



English I

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, 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.
- 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.
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LEARNING STRATEGIES

Think-Pair-Share, Brainstorming, Marking the Text, Graphic Organizer, Webbing, Role Playing, Self-Editing/Peer Editing, Sharing and Responding, 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 go through a pivotal experience, grow, and change. This type of writing draws upon personal experiences and imagination.

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

ACTIVITY 1

Discovering the Elements of a Short Story

Before Reading

1. Think about a story you've read that you really enjoyed. What did you like about the story?
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2. What are some elements that are common to good short stories?

During Reading

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

Sample Text

The Stolen Party

by Liliana Heker

As soon as she arrived she went straight to the kitchen to see if the monkey was there. It was: what a relief. She wouldn't have liked to admit that her mother had been right. Monkeys at a birthday? her mother had sneered. Get away with you, believing any nonsense you're told! She was cross, but not because of the monkey, the girl thought; it's just because of the party.

"I don't like you going," she told her. "It's a rich people's party."

"Rich people go to Heaven too," said the girl, who studied religion at school. "Get away with Heaven," said the mother. "

The girl didn't approve of the way her mother spoke. She was barely nine, and one of the best in her class.

"I'm going because I've been invited," she said. "And I've been invited because Luciana is my friend. So there."

"Ah yes, your friend," her mother grumbled. She paused. "Listen, Rosaura," she said at last. "That one's not your friend. You know what you are to them? The maid's daughter, that's what." Rosaura blinked hard: she wasn't going to cry. Then she yelled:

"Shut up! You know nothing about being friends!"

Every afternoon she used to go to Luciana's house and they would both finish their homework while Rosaura's mother did the cleaning. They had their tea in the kitchen and they told each other secrets. Rosaura loved everything in the big house, and she also loved the people who lived there.

"I'm going because it will be the most lovely party in the whole world, Luciana told me it would. There will be a magician, and he will bring a monkey and everything."

The mother swung around to take a good look at her child, and pompously put her hands on her hips. "Monkeys at a birthday?" she said. "Get away with you, believing any nonsense you're told!"

Rosaura was deeply offended. She thought it unfair of her mother to accuse other people of being liars simply because they were rich. Rosaura too wanted to be rich, of course. If one day she managed to live in a beautiful palace, would her mother stop loving her? She felt very sad. She wanted to go to that party more than anything else in the world.

"I'll die if I don't go," she whispered, almost without moving her lips.

And she wasn't sure whether she had been heard, but on the morning of the party she discovered that her mother had starched her Christmas dress. And in the afternoon, after washing her hair, her mother rinsed it in apple vinegar so that it would be all nice and shiny. Before going out, Rosaura admired herself in the mirror, with her white dress and glossy hair, and thought she looked terribly pretty.

Senora Ines also seemed to notice. As soon as she saw her, she said: "How lovely you look today, Rosaura."

Rosaura gave her starched skirt a slight toss with her hands and walked into the party with a firm step. She said hello to Luciana and asked about the monkey. Luciana put on a secretive look and whispered into Rosaura's ear: "He's in the kitchen. But don't tell anyone, because it's a surprise."

Rosaura wanted to make sure. Carefully she entered the kitchen and there she saw it: deep in thought, inside its cage. It looked so funny that the girl stood there for a while, watching it, and later, every so often, she would slip out of the party unseen and go and admire it. Rosaura was the only one allowed into the kitchen. Senora Ines had said: “You yes, but not the others, they’re much too boisterous, they might break something.” Rosaura had never broken anything. She even managed the jug of orange juice, carrying it from the kitchen into the dining room. She held it carefully and didn’t spill a single drop. And Senora Ines had said: “Are you sure you can manage a jug as big as that?” Of course she could manage. She wasn’t a butterfingers, like the others. Like that blonde girl with the bow in her hair. As soon as she saw Rosaura, the girl with the bow had said:

“And you? Who are you?”

“I’m a friend of Luciana,” said Rosaura.

“No,” said the girl with the bow, “you are not a friend of Luciana because I’m her cousin and I know all her friends. And I don’t know you.”

“So what,” said Rosaura. “I come here every afternoon with my mother and we do our homework together.”

“You and your mother do your homework together?” asked the girl, laughing. “I and Luciana do our homework together,” said Rosaura, very seriously. The girl with the bow shrugged her shoulders.

“That’s not being friends,” she said. “Do you go to school together?”

“No.”

“So where do you know her from?” said the girl, getting impatient. Rosaura remembered her mother’s words perfectly. She took a deep breath.

“I’m the daughter of the employee,” she said.

Her mother had said very clearly: “If someone asks, you say you’re the daughter of the employee; that’s all.” She also told her to add: “And proud of it.” But Rosaura thought that never in her life would she dare say something of the sort.

“What employee?” said the girl with the bow. “Employee in a shop?”

“No,” said Rosaura angrily. “My mother doesn’t sell anything in any shop, so there.”

“So how come she’s an employee?” said the girl with the bow. Just then Senora Ines arrived saying shh shh, and asked Rosaura if she wouldn’t mind helping serve out the hot dogs, as she knew the house so much better than the others.

“See?” said Rosaura to the girl with the bow, and when no one was looking she kicked her in the shin.

Apart from the girl with the bow, all the others were delightful. The one she liked best was Luciana, with her golden birthday crown; and then the boys. Rosaura won the sack race, and nobody managed to catch her when they played tag. When they split into two teams to play charades, all the boys wanted her for their side. Rosaura felt she had never been so happy in all her life.

But the best was still to come. The best came after Luciana blew out the candies. First the cake. Senora Ines had asked her to help pass the cake around, and Rosaura had enjoyed the task immensely, because everyone called out to her, shouting “Me, me!” Rosaura remembered a story in which there was a queen who had the power of life or death over her subjects. She had always loved that, having the power of life or death. To Luciana and the boys she gave the largest pieces, and to the girl with the bow she gave a slice so thin one could see through it.

After the cake came the magician, tall and bony, with a fine red cape. A true magician: he could untie handkerchiefs by blowing on them and make a chain with links that had no openings. He could guess what cards were pulled out from a pack, and the monkey was his assistant. He called the monkey “partner.” “Let’s see here, partner,” he would say, “turn over a card.” And, “Don’t run away, partner: time to work now.”

Writing Workshop 4 (continued)

The final trick was wonderful. One of the children had to hold the monkey in his arms and the magician said he would make him disappear. “What, the boy?” they all shouted.

“No, the monkey!” shouted back the magician.

Rosaura thought that this was truly the most amusing parry in the whole world.

The magician asked a small fat boy to come and help, but the small fat boy got frightened almost at once and dropped the monkey on the floor. The magician picked him up carefully, whispered something in his ear, and the monkey nodded almost as if he understood.

“You mustn’t be so unmanly, my friend,” the magician said to the fat boy.

“What’s unmanly?” said the fat boy.

The magician turned around as if to look for spies.

“A sissy,” said the magician. “Go sit down.”

Then he stared at all the faces, one by one. Rosaura felt her heart tremble.

“You with the Spanish eyes,” said the magician. And everyone saw that he was pointing at her.

She wasn’t afraid, Neither holding the monkey, nor when the magician made him vanish; not even when, at the end, the magician flung his red cape over Rosaura’s head and uttered a few magic words ... and the monkey reappeared, chattering happily, in her arms. The children clapped furiously. And before Rosaura returned to her seat, the magician said:

“Thank you very much, my little countess.”

She was so pleased with the compliment that a while later, when her mother came to fetch her, that was the first thing she told her. “I helped the magician and he said to me, ‘Thank you very much, my little countess.’”

It was strange because up to then Rosaura had thought that she was angry with her mother. All along Rosaura had imagined that she would say to her: “See that the monkey wasn’t a lie?” But instead she was so thrilled that she told her mother all about the wonderful magician.

Her mother tapped her on the head and said: “So now we’re a countess!”

But one could see that she was beaming. And now they both stood in the entrance, because a moment ago Senora Ines, smiling, had said: “Please wait here a second.” Her mother suddenly seemed worried.

“What is it?” she asked Rosaura.

“What is what?” said Rosaura. “It’s nothing; she just wants to get the presents for those who are leaving, see?”

She pointed at the fat boy and at a girl with pigtails who were also waiting there, next to their mothers. And she explained about the presents. She knew, because she had been watching those who left before her. When one of the girls was about to leave, Senora Ines would give her a bracelet. When a boy left, Senora Ines gave him a yo-yo. Rosaura preferred the yo-yo because it sparkled, but she didn’t mention that to her mother. Her mother might have said: “So why don’t you ask for one, you blockhead?” That’s what her mother was like. Rosaura didn’t feel like explaining that she’d be horribly ashamed to be the odd one out. Instead she said:

“I was the best-behaved at the party.”

And she said no more because Senora Ines came out into the hall with two bags, one pink and one blue.

First she went up to the fat boy, gave him a yo-yo out of the blue bag, and the fat boy left with his mother. Then she went up to the girl and gave her a bracelet out of the pink bag, and the girl with the pigtails left as well.

Finally she came up to Rosaura and her mother. She had a big smile on her face and Rosaura liked that. Senora Ines looked down at her, then looked up at her mother, and then said something that made Rosaura proud:

“What a marvelous daughter you have, Herminia.”

For an instant, Rosaura thought that she'd give her two presents: the bracelet and the yo-yo. Senora Ines bent down as if about to look for something. Rosaura also leaned forward, stretching out her arm. But she never completed the movement.

Senora Ines didn't look in the pink bag. Nor did she look in the bluebag. Instead she rummaged in her purse. In her hand appeared two bills.

“You really and truly, earned this,” she said handing them over. “Thank you for all your help, my pet.”

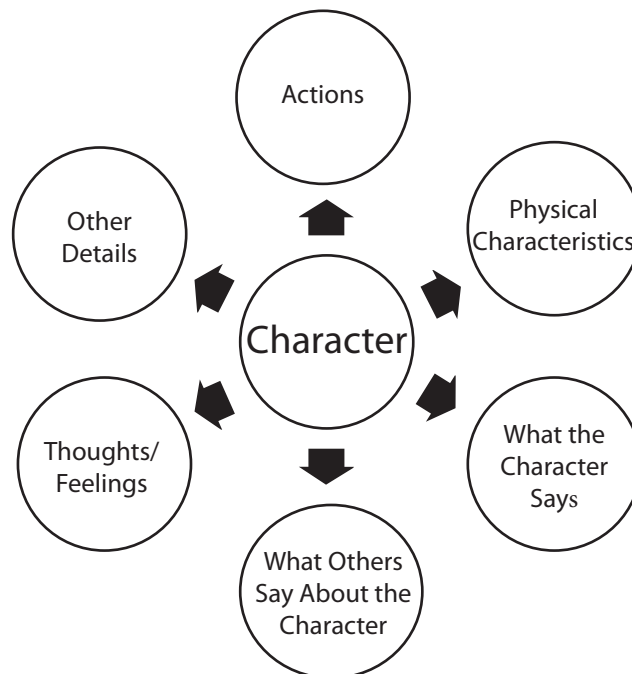
Rosaura felt her arms stiffen, stick close to her body, and then she noticed her mother's hand on her shoulder. Instinctively she pressed herself against her mother's body. That was all. Except her eyes. Rosaura's eyes had a cold, clear look that fixed itself on Senora Ines's face.

Senora Ines, motionless, stood there with her hand outstretched. As if she didn't dare draw it back. As if the slightest change might shatter an infinitely delicate balance.

After Reading

Characterization and Point of View

7. Use the Characterization graphic organizer below as you take notes about the main character in the sample short story. Use fresh copies of the same graphic organizer to take notes about each of the other characters in the story.



ACTIVITY 2

Writing a Short Story

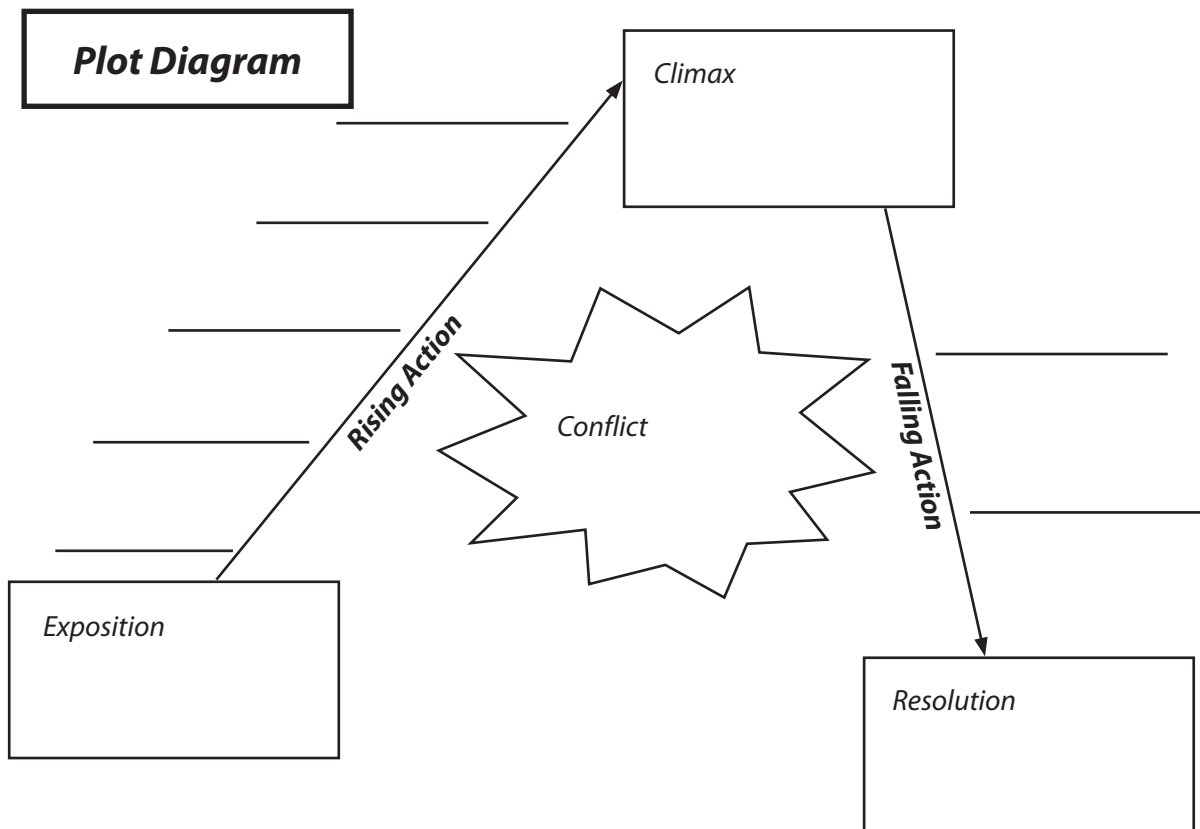
WRITING PROMPT: Write a short story that meets the requirements listed in the Learning Targets. Refer to the Scoring Guide for this writing task—it will help you to plan your efforts.

Prewriting

Planning the Plot

1. Brainstorm as many ideas for a new story as you can think of (use separate paper as needed). Consider twists on the sample story, ideas inspired by work you have in your portfolio, new ideas you want to explore, and so on. You might consider writing the events from “The Stolen Party” from a different character’s point of view. Or you might consider writing a fresh, original story about a party or similar event.

2. Take notes as you and construct a plot line. Use the Plot Diagram below to guide your discussion.



Planning Character(s)

3. Copy and use the Characterization graphic organizer from Activity 1 for each of the characters in your story.

Planning the Setting

4. What is the setting of your story?
5. Brainstorm sensory details (details that appeal to sight, hearing, touch, taste, or smell) to help you develop a believable story setting. Create a Setting graphic organizer on separate paper to record the results of your brainstorming.

Drafting

6. Experiment with different points of view in the opening of the story.
7. Role-play with dialogue that reveals characterization and moves the plot forward.
8. Revisit and refine the climax and resolution. Does the conclusion seem like a natural result of the events that preceded it? Is this a fitting end for your characters? Is there a lesson learned, either by the characters or the audience? Make the necessary changes, big or small, to improve the climax and resolution of the story.

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 and believable?
- 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?

Writing Workshop 4 (continued)

SCORING GUIDE

Scoring Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging	Incomplete
Ideas	<p>The story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustains focus on setting, character, events, and/or ideas to strengthen the unity of the story • presents a thought-provoking conflict and resolution to heighten reader interest • develops engaging and authentic characters that grow in complexity throughout the story 	<p>The story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generally sustains focus on setting, character, events, and/or ideas to maintain the unity of the story • includes a well-developed conflict and resolution to sustain reader's interest • develops interesting and believable characters that grow in depth throughout the story 	<p>The story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not sustain focus on setting, character, events, and/or ideas, limiting the unity of the story • contains an incomplete or unfocused conflict and resolution • contains characters that are not developed or not believable 	<p>The story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presents little or no focus on setting, character, event, and/or idea to contribute to story unity • contains no recognizable conflict and resolution • contains characters that are neither developed nor believable
Structure	<p>The story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses form or structure appropriate to purpose and that enhances story effectiveness • skillfully sequences events to develop conflict(s) and build toward a climax and resolution • provides an insightful ending with a clear and reasonable resolution 	<p>The story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses form or structure that is appropriate to the purpose • includes a sequence of events that develop the conflict and build toward the climax and resolution • provides a comprehensive ending that contains a clear resolution 	<p>The story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may use form or structure that is partially evident or inappropriate to the purpose • presents disconnected events and an unfocused conflict or confusing climax with little resolution • contains an underdeveloped ending with little or no resolution 	<p>The story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses no evident form or structure, or one that is inappropriate to the purpose • presents disconnected events and an unfocused, confusing climax with inadequate or no resolution
Use of Language	<p>The story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purposefully uses sensory details to enhance mood or tone • effectively uses a range of literary strategies and devices to enhance the plot • demonstrates technical command of standard English conventions • uses colons to introduce lists, appositives or dialogue at several appropriate occasions 	<p>The story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses sensory details to define the mood or tone • uses a range of literary strategies and devices to establish the plot • demonstrates general command of conventions; minor errors in grammar, punctuation, capitalization, or spelling do not interfere with meaning • uses colons to introduce lists, appositives, or dialogue 	<p>The story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses limited sensory details to create an unfocused or vague mood or tone • contains few or no literary strategies and devices • shows limited command of conventions; errors in grammar, punctuation, capitalization, or spelling interfere with meaning. • does not use colons skillfully 	<p>The story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses little or no sensory details and descriptive language to create mood or tone • misuses or does not use literary strategies or devices to purposeful effect • misuses conventions to the degree that it interferes with meaning • misuses or does not use colons to introduce lists, appositives, or dialogue.