

Writing a Short Story – Assignment

- You will write a descriptive, fictional short story.
- To begin the story, use one of the introductory lines below. This line **MUST** appear in the first paragraph of the story, although it does not have to be the first line.
 - a) *She was peering through the window, counting the cars that went by, wondering...*
 - b) *I never thought I could do it, but...*
 - c) *If time could stand still or even go backwards, I would...*
 - d) *Inside the envelope was a four-leaf clover...*
 - e) *...and then the ice cream truck came down the road...*
- Plan the elements of your story, including: setting, plot, conflict, point of view, and characters.
 - Make sure this planning is included with the first draft.
- Write a first draft of the story, based on the planning. Be sure to double space.
- Length of the story: 1.5 - 5 pages (maximum).
- Consider the elements below when writing the story:
 1. **Introduction:** does it quickly and effectively engage the reader's interest? Does it harmonize with the general tone of the story?
 2. **Conflict:** is the conflict sharp enough to be interesting? Is it realistic?
 3. **Plot line:** does the story develop logically? Is there any even that could be removed so that the story could be told more economically?
 4. **Narrative viewpoint:** is it consistent? If not, then is the shifting view point used effectively? Is there a more effective way of telling the story and revealing the theme? Does it assist the flow of the narrative?
 5. **Characters:** are they consistent? Sufficiently contrasting? Engaging? Have they been introduced and developed with clear, distinguishing characteristics? Are they sufficiently detailed to be realistic and not stereotypical?
 6. **Atmosphere:** are elements of surprise or humor or irony or suspense included for specific effects?
 7. **Style:** is appropriate diction used for each character and the time period and location of setting? Has descriptive language been used where it can be most effective?
 8. **Ending:** does it leave the reader satisfied? Surprised? Does the ending make sense?
 9. **Title:** is the title suggestive? Brief? Does it appeal to the imagination? Does it reveal too much?
- Keep in mind that this story will be edited many times by you and by others as we discuss and review the elements of a short story.

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.	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.
Title Page	Title page has a graphic or fancy lettering, has the title, author's name, date, and class period.	Title page has the title, author's name, illustrator's name, and the year.	Title page has the 3 of the 4 required elements.	Title page has fewer than 3 of the required elements.
Consistency in: mood, theme, tone, point of view, and verb tense	Elements stay consistent throughout the story.	Elements stay mostly consistent throughout the story.	Many errors in consistency in elements.	Elements not consistent.
Use of: flashback, foreshadowing, imagery, irony, symbol, metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, understatement	Story encompasses four or more of these elements.	Story encompasses three of these elements.	Story encompasses two of these elements.	Story encompasses one or none of these elements.

Prewriting, Rough Draft, Peer Editing, Plot Diagram, and Class Time Use Rubric

Prewriting:

- _____ / 20pts Had prewriting completed on the day it was due (and before the story was written)
_____ / 0pts Did NOT have prewriting completed on the day it was due (or started writing without it completed)

Rough Draft:

- _____ / 10pts Had rough draft completed on the day it was due
_____ / 0pts Did NOT have rough draft completed on the day it was due

Peer Editing:

- _____ / 10pts Turned in two peer editing sheets
_____ / 0pts Did NOT turn in two peer editing sheets

Plot Diagram:

- _____ / 5pts Completed plot diagram upon story completion
_____ / 0pts Did NOT complete plot diagram upon story completion

Story:

- _____ / 48pts Story Total (from rubric above)

Class Time:

- _____ / 7pts Worked hard during allotted time (used WIN, if needed, to complete story on time)

- _____ / 100 pts Overall Total