

Creating a Short Story

SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES: Revisiting Prior Work, Prewriting, Drafting, Revising, Visualizing, Sharing and Responding

Assignment

Your assignment is to develop one of the Story Starters you wrote in this unit into a brief short story. Your story should include the elements of a short story such as character, conflict, and setting. It must include at least one dialogue, or conversation, between two characters. Your story should also relate to the theme of change.

Steps

Prewriting and Planning

1. Look back through previous activities and your Working Folder at the Story Starters you have written. Choose one to develop further. As you begin thinking about a story, make sure your story addresses the theme of change. Perhaps one or more of the characters change because of a conflict, or maybe the resolution to the conflict is made possible by a change of some kind.
2. Once you have a focus for your story, outline the following about the main character:
 - Name:
 - Age:
 - Favorite hobby:
 - Favorite food:
 - Worst fear:
 - Greatest accomplishment:
 - Other ideas:
3. In the space below, create a graphic representation of the way you visualize your character and the conflict of your story.

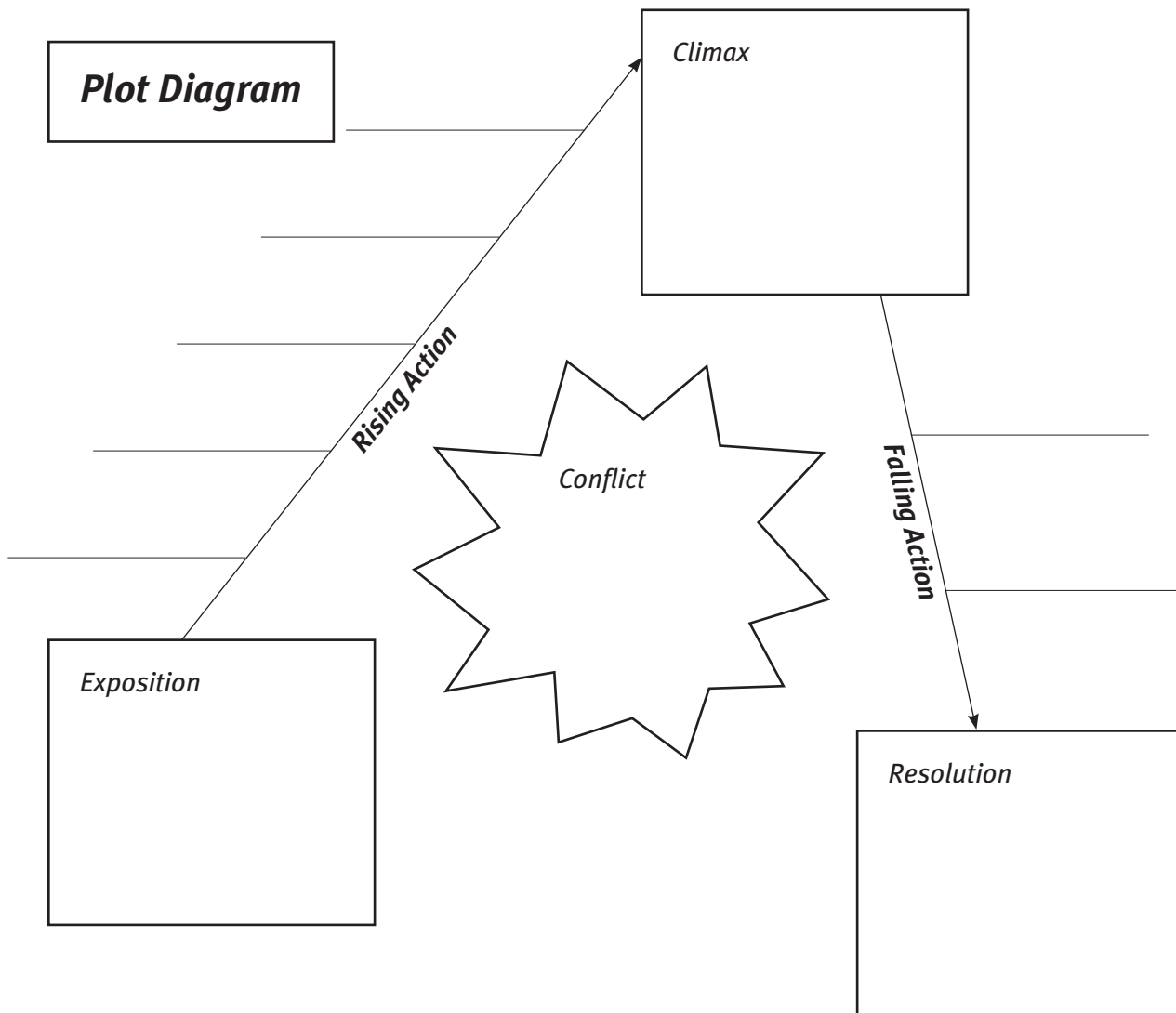
4. Use the following graphic organizers (or create your own) to help you plan your story. Describe your character(s), the conflict, and the setting. In your plot description, include the conflict and its resolution. Write your notes on separate notebook paper if needed. You will be turning in your notes with your final draft of your short story.

Characters	
Describe your main character's appearance.	What does the character's appearance say about him or her?
Describe some of your main character's actions.	What do the character's actions say about him or her?
Other Characters	Details About These Characters

Conflict(s)	
External Conflicts: Conflicts Between the Main Character and Outside Forces (other characters, nature, etc.)	Internal Conflicts: Conflicts Inside the Character

Setting	
Describe what the setting looks like (include colors, objects, activities, etc.).	Describe the sounds.
Describe the textures of things in the surroundings.	Describe the scents (or odors!).

Plot



Drafting

5. Now that you have some plans for your story, use your notes to draft a brief short story that includes all the elements you have studied. Be sure your story relates to the theme of change.
6. Once you have drafted your story, explore different ways to tell your story. For example, experiment with different kinds of openings, such as dialogue, in the middle of action, or with a description of the setting. You might try writing the story from the point of view of different characters, as well as from the point of view of an outside narrator, to see which one suits the story best. You might move your characters to a different setting. Try writing a different ending.
7. Brainstorm titles that might get a reader's attention. Consider unique words or phrases you have used in your story.

8. Be sure to save all of your work; you might decide later that you want to use a discarded attempt after all.

Revision Through Self-Assessment

9. Read your short story quietly to yourself, correcting any mistakes that you notice along the way. Make sure your story sounds right.
10. Compare the draft of your short story to the details on the graphic organizers you completed to plan your story. You might have changed your mind about some of your ideas once you got started writing, so be sure to check to see if you left out any elements of the short story. If any elements are missing or need more development, revise accordingly.
11. Mark your draft as follows to evaluate where you may still need revision:
 - a. Highlight (you may want to use different colors) the following elements in your short story:
 - ▶ Transitions (words or phrases)
 - ▶ Dialogue
 - ▶ Varied dialogue tags
 - ▶ Descriptive details.

If you have a small amount of highlighting, you will probably want to revise the elements to help your reader follow your story.
 - b. Write *Change* in the margin next to to the place(s) where change occurs in the story. Your story must demonstrate the theme of change, either in your characters or in their surroundings.
 - c. Revisit the Assignment and the Scoring Guide and ask yourself how successful you have been in meeting the criteria of the assignment. Make notes, either in the margin or by using sticky notes, of any additional changes you want to make.

Revision Through Sharing and Responding

12. Exchange stories with a partner. You and your partner will write comments about each other's stories. Once your partner has written comments about your story, read your partner's comments and your self-evaluation. Which parts of your short story do you need to improve? What specific improvements will you make?

PARTNER DIRECTIONS: Read a copy of the entire short story very carefully; then respond to these questions/directions.

- Describe the main characters in the story.

- What did the writer do that helps you to visualize the main characters?

- Do the characters seem real? If not, what could the writer do to make them seem more real?

- What is the main conflict in the story?

- How is the conflict resolved?

- When and where does the story take place?

Revision Through Sharing and Responding (continued)

- Is this setting described in a way that lets you imagine it? If not, what could the writer do to make the setting seem real?

- Does the dialogue in the story sound natural to you?

- What kind of change is addressed in the story?

Editing and Publishing

13. Rewrite your draft, incorporating the changes you identified and that your classmate identified.
14. To create a publishable draft, edit your work to make it as error-free as possible. Pay particular attention to the skills you learned in this unit:
 - ▶ Follow the rules of writing dialogue (refer to your list of dialogue tags).
 - ▶ Double-check the use and spelling of the words you used from the Word Wall.
 - ▶ Check for correct grammar and punctuation.
 - ▶ Use all the other tools available to you to create an error-free draft.
15. Following your teacher's directions for formatting and publishing, produce a publishable draft of your short story.

➔ **TECHNOLOGY TIP** If you have access to a digital camera or a cellphone with a camera, you may want to take a photograph to illustrate some aspect of your short story.

SCORING GUIDE

Scoring Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging
Ideas	<p>The short story has narrative elements that include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a detailed, vivid setting • characters who have distinctive character traits that add to the narrative • an inventive plot structure that resolves the conflict in a way that connects to the concept of change. 	<p>The short story has narrative elements that include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a believable setting • characters who have character traits appropriate to the narrative • a plot structure that has a resolved conflict. 	<p>The short story is underdeveloped and missing some or all of the following narrative elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a believable setting • characters who have character traits appropriate to the narrative • a plot structure that has a resolved conflict.
Organization	<p>The short story effectively incorporates each element of plot (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution).</p> <p>Transitional words or phrases seamlessly allow the reader to follow the story.</p>	<p>The short story includes each element of plot (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution).</p> <p>Transitional words or phrases help the reader to follow the story.</p>	<p>The short story is missing some or all of the elements of plot (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution).</p> <p>Transitional words or phrases are missing.</p>
Use of Language	<p>The dialogue is true to the characters' persona/voice and advances the plot.</p> <p>Descriptive details allow the reader to visualize the setting, characters, and action.</p>	<p>The dialogue helps portray character and conflict.</p> <p>Details allow the reader to visualize the setting, characters, and action.</p>	<p>The dialogue is missing or does not show aspects of character or conflict.</p> <p>Descriptive details are missing and/or do not allow the reader to visualize the setting, characters, and action.</p>

SCORING GUIDE

Scoring Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging
<p>Conventions</p>	<p>The writer demonstrates command of dialogue conventions.</p> <p>Overall, the story has few or no errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar.</p>	<p>Although a few errors in dialogue conventions may exist, they do not interfere with meaning or distract the reader.</p> <p>Overall, the story’s spelling, punctuation, capitalization, or grammar mistakes do not detract from the story.</p>	<p>Several errors in dialogue conventions appear in the text. The errors are distracting to the reader.</p> <p>Overall, the story has spelling, punctuation, capitalization, or grammar mistakes that detract from meaning and/or readability.</p>
<p>Evidence of the Writing Process</p>	<p>The story demonstrates thoughtful planning, significant revision, and careful editing in preparation for producing a publishable draft.</p>	<p>The story demonstrates planning, revision, and editing to produce a draft that is ready for publication.</p>	<p>The story does not show evidence of planning and displays minimal revision and editing.</p> <p>The draft is not ready for publication.</p>
<p>Additional Criteria</p>			

Comments:
