



# English IV

# Narrative Writing: Short Story

## Learning Targets

- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
- Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).
- Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
- Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.
- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
- Vary syntax for effect, consulting references (e.g., Tufte’s *Artful Sentences*) for guidance as needed; apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts when reading.

## LEARNING STRATEGIES

Brainstorming,  
 Marking the Text,  
 Graphic Organizer,  
 Webbing, Drafting,  
 Self-Editing  
 Marking the Draft,  
 Note-Taking,  
 Adding,  
 Substituting

## Writing a Short Story

A short story is a type of creative text in which writers share insights and observations about life through characters and theme. Readers often see characters undergo a pivotal experience, grow, and change in some way. This type of writing draws upon personal experiences and imagination.

You will work with your teacher to construct a model stories. You will then use these models to construct your own story.

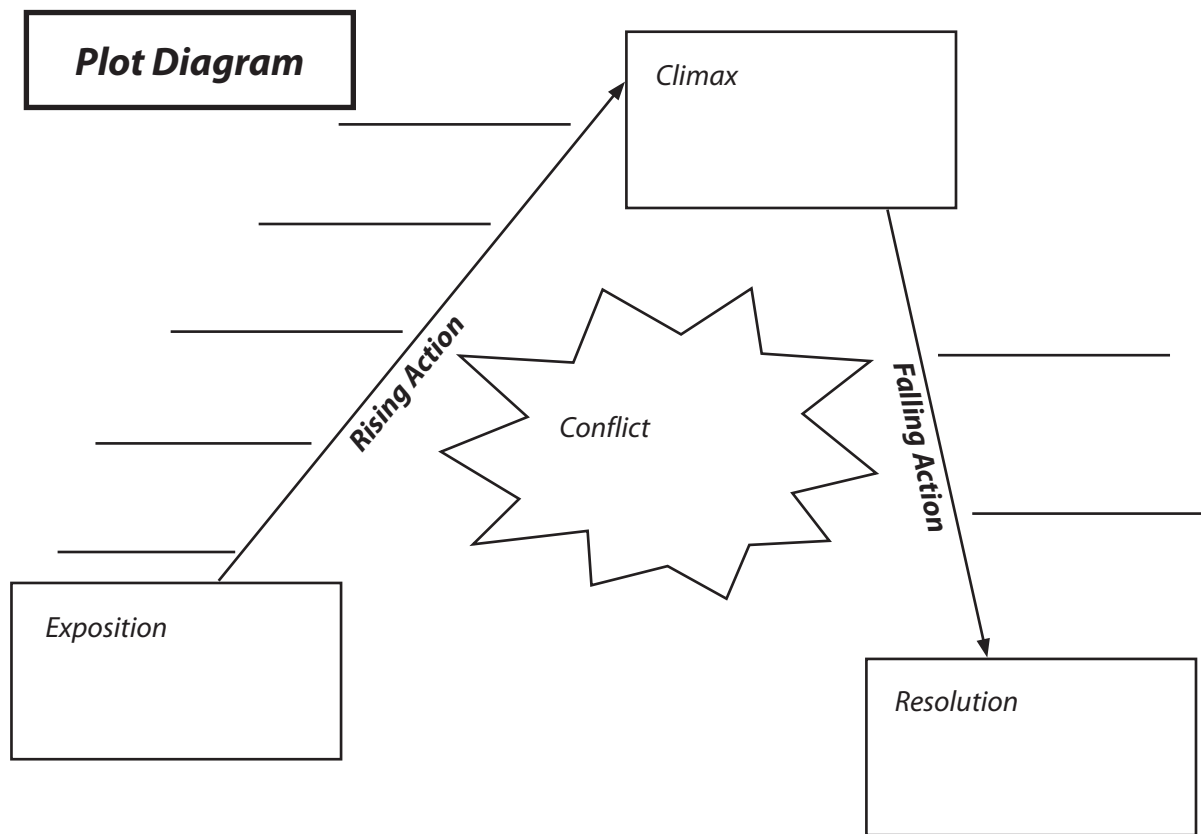
### ACTIVITY 1

## Discovering the Elements of a Short Story

## The Elements of a Short Story

### Plot and Conflict

5. Use the following graphic organizer to sketch the plot of the story. Your plot diagram includes a space to take notes about conflict. Be sure to think about both *internal* and *external* conflicts faced by the character(s).

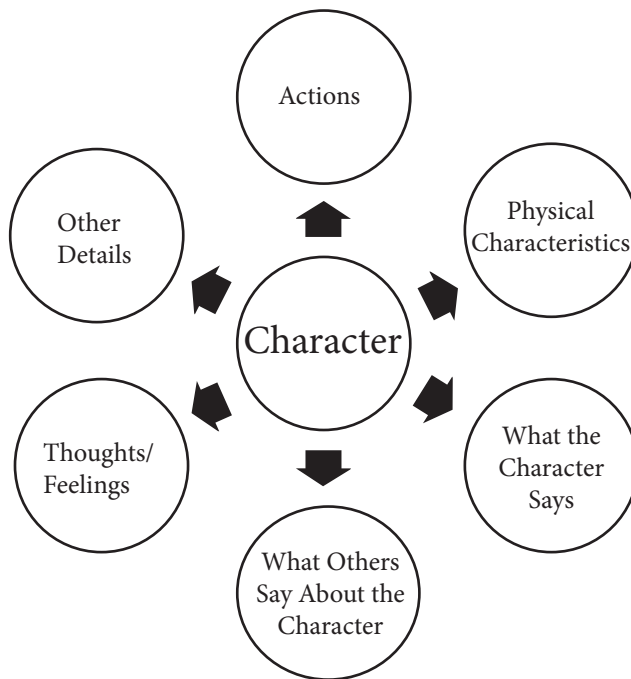


6. Critique the conflicts and the resolution in the sample story. Did the resolution surprise you? Was it satisfying? Did it seem like the natural results of the conflicts and what occurred in the story?

### Characterization and Point of View

7. Make notes about different kinds of characters, including static and dynamic, complex and round, and flat or stereotypical.

8. Use the following Characterization graphic organizer as a model to take notes about the protagonist of the sample short story. Decide whether the character is complex or stereotypical, dynamic or static, or round or flat.



9. What point of view does the writer of the sample short story use? Mark evidence in the story to support your answer.

10. What is the theme of the short story, and how does the author convey the theme?

**Activity 2**  
**During Reading**

As you read the sample short story below, look for elements of a good story and mark the text when you find them.

My Notes

# The Story of an Hour

by Kate Chopin

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.

It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half concealing. Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's name leading the list of "killed." He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram, and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.

She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.

There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.

She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.

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Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will—as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been. When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under hte breath: “free, free, free!” The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial. She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him—sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in the face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

“Free! Body and soul free!” she kept whispering.

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhold, imploring for admission. “Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door—you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven’s sake open the door.”

“Go away. I am not making myself ill.” No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister’s importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister’s waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

Someone was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of the accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine’s piercing cry; at Richards’ quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease—of the joy that kills.

ACTIVITY 3

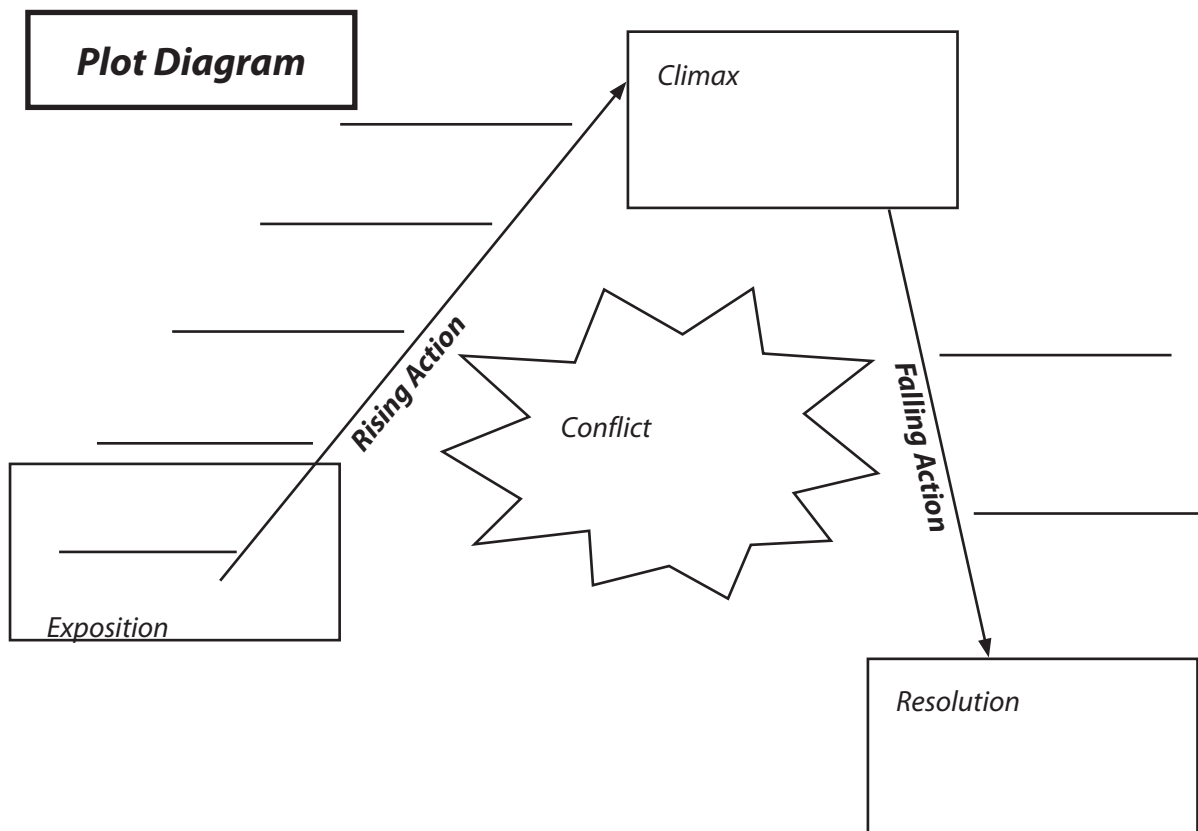
## Independent Writing

**WRITING PROMPT:** Write a short story that meets the requirements listed in the Learning Targets and the Scoring Guide. Be sure to

- Include a well-structured, well-paced sequence of events
- Develop main characters who are multi-faceted and non-stereotypical
- Build the conflict, climax, and resolution to support the theme
- Include descriptive, sensory details to enhance the mood and tone of your story
- Use a range of literary strategies and devices to strengthen your writing
- Use simple, periodic, or loose sentences to achieve specific effects

You might consider developing a story similar to “The Story of an Hour,” or you might create something original. As you prewrite, make and use new copies of the graphic organizers for developing plot and characterization or make your own, new style of organizer.

Don’t forget to use varied syntax, including at least one simple, two periodic, and two loose sentences. In your final draft, underline and label the examples of these sentences.



### Planning the Character(s)

3. Copy and use the Characterization graphic organizer from Activity 1 for each of the major characters in your story. Keep in mind that your major characters should be complex, non-stereotypical characters. Minor characters may be static, flat, and more stereotypical and thus require less planning.

### Planning the Mood or Tone

4. What mood or tone for the story is your class striving to create?
5. How can you use the story's setting to help establish the mood or tone?
6. On separate paper, create a graphic organizer and brainstorm sensory details to define the story's mood or tone.

### Developing the Theme

7. What theme seems to evolve from the characters and situation that you are considering?

## ACTIVITY 4

### Drafting

8. Experiment with different points of view in the opening of the story.
9. Role-play with dialogue that reveals characterization and advances the plot.
10. Analyze your characters and make sure that your major characters are complex, non-stereotypical characters.
11. Revisit and refine the climax and resolution.
12. Revisit your planning for the theme of the story. Now that you have drafted the story, does this theme clearly emerge? Refine and revise accordingly, so that a theme is strongly reflected in your class-constructed story. (Try to avoid simply stating the theme outright.)

### Check Your Understanding

After you have drafted your short story, use the following checklist and the Scoring Guide to evaluate your story and consider revisions.

- Does the story include a well-structured, well-paced sequence of events?
- Are main characters well-developed, multi-faceted, and non-stereotypical?
- Do the conflict, climax, and resolution support the theme?
- Have you included descriptive, sensory details to enhance the mood and tone of your story?
- Have you used a range of literary strategies and devices to strengthen your writing?



## ACTIVITY 5

### Revising for Language and Writer’s Craft: Using Sentence Types for Effect

While most students know that it’s important to use a variety of sentence types, and that using complex sentences adds depth and variety to writing, many aren’t aware of the various kinds of effects that particular sentence types can achieve. Below, you will see to different ways of arranging a sentence in order to have a particular effect on the reader.

#### Simple Sentences

A simple sentence is one independent clause—a subject and a predicate.

##### From the Sample Story

*The delicious breath of rain was in the air.*

Simple sentences are a way of briefly, directly making a statement. On their own, they may not have much of an effect, but by using a brief simple sentence after many lengthier ones, the idea in the sentence stands out.

*Amber hurried back down the twisting staircase, her breath echoing as she went. Behind her, rustling like sinister whispers, she heard her pursuers. She leapt down the last few steps and sprinted back to the shadowy room where she had entered the house. The door was gone.*

Complex sentences occur when a dependent clause is added to a simple sentence, or independent clause. Depending on the location of the independent clause, a complex sentence could be either **loose** or **periodic**.

#### Loose Sentences

Loose sentences begin with the independent clause and then continue with one or more dependent clauses.

##### From the Sample Story

*“There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.”*

A loose sentence emphasizes the independent clause so that it stands out. The description or details that flesh out the sentence are of lesser significance. Often, the tone of a loose sentence is clear and confident. The loose sentence is more straightforward than its counterpart, the periodic sentence.

#### Periodic Sentences

Periodic sentences wait until the end of the sentence to provide the most important part—the independent clause.

##### From the Sample Story

*When the storm of grief had spent itself, she went away to her room alone.*

A periodic sentence emphasizes description or detail before revealing the main idea. It can be used to build suspense and tension that draws the reader in. It may be less clear than a loose sentence, but that can work to increase reader interest.

### Practice

Take the simple sentences below and modify them, first to create a loose sentence, then again to create a periodic one. Consider adding more than one dependent clause.

1. Carlos choked down the disgusting bowl of soup
2. The car burst into flames.
3. Amy hit a home run.

### ACTIVITY 6

#### Revising

10. Participate again in sharing and responding to ideas for refining the middle of your story. Remember to take good notes.
11. Reread the ending of the model story. Remember that your goal is to write a story with a well-developed resolution.
12. Participate in sharing and responding to ideas for refining your ending. Again, take good notes.
13. Reread your draft and determine whether the desired mood or tone is clear.
14. Highlight all the sensory details that define mood or tone used in your draft. Brainstorm additional sensory details that could help define the mood or tone more clearly. Then revise as needed.
15. Discuss with a partner to what degree the theme you want to communicate is clear in your current draft. Make a plan to revise so that your theme is clear, but not explicitly stated.
16. Reread your draft and mark it to identify literary strategies and devices. Take notes on where you can add and substitute strategies and devices to broaden the range of their usage and to enhance the plot. Make a plan to revise the draft based on your notes.
17. Look for areas where you can use varied syntax for specific effects. Are you using simple, periodic, and loose sentences? Indicate where in the story you have used these sentences for specific effect, and note the intended effect in the margin.

## SCORING GUIDE

Scoring Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging	Incomplete
<b>Ideas</b>	<p>The story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sustains focus on setting, character, event, and/or idea, strengthening the unity of the story</li> <li>presents a thought-provoking conflict and resolution that enhance an insightful theme</li> <li>successfully develops multifaceted, non-stereotypical characters</li> </ul>	<p>The story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>generally sustains focus on setting, character, event, and/or idea, maintaining the unity of the story with only minor lapses</li> <li>Includes a well-developed conflict and resolution that contribute to a clear theme</li> <li>develops complex, non-stereotypical characters</li> </ul>	<p>The story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>does not sustain focus on setting, character, event, and/or idea, limiting the unity of the story</li> <li>contains an incomplete or unfocused conflict and resolution and an underdeveloped theme</li> <li>contains characters that are not developed, simple, or stereotypical</li> </ul>	<p>The story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>presents little or no focus on setting, character, event, and/or idea to contribute to story unity</li> <li>contains no recognizable conflict and resolution, and/or theme</li> <li>contains characters that are undeveloped, simple, or stereotypical</li> </ul>
<b>Structure</b>	<p>The story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses form or structure that is appropriate to the purpose and enhances the effectiveness of the story</li> <li>effectively sequences events that develop the conflict(s) and steadily build toward the dynamic climax and thoughtful resolution</li> </ul>	<p>The story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses form or structure that is appropriate to the purpose</li> <li>includes a sequence of events that develop the conflict and build toward the climax and resolution</li> </ul>	<p>The story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>may use form or structure that is partially evident or inappropriate to the purpose</li> <li>presents disconnected events and an unfocused conflict or confusing climax and little resolution</li> </ul>	<p>The story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses no evident form or structure, or one that is inappropriate to the purpose</li> <li>presents disconnected events and an unfocused, confusing climax with inadequate or no resolution</li> </ul>
<b>Use of Language</b>	<p>The story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>purposefully uses sensory details and descriptive language to enhance the mood or tone</li> <li>effectively uses a range of literary strategies and devices to enhance the plot</li> <li>uses loose and periodic sentences for specific effects</li> <li>demonstrates technical command of conventions of standard English</li> </ul>	<p>The story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses sensory details and descriptive language to define the mood or tone</li> <li>uses a range of literary strategies and devices to establish the plot</li> <li>uses loose and periodic sentences at appropriate times</li> <li>demonstrates general command of conventions; minor errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, or capitalization do not interfere with meaning</li> </ul>	<p>The story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses limited sensory details and descriptive language that do little to create mood or tone</li> <li>contains few or no literary strategies and devices that present a purposeful effect</li> <li>struggles to (or does not) use loose and periodic sentences</li> <li>demonstrates limited command of conventions; errors in grammar, punctuation, capitalization, or spelling interfere with meaning</li> </ul>	<p>The story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses little or no sensory details and descriptive language to create mood or tone</li> <li>misuses or does not use literary strategies or devices to purposeful effect</li> <li>misuses or does not use loose and periodic sentences</li> <li>misuses conventions to the degree that it interferes with meaning</li> </ul>