Writing a Short Story

In order to write a successful short story, there are some elements that have to be included and used effectively. Those elements include: **plot**, **setting**, **conflict**, **characters**, **point of view**, **symbols**, **irony**, **foreshadowing/flashback**, and **themes**.

The writing process consists of a series of steps: **Prewriting**, **Drafting** and **Revision**. Each of these steps will build upon each other to lead to your final short story.

Consider this criteria:

- Plot — series of events that leads to the climax

- Setting — the time and location of the story

- Develop strong characters

- Dialogue that will help reveal the characters

- Story — told from a specific point of view

- Use symbols and irony

- Use either foreshadowing or flashback

- Choose a global theme that is revealed by the story's end

- Write for a specific audience

- Use correct grammar, punctuation, etc.

- Use appropriate language

Prewriting

Characters are the people, animals, alien life-forms, or other creatures that take part in the action of a narrative. When sketching a character, imagination and creativity must be used.

The chart below helps to create and examine 2 main characters to learn who he, she, or it is in each case.

Name of Character: _____

Character	Details
Appearance	
Actions	
What the Character Says	
Thoughts	
Likes	
Dislikes	
Dreams	
Fears	
What Others Think of the Character	
What the Character Learns in the End	

Prewriting Rubric

Character # 1				
	3	2	1	0
Character Development	Successfully gave enough details to create a character.	Gave details to create a character.	Barely gave any details to create a character.	Did not give details to create an effective character.
Completeness	Filled in all spots on the chart.	Filled in most spots on the chart.	Did not fill in more than half of the spots.	Did not fill in chart.

Character # 2				
	3	2	1	0
Character Development	Successfully gave enough details to create a character.	Gave details to create a character.	Barely gave any details to create a character.	Did not give details to create an effective character.
Completeness	Filled in all spots on the chart.	Filled in most spots on the chart.	Did not fill in more than half of the spots.	Did not fill in chart.

Drafting

Before drafting a story, the central conflict has to be kept in mind and the story has to be shaped around it. An effective plot has the following components:

Climax

Rising Action   Falling Action

Exposition   Resolution
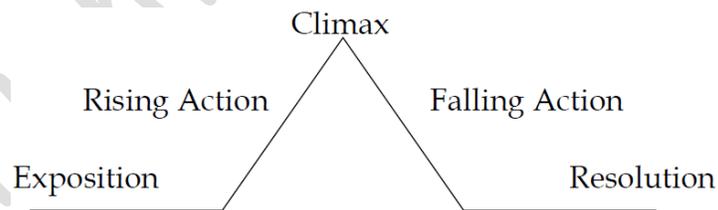
Once identified each of these parts of the plot, it will be easier the draft the story.

To get started:

✔ Create the Plot Diagram

✔ Fill in the events of the story from beginning to end

✔ Correctly identify which events are the 5 parts of plot

✔ Include details from the story

Once the plot diagram is finished, the rough draft must be written. The plot diagram and character sketches have to be used in the writing process.

Plot Diagram Rubric

Plot				
	3	**2**	**1**	**0**
Presentation	Plot diagram is complete, neat, organized, and easy to follow.	Plot diagram is complete, organized, and can be followed.	Plot diagram is unorganized, and can be followed with difficulty.	Plot diagram is not legible, is incomplete, or was not done.
Events	Events are displayed in logical order.	One event is not in logical order.	Two or more events are not in logical order.	Events are not given in logical order.
Parts of Plot	Successfully labeled and identified all parts of plot.	Labeled and identified parts of plot with one error.	Labeled and identified parts of plot with 2 or more errors.	Did not label parts of plot on timeline.
Details	Successfully gave enough details to enhance plot.	Gave details to enhance plot.	Barely gave any details to enhance plot.	Did not give details to enhance plot.

Revision

Once the rough draft has been written, a peer editing activity follows. For this activity you are to:

- Exchange papers with a partner; read through your partner's essay carefully
- Correct any grammatical errors as you read the essay
- When you are done, fill out the Rubric for Assessment
- Once the rubric has been completed pass it back to your partner and discuss the ratings you have given
- REMEMBER to provide constructive comments to your partner

Rubric for Assessment

Criteria	Not Very →			→ Very	
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Does the main character undergo a change or learning experience?					
How well is the setting described?					
Are there clear plot events that lead to a climax?					
How clearly is the theme revealed?					
How effective is the descriptive language?					

Short Story Rubric

Final Draft Rubric				
	4	**3**	**2**	**1**
Audience / Purpose	Presents details targeted at a unique audience; successfully narrates the events of a story.	Presents details suited to an audience; narrates the events of a story.	Presents few details suited to an audience; some ides conflict with narration of story.	Supports no purpose; is not written for a specific audience.
Plot	Presents events that create a clear narrative.	Presents sequence of events.	Presents a confusing sequence of events.	Presents no logical order.
Setting	Many vivid, descriptive words are used to tell when and where the story took place.	Some vivid, descriptive words are used to tell when and where the story took place.	It can be inferred when and where the story took place, but not much detail was provided.	It is difficult to figure out when and where the story took place.
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 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.
Characters	Successfully goes in-depth with description; clearly covers all aspects of character.	Goes in-depth with description; covers all aspects of character.	Includes some description; covers some aspects of character.	Does not go in-depth with description; does not cover all aspects of character.
Point of View	Writes from a consistent point of view.	Told from a specific point of view.	Contains inconsistent points of view.	Uses an inconsistent point of view.
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, but it is always clear which character is speaking.	It is not clear which character is speaking or no dialogue provided.
Grammar	Contains no errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling.	Contains few errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling.	Contains some errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling.	Contains many errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

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Use of Language	Uses fresh word choice and tone to reveal story's setting and character.	Uses interesting and fresh word choices.	Uses clichés and unoriginal expressions.	Uses uninspired word choices.
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 story contains a few creative details and/or descriptions that contribute to the reader's enjoyment.	The story contains a few creative details and/or descriptions, but they distract from the story.	There is little evidence of creativity in the story.
Requirements	All of the plot requirements (symbols, irony, foreshadowing or flashback, themes, resolution, etc.) were met.	Almost all (about 90%) the plot requirements were met.	Most (about 75%) of the plot requirements were met, but several were not.	Many requirements were not met.
Length	Meets required page length.	N/A	N/A	Does not meet required page length.

** When using Storybird, invite as many people as possible to read your story. The story with the most comments from readers will get 2% extra.