

Short Story Writing Assignment

The Assignment

For this assignment, you will be creating your own short story (500-1000 words). Your piece will need to include the short story elements we have discussed throughout this unit. The goal is to work towards creating a story that includes these elements, and also takes into account all of the challenges that are a part of writing good fiction.

In crafting your story, keep the following in mind:

- Choose a theme/conflict as the basis for your story.
- Use indirect characterization (description of character's appearance, actions, thoughts, words, and other character's reactions to them) to bring your characters to "life."
- Think carefully about your lead and your conclusion-your lead should draw the reader into the story (narrative hook), and your conclusion should provide some sort of resolution.
- Try using thoughts and descriptive pictures (imagery) to make your story and characters believable.

Pre-writing Packet

Complete the following pre-writing assignments and turn them in after you submit your short story:

- Plot Diagram
- Setting Worksheet
- Characterization Worksheet

Reminders

As you write and revise your story, keep the following tips in mind:

- Give enough information so the reader can actually picture the story events and characters.
- Give details that are specific and relevant.
- Consider word choice and sentence structure carefully.
- Correct any grammatical and spelling errors.

Practical Considerations

Be sure to following all guidelines set forth in class. Remember:

- Utilize your creative writing worksheets throughout the writing process.
- Your story must be a minimum of two typed pages and no more than four.
- Use Times New Roman, size 12 font for everything, including the title. Double space your story.

Review the Rubric!

You will be graded based on the Short Story Rubric attached. Did you included all of the elements listed?

Short Story Grading Rubric

CATEGORY	Exceptional (A)	Good (B)	Fair (C)	Poor (D)
Setting	Many vivid, descriptive words are used to tell when and where the story took place.	Some vivid, descriptive words are used to tell the audience when and where the story took place.	The reader can figure out when and where the story took place, but the author didn't supply much detail.	The reader has trouble figuring out when and where the story took place.
Characters	The main characters are named and clearly described. Most readers could describe the characters accurately.	The main characters are named and described. Most readers would have some idea of what the characters looked like.	The main characters are named. The reader knows very little about the characters.	It is hard to tell who the main characters are.
Problem/Conflict	It is very easy for the reader to understand the problem the main characters face and why it is a problem.	It is fairly easy for the reader to understand the problem the main characters face and why it is a problem.	It is fairly easy for the reader to understand the problem the main characters face but it is not clear why it is a problem.	It is not clear what problem the main characters face.
Solution/Resolution	The solution to the character's problem is easy to understand, and is logical. There are no loose ends.	The solution to the character's problem is easy to understand, and is somewhat logical.	The solution to the character's problem is a little hard to understand.	No solution is attempted or it is impossible to understand.
Dialogue	There is an appropriate amount of dialogue to bring the characters to life and it is always clear which character is speaking.	There is too much dialogue in this story, but it is always clear which character is speaking.	There is not quite enough dialogue in this story, but it is always clear which character is speaking.	There is no dialogue, or it is not clear which character is speaking.
Organization	The story is very well organized. One idea or scene follows another in a logical sequence with clear transitions.	The story is pretty well organized. One idea or scene may seem out of place. Clear transitions are used.	The story is a little hard to follow. The transitions are sometimes not clear.	Ideas and scenes seem to be randomly arranged.
Creativity	The story contains many creative details and/or descriptions that contribute to the reader's enjoyment. The author has really used his/her imagination.	The story contains a few creative details and/or descriptions that contribute to the reader's enjoyment. The author has used his/her imagination.	The story contains a few creative details and/or descriptions, but they distract from the story. The author has tried to use his/her imagination.	There is little evidence of creativity in the story. The author does not seem to have used much imagination.
Mechanics	The story contains no errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics.	The story contains few minor errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics.	The story contains many and/or serious errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics; may interfere with reading.	The story contains so many errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that errors block reading.
Requirements	All of the written requirements (typed, double spaced, # of pages, font, margins) were met.	Almost all (about 90%) the written requirements were met.	Most (about 75%) of the written requirements were met, but several were not.	Many requirements were not met.
Theme	The story supports the theme using a variety of literary elements. (i.e. setting, character, dialogue, plot, etc.)	The story supports the theme using a few literary elements.	The story supports the them using one of the literary elements.	The story does not incorporated the theme.

Short Story Grading Rubric

Name: _____

CATEGORY	Points Possible				Points Earned
Setting	10	8	6	4	
Characters	10	8	6	4	
Problem/Conflict	10	8	6	4	
Solution/Resolution	10	8	6	4	
Dialogue	10	8	6	4	
Organization	10	8	6	4	
Creativity	10	8	6	4	
Mechanics	10	8	6	4	
Requirements	10	8	6	4	
Theme	10	8	6	4	
					TOTAL:

Plot Diagram

Exposition	
Inciting Action	
Rising Action	
Climax	
Falling Action	
Resolution	
Denouement	

Setting Worksheet: Every story happens somewhere. Imagine where your story will take place. Decide the place and the time period then develop 2-3 “images” for each of the five senses that describe the location. Remember the goal of descriptive writing: “showing” not “telling.”

Place (Real or Invented):
Time Period:
Season:
Sight:
Sound:
Taste:
Touch:
Smell:
Dominant Impression (overall mood):

Character Worksheet: Although you may not explicitly narrate all of these details in your short story (and really short stories usually don't), a fully developed character helps you imagine the protagonist of the story and create believable action and dialogue.

Character Name: _____

Age:	Gender:	Eye color:
Complexion:	Build (Height/Weight):	Hair color/style:
Style of dress:		
Most striking physical feature (one thing that everyone would notice):		
Mannerisms (a habitual or characteristic manner, mode, or way of doing something):		
Speaking voice (sound quality):		
Personality strengths:		
Personality weaknesses:		
Critical flaw (a limitation, imperfection, problem, phobia, or deficiency present in a character):		
Back story (the personal history that explains the character's motivation):		
What does the character really want?		
What is the character most afraid of?		