

STORY TEMPLATE

THE SHORT STORY



A plot is two dogs and one bone.

--- Robert Newton Peck

I think a short story is usually about one thing, and a novel about many. . . . A short story is like a short visit to other people, a novel like a long journey with others.

--- M. E. Kerr

“The king died and then the queen” is a story.

“The king died and then the queen died of grief” is a plot.

--- E. M. Forster

A short story is, in some ways, like a photograph -- a captured moment of time that is crystalline, though sometimes mysterious, arresting, though perhaps delicate. But while a photo may or may not suggest consequences, a short story always does. In the story's moment of time something important, something irrevocable has occurred. The change may be subtle or obvious, but it is definite and definitive. -- Marilyn Singer

A short story collection is the literary equivalent of a Whitman's Sampler. The reader pokes around to see what's interesting -- reads some stories the way you'd snap up the Truffle or Caramel, flips past others the way you'd put back the Bad Mint Coconut Swirl. A short story is bite-sized. Like good chocolate, it's intense. It's long enough to make you care about the characters -- but it resolves in a way that's satisfying, rather than seeming unfinished or overdone. -- Sharyn November

WHAT IS A SHORT STORY?

It's a piece of prose fiction, usually under 10,000 words, which can be read at one sitting. Artistically, a short story is intended to create an impression via character, conflict, theme, setting, symbols and point of view. Every detail contributes to this one impression -- a unity of effect. A short story is personal -- a part of the author -- and today is more concerned with character than action.

SOME ELEMENTS OF THE SHORT STORY

WHAT IS CHARACTERIZATION?

Well, there is **direct characterization**, where the author comes right out and tells the reader what a certain character is like. . .

“For he was a quiet man, not given to talking about himself and the things he had done.” --Maurice Walsh.

More effective is **indirect characterization** -- In this case, the author gives certain information and lets readers draw their own conclusions regarding the character of a person in the story --

1. Character's name, i.e. Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown."
2. Character's appearance.
3. What the character says.
4. What the character thinks (where story is told in first person or third person omniscient).
5. What ot people think of the character.
6. How animals react to the character.
7. What the character does, i.e. how the character acts in a particular situation.

WHAT IS IRONY?

Irony is a literary technique by which, through characterization or plot, the writer indicates something **opposite** to what is stated --

1. **Rhetorical (verbal) irony** -- saying the opposite of what is meant. Writer may use this method to reveal a character's weaknesses, prejudices, etc.
2. **Dramatic, tragic, or situational irony** -- reader knows more about the situation than the character -- giving a second meaning for the reader.
3. **Cosmic (fate) irony** -- destiny controls one's fate -- where one has little influence or significance -- a soldier returns from war and is killed in a car accident, etc.

WHAT IS SYMBOLISM?

A **symbol** is something that stands for something else. Such as: the cross standing for Christianity or the Star of David standing for Judaism. There are **conventional** symbols. In addition, there are **natural** symbols. Such as the sun standing for knowledge, shadows for distrust, etc.

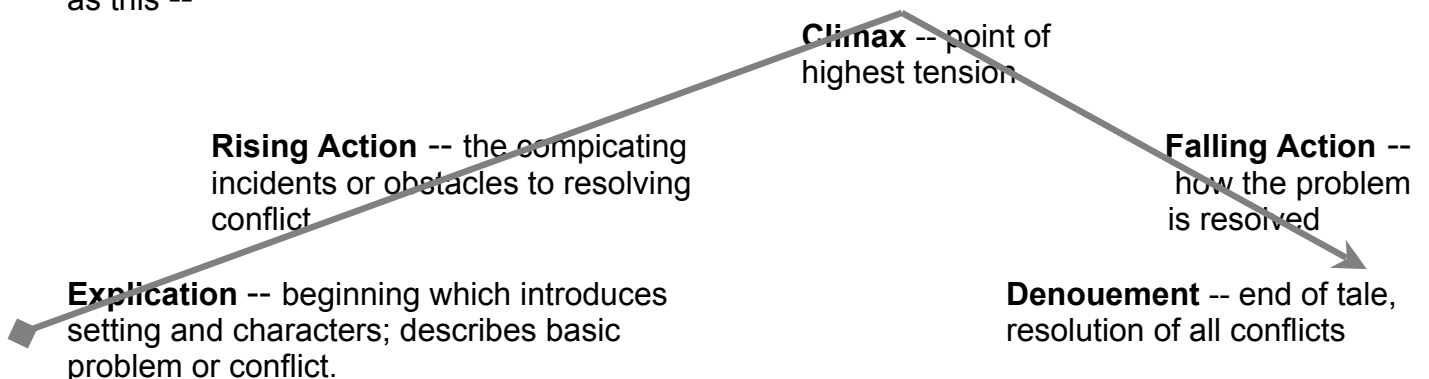
Symbols are much used in short stories. They may be people, objects, or the action itself to symbolize meaning -- such as death, love, grief.

Often symbolism is **personal** to the author and may be hard to decipher. In these cases, the reader may need to know about the author's background.

Note: Don't confuse **symbol** with **metaphor**. "Joe is a peacock" is a metaphor in which Joe is the subject and peacock is the **vehicle**. A symbol is based on the vehicle; that is, peacock could symbolize vanity.

WHAT IS PLOT?

Plot is the plan of action in the story. many modern short stories do not have well-defined plots. However, those that do generally follow a **plot plan** called Freytag's Pyramid, such as this --



The **turning point** is also important in a plot. It is the point in the plot at which the end is inevitable. It may or may not be the same as the **climax**. For example, in "Little Red Ridinghood," the turning point is when Little Red speaks with the Wolf; the climax is when the Wolf impersonates Grandma. Some standard plot twists include the **flashback**, a **surprise ending**, an **anti-climax**, and may well take advantage of a plot device such as **foreshadowing**. A plot may also be built upon recurring **parallel** events or a **circular** plot.

WHAT IS THE THEME?

The theme is the meaning or purpose of the story. A theme should—

- ✓ Be specific to the story.
- ✓ Be universal.
- ✓ Provide unity to the story.
- ✓ Be an integral part of the story.
- ✓ Present a new awareness of life.

Themes are sometimes characterized as conflicts -- man vs. man, man vs. nature, man vs. himself, good vs. evil, etc. Themes can be more specifically stated -- grace under pressure, the desire for love, etc:

WHAT IS POINT OF VIEW?

The **point of view** is the relationship of the narrator and the story. Sometimes this is called the method of narration.

Five Methods of Narration	Advantages	Disadvantages
First-person major – main character simply tells his story (i.e. Huckleberry Finn)	1. illusion of storyteller speaking out loud 2. excellent for use of verbal irony 3. reader identifies with character more easily – “I” 4. authority of eye witness more real and immediate	1. may give impression of conceit 2. reader cannot expect narrator to be unbiased
First-person minor – a minor character who “happens to be there” (i. e., Dr. Watson in Conan Doyle’s stories)	1. may describe main character directly and/or all characters 2. suspense created by concealing main character’s thoughts	1. his/her presence must always be justified
Third-person omniscient (all-knowing) – narrator knows the thoughts of all the characters in a story	1. author can reveal thoughts of any or all characters’ thoughts 2. author can comment and explain significance	1. may result in lack of focus and emphasis 2. not realistic 3. hamper reader from reaching own conclusions
Third-person ordinary (limited) –narrator tells only what he perceives	1. flexible – allows main character to die at end 2. author can describe and comment on character 3. more objective – dramatic – reader makes own judgments	1. limits reader’s knowledge of actioto what central character experiences and observes 2. reader loses depth of understanding based on character’s thoughts and feelings
Third-person central character – narrator tells only what the central character thinks, feels, does, etc.	1. effect of first person narration with no danger of egotism by narrator 2. allows reader to draw own conclusions regarding the other characters	1. may lack intimacy of first-person narration

WHAT IS TONE?

The **tone** is how the writer feels about his/her characters and his/her plot. It may be light, romantic, sympathetic, ironic, pensive, and is usually described by adjectives.

Tone is set by --

- ✓ **Action** (i.e., a brutal murder sets a morbid tone).
- ✓ **Choice of details** in presenting facts.
- ✓ **Author's style** -- figurative language, diction, rhythm, sounds.

A writer often uses shifts in tone -- from satirical to sympathetic, from light to serious, etc. -- to shock the reader and maintain interest in the story.

WHAT IS THE STYLE?

The style of a short story is the way in which the writer uses language. Here are some of the things which make up a writer's style:

Diction -- choice of words. For example, simple one-syllable words or elaborate sentences with more sophisticated words.

Types of Sentences -- simple, compound, fragmented, complex, cumulative, compound-complex.

Use of Poetic Language -- figurative language like simile, metaphor, alliteration, assonance, symbolism, rhythmic patterns, personification, etc.

Theme -- Many writers employ the same basic theme, which may run through almost all the writer's stories.

Rhetorical Devices and Effects –

antithesis -- balancing contrasting words or ideas against each other.

apostrophe -- sudden shift to direct address (either to absent or present entity).

rhetorical question -- one not to evoke a reply but to get more emphasis than a direct statement.

chiasmus -- use of phrases syntactically parallel but with reversed elements.

periphrasis -- circumlocution, roundabout expression using superfluous words.

LRJ

Your **Literary Response Journal** should convince me that you have read and thought carefully about each assigned short story. If your understanding of The story is “wrong,” yet your journal clearly proves that you read (*or misread*) The story, you may well receive full credit. Your grade is based on content –

what you have to say, how well you say it, your thoughts and feelings about the story, and your explanation of the logic that led to your interpretation.

Your grade is also based on following directions. I will not penalize you for grammar and usage errors -- but to receive credit, you **MUST** include the following in every **LRJ**:

- ✓ the short story’s title in quotation marks
- ✓ the author’s name
- ✓ a quotation from the story--integrated with your own sentence, properly punctuated, and commented upon as necessary to show why you cited that particular passage. **No Quote Lumps!**
- ✓ specific references to the short story
- ✓ careful thought

After you’ve included the five **MUSTS** above, you may choose any of these **MAYBEs** to guide your response. You may even choose the same one every time. Consider the possibilities:

- [1] an analysis of a major character -- flat/round, static/dynamic, internal / external conflicts, dominant traits, significant actions, personal relationships...
- [2] a comparison / contrast of related characters -- protagonist / antagonist, foils, doubles, stereotypes, stock characters...
- [3] a discussion of the role(s) played by minor character(s)
- [4] an analysis of elements of plot (exposition, narrative hook, rising action, climax / turning point, falling action, resolution) or plot patterns
- [5] an analysis of the effect of the author’s chosen point of view
- [6] an analysis of the effect of setting -- time, place, circumstances
- [7] an explanation of symbolism in the story
- [8] a discussion of the validity and development of the theme(s)
- [9] a discussion of the title’s significance
- [10] a detailed response to a specific word, phrase, sentence, passage, or scene
- [11] a very limited or general comparison to another story, song, poem, movie...
- [12] a close analysis of the author’s style -- vocabulary, figurative language, imagery, sentence structure, dialogue / narration...
- [13] a re-telling of the story, adding an additional scene, or changing an element such as the ending, setting, point of view, tone...
- [14] a transformation of the story to another form, such as a poem, a letter, a play, a news story, a commercial, a cartoon, a soap opera, a fable...
- [15] an original poem developing in some way from the assigned story
- [16] a statement relating the story to your experience or ideas
- [17] an explanation of problems you had in understanding the story
- [18] your opinion of the story, good or bad, supported by specific references from the story

Length: Approximately 1/2 to 1 page long for each **LRJ**

Format: Blue or black ink, front side of the paper only

Due: Beginning of the hour in the blue wire basket on my desk.

NARRATIVE TYPES

TYPE ONE: Interior Monologue

The reader is taken inside the mind of a character. We read his or her thoughts -- listen in.

Examples: _____

TYPE TWO: Dramatic Monologue.

The main character tells a story to another character. The reader "listens in."

Examples: _____

TYPE THREE: Letter Narration

Events are told through letters exchanged by the characters.

Examples: _____

TYPE FOUR: Diary Narration.

Events are recorded in the diary of one of the characters.

Examples: _____

TYPE FIVE: Subjective Narration.

The narrator is the main character and is telling the story to us in a time very close to the time the events happened.

Examples: _____

TYPE SIX: Detached Autobiography.

The narrator again is one of the characters -- but this time he or she is telling the story much after it actually happened. The narrator is, therefore, not so involved and, perhaps, more objective.

Examples: _____

TYPE SEVEN: Memoir, or Observer Narration.

The narrator tells a story about other characters. The narrator is a participant, an observer -- not the main character.

Examples: _____

TYPE EIGHT: Biography, or Anonymous Narration – Single-Character Point of View.

The narrator tells about others without identifying himself or telling us how he knows what he knows. The narrator tells the story through the eyes of one character.

Examples: _____

TYPE NINE: Anonymous Narration – Dual-Character Point of View.

Same as Type Eight, but the narrator presents the thoughts, feelings, and attitudes of TWO characters in the tale.

Examples: _____

TYPE TEN: Anonymous Narration – Multiple-Character Point of View.

Same as Types Eight and Nine, but the narrator presents the thoughts, feelings and attitudes of a number of characters.

Examples: _____

TYPE ELEVEN: Anonymous Narration -- No Character Point of View.

Purely description -- the narrator is not in the minds of the characters but describes actions and events only.

Examples: _____

POINT OF VIEW

I

He perched upon the surprisingly narrow wall. Looking down made him dizzy, but he had to look down if he were ever to return to his friends below. Friends, indeed! They were the cause of his being here now in this dangerous position -- mocking, jeering, daring him. "Climb the wall," they said. "Climb the wall, chicken!" So he climbed, his feet feeling leaden, his hands slippery with sweat, his heart thunderously pounding in his ears. But he reached the top. The view! He hadn't realized! In the distance he could see trees, like those in the park where mother used to take him. Trees and a far, blue horizon. But below, the distant earth and the white, upturned faces of his now silent friends. He slid both feet into the void and rested one on a slight protrusion in the sheer plunge of the wall. He suddenly felt the ancient mortar crumble, felt no weight in his body, saw the top racing away from him. A smashing, numbing blow. "But the blue trees," he thought. Then blackness.

II

We interrupt this program to bring you a special news bulletin. An unidentified person has just fallen from the top of a high wall at the corner of Vermont and Mediterranean Avenues. The walls in that vicinity are over fifty feet high. No report of the accident victim's condition has been received. A large crowd has now gathered, and Police Chief Little urges all citizens to stay away from the scene of the accident, so as not to create a traffic problem. It has just been reported that the Royal Emergency Squad is on its way to the scene. Stay tuned to this station for further details. We now return you to your regularly scheduled program.

III

"We got there as quickly as possible, but it was too late. The crazy crowds held us up. They swarmed all over the place, vicious thrill seekers. They probably yelled at him to jump. We finally had to go round by way of Boardwalk to get there. Had to really push our way through. He lay there all crumpled up. Real bad case. We did all we could, especially Sergeant Blue. Good man. Tried everything we could, there on the spot. Plasma, morphine, respirator. Nothing helped. Just a young kid, really. Even had to fight the blasted crowd to take it away!"

IV

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the King's horses and all the King's men
Couldn't put Humpty Dumpty together again.

MORALS FROM AESOP'S FABLES

- 1. Do not judge people's usefulness by their appearance.**
- 2. Every problem has a different solution.**
- 3. If you want something done, do it yourself.**
- 4. A man in love is easily deceived.**
- 5. There is no point being stubborn just for the sake of it.**
- 6. Some people pretend to despise the things they cannot have.**
- 7. Actions speak louder than words.**
- 8. Freedom is more important than comfort.**
- 9. Familiarity breeds contempt.**
- 10. Don't count your chickens before they are hatched.**
- 11. Pride comes before a fall.**
- 12. One good turn deserves another.**
- 13. Don't try to be something you are not..**
- 14. Look before you leap.**
- 15. United we stand; divided we fall.**
- 16. Be prepared.**
- 17. Plan ahead.**
- 18. Think before you act.**
- 19. You can't please everyone.**
- 20. No one believes a liar -- even when he tells the truth.**
- 21. Be satisfied with what you have.**
- 22. People don't appreciate things they do not understand.**
- 23. Slow and steady wins the race.**
- 24. One swallow does not make a summer.**
- 25. Sometimes it is safer not to have an opinion.**
- 26. Where there's a will there's a way.**
- 27. Don't believe everything you hear.**
- 28. You can tell what people are like from the friends they choose.**
- 29. Experience is a good teacher.**
- 30. Vanity is expensive.**
- 31. Spare the rod and spoil the child.**
- 32. Pretending to be something you are not may get you in trouble.**
- 33. If you give an inch, you may lose a mile.**

Things to Do with a Short Story

1. Rewrite a passage from a story from as many points of view as possible.
2. Write a television script for one of the stories you have read.
3. Present an oral interpretation from one of the stories you have read.
4. Convert one of the stories you have read to readers' theatre, assemble a cast, and read it to the class.
5. Write a letter to a character in a story you have read, giving him advice.
6. Put a character from a story you have read into a totally new setting of your invention and tell (or show) how he would react in those circumstances.
7. Write your own short story.
8. Write a short story and tell the class how you did it, why you chose the various characters, the setting, the particular point of view, etc.
9. Compare two characters -- either from the same story, one from each of two stories.
10. Read several stories dealing with the same theme. Develop a creative way of demonstrating their relationship.
11. Read as many short stories as you can and submit a list to the teacher, including your personal reaction to each.
12. Discuss a story that you liked (or disliked) with the teacher. Or with the class. Or with another student.
13. Compare a story you liked to one you disliked, explaining why.
14. Compose an imaginary encounter between two characters from different stories.
15. Construct a collage to illustrate the theme of a story you enjoyed.
16. Choose a character and tell what you would have done in his place, giving reasons for your decision.
17. Describe a character completely. Collect your data by filling in a chart with three columns headed "Detail from the Story," "What Detail Reveals about the Character," and "Method of Revealing Character."
18. After determining the theme of a particular story, attempt to prove that it is a valid or invalid world view.
19. Write a new ending for a story you have read. Consider what other changes must be made in the story to make your ending logical and how your ending would alter the overall meaning of the story.
20. Is there a character in any story you have read who is similar to someone you know in real life? Describe this person, pointing out the similarities to the fictional character.
21. Explain which character you are most similar to.
22. Assemble a collection of newspaper clippings on which short stories might be based, explaining how you would develop them into a story.
23. Illustrate a story you liked with photographs, clippings from magazines, or drawings.
24. Don Wolfe has stated that "a short story is a study of two parts of the same hero, one part of him at war with another." Demonstrate how this is true in stories you have read.
25. Devise your own activity, subject to the teacher's approval.

THE SHORT STORY: Seminar Presentations

Your group's seminar presentation should be a coherent discussion that helps your classmates *appreciate* your chosen short story. Provide an extensive handout in note format, which will serve as a kind of "mini-Cliff Note," giving literary and biographical information needed for a thorough understanding of the story. Include all the topics on this assignment sheet in reproducible form (typed or printed in black ink). The very best handouts will be more than thorough -- perhaps even provocative. Your presentation should take from 20 to 30 minutes, but it should not be a mechanical rendering of information already on the handout. (*Remember that as teachers, you will also be expected to evaluate your lesson and assess your classmates' learning!*)

1. **The Writer's Background:** How has the writer's personal life affected this story? What literary influences are evident from the writer's background or from the story itself? Do not tell everything you find, but rather sift through this information, interpreting and emphasizing what is truly relevant.
2. **The Writer's Other Works:** Is this work typical for the writer? Are the themes in your story consistent with themes in other works by the writer? Has the writer used other literary forms in any way that might be significant or interesting? Show us the connections.
3. **Précis of the Short Story:** Following directions given in class, write a one-paragraph summary of the story. Do not draw conclusions or interpret in your synopsis. Be accurate and concise. Write in your own words, but avoid choppy sentences. Combine "baby" sentences when necessary for grace.
4. **Technical Details about the Short Story:**
 - A. **Setting:** Describe the *setting*, as to both time and place. Is the setting *integral* to the story or *independent*? Analyze whether a change in setting would significantly alter the story.
 - B. **Characters:** List and analyze the major characters. Discuss *dominant traits* and *significant actions*. Are they *flat* or *round*, *static* or *dynamic*? Examine whether character is revealed *directly* or *indirectly*. Explore character relationships if appropriate for your story. Identify *protagonist* and *antagonist*. Note any *foils* or *doubles*.
 - C. **Point of View:** Who is the *narrator*? Is he *reliable*? What *point of view* is used? *First* or *third-person*? *Limited* or *omniscient*? *Major* or *minor* character perspective? *Objective* or *subjective*? Analyze how the writer's choice of viewpoint influences the reader.
 - D. **Plot Structure:** List and analyze the elements of plot (*narrative hook*, *exposition*, *rising action*, *climax* or *turning point*, *falling action*, and *resolution*). Does the story fit Freytag's pyramid, or is it organized differently? Are the conflicts *internal* or *external*? Specifically, who vs. whom? Are the conflicts resolved?
 - E. **Theme:** List several possible themes offered by your story rather than committing your group to one and one alone. Indicate whether theme is *stated* or *implied*. Remember theme must be a statement; no questions allowed!
5. **Significant Quotations:** Cite sentences and/or passages which seem significant or which illustrate the writer's *style*. Include the page number and be prepared to discuss what each quotation means, why you chose it, and how it is important to the story. Remember that *dialogue* and *quotation* are not the same thing.
6. **Special Topics:** What special line of inquiry interests your group? You might consider additional technical aspects, such as *irony*, *satire*, *figurative language*, or *symbolism*. Does this story take a stand about family relationships, sexual attitudes, racial discrimination, economics, politics, or religion? Might the *Seven Deadly Sins* or the *Seven Cardinal Virtues* be relevant? Or a discussion of *sins of omission* vs. *sins of commission*?

You could discuss plot patterns, such as *rite of passage*, *initiation*, *fall from innocence*, or *quest*. Or examine *motifs*, such as death and rebirth or cycles of nature. You might apply *Northrop Frye's heroic types* or *Joseph Campbell's plot paradigm*. Or Sigmund Freud's *id*, *ego*, and *superego*? Or Carl Jung's *archetypes*? Perhaps there are contrasts that produce tension within the story: Reason vs. Emotion, Knowledge vs. Ignorance, Realism vs. Romanticism, Civilization vs. Savagery, Age vs. Youth, Male vs. Female? And on and on and on...

THE SHORT STORY: Seminar Presentations

Students _____ Block _____ Date _____

Short Story _____

**

Handout (_____ pages)

**

- _____ 1. Author's Background (5)
- _____ 2. Author's Other Works (5)
- _____ 3. Précis (10)
- _____ 4. Setting (5)
- _____ 5. Characters (20)
- _____ 6. Point of View (5)
- _____ 7. Plot Structure (20)
- _____ 8. Theme (5)
- _____ 9. Quotes (15)
- _____ 10. Special Topic: (10)

POINTS POSSIBLE (100)

**

Oral Presentation

**

- _____ 1. Lesson Plan & Organization (10)
- _____ 2. Speaking Voice(s) (10)
- _____ 3. Teaches Story (15)
- _____ 4. Knowledge of Story (30)
- _____ 5. Answering Questions (10)
- _____ 6. Your Turn to Grade: (25)

POINTS POSSIBLE (100)

- _____ Handout On Time
- _____ Reproducible
- _____ Note Format
- _____ Spelling OK
- _____ Punctuation OK

Oral Presentation _____ points
+ **Handout** _____ points

=====

TOTAL _____ points
Letter Grade _____ %

Comments: _____

SO YOU THINK IT'S EASY?

Your Turn

SETTING:

Examine magazines to locate three pictures -- each quite different -- which could serve as the setting for a short story. Examine each picture and think about how you would describe it for a story setting. To develop your setting you would need to include descriptive details based on the sensory images -- sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures. Your description, however, should convey a mood, not just reproduce the scene photographically. Write at least one paragraph describing each of your scenes as if the paragraph were part of a short story. Mount each picture and its companion description on unlined paper.

CHARACTERIZATION:

Examine magazines to locate three pictures of people who could serve as characters in a short story. Your pictures should represent a variety of character types. Examine each picture to determine how the character's appearance and actions reveal personality. Think about how you would present each character if he appeared in a short story. Write about each pictured character, experimenting with different points of view and different methods of revealing character. Be sure to use each of the following techniques for revealing character at least once (not necessarily once in each description):

1. **Authorial Statement** -- you explicitly reveal his personality.
2. **Character's Appearance** -- his face, body, and clothing reveal his personality.
3. **Character's Actions** -- what he does reveals his personality.
4. **Character's Thoughts** -- what he thinks reveals his personality.
5. **Character's Words** -- what he says reveals his personality.
6. **Reactions to the Character** -- what other characters say and think about him reveal his personality.

You may need to write several paragraphs about each picture, but keep to the point. Concentrate on revealing character -- not constructing a full short story. Mount each picture and its companion paragraphs on unlined paper.

DIALOGUE AND NARRATION:

Examine newspapers, cartoon strip anthologies, and/or online resources to locate three short strips which include dialogue. You may choose from any general circulation strip, classic or contemporary -- Archie, B. C., Beetle Bailey, Calvin and Hobbes, Cathy, Dilbert, Garfield, Hagar the Horrible, Katzenjammer Kids, Mary Worth, Peanuts, Wizard of Id, Zippy, Zits, and so on -- but be sure that each panel you select has at least two boxes (so, no single panel editorial cartoons). Then transform each strip into a scene as if it appeared in a short story. You will need to reproduce dialogue word for word, putting the words that appear in balloons in quotation marks in your narrative. You will also need to write original narration to reveal what's happening in the pictures. Remember, when you write dialogue, you must begin a new paragraph every time the speaker changes. Mount each comic strip and its companion narration on unlined paper.

Online Background and Resources

Wikipedia Background on Comic Strips & Links
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comic_strip

National Cartoonists Society
<http://www.reuben.org/news/>

Comics.com Free Online Strips (including Peanuts)
<http://comics.com>

Comic Strip Nation
<http://www.comicstripnation.com/>



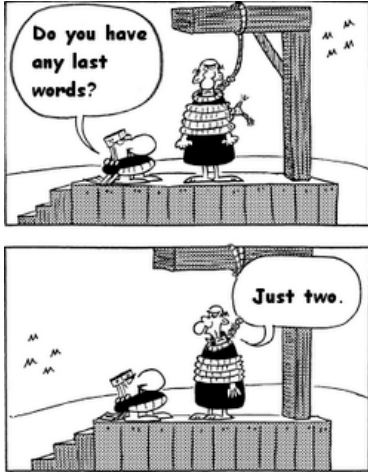
Comic Strip Project
<http://www.bpib.com/comicsproj/>

Stu's Comic Strip Connection
<http://www.stus.com/3majors.htm>

San Francisco Chronicle Comic gateway
<http://www.sfgate.com/comics/>

Yahoo Directory to Comic Strips
http://dir.yahoo.com/Entertainment/Comics_and_Animation/Comic_Strips/

Sample Graphics

Sample Setting Picture	Sample Character Picture	Sample Comic Strip
		

pp. * - *

Author

dates of birth / death
place, job, family;
other facts about life

details about author's
works; maybe Title
of major work.

★ Maybe "QUOTE" or
special note from
class lecture

Setting

Place and
Time of story

1) scene
2) scene } most important
3) scene

Use NAMES of places
if given in story

Theme

complete
sentence
stating

main idea or
moral or
message or
lesson to be learned
from story

Point of View

✓ 1st ("I") or 3rd (he "it",
she "it")
✓ limited (one character's
viewpoint) or
omniscient (all characters
viewpoints)
✓ central or minor
character's viewpoint
if applicable

Significant Quote

"QUOTE which has universal
application; makes sense,
outside context of story."
NOT in all stories. p. *

"Title of the Short Story" By Author's Full Name

■ Major Character - description;
actions; interests; "little quotes" CONFLICTS
Flat or Round - 3 character traits
Static or Dynamic - changes from → to
★ IMP aspect of personality or actions.
✓ Specific point } etc. as appropriate
✓ Specific points }

"Significant QUOTE which reveals
or describes character's personality."
p. *

■ Other Major Characters -
follow same sort of approach
"Perhaps QUOTE also." CONFLICTS
p. *

and so on for ■ Major Characters

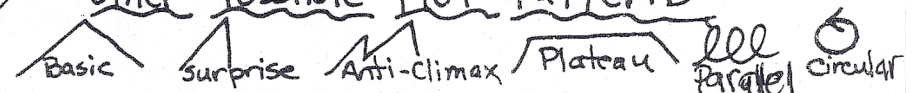
□ Minor Character - details, etc.
perhaps showing why this character
is in the story ("Maybe QUOTE if important."
p. *)
and so on for □ Minor Characters

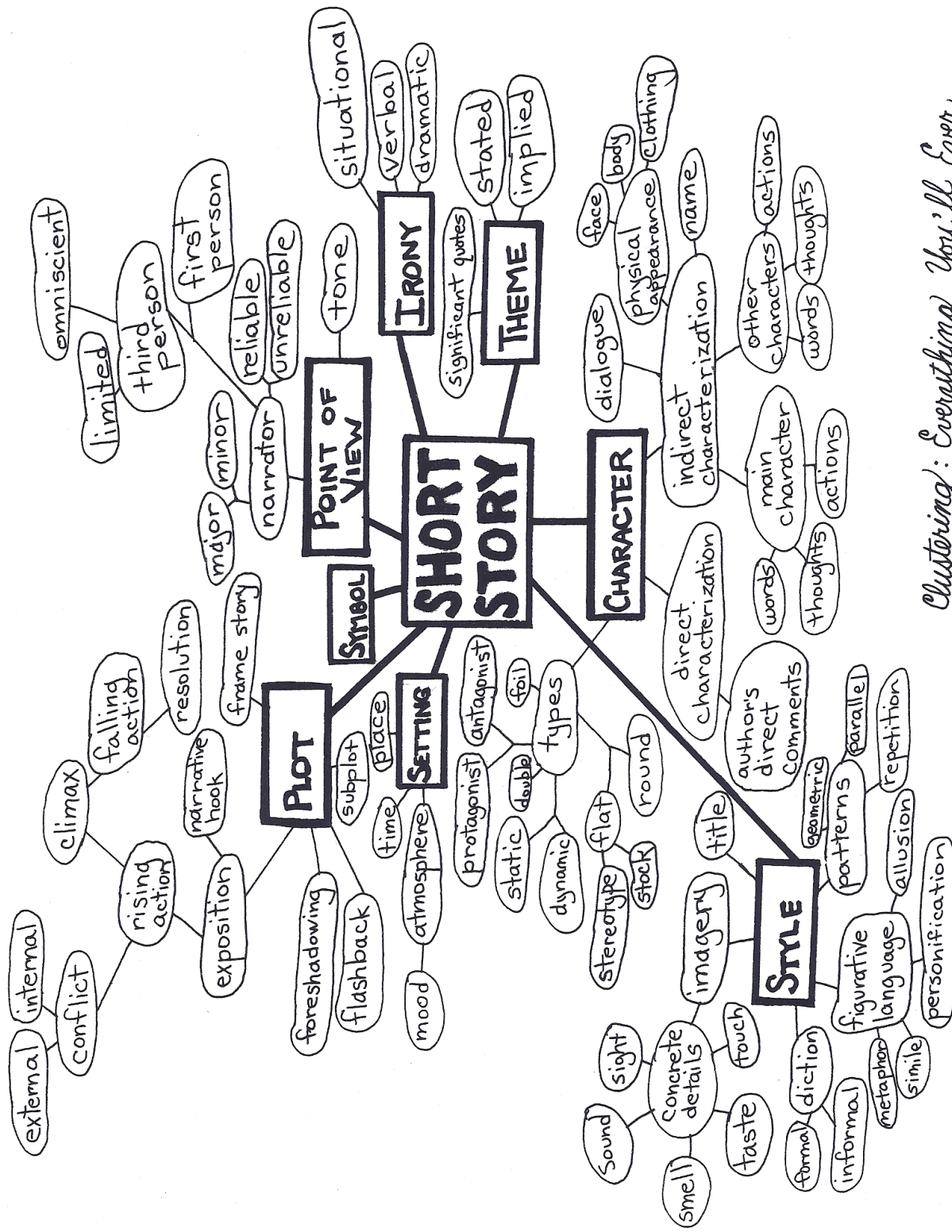
PLOT DEVELOPMENT

Exposition → "Background"; introduce setting,
characters, opening situation
Narrative Hook → attention grabber
Conflict/Problem → specific application
Conflict/Problem → of internal/external
Conflict/Problem → conflicts; etc.
Climax → Point of greatest interest
or Turning Point → Point at which end
of story is inevitable (may NOT be the same)
Falling Action → Unraveling the knot
Resolution → Author's final comment,
perhaps distanced from story.

[FORESHADOWING, FLASHBACK, etc.]

Other Possible Plot Patterns





Clustering: Everything You'll Ever Need to Know about the short story

S. Effinger

Quoting from a Short Story

When you write about a short story or refer to a short story in a literary response journal or an essay, you will frequently need to quote from it. Below are some rules to follow when you refer to the title of a story or quote words from it. All the examples given in the rules are taken from the short story “Test” by Theodore Thomas.

RULE 1: *Whenever you mention the title of a short story, put quotation marks around it.*

Robert Proctor, the protagonist in “Test,” by Theodore Thomas, fails his driving test because he doesn’t understand the rules.

RULE 2: *Whenever you quote an uncommon word or a longer phrase that appears in the story, put quotation marks around it and INTEGRATE the quoted material within your own sentence.*

Robert’s compassionate nature is revealed in his concern for what might have happened to the sleeping girl. He knows that, had the accident been real, she would have passed unknowingly “into the dark, heavy sleep of death.”

RULE 3: *Whenever you quote a phrase that uses only part of a longer sentence, indicate where words have been omitted by using AN ELLIPSIS.*

One of the most startling images in the story occurs in the last paragraph when the two men drag “Robert Proctor out the door...his rubber heels sliding along the two grooves worn into the floor.”

RULE 4: *Whenever you quote two or more whole lines from the story, do not use quotation marks unless they enclose dialogue. Instead, write the lines from the story on separate, indented lines within your paragraph. When several lines are cited, they should be especially significant.*

You should “set up” the quote by introducing it and justify such a long quote by explaining its importance afterwards “saying goodbye”).

The theme of the story is revealed in the final interchange between Robert and the uniformed man. Robert says,

“You can’t really mean this, I’m still dreaming aren’t I? This is still part of the test isn’t it?”

The uniformed man said, “How do any of us know?”

The author is saying that we never know when a seemingly simple action, like driving down a freeway, will have serious consequences. Our ability to make wise decisions may be tested at any time.

ACTIVITIES: Use the assigned story. Answer on a separate page

1. Write a sentence that explains what this story is about. Use the title of the short story and the author in your sentence.
2. In another sentence, discuss the main character and point out how some specific words or phrases from the story help reveal the way the personality of the character.
3. In another sentence, point out a striking image in the story. Quote a phrase that uses only part of a longer sentence and indicate where words have been omitted by using an ellipsis correctly.
4. In a sentence that comments on your opinion about the theme of the story, quote a passage that is longer than two lines. Be sure to “set up” the quote and to “say goodbye” by explaining it afterwards.

QUOTING APPROPRIATELY: “Shaving” by Leslie Norris

Directions: Complete each of the following writing assignments by incorporating quotes from the story into your own sentences. Quote only PHRASES from the story. Do not quote an entire sentence. Each quote you use must fit into an original sentence of your own. If necessary to make your point clear, write sentences explaining the significance of the phrases you have quoted.

For example:

By the story’s end, we see Barry looking out a window that is full of the “dying sunlight.” Barry stands there, “knowing it would soon be gone.” At one level, Barry recognizes that his father is dying, in the same way that the sun is fading. At another level, Barry also realizes that his own youth and strength will fade in the future.

1. The two main characters in this story are at different stages of life. Examine the ways Barry is contrasted with his father. Write a paragraph contrasting the two, including appropriate quotes.
2. The act of shaving is important because it is the act by which Barry comes of age. In a sense, Barry undergoes a rite of passage and takes up his father’s authority. Write a paragraph explaining how Barry grows up during the story.
3. The act of shaving is also presented as a kind of ceremony. Write a paragraph proving that shaving is symbolic in this story.
4. What details in the last two paragraphs indicate that Barry accepts the fact that some day his own youth will be gone? Explain in a short paragraph.

CITATION NOTES

Each group will be assigned a thesis sentence and will take **citation notes** to support that thesis -- very specific evidence from the story -- a quotation, an action or event, a detail or description or example -- not your opinion!

1. Before you begin making any citation notes, discuss the thesis sentence and re-state it in your own words.
2. Then decide how many component parts (or body paragraphs) are promised in the thesis sentence. Divide a piece of paper into columns for each component, and label each column with your **key words**.
3. As a group, go through the story and cite evidence to support each component. In the appropriate column, list your evidence for that paragraph-- examples, events, details, quotes, and so on. (page # needed for quotations)
4. When your group finishes, you should have many, many more citation notes than you would ever be able to use in a five-paragraph essay. Later, each group member will select the best evidence to use in an individual essay.

Example: The story told in “Chee’s Daughter” bears striking similarities to the Greek myth of Demeter and her child Persephone.