

Write a Short Story

Subject: Prep Advanced Writing

Short Story Unit Overview

In this unit, you will examine the craft of using language, the literary devices that authors use, and discover how these can make a story work (or not work) for a reader.

Learning Objectives:

- Explore the elements of the short story
- Practice oral reading skills
- Work collaboratively on a variety of projects
- Develop creative writing skills through short story writing
- Read and analyze six short stories

Short Story Unit Overview:

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|---|---------------------------------------|
| • Elements of a Story/The True Story of the Three Little Pigs | • Creating Character & Conflict |
| • Good Story/Bad Story (What IS a Story, Anyway?) | • Short Story Workshop - Plot |
| • The Tell-Tale Heart by Edgar Allan Poe | • The Big Snit, Continue Plot Diagram |
| • The Lottery by Roald Dahl | • Creating Setting, Dialogue |
| • The Fall of a City by Alden Nowlan | • Short Story Writing Workshop |
| | • Sociograms |
| | • Writers Café |



Resources:

Stories: Jon Scieszka: *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*
 Edgar Allen Poe: *The Tell-Tale Heart*
 Shirley Jackson: *The Lottery*
 Alden Nowlan: *The Fall of a City*
 Ronald Dahl: *The Landlady*

Movie: Richard Condie: *The Big Snit*

Short Story Unit	
Class	Content
Introduction Jon Scieszka's <i>The True Story of the Three Little Pigs</i>	Short story elements; includes handout, brainstorm, and quiz.
E. A. Poe's <i>The Tell Tale Heart</i>	Short story elements; point of view, tone, theme of menace
Shirley Jackson's <i>The Lottery</i>	Theme, setting, mood, ritual behavior
Richard Condie's <i>The Big Snit</i>	Irony
Alden Nowlan's <i>The Fall of a City</i>	Character development, setting, mood
Ronald Dahl's <i>The Landlady</i>	Character, theme, moral dilemmas
Story Writing Workshop	Draft your story using the writing process
Sociograms	Construct sociograms; integrating all the elements from one story into a cohesive visual construct.
Writer's Café	Share sociograms, excerpt of story, celebrate your creative writing.

Introduction to the Elements of the Short Story

Rationale:

Explore what a short story is, and what elements make it a distinct genre.

Learning Objectives:

- Discuss and demonstrate what the definition of the short story is, and its elements
- Establish working definitions of the elements in a short story
- Discuss a well known fairy tale and apply each of the elements to it

Resources:

Jon Scieszka's "The True Story of the Three Little Pigs"

Handout "Elements of a Short Story"

Quiz

Workbook - Good Story/Bad Story

Class Activities:

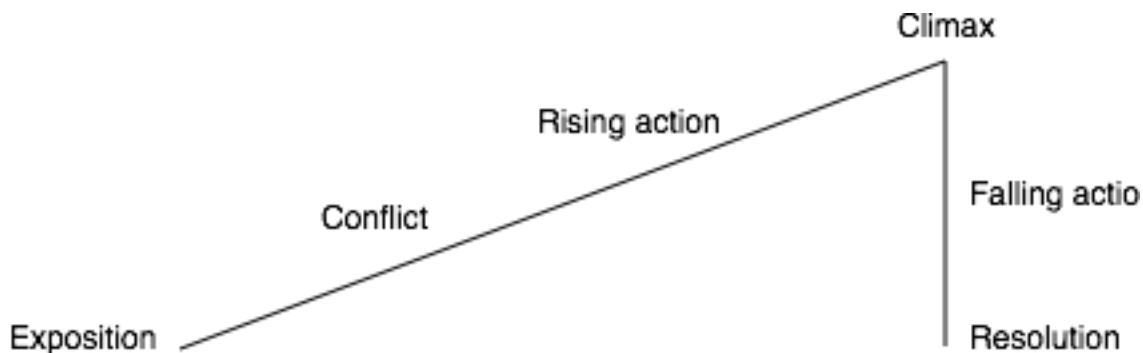
1. What are short stories? What makes a short story 'short?'
2. Review Elements of Short Stories
3. Listen to "The True Story of The Three Little Pigs."
4. Discuss techniques or approaches you see in the story, such as the title, introduction, characters, setting, plot, rising action, etc.



Elements of Short Stories

1. **Plot** – sequence of events or incidents that make up a story.
 - A. **Exposition** – designed to arouse reader's interest; background is provided.
 - B. **Conflict** – struggle between opposing forces (protagonist vs. antagonist)
 - i. **Person vs. Person** – *external* struggle between two or more individuals.
 - ii. **Person vs. themselves** – *internal* struggle concerning emotion and decision.
 - iii. **Person vs. nature** – *external* struggle between person and an element of nature or the environment.
 - C. **Rising action** – complication or development of the conflict.
 - D. **Climax** – turning point of the story; point of most intense interest.
 - E. **Falling action** – (denouement) events that lead to resolution.
 - F. **Resolution** – outcome of the conflict.

Parts of a Typical Plot



2. **Character** – is generally the central or focal element in a story.
 - A. **Four types of characterization** – techniques the writer uses to develop a character.
 - i. Physical description.
 - ii. Speech and actions of the character.
 - iii. Direct comment from the narrator.
 - iv. Speech and other actions of other characters.

B. Four types of characters –

- i. **Round** – complex or presented in detail.
- ii. **Dynamic** – developing and learning in the course of the story.
- iii. **Flat** – characterized by one or two traits.
- iv. **Static** – unchanged from the story's beginning to end.

3. Themes of literature / Analyzing characters

- A. **Motivation** – cause of / reason for actions.
- B. **Behavior** – actions of the character.
- C. **Consequences** – results of actions.
- D. **Responsibility** – moral, legal, or mental accountability.
- E. **Expectations** – what the reader expects.

4. Mood

- A. **Setting** – the time and place in which the story is taking place, including factors such as weather and social customs.
- B. **Atmosphere** – the mood to feeling which pervades the story.

5. Point of view

- A. **Omniscient** – the author tells the story using the third person. Author knows all of what is done, said, felt, and thought by the characters.
- B. **Limited omniscient** – author tell the story from the third person, but limits observations of thoughts and feelings to one character; the author presents the story from this character's eyes.
- C. **First person** – one character tells the story in the first person. The reader sees and knows only as much as the narrator.
- D. **Objective** – the author is like a movie camera that moves around freely recording objects. However, the author offers no comments on the characters or their actions. Readers are not told the thoughts or feelings of the characters.

6. Figurative language

- A. **Simile** – comparison using *like* or *as*.
- B. **Metaphor** – comparison using *is* or a form of *is*.
 - i. Implied metaphor
 - ii. Extended metaphor
- C. **Personification** – attributing humanlike qualities to inanimate things.

Short Story Unit Assignments

Journal Writing

You are expected to write a brief response in your notebook after reading each story. The writing journal is a place where you can record your reactions, no matter what they are. These journals will only be marked on completion, not on content, so have some fun and don't worry about grammar, fancy vocabulary, or spelling.

In-class writing assignments

Throughout the unit, there will be a number of short in-class writing assignments based on the readings. They will begin during class time, and can be completed at home if needed. All assignments will be submitted via google docs, and must be labeled as such:

Your Full Name

Your Number

Your Class (Prep H Writing)

Name of Writing Assignment

All in-class writing assignments should be submitted to dclair@my.aci.k12.tr.

After your paper has been checked by the teacher, you will be asked to print an edited and error free copy which will go into your Short Story Writing folder.

Sociogram Assignment

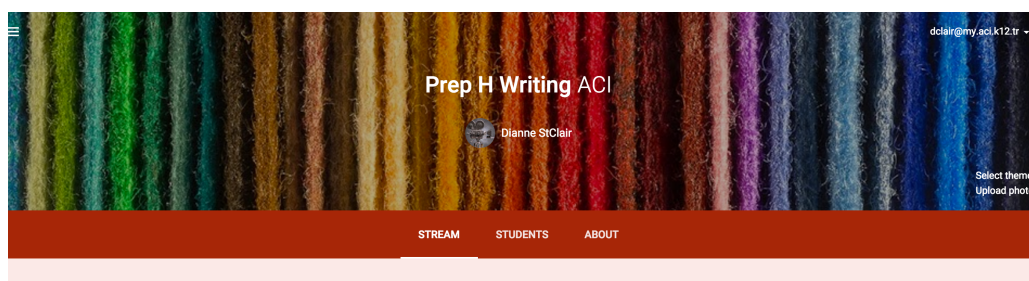
Working in groups of 3-4, you will create a sociogram of a story in the unit.

There is a handout to guide you in constructing the sociogram, and it needs to include all the elements of short story craft that are applicable.

Short Story Assignment

Write a short story between 1250 and 1500 words. You can write a narrative story about whatever you want; it's your choice! You will begin brainstorming your narrative outline during our short story workshops, and you will be given time in class to complete your story.

STAY UPDATED - CHECK YOUR GOOGLE CLASSROOM!



Lesson – The Tell-Tale Heart

Rationale: Explore short story elements.

Read Tell-Tale Heart

Student writing assignment

Everyone experiences fear when reading or watching horror stories. The best horror-story writers are experts at frightening readers. The feeling or atmosphere the writer creates for the reader is called mood. In the story, *The Tell-Tale Heart*, Edgar Allan Poe begins to weave the mood from the very first sentence:

“True!-nervous-very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am! But why will you say that I am mad?”

Reflect and comment on the following:

- What is the mood created immediately with this choppy introduction.
- What thoughts come to your mind when a denial of madness is added to the strange speaking style?
- Which figurative elements does Poe use to add to the mood of the story (consider word choice, sentence structure, plot twists, setting descriptions, etc...).



Lesson - Analysis of The Lottery by Shirley Jackson

Rationale:

Explore the ironic ending of The Lottery; theme of ritual, and the cultural values of the story's community.

Learning Objectives:

- articulate thoughts and concerns regarding The Lottery in a class discussion
- journal responses regarding The Lottery
- establish a definition of irony and articulate its effects in The Lottery
- discuss a well known short story and apply each of the elements to it

Resources:

The Lottery by Shirley Jackson - pdf

Activities:

1. How does the mood develop through the story?
2. Journal your responses to The Lottery for 5 minutes. What did you find particularly effective in this story?
3. Share responses with a partner.

Student writing assignment

You have been asked to lend your creative writing skills to a movie production company to create a trailer to entice prospective viewers. They want you to create a mood that best captures the mood and building tension of the story.

Narrative needs to be approximately 250 words.

Homework:

Finish writing assignment.

Lesson - “The Big Snit” by Richard Condie

Rationale:

Explore themes and irony in the animated short film The Big Snit, as well as the need to be aware of larger issues in the world. This lesson will continue to encourage students to further explore the short story through class discussion and writing.

Learning Objectives:

- articulate your thoughts and concerns regarding The Big Snit in a class discussion
- journal your responses regarding The Big Snit
- establish a definition of irony and articulate its effects in The Big Snit
- discuss a well known short story and apply each of the elements to it

Resources:

The Big Snit

Activities:

1. View the video.
2. Journal your responses to The Big Snit for 5 minutes paying close attention to what really grabbed you and what you want to explore further. What was particularly effective in this story?
3. Pair up and share their responses with one another.
4. Class discussion

Student writing assignment

Imagine you have two very good friends who are always bickering over little insignificant things. It is starting to affect their friendship with each other and with you. Not wanting your friendships to be ruined, you decide to remind them that their differences are petty compared to the larger issues in the world. What would you say to them to get them to put their differences in perspective and move beyond them? Maximum 250 words.

Homework:

Finish this writing assignment.

Lesson - Analysis of The Fall of a City by Alden Nowlan

Rationale:

Explore character development and setting in The Fall of a City.

Learning Objectives:

- articulate thoughts and concerns regarding The Fall of a City in a class discussion
- journal responses regarding The Fall of a City
- contrast the fantasy world Teddy creates with the real world of his aunt & uncle
- discuss a well known short story and apply each of the elements to it

Resources:

The Fall of a City

Activities:

1. Read The Fall of a City
2. Journal responses to The Fall of a City for 5 minutes paying close attention to the tension of the relationship between Teddy and his aunt and uncle.
3. Share responses with one another.

Student writing assignment

Working with a partner, write an alternate ending to the story. This ending can carry on from the original ending. Max 250 words.

Homework:

Work on Short story workbook.

Sociogram of one story

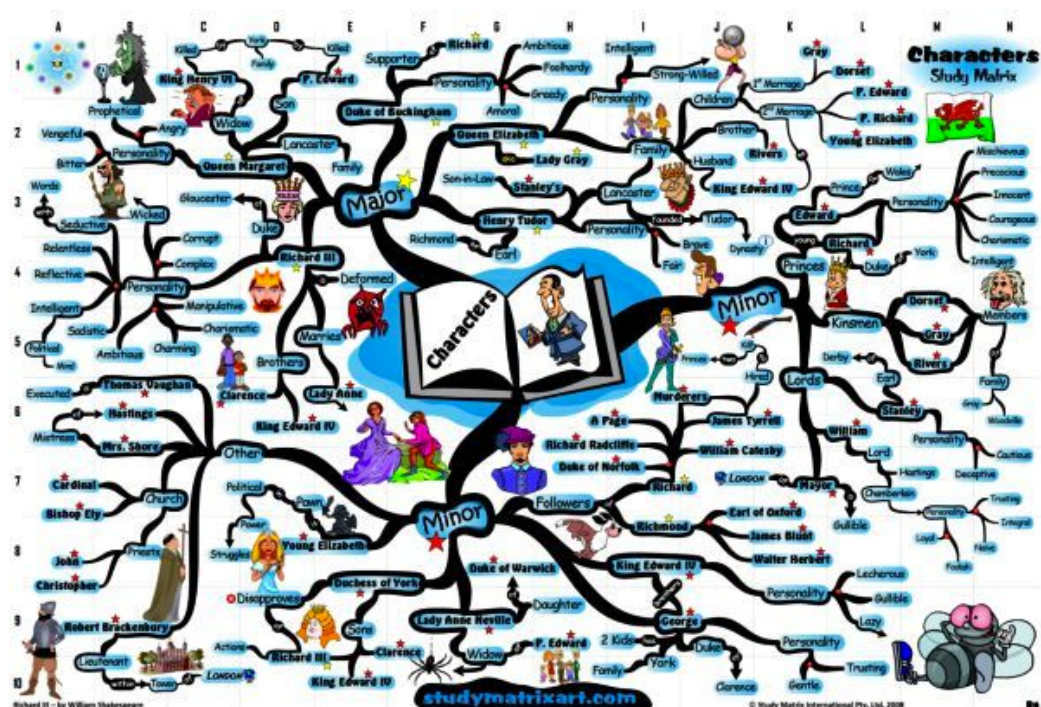
Rationale:

You will have two lessons to create a sociogram with your assigned group.

Learning Objectives:

- Demonstrate insightful understandings of the elements of a short story
- Collaborate creatively on a visual interpretation of short story elements
- Articulate relationships between the relevant elements of a short story

Resources: Handout: Sociograms



Activities:

1. In your group of 3-4, you will create a so-

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from one of the stories covered in the unit.

Homework:

Short Story workbook

Sociograms

What is it?

A literary sociogram is a graphic organizer that represents the relationships among characters in a literary text.

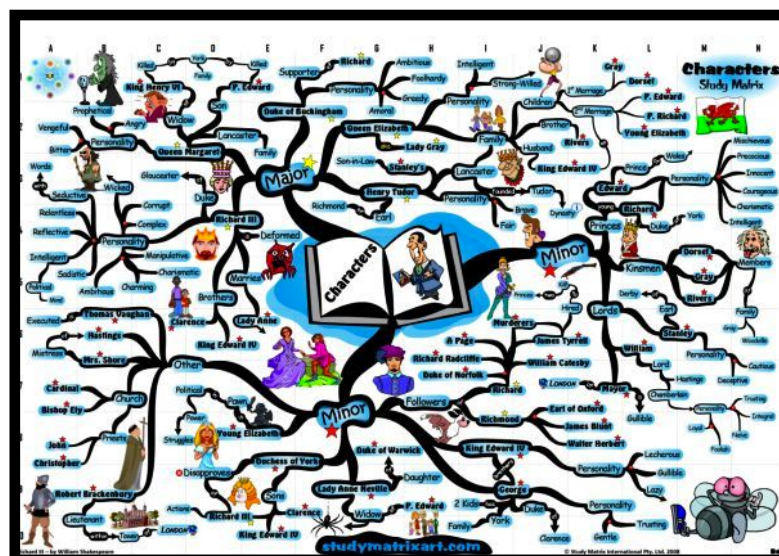
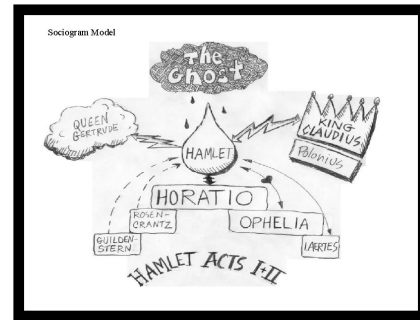
What is its purpose?

It helps you to think more deeply about the literary texts you have read or viewed.

How do I do it?

There are many variations, here are some suggestions:

- ✱ Place the central character at or near the centre of the page. Enclose the character's name with a circle so that it is readable. Arrows can be drawn to and from it.
- ✱ Let the physical distance between characters reflect the perceived psychological distance between characters
- ✱ Let the size of the shape representing a character vary with (a) the importance, or (b) the power of the character
- ✱ Show the direction of a relationship by an arrow, and its nature by a brief label. Arrows can be one-way, two-way or a boomerang effect
- ✱ In any order, use labeled arrows going from one character to another to indicate relationships, motivations, feelings, beliefs, attitudes, etc
- ✱ Think of as many arrows as possible indicating motivation, action, feelings, beliefs, or attitudes between each central character. A full and interesting sociogram will have many lines running between the characters. Think of how a plate of spaghetti looks
- ✱ Circle active characters with a solid line. Circle significantly less active characters with a broken line.
- ✱ Place the characters who support the main character on one side of a dividing line, and antagonistic characters on the other (goodies vs. baddies).
- ✱ You may also include settings and significant objects in the sociogram. These may also have arrows running between them and central characters.



Writer's Café

Rationale:

The final lesson in this unit will be for class presentations of the sociograms and for celebrating your writing through the reading of your short stories. Due to limited time, you will read an excerpt of your story to the audience. We will have the ambience of a “writer’s café,” and invite other teachers and parents to join us. Please plan on bringing food to share with our guests.

Learning Objectives:

- read your creative writing;
- demonstrate an increasing level of confidence in reading aloud
- demonstrate an appreciation for oral reading
- listen attentively to the other students reading their stories aloud

Activities:

1. Present your sociograms. You must be able to articulate the relationships between and among the elements of the short story.
2. Read an excerpt of your short story to the class.
3. Provide positive comments and feedback for peers.

