

Creating a Short Story

This chapter will help you to create your own short story. The other chapters in this book have taught you about the elements of the short story: setting, characterization, conflict and plot, theme, and point of view. This chapter teaches you how to include these elements in your own short story.

Practice

This section of the chapter is designed to help you create details and descriptions of characters and events for your story. Your story may be based on an event or experience which illustrates some aspect of your life, or the lives of others. You may wish to write about real or imaginary events. Read each part of the following exercise and provide information for all **12** items.

1. Write a title for your short story. You may prefer to create one after you have written the story.

2. Where does the story take place?

3. When does the story take place?

4. Provide some background information that is relevant to the story.

5. You may create one, two, three, or four characters for your story. For each, provide the following information.

Name _____

Role in the story _____

Description _____

6. Choose one character who will tell the story from a first-person point of view.

Character's name _____

7. Make a list of the events that occur in the story, from beginning to end. This is your story line. Include at least four events in your list.

8. List the major conflict and complications that occur in the plot.

Major conflict _____

Complications _____

9. What is the point of greatest tension in the story?

10. How is the conflict resolved?

11. What happens to **each** of the characters at the end of the story?

12. What is the theme of the story, your message to the reader?

After you have completed the Practice exercise, go on to the composition part of this guide.

Composition

This part of the chapter will help you to write your own short story. Use the material that you created for the Practice exercise to write your story. Take the time to review your notes before you begin to write, then follow the outline below. Use the checklist to help you review and revise your writing.

Outline

- I. Tell the story from a first-person point of view. The narrator will be a character in the story.
- II. Capture the reader's interest right at the beginning of the story. Here are some suggestions for how you can do this:
 - A. Open with a strong statement or ask a question.
 - B. Start a detailed description of a person or a place.
 - C. Begin with a conversation between two characters.
- III. Tell where and when the story takes place, and provide important background information. Offer significant details and descriptions. This helps to create atmosphere and enables the reader to see the people and places in your story.
- IV. Make your characters come alive for the reader, both physically and emotionally. Reveal their personalities through the expression of thoughts, feelings, actions, and words. Create dialogue where appropriate.
- V. Through the events in your story, present the conflict, complications, the climax, and the resolution.
- VI. Reflect the theme through all elements of your short story: setting, characterization, conflict and plot, and point of view.

Checklist: Yes/No

1. My story has a first-person narrator. ____
2. I capture the reader's interest at the beginning of the story ____
3. I tell where and when the story takes place, provide background information, and create atmosphere by offering significant details and descriptions. ____
4. I make my characters real for the reader, both physically and emotionally. ____
5. Through the events in my story, I present the conflict, complications, the climax and the resolution. ____
6. I reflect the theme through all the elements of my short story. ____
7. I wrote complete sentences that reflect proper usage and grammar. I used transitions to connect ideas and create unity in my writing. As needed, I referred to the list of transitions at the back of the text. ____
8. I proofread and edited my composition, and wrote a corrected copy of my work. ____

Submit the completed writing assignment to your instructor for evaluation.