

Creative Writing – Short Story

Exhibit Requirements for All Divisions:

- A. Exhibit a different story for each year you are enrolled in this project.
- B. Your short story must have a title, your name and the date completed on a cover page.
- C. Your short story must be typed with a 12 inch font, double spaced, and printed on one sided paper. (Make sure to type your name and the title of your short story on each page.)
- D. Also include on the cover sheet whether your short story is Adventure, Factual, Fiction, Mystery, or Romance, Fairy Tale, etc.
- E. Exhibit your short story in some type of binder or notebook.

BEGINNER: Grades 3, 4 and 5

Exhibit: A short story with 150 to 250 words following the requirements listed above.

INTERMEDIATE: Grades 6, 7 and 8

Exhibit: A short story with 250 to 500 words following the requirements listed above.

ADVANCED: Grades 9, 10, 11 and 12

Exhibit: A short story with 500 to 1,000 words following the requirements listed above.

The First Step in Writing a Short Story

Your job in writing a story is to draw your reader into the story. Make them feel like they are there experiencing and seeing the things you describe. The reader will have a better picture in their mind about what is happening in your story when you use descriptive words.

Example:

There was a flower in the yard.

Better example: One sunny day after a quenching summer shower, I spotted a single Black-eyed Susan in our yard raising its head toward the once again blue sky that now displayed a rainbow.

What is a Short Story?

There are several common characteristics to a short story:

- Has a limited number of characters and scenes
- Covers a short time period
- Usually starts close to the conclusion of the story
- The story takes off at a fast speed
- Deals with only one problem or conflict

1) Getting Started

List your ideas –

Sketch out on paper the characters, plot, emotional tone, etc.

Brainstorm these ideas and jot them down as they come to your mind. Don't slow down to organize your ideas into sentences and paragraphs. A story will start to develop around your list of ideas and thoughts.

Make a list of events –
Think about a stressful, unusual, or difficult time in your life.
Select some of these events to write a paragraph about each one

Additional writing tips –

Keep a notebook to write down expressive phrases, images or thoughts,
conversations about people and things around the world.
Write on a regular basis – Sit down in your favorite place. Compose sentences for a
couple hours every day
Collect stories from people you meet – Study these stories for hidden meanings and
how they may apply to understanding people or relate to real life situations.

2) **Write a Catchy First Paragraph** – The first sentence of a short story should catch
the reader's attention with the unusual, the unexpected, or some kind of action or
conflict.

3) **Develop Your Characters** – Help the reader to get to know the character(s) in your
story by providing detail and descriptive words in these four areas:

Appearance – gives the reader a visual understanding of the character
Action – shows the reader what kind of person the character is through
describing the character's actions
Speech – develops the character as a person
Thought – brings the reader into the mind of the character by showing the
character's memories, fears, and hopes

4) **Select a Point of View** – Point of view is the narration of the story from the first,
second or third person.

1st Person – the story is told the view of "I"
2nd Person – the story is told directly to you
3rd Person – the story tells what "he", "she" or "it" does

5) **Write Meaningful Dialogue** – Dialogue is what the characters say to each other
(or to themselves). A good short story will allow the reader to see the characters'
actions, behavior, or movement through your use of words.

6) **Describe the Setting** – Setting is where the plot of the story takes place and may
include the time, location, situation, event, and atmosphere. It is more descriptive to
use 2 or more senses to describe the setting. The more detail you use to describe
the setting of your story, the reader will be able to picture the scene.

7) **Set the Plot** – The plot of the story is what actually happens in the story. It is also
called the story line and shows the action or series of events. The plot shows the
turning points in the story and reveals what the characters do at the end of the story.

8) **Create Conflict and Tension** – Conflict produces tension and is what makes the
story interesting. Tension can be shown between the character or characters, or the
internal and external forces or conditions can be written your story. Conflict can be
shown in many ways through –

- ▼ **mystery** – explain just enough to tease the reader
- ▼ **surprise** – give just enough information to keep the reader from predicting events too far in advance
- ▼ **empathy** – identification with characters and scenarios
- ▼ **insight** – revealing something about human nature or how it relates to real life situations
- ▼ **progression** – how the number and type of obstacles or events intensify
- ▼ **universality** – present a struggle that is meaningful to most readers or that most reader can identify with

9) **Build the story with a crisis or climax** – The crisis or climax in a story is also called the turning point. It is the most exciting or dramatic part the story. Don't include the crisis too early in your story so the readers won't expect another turning point.

10) **Find a Resolution** – In a short story it is difficult to provide a complete resolution (or solution to the conflict). You may need to show that the characters are changing in some way, or made a decision, or began to see things differently.

- 11) **End Your Story** – There are several options for ending a story.
- A. Open ending – readers determine the meaning
 - B. Resolved – the story has a clear-cut outcome
 - C. Literal image – the setting resolves the plot
 - D. Symbolic image – the details represent a meaning behind a literal one
 - E. Parallel to beginning – similar to beginning situation or image presented
 - F. Monologue – using the comments of the character to end your story
 - G. Dialogue – using the characters conversation to end your story

Creative Writing Journaling, Poetry & Short Story			
	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement
Project Follows Guidelines			
Grammar & Spelling			
Originality			
Neatness			
Comments:			

