipper. However, the slipper was tiny, and the Prince had been to almost every house in the city without anyone’s foot fitting it. Finally he stood outside Cinderella’s house. It was his last hope. The stepsisters were determined to fit the shoe, and nearly broke the slipper by forcing their huge feet into it. “Enough!” said the Prince angrily. “My bride is nowhere to be found!” At that moment, Cinderella stepped out of the kitchen dressed in her dirty clothes. The stepsisters gasped in shock, but the Prince did not look at them. He simply took Cinderella in his arms and asked her to be his bride. She happily said yes, and they were married the next day. And they lived happily ever after.
**SETTING**

*Setting* in a narrative always involves two things: time and place. In some stories, the setting is plainly stated for the reader; in others, we have to use clues to make an educated guess about the time/or place of the story.

**TIME**

Time can refer to “time of day” or “historical period”.

The time period during which the story takes place, may be different from the time in which the author lived. Knowing a bit of historical background usually helps in understanding the story; it can explain, for example, why characters behave in a certain way. Morals and attitudes change with the times. In contrast, science fiction stories are set in the future; therefore, the author is totally free to create details from his/her imagination.

To determine where a story is set, if it is not stated, use hints such as details of landscape, local customs, dialect (speech patterns of a certain region). It is unusual to have several settings in a short story because of its limited length.

There is a setting in every story, and it may or may not play a significant role in the story. If the setting isn’t important, then it is often implied (not directly stated) through details. To suggest a city, there would be details like traffic noise, sirens, and descriptions of skyscrapers. A rural scene would involve lots of green space, rivers, and lakes, or peace and quiet. If it is important to know that a story takes place in New York City or rural Saskatchewan, it is more likely to be stated directly. The place, in these cases, may play a vital role in the development of narration or the lives of the characters.

**PLACE**

The place where a story is set may be clearly established. If not, you have to use clues in the writing to determine where the action is taking place. The action may be confined to one place or involve many places. When a writer uses details of a certain geographic area to make the story sound authentic, he/she is using local color. Such details include dialect (the accent or manner of speaking in a particular region); clothing; food; landscape; ways of thinking and feeling (beliefs); customs; pastimes; or professions. The place is vital in these stories, because we are all shaped by our surroundings in both good and bad ways.
The mood of a story is the feeling or atmosphere that the reader senses; it is created from many details of setting, character, and plot. Although it isn’t often easy to pinpoint how atmosphere is created, we all have a general sense of the tone of a story. We say it’s… happy or sad, peaceful or disturbing, frightening, suspenseful, gloomy, uplifting. The atmosphere may play a powerful role in the story; to the extent that it can still be felt after the story is finished.

Mood is the emotions that you (the reader) feel while you are reading. Some literature makes you feel sad, others joyful, still others, angry. Often a writer creates a mood at the beginning of the story and continues it to the end. However, sometimes the mood changes because of the plot or changes in characters.

Examples of MOODS include: suspenseful, joyful, depressing, excited, anxious, angry, sad, tense, lonely, suspicious, frightened, disgusted.

The theme is the lesson or moral the reader draws from a story. The writer may state this message directly, but more often the theme is implicit. That means that the reader must search for the theme or draw his/her own conclusions by thinking about all the elements of the story (plot, character, conflict, etc.).

A good writer makes this easy for a reader by communicating his understanding of human nature and by making the story so powerful that the reader is involved and interested in the characters and what happens to them. Often, the reader sees something clearly, while a character in the story remains unaware of it.

The theme is not a summary of the events of a story, but rather a statement of what the story was about, such as “Honesty is the best policy”, anger is a destructive emotion, sacrifice is a noble gift, etc. The theme is often a comment or lesson on human problems and solutions that remain effective throughout time.
Conflict is a struggle between opposing forces. We distinguish two basic types of conflict:

- Internal conflict: Involves a struggle that takes place within the mind of a character.
- External conflict: Involves a struggle between a character and an outside force, such as another person, society, or nature.

Conflict is introduced in the rising action section of the plot and are used by the author to help create suspenseful situations for the reader. As the conflict develops, the reader wonders how the problem will be resolved and what the outcome will be.

**Types of Conflict**

1. **Man versus man**: One person against another person or people.
   - Example: one person struggling with another either physically or in a battle of wits.

2. **Man versus society**: One person against society.
   - Example: a lawbreaker who is violating the rules or moral codes made by society.

3. **Man versus himself**: One person struggling within him/herself.
   - Example: a character struggling with internal conflicts - his conscience, his sense of right and wrong, trying to make a difficult a decision.

4. **Man versus nature**: One person against nature.
   - Example: survival in the outdoors. Canadian short stories and novels portray our constant battle against the elements - storms at sea, Arctic snowstorms, Prairie droughts, freezing temperatures everywhere.

Two other devices are often used to create rising action in a narrative.

**Foreshadowing**
Hints/clues given to the reader about something that will happen in the future.

**Suspense**
The feeling of anticipation readers experience when they know an event is about to take place. Suspense keeps us guessing and eager to know what happens next.
SHORT STORY RELATED ACTIVITIES

1. Conflicts
Most stories are built around conflicts. Conflicts between characters are guaranteed to raise some sparks. Students work in pairs. Firstly they create some situations with conflict that could have happened or that actually happened in the story. The teacher collects their ideas and distributes them around the class. Their second task is to prepare a short role play based on the conflict they were given.

2. Setting
There are certain settings that act as powerful motifs in stories. Teacher creates settings cards and students discuss what might happen there and how it will influence the story. Key settings that influence stories are:

- Mountains, Hills, Hedge, Fence, Wall, Dark woods, Thicket
- Kitchen, Bridges, Oceans, Great hall, Lake, Pond, Sea
- Rivers, Swamp, Pool, Doors, Cosy bedroom, Palace
- Tower, Maze, Castle, Library, Forest, Workshop

3. Building a story – Pass the story
Students work in groups. Each member chooses one card from prepared cards – each member chooses from a different category. They have to incorporate the key word on the card into a story. The story is passed round the circle - each member of group adding a new piece of information using a key word they chose.

Possible categories with key words:
- Settings: Disco, Garden shed, Hospital waiting room, Garage, Shopping centre, Dentist, Beach, Train, Castle
- Characters: Robber, Teacher, Princess, Singer, Policeman, Doctor, Inventor, Frog, Bus driver, Child, Mickey Mouse,
- Problems: Storm, Thunder, Snow, Hurricane, Wicked witch, Angry Ogre, Earthquake, Lost, Kidnapped,
- Positive words: A helper arrives, A magic wish, Dream is true, Unicorn appears, A magic ring is found, Phone rings, Map is found, Treasure is found, Flying horse appears, Friend arrives

4. The story jigsaw
Cut up a story into five sections. Put students into groups. Each group prepares their section of the story for telling. They should do it in some interesting way – draw a map, act it out, tell it round the circle. Then they present it to the class – in the order of the story.

5. Story shorts
Teacher presents a story in its bare form. The students then work in pairs to develop a full telling adding in detail, description, characterization and so on.
6. Sorting and sequencing
The teacher prepares a short story, cuts it into strips. The class is divided into groups. Each student within a group is given one piece of the story. Students try to order a story by listening to each other say their part of the story and deciding on the logical order. Each group can have different story or all the groups can have the same story and compete to see who can find the correct order first.

7. Biographical lie-detecting
The teacher gives a brief and truthful introduction to an author’s life. Then one written sentence is given to each member of a group of four students. Each sentence adds a new detail about the author’s life, but one of the four is not true. Each group compares their four sentences and nominates the false one. The teacher asks each group for its choice and the reason for it. He or she then reveals the lie.

8. Connectors and summary writing
The teacher gives the class a list of connectors, for example: furthermore, nevertheless, even so, however, meanwhile, on the other hand, to sum up, to make matter worse. Students are set a passage to read at home. In the next class lesson, they are asked, in pairs, to write a summary of this section, using each of the connectors in the list appropriately. The teacher gives them a maximum number of words. There is comparison and discussion of the results.

9. Write a blurb for the back cover
As preparation for this activity, the teacher reads out the cover blurb for two or three novels or plays which the students are unlikely to know. These are then displayed, and students are asked to rank them in order of appeal. They discuss the format and any special features, which affected their response. In groups or pairs, students are then to write the blurb for the book they have been studying, including at least one quote from the work, which they feel is bound to draw in someone browsing in a bookshop.

10. Words in the story
The students predict a story from key words. Teacher introduces and writes a key words from the story on the board (or prepares a flashcards with the key words, or a wordle can be made). Teacher asks students to predict what they think happens in the story based on the vocabulary. After reading a story students compare their predictions with it.

11. That’s not right!
The students try to identify and correct mistakes or things which are different in the story. It can be used as a revision activity – to revise a story that the students are already familiar with. Retell the story making mistakes and changing some things. Students need to spot the incorrect information and take the notes. They can work in the groups and compete against each other. The group that spots the most mistakes at the end wins.