What is a short story?

It’s a relatively brief fictional narrative in prose.

- Short – usually 10 pages max.
- Not real – made up
- Tells a plot/story
- Written in sentences and paragraphs. Not poetry.

A short story needs compression (unity):

- **Unity of action:** the story will tell of one situation involving only a few characters
- **Unity of time:** the story will occur in a relatively short period of time
- **Unity of place:** the action occurs primarily in one place

A short story is composed of 4 main elements: **PLOT, CHARACTER, SETTING, & THEME.**

Title of Short Story: _____________________________________________________________

Student Name: ______________________________________    Mark: ________/25

**PLOT** – the sequence of events portraying the conflict of the main character and the resolution of the conflict. Conflict is necessary to move the plot forward.

There are two main types of conflict:

- **External Conflict** – man against man OR man against environment
- **Internal Conflict** – man against himself (his conscience)

1. Which type of conflict is used in this short story? Explain.
Components of a short story plot:

A. **Introduction**: describes the setting, introduces the main character, and most importantly, presents an inciting force. The inciting force is the event which begins the conflict and compels the main character to act/react.

2. Describe the setting of this short story. Who are the main characters?

3. What is the inciting force in this story? How so?

B. **Rising Action**: contains incidents which are linked by cause and effect. These incidents show the main character facing obstacles to achieve his/her goals. (The story is pushed forward by various events.)

4. Describe the events which create the rising action. (jot notes)

C. **Climax**: the highest emotional point at which the outcome of the conflict is determined.

5. What is the climax of this story?

D. **Conclusion**: follows the climax swiftly. It untangles any remaining problems and ties up any loose ends which remain. Sometimes this is left to the reader’s imagination.

6. Describe the conclusion of the story.
CHARACTER

Types: Protagonist: the main character in the story.
      Antagonist: the person who is in conflict with the protagonist
      Minor characters

7. Who is the protagonist in this story? ______________________________________

8. Antagonist? __________________________________________________________

9. Minor characters? ______________________________________________________

Character can be revealed through:
  ➢ exposition (author tells us about the character)
  ➢ the character’s actions
  ➢ speech/thought (reveals what a character is like)
  ➢ reaction of others
  ➢ names
  ➢ environment – where the character lives, occupation, dress, accent

10. Describe the protagonist in the story. How have the above points been used to reveal
    the character?

Characters can be classified in different ways:

Static: character remains the same throughout a story
Dynamic: character experiences some kind of change in personality or attitude

Flat: have only one or two "sides," representing one or two character traits. They are often
      stereotypes that can be summed up in a few words, for example, a "strong, silent type."
Round: are complex and have many "sides" or traits. Their behavior is unpredictable
      because they are individuals, and their personalities are fully developed.

In the story you are studying, find an example of a:

11. (a) static character: ________________________________________________
    (b) dynamic character: _____________________________________________
    (c) flat character: ________________________________________________
    (d) round character: _____________________________________________
SETTING – refers to the time and place in which a story occurs. It can also include occupations, local colour (dress, custom, vocabulary that make a certain area unique), and atmosphere (the feeling or mood of the story).

12. Describe the setting of the story in as much detail as possible. Be specific!

THEME – the overall idea which is suggested, or the general comment on human life presented. It may be positive, negative, or may take on the form of a moral.

13. What is the theme of this story? Explain.

POINT OF View – the perspective from which the author presents the actions and characters of the story.

First Person: the author uses “I” or “we” to tell the story as a participant or as an observer. It gives insight into the narrator’s state of mind, but does the disadvantage is that is only shows a single viewpoint.

Third Person: the story is told by someone who is not a character in the story (using “he” or “she’, instead of “I” or “we”)

➢ Third Person Objective: describes like a newscaster only what can be seen.

➢ Third Person Omniscient: describes the thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of any or all of the characters. Can see into the hearts and minds.

➢ Third Person Limited: is also omniscient, but the narrator limits himself to looking into the thoughts and feelings of only one character.

14. Which point of view is used in this story? What is the effect?
TITLE – Once you have read the story, take a second look at the title. Often it holds significance.

15. What do you think is the significance of the title of this short story?

SPECIAL DEVICES – tricks writers use to be more effective!

➢ **Realistic Dialogue:** reveals character, mood, advances plot, and creates local colour.

16. Is realistic dialogue used in this story? Provide an example.

➢ **Dramatic Foreshadowing:** involves using clues to warn the reader of the future importance of certain elements of the plot. This is of supreme importance in mystery stories!

17. Is foreshadowing used in this story? Provide an example.

➢ **Flashback:** when the story switches to a time before the story to provide background information.

18. Is flashback used in this story? Provide an example.
Contrast: projects one character, setting, or viewpoint, against another in order to emphasize character, mood, or theme.

19. How is contrast used in this story? How does it affect the story?

Suspense: the reader must have a reason to keep following the story! Points must build on one another to maintain the reader’s interest. (Why read a mystery if you know who the killer is in the first paragraph??)

20. How is suspense used in this story?

Most importantly, a short story should be entertaining!

21. Did you enjoy this story?

22. Why/why not?

Total Possible Marks = 25