

## Section 1.1.10 – Writing a Short Story Rough Draft

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### Section Objective:

- Develop the characters, plot and setting for a short story
- Develop a rough draft for a short story



As you begin to write a first draft for a short story, be sure you develop a plan. Although some people just start to write – what some may call a part of a pre-write – you will eventually need to focus your direction. **Perhaps, the following graphic organizer could help you focus your writing more before you start to write.** If you are having a hard time starting to write, you might have to plan and develop your ideas more deeply. Also, remember that after you develop a plan for your short story, do not be afraid to change various elements as you need to do so.

### Graphic Organizer For a Short Story

This organizer can help you develop a short story. You may have to change elements to fit your thinking. However, if you can plan much of this ahead of time, writing the story should be easier for you. When you write stories, use what you think will help you.

Also, further in this section, you will find an explanation of these elements if you need more of a review.

1. Title of your short story:
2. Your name (author):
3. Setting:

4. Time Period:
5. Tone (Attitude of Author):
6. Mood (Feelings of Reader):
7. Characters:

Name	Description	Motivation
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8. Point of View (1<sup>st</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup>):
9. Dialogue (Where?)
10. Plot:

Main Conflicts:

Minor Conflicts:

Exposition:

Narrative Hook:

Rising Actions:

Climax:	Technical Climax
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Falling Actions:

Resolution:

Denouement:

Inferences:

Predictions:

11. Theme (Reason for the Story in Sentence Form):

Note: Thinking of the theme as you write, will help you to develop a strong purpose and force in your story.

## Detailed Check

### Development Of a Short Story

If you need to review the elements from above, study this part to help remind yourself of what each element encompasses.

When you develop or plan a short story, the following areas need to be considered:

- Characters
- Setting
- Time
- Tone
- Mood
- Plot
- Theme

Then, you might want to follow the steps for the writing process once you decide on the direction of your story.

### Character Development:



You need to think about the characters that you want to be part of your story. Sometimes, if you think of some good characters, these characters can actually shape the direction of your story.

Think of all the people who live in your neighborhood. Who are the most interesting people who live there? If you would use people you know, change their names and exaggerate their personalities so that they cannot be recognized. The emphasis in the story should be an in-depth character study of one character – more than plot.

Remember graphic organizers for characterizations are a great beginning step.

## Sample Character Analysis Guide: Help for You

For each major character in your planning, you will want to complete a graphic organizer.

Characterization can involve a number of various areas, such as the following:

1. **APPEARANCE** What does the person look like?  
  
(hair, eyes, body parts, shape, colors, tones, etc.)
2. **PERSONALITY** What kind of attitudes does the person reflect?  
  
(optimistic, angry, thoughtful, crazy, etc.)
3. **BACKGROUND/ENVIRONMENT** From where does this person come? Where does he/she live?  
(home, school, work, country, society, etc.)
4. **SPEECH** How does this person express himself verbally? Look at what he/she actually says or does not say.  
  
(Diction? Dialogue? Dialect? Idioms? Phrasing? Structure?)
5. **THOUGHTS** What are his/her deep reflections?  
  
(Diaries, journals, discussions, monologues, conversations, soliloquies, etc.)
6. **ACTIONS** What does he/she actually do?  
  
(Details that happen each situation – playoff game, prom, election, trip etc.)
7. **REACTIONS TO OTHERS** How does he/she treat others?  
  
(Family, friends, co-workers, service personnel, etc.)
8. **OTHERS' REACTIONS TO HIM/HER** How do others treat him/her?  
  
(Family, friends, co-workers, service personnel, etc.)

## Setting Development:



Naturally, try to choose a place that will fit the storyline. However, a believable setting probably needs to come from some place you know so that you can pull the details that you need.

Remember that a setting can be a whole area or just a room or just the mind of one character.

## Time Development:



Choose a time about which you know. Using the present might be a good idea. If you use the past, then do some research to create a believable time period. If you use the future, then your ability to predict would be important. If you use fantasy or science fiction, you need to have a good imagination, rooted in credibility.

## Tone Development:

The tone of a story is the attitude you plan to use in the story. Do you think you want the story to have a romantic, tragic, humorous, ironic, sympathetic, combination, etc. tone?

Tone is usually referred to in the form of an adjective. You might try brainstorming with a list of adjectives that would fit the plan you are trying to use.

## Mood Development:

The mood is what you want your reader to feel – sad, happy, fearful.

Again, adjectives are good.

## Plot Development:

In planning a short story, you need to decide on what the major conflict will be, especially if you want an action-type story.

Consider these four major conflicts found in most literature:

**Man Versus Man**  
**One person or group against Another**

**Man Versus Society**  
**Individual against Society**

**Man Versus Nature**  
**Man against the forces of Nature**

**Man Versus Himself**  
**Man against His Inner Nature**

Then, you need to consider how much of the following plotline you plan to use:

- |    |                         |   |
|----|-------------------------|---|
| 1. | <b>Exposition</b>       | Setting and situation of the beginning of the story   |
| 2. | <b>Narrative Hook</b>   | The beginning of the conflict, which grabs the reader's attention and throws him/her into the story |
| 3. | <b>Rising Action</b>    | Every happening that enables the conflict to develop – usually many, many details                   |
| 4. | <b>Technical Climax</b> | The point where the reader can infer or predict how the conflict will be resolved                   |

5. **Dramatic Climax**     The point in the story where the reader feels  
The most intense interest or emotion

Note: Sometimes the technical and dramatic climax are the same,  
but not always.

6. **Falling Action**     Happenings after the climax has been  
reached – could be a great deal or just a  
few ideas
7. **Resolution**     Final outcome of the conflict
8. **Denouement**     An Epilogue – the final resolution –  
especially of all the other little elements of  
the story, not necessarily part of the major  
conflict – sometimes part of the minor  
conflicts –not in some stories

Remember: Inferences, motivation, and predictions are important in  
plot development to maintain a reader's attention.

## Theme Development:

A theme is the purpose or the reason (thesis) the author is writing the story. When you plan your short story, decide what you want the reader to learn, know, or understand about life, the future, etc.

Like a thesis, everything that you include in your short story should reflect the theme you use for the story.

Usually a theme is expressed in the form of a sentence. If you are too general with your theme, using just one word, you will not have enough directions to help you develop your story.

Example:     War    (too general)

War destroys a person's life, even if that person  
has never fought in a war.



## Writing Process: Practice: Reminders:

1. Brainstorm: All elements (Character, Setting, Times, etc.)
2. Graphic Organizer: Clustering of ideas when needed
3. Basic Idea: Main Purpose: Theme
4. Outline: Planning: Direction of Story with emphasis on Characters  
Character(s): Details
5. First Draft: Attention Getter / Introduction of Characters / Plot / Theme /  
Setting/ Time / Motivation / Inferences / Predictability
6. Revisions
7. Test: Have others read the story and see if they understand the  
story and if they like it.
8. Final Version

## Short Check for the Development of a Short Story

Before you complete a final copy of a short story, you might want to use following checklist as a double check to make sure everything is the way you want it to be.

Did you choose a situation for a plot, a setting, a time period, point of view, and a theme?

Did you decide on the tone and mood of the piece?

Did you choose appropriate characters? Did you develop them in some detail?

Did you use all of these elements in a coherent way?

Have you planned the beginning and the end – something to grab a reader’s attention at the beginning and something to leave a reader satisfied at the end? Is it a good ending?



## Sample Rubric: For Short Story

Consider the follow rubric to evaluate your story for yourself:

### 1. **Focus:**

5 Points	Excellent direction (Thesis)
4 Points	Good direction / Weak in a few minor places
3 Points	Some direction / Weak in some places
2 Points	No real direction / Some attempt
1 Point	No real effort

### 2. **Content**

5 Points	Excellent depth (details) and perceptions
4 Points	Good depth (details) and perceptions
3 Points	Needs more depth and details
2 Points	No real depth / A few details
1 Point	No real depth at any level

### 3. **Organization**

5 Points	Excellent plan that can be seen / Great coherence
4 Points	Good plan / Coherence a little weak
3 Points	Evidence of a plan, but weak
2 Points	Very weak plan
1 Point	No real plan

### 4. **Style**

5 Points	Strong Individual Voice / Fluent Sentence Structure / Appropriate Vocabulary
4 Points	Good Individual Voice / Decent Sentence Structure / Appropriate Vocabulary Most of the Time
3 Points	Weak Individual Voice / Sentence Structure Problems / Weak Vocabulary

2 Points      No Real Voice / Awkward Sentence Structure / Weak Vocabulary

1 Point      No Real Voice / Poor Sentence Structure / Weak Vocabulary

**5.      Conventions**

5 Points      Excellent grammar, usage, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, manuscript form, etc.

4 Points      Good grammar, usage, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, manuscript form, etc.

3 Points      Weak grammar, usage, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, manuscript form, etc.

2 Points      Poor grammar, usage, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, manuscript form, etc.

1 Point      Extremely poor grammar, usage, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, manuscript form, etc.

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## Growth Activities

If you are up for a challenge or think of yourself as a truly creative writer, you might want to write a short story that is a **parody** of one of the short stories that you have read. A **parody** makes fun of a piece of literature. For instance, you could take a story and use the elements and tone of the story, but you would change the names, facts, etc. Many times people make a parody of an older story and kind of modernize it, keeping some of the key elements of the story.