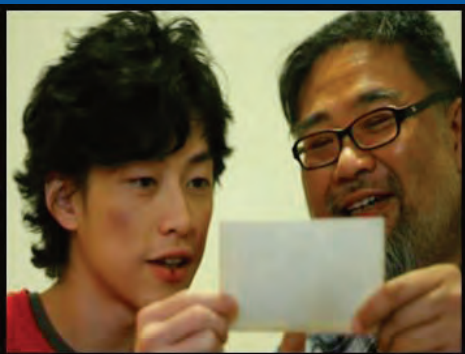


# NETworking

## Using Short Stories in the English Classroom





# Introduction

## About the Learning English through Short Stories elective module

The Learning English through Short Stories module is designed to introduce learners to the world of short stories, encouraging them to read, write and tell them. The activities that learners engage in should aim to develop their understanding of the major features of short stories, their language skills, cultural awareness, critical thinking skills and creativity. By the end of the module, learners are expected to write a story or develop one from a given story outline.

The module comprises the following three parts:

**Part 1:** Students will identify and understand the key features of a short story and read short stories with appreciation.

**Part 2:** Students will read and write specific aspects of a short story such as setting, character, theme, dialogue, opening and closing, and they will start writing their own story for the module.

**Part 3:** Students will practise oral and storytelling skills by sharing a story with the class. They will also finalise the draft for their module story and perform it.

(Adapted from the English Language Curriculum and Assessment Guide (Secondary 4 - 6), CDC & HKEAA, 2007)

## Rationale for this publication

In *NETworking: Using Short Stories in the English Classroom*, you will find teaching resources that are designed to support the Learning English through Short Stories elective module in the Three-year Senior Secondary English Language Curriculum.

Many of the materials in this book have been used in the professional development workshops for 'Shorts': A Short Story Writing Competition organised by the NET Section. The workshop materials have been revised and updated for this publication to be used more generally in the elective module on Short Stories.

Although this resource package is designed to be a companion to the Short Stories elective module, it is hoped that teachers will also find the materials useful as an integral part of the school-based English Language curriculum

# Acknowledgements

The NET Section would like to thank the following writers for granting us permission to use their original short stories and ideas in this publication:

Stuart Mead, NET  
Chong Gene Hang College

Adrian Tilley, former NET  
Jockey Club Ti-I College

For contributing ideas on the use of peer response groups, we are grateful to:

Helen Wong, English Panel Chair  
United Christian College (Kowloon East)

We also appreciate the many teachers who have shared ideas and materials with us on the teaching of short stories through regional cluster meetings and email exchanges. Although we are not able to use every idea, we appreciate all the good work that is happening in Hong Kong schools in preparation for the Short Stories elective module.

The following prize-winning short stories from 'Shorts': A Short Story Writing Competition have been selected for this publication and are available on the Resource CD:

'Shorts' 2010: 'The Magic Door' by Alexandria Lee Yik-ki, Christie C. Cheng, Anthea Pang Yin-seng and Nicole Hurip from Marymount Secondary School

'Shorts' 2011: 'The Machine' by Felix Shih Y. Y., Jeremy Chan Chun-ming, Trevor Sham Tsz-ho and Cheung Chi-kwan from Wah Yan College, Hong Kong

The following prize-winning films from 'Clipit': A Student-created Film Competition have been selected for this publication and are available on the Resource CD:

'Clipit' 2010: Untitled film by Sprindy Wong Yi-man, Sam Kok Man-chun, Ken Ho Cheuk-him and Watery Choi Chin-wa from Po Leung Kok Tang Yuk Tien College

'Clipit' 2010: 'The Precious Thing' by Hong Kiu, Tang Pui-shan, Kwan Siu-hoi, Lam Sze-wa and Wong Shing-lung from Hoi Ping Chamber of Commerce Secondary School

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Worksheets



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PowerPoints



Assessment Forms



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Short Stories



Publications and Websites

# Part 1

## Reading and Appreciating Short Stories

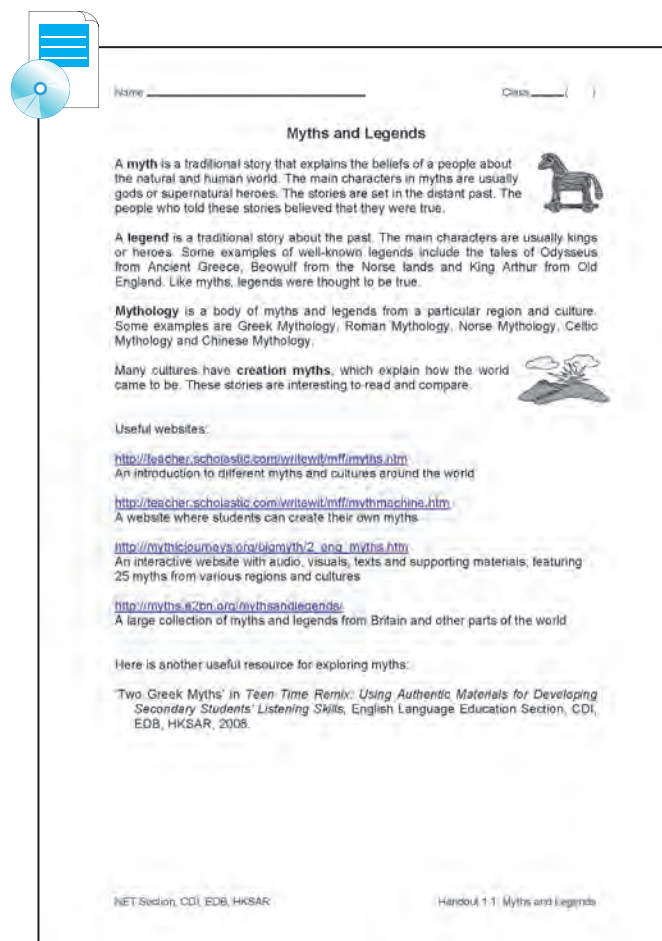
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# History of the Short Story

## Folklore

Stories are an important part of every culture. Short stories have their roots in folklore, or the oral tradition of storytelling. In the oral tradition, stories were told to explain beliefs about the world (e.g. myths), to remember the great deeds of past kings and heroes (e.g. legends), to teach moral principles (e.g. fables and parables) or simply for the sake of entertainment (e.g. folktales and fairy tales).

The following handout on the Resource CD contains information on **myths** and **legends**.



The handout is a worksheet titled "Myths and Legends" with a CD icon in the top left corner. It includes a header for "Name" and "Class", followed by the title "Myths and Legends". The text defines a myth as a traditional story explaining beliefs about the natural and human world, often involving gods or supernatural heroes. It defines a legend as a traditional story about the past involving kings or heroes, citing examples like Odysseus, Beowulf, and King Arthur. It also defines mythology as a body of myths and legends from a specific region and culture, listing Greek, Roman, Norse, Celtic, and Chinese mythologies. The handout mentions creation myths and provides several useful websites with brief descriptions. It also references a resource for exploring myths and includes footer information: "NET Section, CDI, EDB, HKSAR" and "Handout 1.1: Myths and Legends".

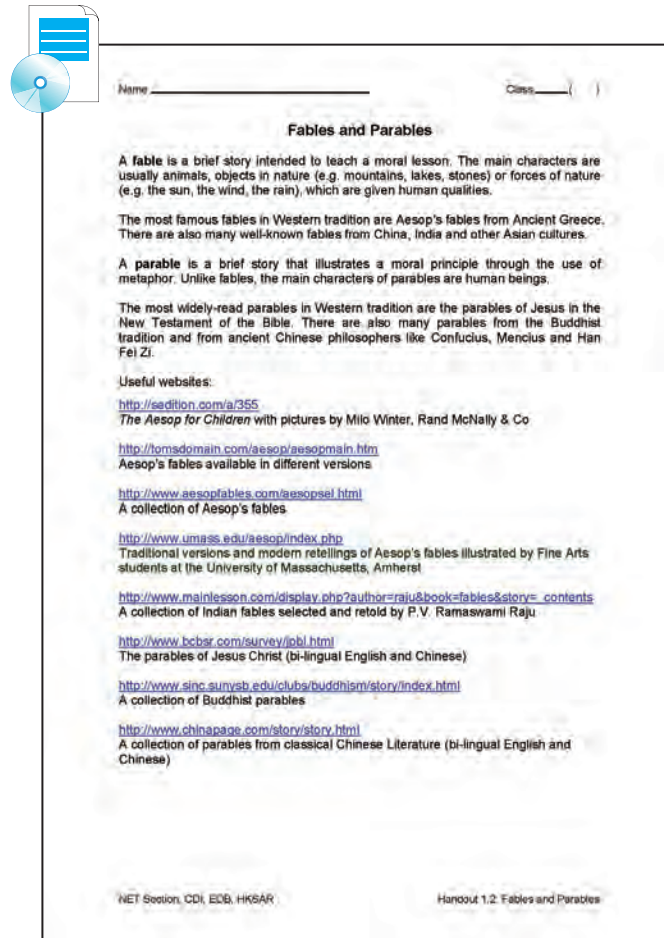
Handout 1.1:  
Myths and  
Legends

A **myth** is a traditional story that explains the beliefs of a people about the natural and human world. The main characters in myths are usually gods or supernatural heroes. The stories are set in the distant past. The people who told these stories believed that they were true.

A **legend** is a traditional story about the past. The main characters are usually kings or heroes. Some examples of well-known legends include the tales of Odysseus from Ancient Greece, Beowulf from the Norse lands and King Arthur from Old England. Like myths, legends were thought to be true.



This handout contains information on **fables** and **parables**.



The handout is a worksheet titled "Fables and Parables". It includes a header for "Name" and "Class", followed by the title. The text defines fables and parables, lists famous fables and parables, and provides several useful websites. At the bottom, it identifies the source as "NET Section, CDI, EOB, HKSAR" and the document as "Handout 1.2: Fables and Parables".

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

### Fables and Parables

A **fable** is a brief story intended to teach a moral lesson. The main characters are usually animals, objects in nature (e.g. mountains, lakes, stones) or forces of nature (e.g. the sun, the wind, the rain), which are given human qualities.

The most famous fables in Western tradition are Aesop's fables from Ancient Greece. There are also many well-known fables from China, India and other Asian cultures.

A **parable** is a brief story that illustrates a moral principle through the use of metaphor. Unlike fables, the main characters of parables are human beings.

The most widely-read parables in Western tradition are the parables of Jesus in the New Testament of the Bible. There are also many parables from the Buddhist tradition and from ancient Chinese philosophers like Confucius, Mencius and Han Fei Zi.

Useful websites:

<http://edition.com/a/355>  
The Aesop for Children with pictures by Milo Winter, Rand McNally & Co

<http://homsdomain.com/aesop/aesopmain.htm>  
Aesop's fables available in different versions

<http://www.aesopfables.com/aesopsel.html>  
A collection of Aesop's fables

<http://www.umass.edu/aesop/index.php>  
Traditional versions and modern retellings of Aesop's fables illustrated by Fine Arts students at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst

<http://www.mainlesson.com/display.php?author=raju&book=fables&story=contents>  
A collection of Indian fables selected and retold by P.V. Ramaswami Raju

<http://www.bcbsr.com/survey/job1.html>  
The parables of Jesus Christ (bi-lingual English and Chinese)

<http://www.sinc.sunysb.edu/cluba/buddhism/story/index.html>  
A collection of Buddhist parables

<http://www.chinapage.com/story/story.html>  
A collection of parables from classical Chinese Literature (bi-lingual English and Chinese)

NET Section, CDI, EOB, HKSAR Handout 1.2: Fables and Parables

*Handout 1.2:  
Fables and  
Parables*

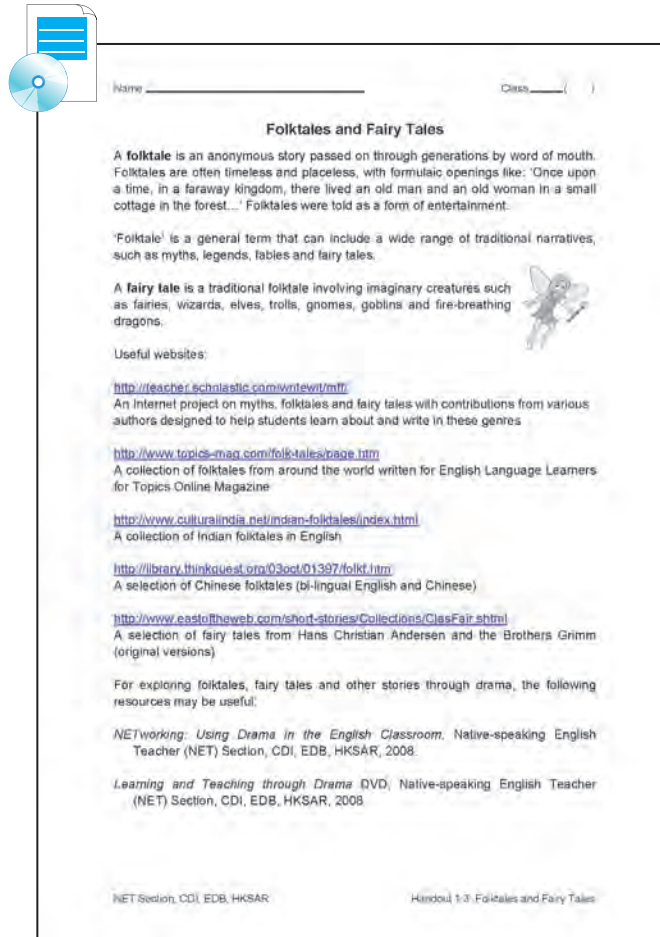
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This handout contains information on **folktales** and **fairy tales**.



The handout is a worksheet titled "Folktales and Fairy Tales". It includes a header for "Name" and "Class", a definition of folktales, a definition of fairy tales, a list of useful websites, and references for drama resources. A small illustration of a fairy is on the right side.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

### Folktales and Fairy Tales

A **folktale** is an anonymous story passed on through generations by word of mouth. Folktales are often timeless and placeless, with formulaic openings like: 'Once upon a time, in a faraway kingdom, there lived an old man and an old woman in a small cottage in the forest...' Folktales were told as a form of entertainment.

'Folktale' is a general term that can include a wide range of traditional narratives, such as myths, legends, fables and fairy tales.

A **fairy tale** is a traditional folktale involving imaginary creatures such as fairies, wizards, elves, trolls, gnomes, goblins and fire-breathing dragons.

Useful websites:

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/writew/mfr/>  
An internet project on myths, folktales and fairy tales with contributions from various authors designed to help students learn about and write in these genres

<http://www.topics-mag.com/folk-tales/page.htm>  
A collection of folktales from around the world written for English Language Learners for Topics Online Magazine

<http://www.culturalindia.net/indian-folktales/index.html>  
A collection of Indian folktales in English

<http://library.thinkquest.com/03oct/01397/folk.htm>  
A selection of Chinese folktales (bi-lingual English and Chinese)

<http://www.easttotheweb.com/short-stories/Collections/ClassFair.shtml>  
A selection of fairy tales from Hans Christian Andersen and the Brothers Grimm (original versions)

For exploring folktales, fairy tales and other stories through drama, the following resources may be useful:

*NETworking: Using Drama in the English Classroom*, Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) Section, CDI, EDB, HKSAR, 2008.

*Learning and Teaching through Drama DVD*, Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) Section, CDI, EDB, HKSAR, 2008.

NET Section, CDI, EDB, HKSAR Handout 1.3: Folktales and Fairy Tales

*Handout 1.3:  
Folktales and  
Fairy Tales*

A **folktale** is an anonymous story passed on through generations by word of mouth. Folktales are often timeless and placeless, with formulaic openings like: 'Once upon a time, in a faraway kingdom, there lived an old man and an old woman in a small cottage in the forest...' Folktales were told as a form of entertainment.

'Folktale' is a general term that can include a wide range of traditional narratives, such as myths, legends, fables and fairy tales.

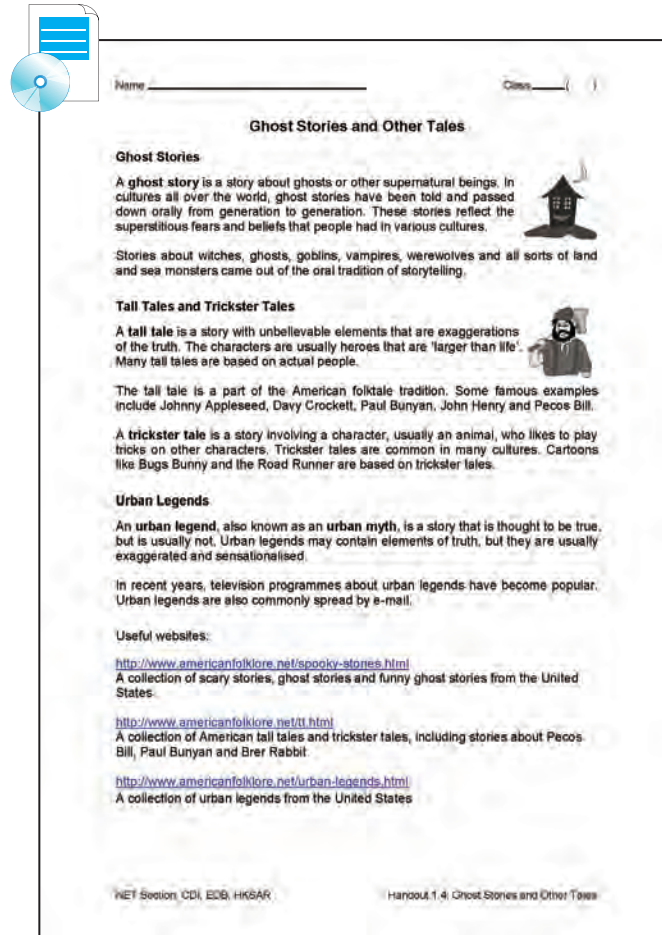
A **fairy tale** is a traditional folktale involving imaginary creatures such as fairies, wizards, elves, trolls, gnomes, goblins and fire-breathing dragons.

"Fairy tales are more than true: not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten."



G. K. Chesterton

This handout contains information about **ghost stories** and other tales from the oral tradition, such as **tall tales**, **trickster tales** and **urban legends**.



The image shows a handout titled "Ghost Stories and Other Tales" with a name and class line at the top. It is divided into three sections: "Ghost Stories", "Tall Tales and Trickster Tales", and "Urban Legends". Each section includes a definition and a small illustration. The "Ghost Stories" section has a house with a ghost, "Tall Tales and Trickster Tales" has a man with a large head, and "Urban Legends" has a person with a large head. At the bottom, there are three website links and the text "NET Section, CDI, EOB, HKSAR" and "Handout 1.4: Ghost Stories and Other Tales".

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

### Ghost Stories and Other Tales

#### Ghost Stories

A **ghost story** is a story about ghosts or other supernatural beings. In cultures all over the world, ghost stories have been told and passed down orally from generation to generation. These stories reflect the superstitious fears and beliefs that people had in various cultures.

Stories about witches, ghosts, goblins, vampires, werewolves and all sorts of land and sea monsters came out of the oral tradition of storytelling.

#### Tall Tales and Trickster Tales

A **tall tale** is a story with unbelievable elements that are exaggerations of the truth. The characters are usually heroes that are 'larger than life'. Many tall tales are based on actual people.

The tall tale is a part of the American folktale tradition. Some famous examples include Johnny Appleseed, Davy Crockett, Paul Bunyan, John Henry and Pecos Bill.

A **trickster tale** is a story involving a character, usually an animal, who likes to play tricks on other characters. Trickster tales are common in many cultures. Cartoons like Bugs Bunny and the Road Runner are based on trickster tales.

#### Urban Legends

An **urban legend**, also known as an **urban myth**, is a story that is thought to be true, but is usually not. Urban legends may contain elements of truth, but they are usually exaggerated and sensationalised.

In recent years, television programmes about urban legends have become popular. Urban legends are also commonly spread by e-mail.

Useful websites:

<http://www.americanfolklore.net/spooky-stories.html>  
A collection of scary stories, ghost stories and funny ghost stories from the United States.

<http://www.americanfolklore.net/tt.html>  
A collection of American tall tales and trickster tales, including stories about Pecos Bill, Paul Bunyan and Brer Rabbit.

<http://www.americanfolklore.net/urban-legends.html>  
A collection of urban legends from the United States

NET Section, CDI, EOB, HKSAR Handout 1.4: Ghost Stories and Other Tales

*Handout 1.4:  
Ghost Stories  
and Other  
Tales*

A **ghost story** is a story about ghosts or other supernatural beings. In cultures all over the world, ghost stories have been told and passed down orally from generation to generation. These stories reflect the superstitious fears and beliefs that people had in various cultures. Stories about witches, ghosts, goblins, vampires, werewolves and all sorts of land and sea monsters came out of the oral tradition of storytelling.

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An **urban legend**, also known as an **urban myth**, is a story that is thought to be true, but is usually not. Urban legends may contain elements of truth, but they are usually exaggerated and sensationalised.

Television programmes such as *Ripley's Believe It or Not!* (1949-1950, 1982-1986, 2000-2003), *Beyond Belief: Fact or Fiction* (1997-2002), *Mostly True Stories: Urban Legends Revealed* (2002-2008), *Mythbusters* (2003-present), and *Urban Legends* (2007-present) have helped popularise urban legends in recent times. Urban legends are also commonly spread by e-mail.

### The Early Literary Tradition



The first stories to be written down were stories from the oral tradition, such as Aesop's Fables and the many other fables, folktales and fairy tales recorded by storytellers and story collectors around the world.

The following handout contains information about some of the earliest stories from the oral tradition to be preserved in writing as part of the literary tradition in English.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

### The Early Literary Tradition

Below are some of the earliest stories from the oral tradition to be preserved in writing as part of the literary tradition in English.

	Title, author and origin	Examples of well-known fables or tales
1.	<p><b>Aesop's Fables</b>, approx. 6<sup>th</sup> Century BC, Greece.</p> <p>Aesop is said to have been a slave in Ancient Greece who became very famous for his skill as a storyteller.</p> <p>All his stories are fables with a moral, or a lesson about how to live a good life.</p>	<p>The Ant and the Grasshopper</p> <p>The Boy who Cried Wolf</p> <p>The Fox and the Grapes</p> <p>The Lion and the Mouse</p> <p>The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse</p>
2.	<p><b>One Thousand and One Nights</b>, 10<sup>th</sup> Century, Persia</p> <p>The framing story is about a Persian king who executes his wife because she is unfaithful. He then marries one young maiden after another, executing each one the morning after the wedding. This continues for three years, until there are no more young maidens to be found.</p> <p>At this point, Scheherazade, the king's daughter, offers herself as the next bride. On the night of the wedding, she tells the king the beginning of a tale, but she does not tell him the ending. The king postpones her execution because he is so interested in hearing how the tale ends. The following night she finishes the tale, but then begins a new one. Again she does not tell him the ending. This goes on for 1001 nights.</p> <p>One Thousand and One Nights is also known as <i>Tales from the Arabian Nights</i>.</p>	<p>'Aladdin and his Lamp' is the story of a boy named Aladdin, who finds a magic lamp. When he rubs the lamp a genie comes out and grants him three wishes.</p> <p>'The Voyages of Sindbad' is a series of adventure tales about Sindbad the Sailor, who sails the seas seven times and visits many magical and mysterious lands.</p> <p>'Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves' is about Ali Baba, a young man who is cast out of the family by his older brother and not given his inheritance. He comes across forty thieves in the forest and discovers the hiding place of their secret treasure.</p> 
3.	<p><b>The Canterbury Tales</b> (1387-1400), Geoffrey Chaucer, England</p> <p>The framing story is about a pilgrimage from London to Canterbury. The pilgrims come from all walks of life. They decide to tell stories to each other along the way. The person who tells the best story gets a free dinner. The host of the pilgrimage is the judge of the competition.</p>	<p>'The Knight's Tale' is a romantic tale about love and honour.</p> <p>'The Pardoner's Tale' is a folk tale about three drunken men who leave the pub in the first and kill Death.</p> <p>'The Nun's Priest's Tale' is a fable about a very proud rooster named Chanticleer who dreams he will be eaten by a fox.</p> 

HET Section, CD4, EDB, HR5AR Handout 1.5: The Early Literary Tradition

**Handout 1.5:**  
**The Early Literary Tradition**

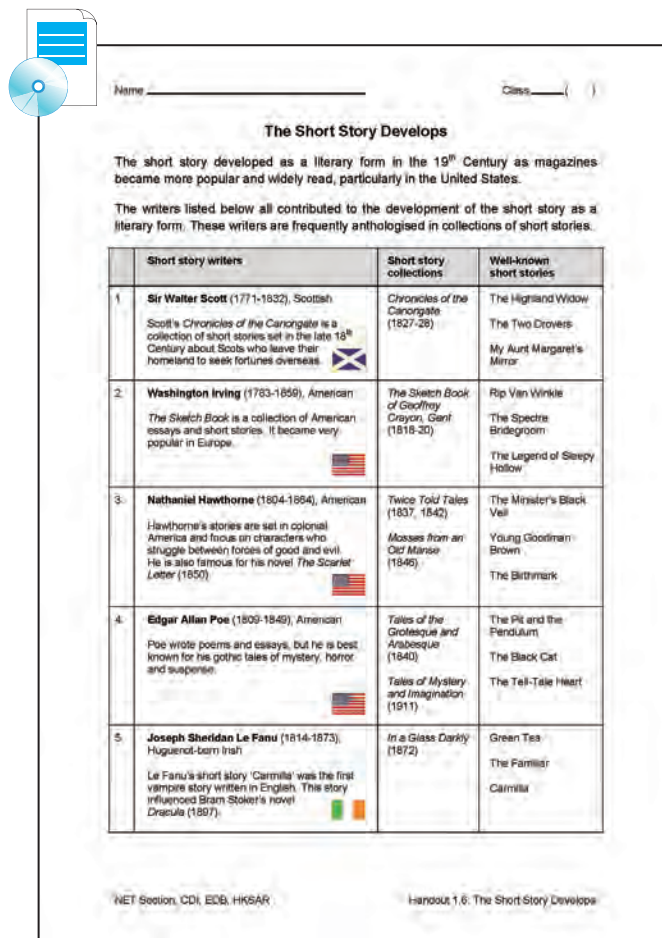
These stories are available in illustrated children's books and in simplified readers (e.g. Macmillan Readers, Oxford Bookworms Library, Penguin Longman Readers).

## The Short Story Develops

In the 19th Century, the short story developed as a literary form as magazines became more popular and widely read.

Many 19th Century writers contributed to the development of the short story as a literary form. These writers are frequently anthologised in collections of short stories.

The following handout contains information about some of these writers and the short stories they wrote.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

### The Short Story Develops

The short story developed as a literary form in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century as magazines became more popular and widely read, particularly in the United States.

The writers listed below all contributed to the development of the short story as a literary form. These writers are frequently anthologised in collections of short stories.

	Short story writers	Short story collections	Well-known short stories
1.	<b>Sir Walter Scott</b> (1771-1832), Scottish Scott's <i>Chronicles of the Canongate</i> is a collection of short stories set in the late 18 <sup>th</sup> Century about Scots who leave their homeland to seek fortunes overseas.	<i>Chronicles of the Canongate</i> (1827-28)	The Highland Widow The Two Crovers My Aunt Margaret's Mirror
2.	<b>Washington Irving</b> (1783-1856), American <i>The Sketch Book</i> is a collection of American essays and short stories. It became very popular in Europe.	<i>The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent</i> (1818-20)	Rip Van Winkle The Spectre Bridegroom The Legend of Sleepy Hollow
3.	<b>Nathaniel Hawthorne</b> (1804-1864), American Hawthorne's stories are set in colonial America and focus on characters who struggle between forces of good and evil. He is also famous for his novel <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> (1850).	<i>Twice Told Tales</i> (1837, 1842) <i>Mosses from an Old Manse</i> (1846)	The Minister's Black Veil Young Goodman Brown The Birthmark
4.	<b>Edgar Allan Poe</b> (1809-1842), American Poe wrote poems and essays, but he is best known for his gothic tales of mystery, horror and suspense.	<i>Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque</i> (1840) <i>Tales of Mystery and Imagination</i> (1911)	The Pit and the Pendulum The Black Cat The Tell-Tale Heart
5.	<b>Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu</b> (1814-1873), Huguenot-born Irish Le Fanu's short story 'Carmilla' was the first vampire story written in English. This story influenced Bram Stoker's novel <i>Dracula</i> (1897).	<i>In a Glass Darkly</i> (1872)	Green Tea The Familiar Carmilla

NET Section, CDI, EOB, HKSAR Handout 1.6: The Short Story Develops

Handout 1.6:  
The Short  
Story Develops

Many of these stories are available in simplified readers (e.g. Macmillan Readers, Oxford Bookworms Library, Penguin Readers).

## The Early 20th Century

By the 20th Century, the short story was a well-established literary form in the West, thanks to the influence of earlier writers like Edgar Allan Poe, Guy de Maupassant, and Anton Chekhov. The short story continued to flourish throughout the 20th Century due to the proliferation of popular magazines. Writers began to use the literary form of the short story to explore a variety of genres, including love stories, fantasy and horror stories, crime and mystery stories, and science fiction.

Many short stories written in the early 20th Century reflect issues related to the Age of Industrialisation. During this time, a growing number of people left their farmlands and moved to the cities to work in factories. Some short stories feature the lives of immigrants, who worked hard and learned to adapt to a new language and culture in an unfamiliar environment. Major historical events like World War I, the Great Depression and World War II form the backdrop to many of the best short stories written in the first half of the 20th Century.

The following handout contains information about some of the most frequently anthologised short story writers of the early 20th Century.

Name \_\_\_\_\_
Class \_\_\_\_\_

### The Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century

By the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the short story was a well-established literary form in the West, thanks to the influence of earlier writers like Edgar Allan Poe, Guy de Maupassant, and Anton Chekhov. The short story continued to flourish throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century due to the proliferation of popular magazines. Writers began to use the literary form of the short story to explore a variety of genres, including love stories, fantasy and horror stories, crime and mystery stories and science fiction.

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Here is a list of just some of the most frequently anthologised short story writers of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Short story writers	Short story collections	Well-known short stories
<p>1. <b>M. R. James</b> (1862-1936), British</p> <p>M. R. James was a medieval scholar; most famous for his ghost stories. Unlike ghost stories written in the gothic tradition, James' stories had contemporary settings and were more realistic.</p>	<p><i>Ghost Stories of an Antiquary</i> (1904)</p> <p><i>More Ghost Stories</i> (1911)</p> <p><i>A Warning to the Curious and Other Ghost Stories</i> (1925)</p> <p><i>The Collected Ghost Stories of M. R. James</i> (1931)</p>	<p>Number 13</p> <p>The Rose Garden</p> <p>A Warning to the Curious</p>
<p>2. <b>O. Henry</b>, aka William Sydney Porter (1862-1910), American</p> <p>O. Henry is often considered the best short story writer of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. He became well known for his surprise endings, or ironic "twists," at the end of his stories.</p>	<p><i>The Four Million</i> (1909)</p> <p><i>O. Henry Selected Stories</i> (1995)</p>	<p>The Gift of the Magi</p> <p>The Last Leaf</p> <p>The Furnished Room</p>

©NET Section, CDI, EOB, HKSAR
Handout 1.7: The Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century

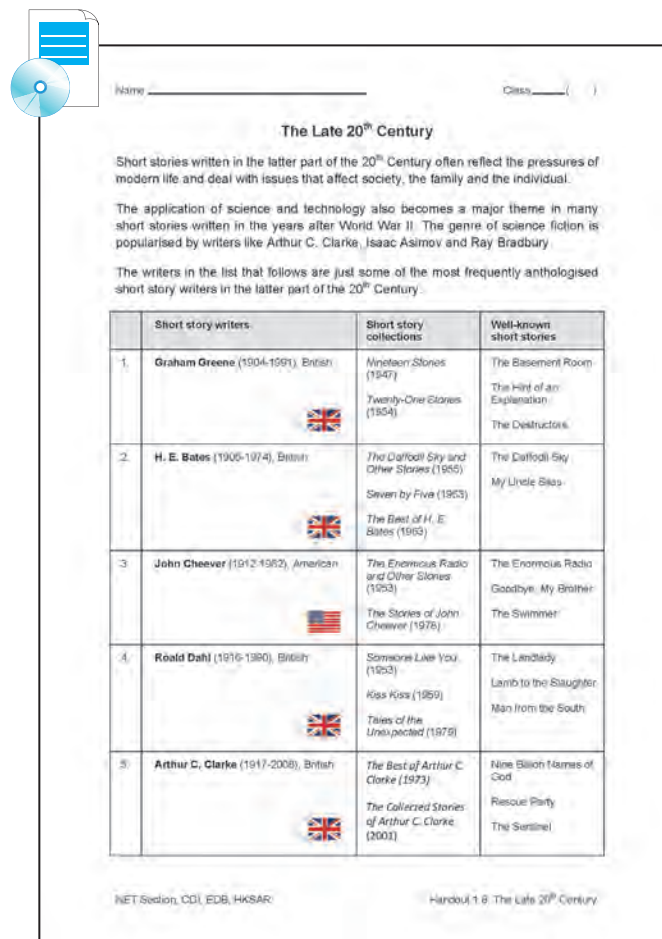
*Handout 1.7:  
The Early 20th  
Century*

## The Late 20th Century

Short stories written in the latter part of the 20th Century often reflect the pressures of modern life and deal with issues that affect society, the family and the individual.

The application of science and technology also becomes a major theme in many short stories written in the years after World War II. The genre of science fiction is popularised by writers like Arthur C. Clarke, Isaac Asimov and Ray Bradbury.

The following handout contains information about some of the most frequently anthologised short story writers in the latter part of the 20th Century.








Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

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Short stories written in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century often reflect the pressures of modern life and deal with issues that affect society, the family and the individual.

The application of science and technology also becomes a major theme in many short stories written in the years after World War II. The genre of science fiction is popularised by writers like Arthur C. Clarke, Isaac Asimov and Ray Bradbury.

The writers in the list that follows are just some of the most frequently anthologised short story writers in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

	Short story writers	Short story collections	Well-known short stories
1.	<b>Graham Greene</b> (1904-1991), British 	<i>Nineteen Stones</i> (1947) <i>Twenty-One Stones</i> (1954)	The Basement Room The Hint of an Explanation The Destructors
2.	<b>H. E. Bates</b> (1905-1974), British 	<i>The Darford Sky and Other Stories</i> (1955) <i>Seven by Five</i> (1963) <i>The Best of H. E. Bates</i> (1965)	The Darford Sky My Uncle Skis
3.	<b>John Cheever</b> (1912-1982), American 	<i>The Enormous Radio and Other Stories</i> (1953) <i>The Stories of John Cheever</i> (1976)	The Enormous Radio Goodbye, My Brother The Swimmer
4.	<b>Röald Dahl</b> (1916-1990), British 	<i>Someone Like You</i> (1953) <i>Kiss Kiss</i> (1959) <i>Tales of the Unexpected</i> (1978)	The Lamb Lamb to the Slaughter Man from the South
5.	<b>Arthur C. Clarke</b> (1917-2008), British 	<i>The Best of Arthur C. Clarke</i> (1973) <i>The Collected Stories of Arthur C. Clarke</i> (2001)	Nine Billion Names of God Rescue Party The Sentinel

NET Section, CCI, EDB, HKSAR Handout 1.8: The Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century

*Handout 1.8:  
The Late 20th  
Century*

Many 20th Century short stories written by the authors listed in Handouts 1.7 and 1.8 are available in simplified form.

## The Short Story Today

English has truly become a global language and there are more and more writers, both male and female, from countries and cultures all over the world writing their stories in English, even when English is not their mother tongue.

F. Sionil Jose from the Philippines, Farida Karodia from South Africa and the Maori writer Witi Ihimaera are just a few notable examples. Ha Jin is another example. He is a Chinese writer living in the United States who writes short stories in English about the struggles of ordinary Chinese people.

Some publishers of simplified readers are now including authors like these in short story collections under the category of 'World Stories'.

"The destiny of the world is determined less by the battles that are lost and won than by the stories it loves and believes in."

Harold Goddard, *The Meaning of Shakespeare*



# Selecting Suitable Short Stories

## Introduction

The short stories you select for your students to read in the *Learning English through Short Stories* elective module will depend largely on the language and interest level of your students.

*The Suggested Schemes of Work for the Elective Part of the Three-year Senior Secondary English Language Curriculum (Secondary 4-6)* recommends that teachers go over one short story with students at the beginning of the module to highlight the features of a short story, using 'pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading activities'; students should then 'be encouraged to read a couple of stories' on their own and respond to them in a reading journal. (p. 14-15)

## Selecting Texts for Instruction

For the first short story of the module, it is important to select a story that is at the 'instructional level' for the majority of students in the class. An instructional level text is one in which a student is able to read at least 90% of the words accurately and understand no less than 75% of the overall content. If the text is too difficult, the teacher will spend too much time explaining vocabulary and scaffolding student learning. Students will spend too much time focusing on word recognition and will struggle to understand the meaning.

To determine whether a particular short story is at the instructional level for the majority of students in a class, the teacher can conduct a quick reading test with a random sample of 10 students. For the test, the teacher selects one paragraph of roughly 100 words from the short story. Each of the 10 students then meets with the teacher individually and follows the procedures below.

### Suggested procedures

1. The student holds out two hands on the desk and reads the paragraph aloud.
2. The student puts down one finger for every unfamiliar word.
3. The teacher analyses the results:
  - a. If the student puts down all 10 fingers before finishing the paragraph, the story is too difficult for the student;
  - b. If the student still has at least one finger up at the end of the paragraph, the story is likely to be appropriate for instructional reading;
  - c. If the student still has at least six fingers up at the end of the paragraph, the story is likely to be appropriate for independent reading.


This table describes the three reading levels in terms of word-level accuracy.

Reading level	Word accuracy	Description
Independent	> 95%	The student can read and understand at least 96% of the words. The text is relatively easy for the student. The text is a good choice for the student to develop fluency.
Instructional	90%-95%	The students can read and understand 90-95% of the words. The text is challenging but manageable for the student. The text is appropriate for instructional reading.
Frustration	< 90%	The student cannot read or understand more than 10% of the words. The text is difficult for the student.

If the teacher expects students to read a short story and respond to it in a reading journal, the short story should be at students' independent reading level.

### Short Story Genres

To give students a more varied experience with short stories, teachers are encouraged to introduce stories from various genres. The following handout on the Resource CD contains information about the major short story genres.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

#### Short Story Genres

The major short story genres are listed in the table below.

Short story genres	Features	Well-known examples
<b>Fables and animal tales</b>	Fables are stories that feature animals, plants or forces of nature as characters.  There is a moral lesson explicitly expressed at the end of the story.	'The Fox and the Crow' is one of Aesop's Fables.  'The Frog in the Shallow Well' is a Chinese fable.  'Rikki Tikki Tavi' is a modern fable written by Rudyard Kipling.
<b>Folktales and fairy tales</b>	Folktales include a wide range of traditional narratives including myths, legends, fables, fairy tales and tales about ordinary people.  Fairy tales are folktales that feature imaginary characters such as witches, giants or talking animals. The stories tend to be about loyalty and the events are magical.	'The Fisherman and his Wife' by The Brothers Grimm  'The Emperor's New Clothes' by Hans Christian Andersen  'The Happy Prince' by Oscar Wilde
<b>Ghost stories</b>	Ghost stories feature ghosts or other supernatural beings. They play on people's superstitious fears and beliefs.	'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow' by Washington Irving  'Humber 13' by M. R. James  'The Judge's House' by Bram Stoker
<b>Horror stories</b>	Horror stories explore the dark side of human nature. They play on people's psychological fears.	'Young Goodman Brown' by Nathaniel Hawthorne  'The Tell-Tale Heart' by Edgar Allan Poe  'The Landlady' by Roald Dahl
<b>Crime and mystery stories</b>	Crime stories or mystery stories often feature a clever detective who must solve a mysterious crime. These stories are also called detective stories.	'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' by Edgar Allan Poe  'The Red-headed League' by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle  'The Heroine' by Patricia Highsmith

NET Section, CDI, EDB, HKSAR Handout 1.9: Short Story Genres

*Handout 1.9:  
Short Story  
Genres*

## Using Simplified Readers

Many short stories are available in simplified readers for English language learners. The table below lists some of the advantages and disadvantages to consider when using simplified readers.

Advantages	Disadvantages
The language is graded for English language learners at various levels.	The beauty of the language is often lost in the simplified text.
Students can read, understand and appreciate some of the best-loved stories written in English.	The stories are often reduced to plot summaries so students may not be very interested in the story.
Pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading activities are often provided.	The pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading activities are not always well-designed.
A CD is often provided so that students can listen to the stories as they read them.	Opportunities for students to practise reading strategies may be reduced with a simplified text.

If you choose to use a short story in a simplified reader with your students, also have them read excerpts from the original version of the story. By doing so, students will be able to analyse and appreciate the use of language in the original text.

Several major publishers produce sets of simplified readers. More information is available on their websites.

*"No matter how busy you think you are, you must find time for reading, or surrender yourself to self-chosen ignorance."*

*Confucius*

## Using Children’s Literature





Children’s literature may also work well in the short story module. Handout 1.10 contains information about some of the most popular authors of children’s literature in English.

Handout 1.10: Children's Literature

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

**Children's Literature**

Here are some of the most popular authors of children's literature in English.

	Children's literature authors	Well-known books
1.	<p><b>Dr Seuss</b>, aka Theodor Seuss Geisel (1904-1991), American</p> <p>Dr Seuss' picture books have creative illustrations and stories written in rhyming verse.</p> <p><a href="http://www.drseuss.com">www.drseuss.com</a></p> 	<p><i>Horton Hears a Who!</i> (1954) is a story that promotes an awareness of others.</p> <p><i>How the Grinch Stole Christmas!</i> (1957) is a story that addresses greed and materialism.</p> <p><i>The Sneetches</i> (1961) is a story that deals with racial discrimination.</p>
2.	<p><b>Shel Silverstein</b> (1930-1999), American</p> <p>Silverstein's stories, poems and illustrations are funny and philosophical.</p> <p><a href="http://www.shelilverstein.com">www.shelilverstein.com</a></p> 	<p><i>The Giving Tree</i> (1967) explores the theme of giving freely with no strings attached.</p> <p><i>The Missing Piece</i> (1976) deals with the theme of achieving happiness and fulfillment.</p> <p><i>The Missing Piece Meets the Big O</i> (1981) is a sequel to <i>The Missing Piece</i>.</p>
3.	<p><b>Michael Morpurgo</b> (1943 -), British</p> <p>Morpurgo collaborates with illustrator Michael Foreman to bring classic stories from English literature to life for children. He has also worked with Rosemary Sandberg on the <i>Kingfisher Treasury of Classic Stories</i> (2002) and illustrator Emma Chichester Clark on <i>The Orchard Book of Aesop's Fables</i> (2004). He is also well known for his modern stories for children.</p> <p><a href="http://www.michaelmorpurgo.com">www.michaelmorpurgo.com</a></p> 	<p><i>Robin of Sherwood</i> (1986)</p> <p><i>Arthur, High King of Britain</i> (2002)</p> <p><i>The Sleeping Sword</i> (2002)</p> <p><i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> (2004)</p> <p><i>Beowulf</i> (2006)</p> <p><i>Muck and Magic: Stories from the Countryside</i> (1995) and <i>More Muck and Magic: Stories from the Countryside</i> (2001) are two collections of stories with rural settings and themes illustrated by Quentin Blake.</p>
4.	<p><b>Chris Van Allsburg</b> (1949 -), American</p> <p>Van Allsburg's picture books depict supernatural events, explore the darker side of human nature and often end with an ironic twist.</p> <p><a href="http://www.chrisvanallsburg.com">www.chrisvanallsburg.com</a></p> 	<p><i>The Garden of Abdul Gasazi</i> (1979) is a fantasy story about a supernatural garden.</p> <p><i>Jumangi</i> (1981) is a fantasy story about a supernatural Christmas gift.</p> <p><i>The Polar Express</i> (1985) is a Christmas fantasy adventure story.</p> <p><i>The Stranger</i> (1980) is a fantasy story involving a farmer and a very strange visitor.</p> <p><i>The Sweetest Fig</i> (1993) is a fantasy story about a greedy dentist who gets his just dessert.</p>

NET Section, CCL, EDB, HKSAR Handout 1.10: Children's Literature

Handout 1.10:  
Children's  
Literature

The table below lists some of the advantages and disadvantages to consider when using children's literature.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>The stories are beautifully illustrated.</p> <p>The language is rich and authentic.</p> <p>The plot structure is usually simple.</p> <p>The themes are often thought-provoking.</p>	<p>The books are expensive.</p> <p>The language can be difficult for second language learners to understand and appreciate.</p> <p>Secondary students may perceive stories from children's literature to be too childish.</p>

Schools can buy children's literature for the school library (see Handout 1.10 for suggestions) and students can be encouraged to read them on their own. Teachers can also read the stories with the whole class. A good story from children's literature can serve to illustrate concepts like character, setting, plot and theme in a fun and interesting way.

## Using English Short Stories Set in Hong Kong

Teachers may want to use short stories written in English by Hong Kong-based authors, although some of these stories are not easy.

*City Voices: Hong Kong Writing in English, 1945 to the Present* (Hong Kong University Press, 2002) has a fine selection of novel excerpts and short stories written by authors with a Hong Kong background, such as Xu Xi, Timothy Mo and David T. K. Wong. Xu Xi's *Access: Thirteen Tales* (Signal 8 Press, 2011) is a collection of short stories featuring a wide range of strong female characters in Hong Kong.

Two additional sources of local fiction are *Asia Literary Review* and *Cha: An Asian Literary Journal*. More information about these sources is available at the websites below:

*City Voices: Hong Kong Writing in English, 1945-Present*  
[www.hkupress.org](http://www.hkupress.org)

*Asia Literary Review*  
[www.asialiteraryreview.com](http://www.asialiteraryreview.com)

*Cha: An Asian Literary Journal*  
[www.asiancha.com](http://www.asiancha.com)

Adrian Tilley, a former Native-speaking English Teacher (NET), has published a book of short stories suitable for young people in Hong Kong called *Cheung Chau Paradise and Other Stories* (Meejah Publications, 2006). More information about this collection of short stories is available on his website: <http://www.adrian-tilley.com/publications>

You will find two of Adrian Tilley's short stories on the Resource CD. You will also find two short stories written by Stuart Mead, as well as two stories written by Hong Kong secondary students for 'Shorts': A Short Story Writing Competition. These stories can be printed and used in the classroom for the Short Stories elective module.

"Hong Kong is ... dense with history, from the pre-historic through the many changing Chinese dynasties, to its present position as a world financial centre where international routes interweave on a daily basis. What more can a writer ask for...?"

Louise Ho, *City Voices*

## Using Other Stories

Other types of stories that may be considered in the Short Stories module include jokes, anecdotes, personal recounts and short feature stories in the news.

The *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul* series, edited by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen and Kimberly Kirberger, contains a wide range of inspirational stories written for young people.

The following websites are good resources for self-access learning. Students can use them to practise their English skills through reading stories.

[www.rong-chang.com/qa2/](http://www.rong-chang.com/qa2/)

This website has a large collection of stories for students learning English as a second language. There are also audio files and exercises for vocabulary, grammar and comprehension practice.

[www.short-funny-stories.com](http://www.short-funny-stories.com)

This website has a large number of short funny stories on a variety of topics similar to those that circulate on the Internet. Students can search for stories by category or select stories randomly.

[www.merlynspen.org](http://www.merlynspen.org)

This website has an online library of short stories written by students. Click on 'You Read' and follow the link to 'Enter the Library'. Search by genre (e.g. 'Horror') to find short stories that your students will enjoy reading. They may also be inspired to write similar stories of their own.

## Finding Short Stories Online

The following websites contain short stories that are in the public domain. If you are looking for the original version of a short story, these are good websites to know about.

[http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main_Page)

<http://www.classicreader.com/browse/6/>

<http://www.online-literature.com/>

<http://www.readbookonline.net/shortStory/>

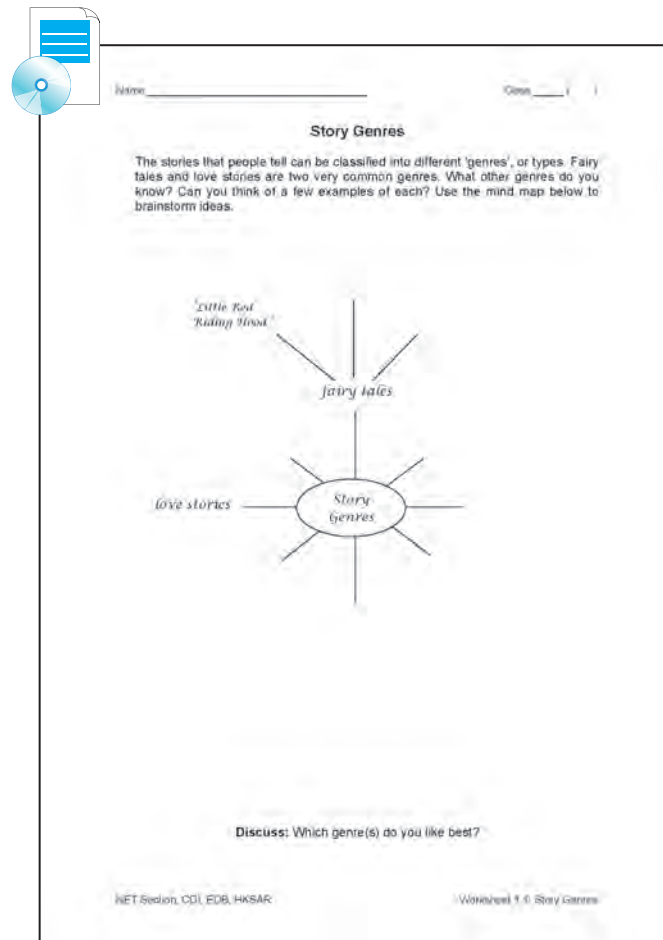
<http://www.web-books.com/Category.php?Category=Short+Stories>

[www.short-stories.co.uk](http://www.short-stories.co.uk)

# Supporting Student Reading

## Beginning the Module

After selecting suitable short stories, you are ready to begin the Short Stories module. You may want to begin the module with a brainstorming activity to help students think about the different genres of the stories they know. The following worksheet is designed for this purpose.



Worksheet 1.1:  
Story Genres

## Suggested Procedures

1. Students work in groups of three or four.
2. Distribute the worksheet and explain that 'genre' refers to the type of story, e.g. fairy tale, love story, horror story.
3. Students brainstorm in groups and complete the mind map with the genres they know and with examples for each genre.
4. Students share their responses with the whole class.
5. Ask students which genres and stories they like best, and to explain their reasons.

## Activities for Teaching a Short Story

After selecting a suitable short story to read with the class, it is time to prepare pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading activities to support students with reading and appreciating the story. These activities should help students develop their language skills, critical thinking skills, cultural awareness and creativity as they read and interact with the story. Students will also become more familiar with the major features of short stories as a literary form.

Below are examples of reading activities for the short story 'The Knock at the Door' by Stuart Mead, which can be found in Appendix I and on the Resource CD. Similar activities can be designed and used for any short story.

### Pre-reading Activities

Students should be encouraged to engage in pre-reading activities and to establish a purpose for reading. Well-structured pre-reading activities are most important with students who have a low level of reading proficiency. As students become more competent readers, teachers will be able to reduce the amount of support and allow students to do pre-reading activities independently.

Pre-reading activities can serve the following purposes:

- Activate prior knowledge and/or provide background information necessary for comprehending the text.
- Clarify cultural information that may cause comprehension difficulties.
- Familiarise students with features of the genre/text type.
- Encourage students to make predictions based on the title, the illustrations and/or the opening of the story.

Many teachers may also feel the need to pre-teach vocabulary before students read a short story. However, to develop students' reading skills it is better to give students as many opportunities as possible to infer the meaning of unfamiliar words using pictorial or contextual clues. These skills can be modelled and explicitly taught in the while-reading phase. This will be discussed further in 'While-reading Activities'.

In the following sample activities, students must think about the genre of the story, as well as information about the characters, setting and plot development, before making informed predictions about the story.

"Read, read, read."

William Faulkner





### Pre-reading Activity 1: Activating Schemata

Part of the reading process involves applying prior knowledge and experience of the world to the text in order to make sense of it. What we already know about the world is sometimes referred to as our 'schemata'. When we read about an unfamiliar topic, reading comprehension becomes much more difficult. One way to help students improve their reading comprehension is to give them background information about the topic and/or help them activate their schemata. In the following activity, students must use their knowledge of the story genre and their imagination to make predictions about the story.

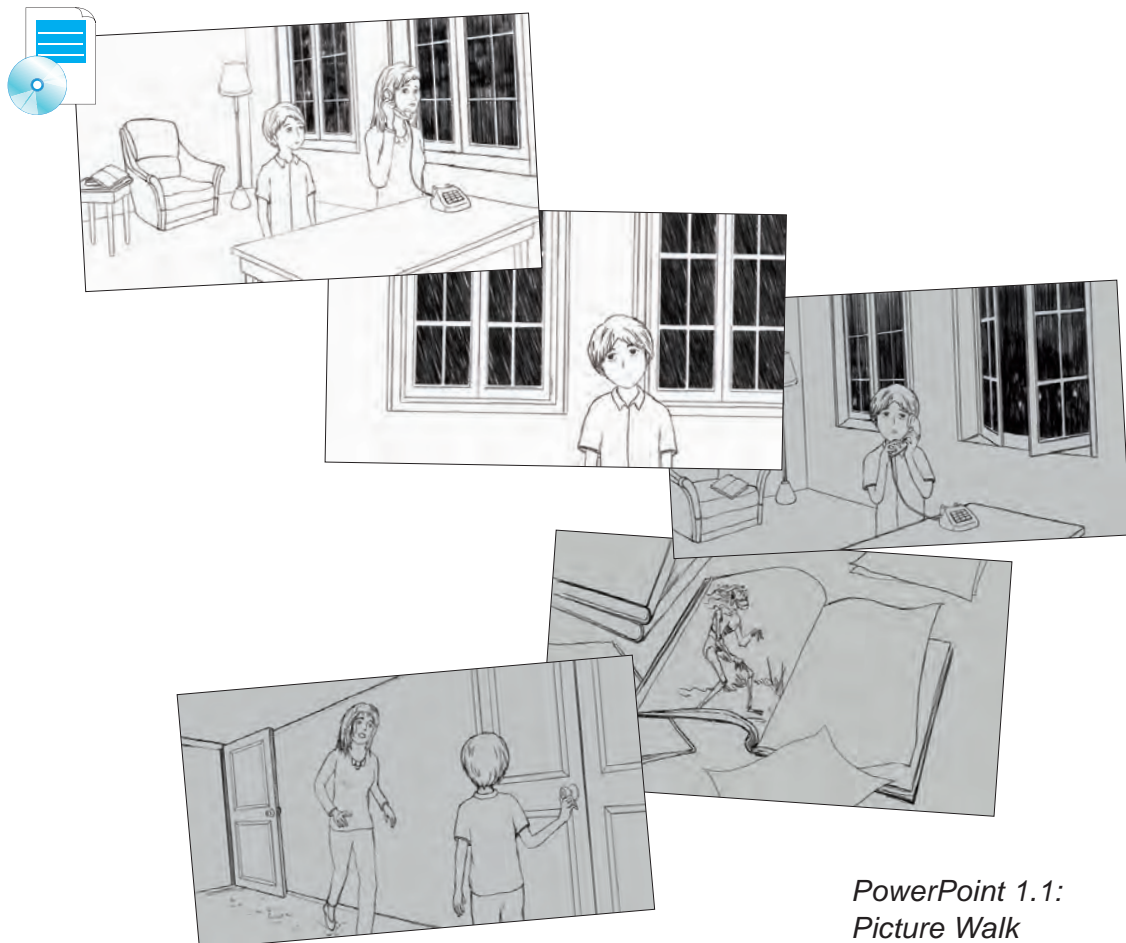
#### Suggested Procedures

1. Tell students to close their eyes. Play a recording of spooky music to create a feeling of suspense. Knock hard on the desk or door three times quickly.
2. Tell students that what they have heard is a scene in the story that they are about to read. Ask students to guess which story genre it is and why they think so.
3. Accept reasonable answers, such as 'horror story' or 'ghost story'. Students should be able to relate the spooky music and loud knocks to their prior experience with horror stories or ghost stories.
4. Ask students to guess:
  - Who is knocking in the story?
  - What is the person knocking on?
  - Why is the person knocking so loudly?
  - What time is it in the story?
  - Where does the story take place?
5. Record students' guesses on the board.
6. Tell students the title of the story. Ask if they would like to change their responses to the questions.
7. Ask students: If you were in the house alone, would you open the door? Why/Why not?
8. Conduct a picture walk to preview and make predictions of the story. (See Step 2 of Suggested Procedures for Pre-reading Activity 2.)

## Pre-reading Activity 2: Picture Walk

In a picture walk, students talk about the illustrations of a story in sequence before reading the text. Going through a picture walk with the class reinforces students' use of pictorial clues and encourages them to anticipate what might happen in the story. Students will read more actively if they have expectations about what will happen in the story before they begin reading. When walking through the pictures with the class, make sure you do not give away the ending of the story!

PowerPoint 1.1 contains illustrations from the short story 'The Knock at the Door' by Stuart Mead. It can be used to do a picture walk before students read the story.



*PowerPoint 1.1:  
Picture Walk*

### Suggested Procedures

1. Tell students the title of the story. Encourage students to guess what the story is about.
2. Project the first picture on the screen. Ask students to talk about what they see and what may be happening in the picture. Encourage students to draw on their personal experiences as they interpret the picture. Focus questions may be used:
  - Look at the picture. What do you see? What do you think is happening?
  - Look at Joey. How do you think he feels? What do you think has happened?
  - Who is the woman? Who is she talking to? How does she feel? What do you think has happened?
  - What can you see outside the window?
  - What do you think will happen next?
  - Have you ever been at home alone on a stormy night?
3. Direct students to details in the pictures that they may not have noticed. Discuss whether these clues affect their predictions.
4. After completing the picture walk, ask students to predict the end of the story. (If there is a picture illustrating what happens at the end, do not show it to the class.)

"To learn to read is to light a fire; every syllable that is spelled out is a spark."

Victor Hugo

## While-reading Activities

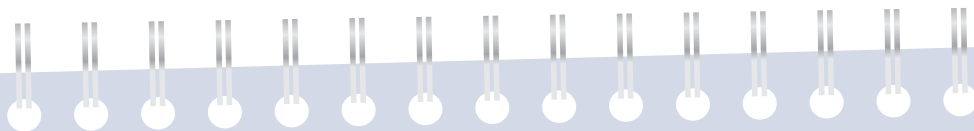
While reading a story with the class, it is important to model particular reading strategies for students so that they learn how to interact with the text and negotiate meaning.

For example, if students have difficulty reading an unfamiliar word aloud, do not simply feed them the correct pronunciation; instead, model for them how to use letter-sound relationships or other 'word attack' skills (e.g. breaking words into syllables; recognising familiar prefixes, suffixes or other word parts; making analogies with familiar words that have similar spellings) to decode, or sound out, the word.

If students do not understand the meaning of a word, do not simply translate the word into Chinese for them or ask them to look it up in the dictionary; rather, model for students how to infer the meaning of the word from the pictures or from the context. It is often possible for students to work out the part of speech of an unfamiliar word, and then to use the information that comes before and after the word to infer its meaning.

To become more skilful readers, students should also learn how to ask questions and make predictions as they read. *'How are these characters related?'*, *'What is this main character's motivation?'*, *'What will happen if...?'* Reading actively by asking good questions can also be modelled by the teacher in the while-reading phase.

The activities that follow are designed to help students respond cognitively, emotionally and imaginatively to a short story. Through the activities, students will become familiar with the features of a short story, such as characters, setting and plot, and this will contribute to their understanding and appreciation of the text. The amount of support given to students will depend on their reading proficiency.



### While-reading Activity 1: Story Elements

The three basic elements that all short stories must have are:

1. characters – the people, animals or creatures in the story
2. setting – the place and time
3. plot – the events that happen in the story

A story cannot take place without characters who think, speak and act, and characters need to exist in a certain place and time. For a story to develop, something must happen, i.e. there must be a plot. Some stories also have a theme. The theme of a story is the central idea that runs through it.

In this activity, students use a graphic organiser to take notes on the three basic story elements (character, setting and plot) as they read.

Worksheet 1.2 is a graphic organiser that students can use to take notes on the story.

The graphic organizer is titled 'Story Elements' and includes a header for 'Name' and 'Class'. It features a central circle labeled 'Title and Author' connected to four boxes: 'Setting (place) When does the story take place?', 'Setting (time) When does the story take place?', 'Main character Who is the main character?', and 'Supporting characters Who are the other characters?'. Below this is a 'Plot (sequence of events)' section with three boxes: 'Beginning What happens at the beginning of the story?', 'Middle What happens in the middle of the story?', and 'End What happens at the end of the story?'. The footer contains the text 'NET/Seelich, GDI, EOB, HKSAR' and 'Worksheet 1.2: Story Elements'.

Worksheet 1.2:  
Story Elements

### Suggested Procedures

1. Explain that all stories have three basic story elements: character, setting and plot. Use a story familiar to students to illustrate this point, e.g. 'The Three Little Pigs' or 'Cinderella'.
2. Distribute Worksheet 1.2 and explain that it will be used to take notes on 'The Knock at the Door' by Stuart Mead. Ask students to fill in the title and the author first.
3. Students work in small groups to take notes on the setting and characters of the story.
4. Discuss answers with the class.
5. Have students work in small groups to take notes on the sequence of events, i.e. what happens at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the story.\*
6. Discuss answers with the class.

\* A sequencing activity can also be used in place of Step 5 to support students with identifying and sequencing the events of the story. (See Post-reading Activity 1.)

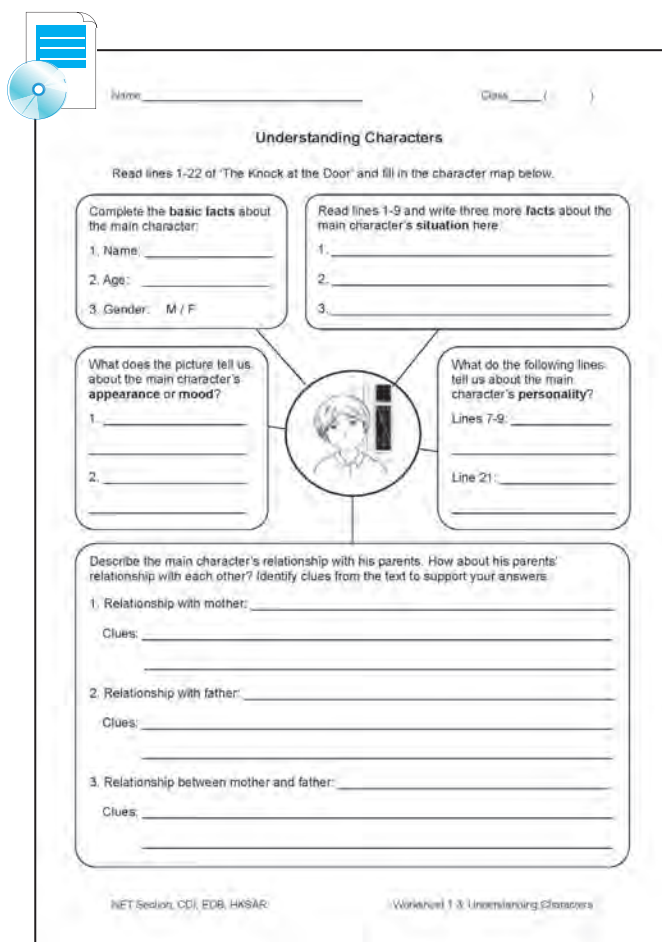
## While-reading Activity 2: Understanding Characters

The author of a story does not always tell the reader everything. For example, instead of describing a character's personality, the author may only reveal what the character says or does. Readers must use their imagination to construct the character in their mind.

This activity helps students better understand the characters in a story. If students can put themselves in the imaginary world of the characters, they will be able to appreciate the story more.

Worksheet 1.3 is based on the story 'The Knock at the Door'. A similar worksheet can be designed for any short story.

Worksheet 1.3 is designed to help students better understand the main character, Joey Carter.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

### Understanding Characters

Read lines 1-22 of 'The Knock at the Door' and fill in the character map below.

Complete the **basic facts** about the main character:


1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Gender: M / F

Read lines 1-9 and write three more **facts** about the main character's **situation** here.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

What does the picture tell us about the main character's **appearance** or **mood**?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_



What do the following lines tell us about the main character's **personality**?

Lines 7-9: \_\_\_\_\_

Line 21: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the main character's relationship with his parents. How about his parents' relationship with each other? Identify clues from the text to support your answers.

1. Relationship with mother: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clues: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Relationship with father: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clues: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Relationship between mother and father: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clues: \_\_\_\_\_

NET (Seeloh, CDI), EDB, HKSAR  
Worksheet 1.3: Understanding Characters

Worksheet 1.3:  
Understanding  
Characters

### Suggested Procedures

1. Distribute Worksheet 1.3 and explain the purpose. Tell students that if they understand the characters better, they can enter the world of the characters and enjoy the story more.
2. Read the instructions with the class and make sure students understand how to complete the worksheet.
3. For the part on relationships, focus students' attention on what the characters say, think and do. This will help them find clues to support their answers.
4. Give students time to work individually, in pairs or in groups.
5. Ask students to report their answers to the class.\* Invite the class to provide feedback on the suggested answers and to discuss whether the clues are appropriate and effective.

\* If students work individually, allow time for them to discuss their answers with a neighbour before sharing with the class.



### While-reading Activity 3: Inferring Characters' Thoughts

One way of understanding the characters better is to infer their thoughts from the events that happen to them.

This activity gives students practice with inferring characters' thoughts. When designing this type of worksheet, it is important to choose events that give readers clues about the characters' thoughts.

Worksheet 1.4 is based on the story 'The Knock at the Door'. A similar worksheet can be designed for any short story.

Worksheet 1.4 is designed to help students infer how Joey and his mother feel at different points in the story.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

#### Inferring Characters' Thoughts

You will find the story more interesting if you understand what the characters think or how they feel when something happens to them.

1. Read the thought bubbles below. Which character from 'The Knock at the Door' does each thought belong to? Write the names of the characters in the spaces provided.

a) I wonder who that was on the phone?

b) There's no time to explain – I'd better go!

She put on her coat and her old shoes and took her umbrella (line 17)

c) Where is she going in this weather?

d) I hope he'll be all right while I'm gone.

a) \_\_\_\_\_ b) \_\_\_\_\_ c) \_\_\_\_\_ d) \_\_\_\_\_

2. What might the characters be thinking when the following events happen? Write down their thoughts in the table below.

Event	Character	Thought
She left quickly. The door closed behind her with a bang. (line 22)	Joey	
BANG! Something hard hit the roof. Joey jumped. He sat down on the sofa and held on to the book he had been reading. (lines 30-31)	Joey	
Carefully, he opened the window and looked out. There were a few lights in the distance – other houses. (lines 48-49)	Joey	

NET Section, CDI, EDB, HKSAR      Worksheet 1.4: Inferring Characters' Thoughts

Worksheet 1.4:  
Inferring Characters' Thoughts



## Suggested Procedures

1. Distribute Worksheet 1.4 and explain the purpose of the worksheet.
2. Explain the instructions for Part 1. Select a thought bubble as an example.
3. Ask guiding questions to elicit the answer. Ask students to describe the event when the character is having the thought. Alternatively, ask students for the line numbers where the event happens.
4. Give students time to complete Part 1.
5. Discuss answers with the whole class with reference to the events.
6. Explain the instructions for Part 2. To demonstrate, work on the first item with the whole class.
7. Tell students that they must be able to justify their answers.
8. Give students time to work individually, in pairs or in groups.
9. Ask students to report their answers to the class\*. Invite the class to provide feedback on the suggested answers and to discuss whether the clues are appropriate and effective.

\* If students work individually, allow time for them to discuss their answers with a neighbour before sharing with the class.



#### While-reading Activity 4: Somebody-Wanted-But-So

'Somebody-Wanted-But-So' (SWBS) is a useful strategy to summarise a story in one sentence using this pattern:

Somebody wanted something, but there was a problem so it must be resolved.

Students need to focus on the various elements of the story:

1. **Somebody** - Who is the main character? (Character)
2. **Wanted** - What does the character want? (Goal/Motivation)
3. **But** - What stops the character from getting what he/she wants? (Problem/Complication)
4. **So** - How is the problem resolved? (Resolution)

As students read through a story, the SWBS strategy can be used to summarise different parts of the story. We can then use words like THEN, LATER, AND, or BUT to connect a series of SWBS sentences, producing a longer summary of the story. (See table below.)

Example:

Somebody	Wanted	But	So
Cinderella	to go to the ball	her evil stepmother wouldn't let her go	her fairy godmother sent her to the ball where she met the prince.
THEN			
Cinderella	to stay at the ball with the prince	she had to leave before midnight	she ran away in a hurry and left one glass shoe behind.
THEN			
The prince	to see Cinderella again	nobody knew who she was	he sent a servant to get every woman in the kingdom to try the glass shoe on.
BUT			
Cinderella's evil stepsisters	to stop her from trying the shoe	the prince's servant invited her	she put her foot in the shoe and it fitted her.

Worksheet 1.5 is designed to help students summarise different parts of the story.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Somebody-Wanted-But-So

'Somebody-Wanted-But-So' (SWBS) is a useful strategy to summarise a story, using the pattern:

Somebody wanted something, but there is a problem so it must be resolved.

To do this, you will need to use various elements of the story:

**Somebody** - Who is the main character? (Character)  
**Wanted** - What does the character want? (Goal/Motivation)  
**But** - What stops the character from getting what he wants? (Problem)  
**So** - How is the problem resolved? (Resolution)

SWBS can also be used to summarise different sections of a story.

Fill in the SWBS tables below to summarise what happens in different sections of the story 'The Knock at the Door'.

Lines \_\_\_\_\_

Somebody (Character)	Wanted (Goal/Motivation)	But (Problem)	So (Resolution)

Lines \_\_\_\_\_

Somebody (Character)	Wanted (Goal/Motivation)	But (Problem)	So (Resolution)

Lines \_\_\_\_\_

Somebody (Character)	Wanted (Goal/Motivation)	But (Problem)	So (Resolution)

NET Section, CDI, EDB, HKSAR      Worksheet 1.5: Somebody-Wanted-But-So

Worksheet 1.5:  
Somebody-  
Wanted-But-So

### Suggested Procedures

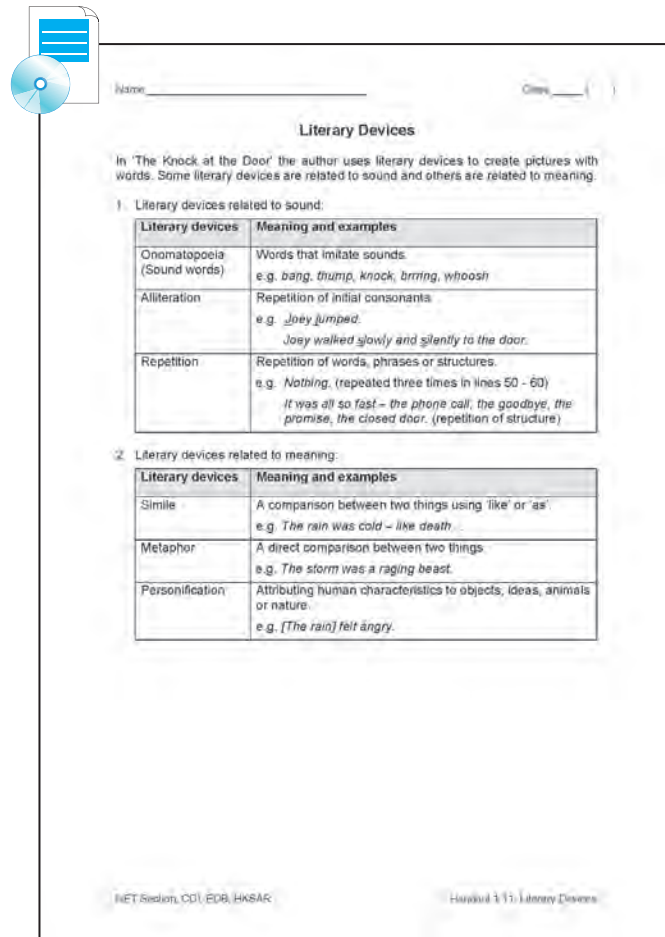
1. After reading the first section of the story, tell students that they are going to summarise the section. (Teacher can decide how to chunk the story into sections.)
2. Illustrate the SWBS strategy by using the beginning of a story that students are familiar with, e.g 'Cinderella'.
3. Apply the SWBS strategy to the first section of 'The Knock at the Door'. Give students time to re-read the section if necessary. Discuss possible answers for each of the four headings with the class.
4. Ask students to complete the SWBS table for each of the remaining sections of the story.

## While-reading Activity 5: Literary Devices

Literary devices are used to make a story more beautiful and memorable because they help the reader to create images in the mind. An understanding of these tools will create pleasurable reading experiences.

In addition to recognising literary devices in a story, it is important to understand why the author uses the device to create a particular effect.

Handout 1.11 provides basic information about literary devices.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

### Literary Devices

In 'The Knock at the Door' the author uses literary devices to create pictures with words. Some literary devices are related to sound and others are related to meaning.

1. Literary devices related to sound:

Literary devices	Meaning and examples
Onomatopoeia (Sound words)	Words that imitate sounds. e.g. <i>bang, thump, knock, brrring, whoosh</i>
Alliteration	Repetition of initial consonants. e.g. <i>Josy <u>l</u>umped.</i> <i>Josy walked <u>s</u>lowly and <u>s</u>ilently to the door.</i>
Repetition	Repetition of words, phrases or structures. e.g. <i>Nothing.</i> (repeated three times in lines 50 - 60) <i>It was all so fast - the phone call, the goodbye, the promise, the closed door.</i> (repetition of structure)

2. Literary devices related to meaning:

Literary devices	Meaning and examples
Simile	A comparison between two things using 'like' or 'as'. e.g. <i>The rain was cold - like death.</i>
Metaphor	A direct comparison between two things. e.g. <i>The storm was a raging beast.</i>
Personification	Attributing human characteristics to objects, ideas, animals or nature. e.g. <i>[The rain] felt angry.</i>

NET Section, CDI, EDB, HKSAR  
Handout 1.11: Literary Devices

Handout 1.11:  
Literary Devices

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### Suggested Procedures

1. Draw students' attention to the literary devices as they occur in the story.
2. Tell students to highlight the literary devices and label them in the story. Refer to Handout 1.11 for examples.
3. Have students practise reading the lines with the literary devices aloud.
4. Discuss with students how the pacing of the story varies when the author combines short sentences with long sentences.
5. Have students practise reading these lines aloud:
  - lines 30 – 49
  - lines 62 – 83
6. Discuss with students how the dialogue moves the action along and adds to the suspense. The lines spoken by the characters are short and are not always written in complete sentences.
7. Have students practise reading lines 119 – 132 aloud.

"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."

Dr. Seuss, *I Can Read with My Eyes Shut!*

## Post-reading Activities

After students have finished reading a short story, there is a wide range of activities that teachers can design to extend student learning. One way to design post-reading activities is to refer to the different levels of thinking skills in Bloom's Taxonomy, as revised by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001). They are as follows:

**Remembering:** Can students recognise, list, describe, identify, name or locate the main characters and events in the story?

**Understanding:** Can students interpret, summarise, infer, paraphrase, compare or explain the character's motivations or the plot development?

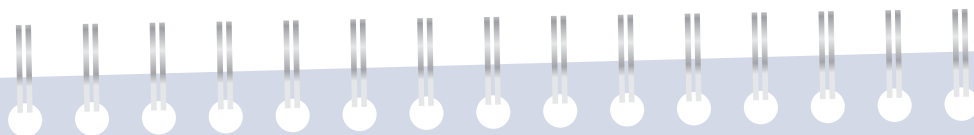
**Applying:** Can students apply a lesson from the story to their own lives?

**Analysing:** Can students compare, organise, deconstruct, outline, structure or integrate ideas about the characters or the events in the story?

**Evaluating:** Can students critique or judge the story based on how successful it is in achieving its purpose, e.g. to entertain an audience?

**Creating:** Can students design, construct, plan or produce something new based on the characters and the events in the story?

The following post-reading activities address different cognitive levels, from Activity 1, which requires students to remember and understand the main events in the story, to Activity 6, which requires students to work across several levels of the revised Bloom's Taxonomy.



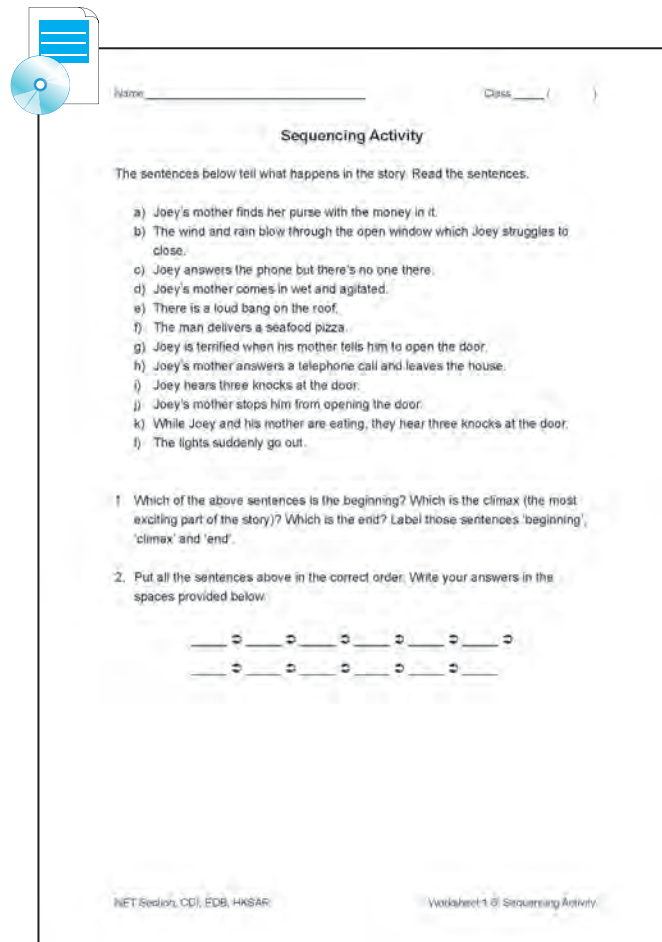
### Post-reading Activity 1: Sequencing Activity

Sequencing helps students recollect the story and allows them to demonstrate their understanding.

In a sequencing activity, only significant events should be used. The beginning, the climax and the end should also be included so that the result is a summary of the story. Students should not be tested on the details of a story.

Depending on the level of the students, sentences or picture cards can be given to students.

In Worksheet 1.6, students must sequence the most significant events of the story from beginning to end.



*Worksheet 1.6:  
Sequencing  
Activity*

### Suggested Procedures

- Review the meaning of 'events' with the class.
- Ask students to recall the significant events from the story. Record the events on the board, using words that they will come across in the worksheet whenever possible. Determine with the class which events are most significant and put them in the correct order.
- Distribute Worksheet 1.6.\* Explain the instructions and allow time for students to read the sentences.
- Identify the beginning, the climax (the most exciting part) and the end of the story with the class before asking them to sequence the other events.
- Give students time to complete the activity.
- Check answers with the class.

\* Arrange group work if students need more support from one another. Make copies of the sentences on big paper. Cut them up and give each group one set of paper strips. After checking the answers, ask each group to keep their strips in the correct order for the plot structure activity that follows.

## Post-reading Activity 2: Understanding Plot Structure

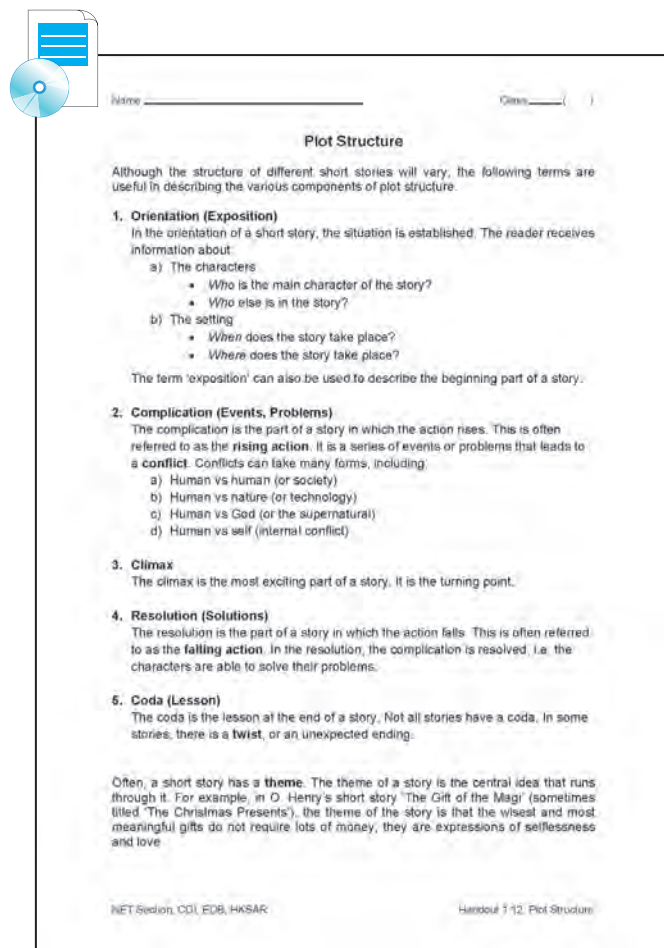
Although the structure of different short stories will vary, the following terms are useful in describing the various components of plot structure.

(See Handout 1.12 for details.):

1. Orientation (Exposition)
2. Complication (Rising Action)
3. Climax
4. Resolution (Falling Action)

These terms can help students discuss and analyse short stories more knowledgeably.

Handout 1.12 provides basic information about plot structure.



Handout 1.12: Plot Structure

Although the structure of different short stories will vary, the following terms are useful in describing the various components of plot structure.

- 1. Orientation (Exposition)**

In the orientation of a short story, the situation is established. The reader receives information about:

  - a) The characters
    - Who is the main character of the story?
    - Who else is in the story?
  - b) The setting
    - When does the story take place?
    - Where does the story take place?

The term 'exposition' can also be used to describe the beginning part of a story.
- 2. Complication (Events, Problems)**

The complication is the part of a story in which the action rises. This is often referred to as the **rising action**. It is a series of events or problems that leads to a **conflict**. Conflicts can take many forms, including:

  - a) Human vs human (or society)
  - b) Human vs nature (or technology)
  - c) Human vs God (or the supernatural)
  - d) Human vs self (internal conflict)
- 3. Climax**

The climax is the most exciting part of a story. It is the turning point.
- 4. Resolution (Solutions)**

The resolution is the part of a story in which the action falls. This is often referred to as the **falling action**. In the resolution, the complication is resolved, i.e. the characters are able to solve their problems.
- 5. Coda (Lesson)**

The coda is the lesson at the end of a story. Not all stories have a coda. In some stories, there is a **twist**, or an unexpected ending.

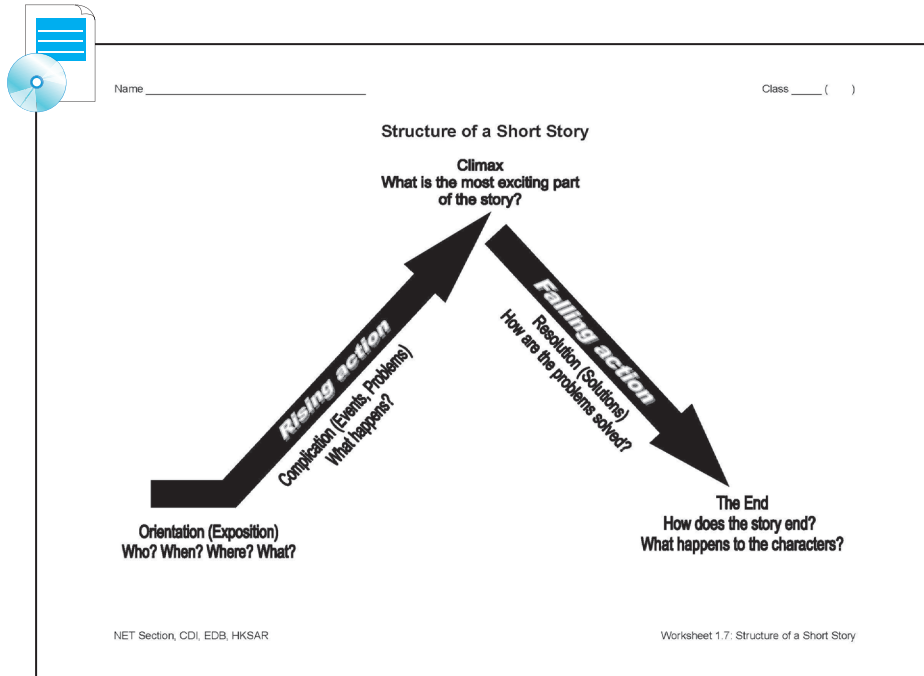
Often, a short story has a **theme**. The theme of a story is the central idea that runs through it. For example, in O. Henry's short story 'The Gift of the Magi' (sometimes titled 'The Christmas Presents'), the theme of the story is that the wisest and most meaningful gifts do not require lots of money, they are expressions of selflessness and love.

NET Section, CQI, EDB, HKSAR Handout 1.12: Plot Structure

Handout 1.12:  
Plot Structure



Students can use the graphic organiser in Worksheet 1.7 to take notes on the plot structure of the story while they are reading it or after they have finished it.



Worksheet 1.7:  
Structure of a  
Short Story

### Suggested Procedures

1. Have the answers from the sequencing activity ready. (See Worksheet 1.6.)
2. Show Worksheet 1.7 on the screen and distribute it to the students. Draw students' attention to the shape of the plot structure.
3. Distribute Handout 1.12. Explain the stages of plot development with reference to the plot structure.
4. Have students work in groups. Ask them to discuss how they will arrange the answers in the sequencing activity to fit the plot structure.
5. Check answers with the class.

"So please, oh PLEASE, we beg, we pray, go throw your TV set away, and in its place you can install, a lovely bookshelf on the wall."

Roald Dahl, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*

### Post-reading Activity 3: Plot Structure Graph

A plot structure graph can be used after a sequencing activity to plot the significant events on a graph according to how suspenseful or exciting the action is.

The significant events in the story are arranged in sequence along the x-axis of the graph. The y-axis represents the level of suspense or excitement in the story on a scale of 1 (lowest level of suspense) to 10 (highest level of suspense)

Worksheet 1.8 can also be used to understand plot structure.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

#### Plot Structure Graph

The story 'The Knock at the Door' has a lot of suspense. This means that it tells of a situation where at least one of the characters and the readers becomes increasingly worried about something that will happen or that they think will happen.

As the story goes on, Joey becomes more and more frightened about what is happening. This can be represented in the graph below.

- On the x-axis of the graph below (What happens in the story), write the letters of the events from the previous sequencing activity (Worksheet 1.6) in the correct order.
- What is the most frightening event for Joey? Mark it with an 'X' on the graph. (10 = most frightening)
- What is the least frightening event for Joey? Mark it with an 'X' on the graph. (1 = least frightening)
- How frightening are the other events for Joey? Mark each event with an 'X' on the graph.

How frightened is Joey?

10																			
9																			
8																			
7																			
6																			
5																			
4																			
3																			
2																			
1																			

What happens in the story?

- Now, draw a line to join the marks. How does the curve look?
- Label the beginning, orientation, complication, climax, resolution and end of the story on the curve.

NET, Seelion, CQI, ED8, HKSAR Worksheet 1.8: Plot Structure Graph

Worksheet 1.8:  
Plot Structure  
Graph

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### Suggested Procedures

1. Have the answers from the sequencing activity ready. (See Post-reading Activity 1.)
2. Distribute Worksheet 1.8. Tell students that the story has a lot of suspense. Refer to the first part of the worksheet to explain what this means.
3. Explain instructions of plotting the graph. Draw the grid on the board and do Steps 1-3 together as a class if necessary.
4. Give students time to complete the graph on the worksheet.
5. Tell students to compare their graphs with a neighbour.
6. Show a few students' work on the visualiser and discuss the shape of the curves.
7. Distribute Handout 1.12. Explain plot structure and the stages of development with reference to the graph of 'The Knock at the Door'.
8. Ask students to label the stages of the plot on their graphs.

"There is more treasure in books than in all the pirates' loot on Treasure Island."

Walt Disney

### Post-reading Activity 4: Interviewing Characters

Interviewing characters is an activity to take the main characters out of the story and bring them into the classroom. It involves students' understanding of the characters and plot development and their use of imagination.

The students playing the roles of the characters in the story have to put themselves in the characters' shoes. They must give answers that reflect the characters' personality and that are relevant to the plot. The students playing the roles of the interviewers pretend that they do not know much about the story. They must ask a series of questions that require the interviewees to draw on the characters' personality and the events in the plot.

In Worksheet 1.9, students have opportunities to role play Joey and his class teacher in an interview.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

#### Interviewing Characters

In this activity, you will work with a partner. One of you will play the role of Joey Carter from 'The Knock at the Door', and the other will play the role of Joey's class teacher. It is the day after the storm, and Joey has come to school looking very tired and nervous. Joey's class teacher notices this and wants to ask Joey some questions after school.

**Role 1**

You are Joey Carter. The day after the storm, you come to school looking very tired and nervous. Your class teacher is worried about your condition. He/She has called you to the teacher's room after school to ask you some questions.

You must be prepared to answer your class teacher's questions based on the events in the story. To prepare for the interview, re-read the story and think about how you will answer the questions 'in role' about why you look so tired and nervous.

**Role 2**

You are Joey's class teacher. Today Joey looks very tired and nervous. You are worried about his condition. You have called Joey to the teachers' room after school to ask him some questions.

You must be prepared to ask questions about why Joey looks so tired and nervous. To prepare for the interview, think about what you would like to ask Joey. Write the questions below in the spaces provided.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

NET/School/CCI, EDB, HKSAR Worksheet 1.9 Interviewing Characters

Worksheet 1.9:  
Interviewing  
Characters

### Suggested Procedures

1. Arrange students in pairs.
2. Distribute Worksheet 1.9 and explain the instructions. Tell students that they will take turns role-playing Joey and the class teacher. First everyone will prepare questions for Role 2, Joey's class teacher.
3. Tell students that they need to prepare five questions for Joey. They also need to be prepared to ask follow-up questions based on the answers that Joey gives.
4. To demonstrate this, ask the question 'What were you doing last night?' Elicit possible answers, e.g. 'I was reading a book.'
5. Explain that a good follow-up question would be 'What were you reading?' because it requires students to recall that Joey was reading a scary story.
6. Give students time to prepare for the role play by writing five Wh- questions and thinking of possible follow-up questions.
7. Assign roles and give students time to do the role play.
8. Tell students to change roles and do the role play again.
9. Ask volunteers to come to the front of the class and demonstrate the role play.
10. Discuss with the class whether the role plays were successful or not.

"We read to know we are not alone."

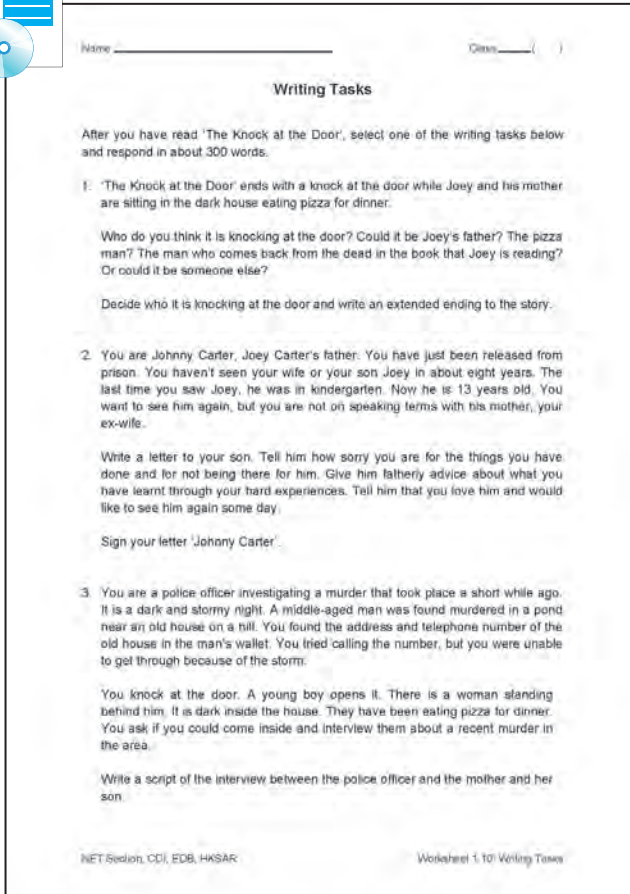
C. S. Lewis

### Post-reading Activity 5: Writing Tasks

After students have finished reading a short story, there is a wide range of writing tasks that students can do. At a basic level, teachers can ask students to write a summary. To further challenge students, teachers can design writing tasks that require students to demonstrate their understanding of the story in more creative ways. For example, students might be asked to write a letter to one of the main characters, write a drama script based on one part of the story, introduce a new character who will change the outcome of the story, or create an alternative ending to the story.

Every good short story contains opportunities for engaging students in creative writing tasks. Teachers should be able to recognise these opportunities and design appropriate writing tasks that enhance students' understanding and appreciation of the story.

Worksheet 1.10 has three creative writing tasks based on 'The Knock at the Door' that students can choose from.



The image shows a worksheet titled 'Writing Tasks' with a CD icon in the top left corner. At the top, there are fields for 'Name \_\_\_\_\_' and 'Class \_\_\_\_\_'. The title 'Writing Tasks' is centered. Below it, a paragraph reads: 'After you have read 'The Knock at the Door', select one of the writing tasks below and respond in about 300 words.' There are three numbered tasks. Task 1: 'The Knock at the Door' ends with a knock at the door while Joey and his mother are sitting in the dark house eating pizza for dinner. It asks who is knocking and to write an extended ending. Task 2: You are Johnny Carter, Joey Carter's father, released from prison after eight years. It asks to write a letter to your son. Task 3: You are a police officer investigating a murder. It asks to write a script of an interview. At the bottom, it says 'NET, Seeloh, CCI, EDB, HKSAR' and 'Worksheet 1.10: Writing Tasks'.

Worksheet 1.10:  
Writing Tasks

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### Suggested Procedures

1. Distribute Worksheet 1.10, explain the instructions and read the three writing tasks with the students.
2. Discuss the type of writing that each question requires students to do and show examples of the text types if necessary. For example, show an interview script for Question 3.
3. Give students time to select the task and plan their writing.
4. When students have finished their first draft, provide opportunities for peer response and for students to revise their work.\*
5. Collect students' work for assessment and feedback.

\* See 'Organising the Writing Activity' in Part 2 for more details.

"A writer only begins a book. A reader finishes it."

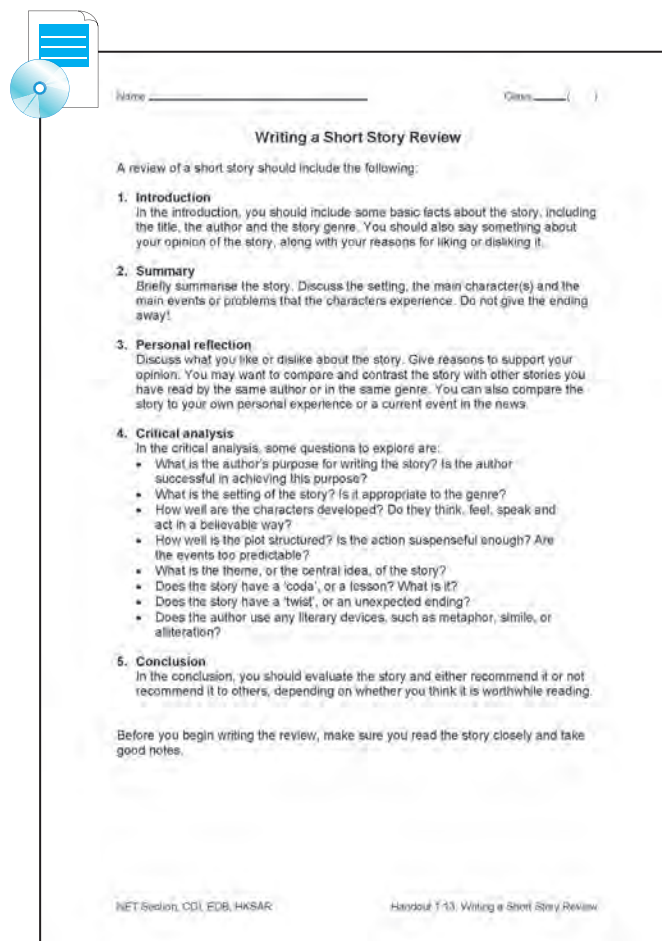
Samuel Johnson

## Post-reading Activity 6: Writing a Short Story Review

In a short story review, students share their understanding of and opinion about a short story they have read. A review of a short story should include the following:

1. A brief introduction that includes basic facts, such as the title of the story, the name of the author and the genre.
2. A brief summary of the story that includes information about the setting, the main character(s) and the main events or problems. (Remind students not to give the ending away!)
3. A personal reflection on what the student liked or disliked about the story and why.
4. A critical analysis that might include a discussion of the author's purpose, the theme of the story or the use of literary devices, etc.
5. A conclusion that includes an evaluation and a recommendation to read the story (or not!)

Handout 1.13 provides guidelines for writing a short story review.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Genre \_\_\_\_\_

### Writing a Short Story Review

A review of a short story should include the following:

- 1. Introduction**  
In the introduction, you should include some basic facts about the story, including the title, the author and the story genre. You should also say something about your opinion of the story, along with your reasons for liking or disliking it.
- 2. Summary**  
Briefly summarise the story. Discuss the setting, the main character(s) and the main events or problems that the characters experience. Do not give the ending away!
- 3. Personal reflection**  
Discuss what you like or dislike about the story. Give reasons to support your opinion. You may want to compare and contrast the story with other stories you have read by the same author or in the same genre. You can also compare the story to your own personal experience or a current event in the news.
- 4. Critical analysis**  
In the critical analysis, some questions to explore are:
  - What is the author's purpose for writing the story? Is the author successful in achieving this purpose?
  - What is the setting of the story? Is it appropriate to the genre?
  - How well are the characters developed? Do they think, feel, speak and act in a believable way?
  - How well is the plot structured? Is the action suspenseful enough? Are the events too predictable?
  - What is the theme, or the central idea, of the story?
  - Does the story have a 'twist', or a lesson? What is it?
  - Does the story have a 'twist', or an unexpected ending?
  - Does the author use any literary devices, such as metaphor, simile, or alliteration?
- 5. Conclusion**  
In the conclusion, you should evaluate the story and either recommend it or not recommend it to others, depending on whether you think it is worthwhile reading.

Before you begin writing the review, make sure you read the story closely and take good notes.

NET/Section, CCL, EDB, HKSAR Handout 1.13: Writing a Short Story Review

Handout 1.13:  
Writing a Short  
Story Review



On the Resource CD, you will find sample short story reviews written by fictional Hong Kong senior secondary students, Virginia Woo and D. H. Law. Each has written a review of Shel Silverstein's 'The Giving Tree'. Virginia likes the story very much and writes a favourable review. D. H. has a different point of view, and his review is less favourable.

These samples can be used along with Handout 1.13 to highlight the features of a review before students write their own review of 'The Knock at the Door' or another short story they have read and would like to share with the class.



*Handout 1.14:  
Story Review 1A*

**Story Review 1A**  
The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein  
Reviewed by Virginia Woo

The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein is one of the most beautiful stories I have ever read. It is a modern day parable about the relationship between a boy and a tree. I was moved by the tree's unconditional love for the boy.

At the beginning of the story, the boy is a young boy who is very happy. He has a tree that he loves very much. The tree is his best friend. The boy grows up and he needs a house and a boat. The tree gives him everything he needs. The boy is very happy and the tree is very happy too.

**Introduction:**  
What is the title?  
Who is the author?  
What kind of story is it and what do you think about it?

**Summary:**  
What is the story about?

**Personal reflection:**  
What do you like/dislike about this story? Why?

**Critical analysis:**  
What is the author's purpose? What is the story's theme or message?

**Conclusion:**  
Would you recommend this story to others?

NET Section, CDI, EDB, HKSAR

**Story Review 1B**  
The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein  
Reviewed by D. H. Law

Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree* is loved by many people, but in my opinion it is just another story that tries to teach us a lesson about life that everyone knows. The story is about a loving tree and a selfish boy. Personally, I think it is a silly story with a naive message.

The story is about a tree that, for some unexplained reason, 'loves a little boy'. The boy makes crowns with the tree's leaves and plays king of the forest. Then he climbs the tree's trunk, swings from her branches and eats her apples. The boy really must think he is 'king of the forest'. When he grows older, he goes away and leaves the tree. He only comes back to visit the tree when he wants something from her. First, he takes the tree's apples to sell them in the city for money. Then he takes the tree's branches and builds a house so he can get married and have children. Later, he takes the tree's trunk to build a boat and sail away. In the end, the tree is just an old stump and the boy is just an old man. We are supposed to believe that the tree is happy.

I like the illustrations of the story, but that's about it. I really don't like the character of the boy. He just takes whatever he wants from the tree and does not give the tree anything in return. He is actually destroying nature! I also don't understand the character of the tree. Why does the tree love the boy and why is the tree happy in the end. If I were the tree, I would use my branches to spank the boy and teach him a lesson!

The Giving Tree is supposed to be a story about giving and love. We are told that the tree is happy whenever she gives something to the boy. It sounds very nice, but I think people who read this story should be careful. In real life, most people are more like the boy. They will try to take advantage of you if you are too kind or generous. If you are like the tree, you may end up with nothing left.

Many people love *The Giving Tree*, and you may enjoy reading it too. Personally, I wouldn't recommend it. The message of the story is too idealistic. I prefer stories that reflect reality.

NET Section, CDI, EDB, HKSAR

Handout 1.15: Story Review 1B

*Handout 1.15:  
Story Review 1B*

Worksheet 1.11 is useful for collecting information and ideas that can be used to write a short story review.

Worksheet 1.11 is a collection sheet for a short story review. It features a header with 'Name' and 'Class' fields. The main content is organized into several sections:

- Introduction:** Fields for Title, Author, and Genre.
- Opinion:** A section with five stars for rating and the instruction: '(Rate the story – out of five stars, how many would you give it?)'.
- Summary:** A large text area with the prompt: 'What is the short story about? (Highlight a few of the most important events.)'
- Personal reflection:** A text area with the prompt: 'What do you like or dislike about the story? Why?'.
- Critical analysis:** A text area with the prompt: 'What is the author's purpose? What is the story's theme or message?'.

At the bottom, it is attributed to 'NET Section, CDI, EDB, HASAR' and 'Worksheet 1.11: Collection Sheet for a Short Story Review'.

*Worksheet 1.11:  
Collection Sheet  
for a Short Story  
Review*

### Suggested Procedures

1. Give students Handout 1.13 and Virginia Woo's story review in Handout 1.14.\*
2. Read the review with the class. Refer students to Handout 1.13 and discuss each part of Virginia's review, focusing on how she organises her ideas and meets the basic requirements of a story review.
3. Give students D. H. Law's story review in Handout 1.15.\*
4. Read the review with the class. Refer to Handout 1.13 again and discuss each part of his review, focusing on the organisation of ideas and the requirements for a well-written review.
5. Tell students that when they write a review of a short story, it can be favourable (like Virginia Woo's review) or unfavourable (like D. H. Law's review), but they must support their opinions with evidence from the story.
6. Give students Worksheet 1.11 for collecting information about 'The Knock at the Door' (or another short story they have read).
7. Tell students to use their notes to write a short story review, following the guidelines in Handout 1.13 and referring to the sample reviews.

\* Alternatively, use the two story reviews of Isaac Asimov's, *The Fun They Had*, written by C. S. Lu (Handout 1.16) and William Shek (Handout 1.17) as models.

# Part 2

## Writing Short Stories

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# Organising the Writing Activity

## Introduction

The Suggested Schemes of Work for the Elective Part of the Three-year Senior Secondary English Language Curriculum (Secondary 4-6) recommends that in Part 2 of the Learning English through Short Stories elective module students plan and write their own short stories.

The suggested activities outlined here are based on 'Shorts': A Short Story Writing Competition, organised by the NET Section for secondary students in Hong Kong.

Although the process suggested can be modified for individual writing, the spirit of 'Shorts' is to have students collaborate on planning, drafting, revising, editing and presenting a short story in small groups. The final story is presented in writing and is also read aloud and recorded in the form of a radio broadcast.

Each student in the group is accountable and must write individual drafts on the characters, the setting and the events in the story. Students keep their drafts in a writing folder for continuous assessment. The final story, however, is a collaborative effort combining the best ideas from each student into a cohesive and coherent whole. As part of the writing process, students engage in peer response to receive feedback from one another.

If the collaborative writing activities are well structured, students will gain a better understanding of writing as a social process. In the real world, professional authors often collaborate with others to produce a finished piece of work. Even when authors work alone, they are aware of and influenced by their audience – the knowledgeable community of readers who will read and respond to their work.

### Note

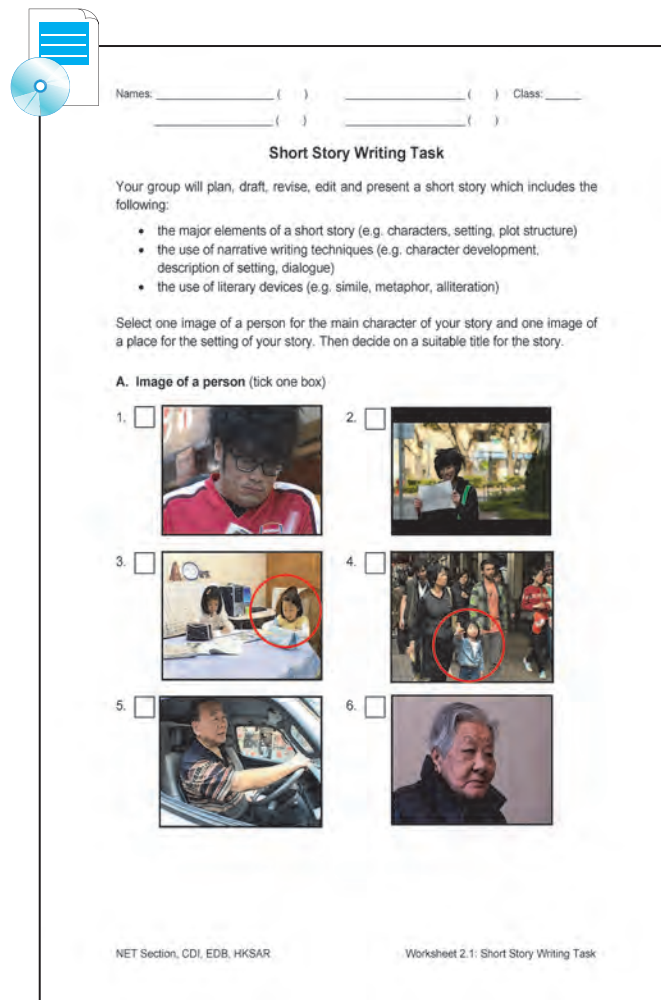
All the activities suggested in this part of the book are set up for collaborative writing in groups of three or four. It is also possible to use the worksheets for individual writing.

## The Writing Task

In the 'Shorts' competition, the writing task requires students to work in groups to plan and write a short story that includes

- the basic elements of a short story (e.g. characters, setting, plot structure);
- the use of narrative writing techniques (e.g. character development, description of setting, use of dialogue); and
- the use of literary devices (e.g. simile, metaphor, alliteration).

To begin, students are asked to select one image of a person for the main character of the story and one image of a place for the setting of the story. They are then asked to choose a suitable title. This provides a framework for students to work with. Below is a writing task similar to the one used in the 'Shorts' competition.



Names: \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) Class: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ ( )







**Short Story Writing Task**

Your group will plan, draft, revise, edit and present a short story which includes the following:

- the major elements of a short story (e.g. characters, setting, plot structure)
- the use of narrative writing techniques (e.g. character development, description of setting, dialogue)
- the use of literary devices (e.g. simile, metaphor, alliteration)

Select one image of a person for the main character of your story and one image of a place for the setting of your story. Then decide on a suitable title for the story.

**A. Image of a person (tick one box)**

1. <input type="checkbox"/>		2. <input type="checkbox"/>	
3. <input type="checkbox"/>		4. <input type="checkbox"/>	
5. <input type="checkbox"/>		6. <input type="checkbox"/>	

NET Section, CDI, EDB, HKSAR  
Worksheet 2.1: Short Story Writing Task

*Worksheet 2.1:  
Short Story  
Writing Task*

In the 'Shorts' competition, the images of people and places are all taken from the archives of 'Clipit', which is a film-editing competition organised by the NET Section.

A much wider range of interesting images can be found in popular magazines or on the Internet. Using images of people, places and events as prompts for writing a short story is a great way to trigger the creativity of your students.

Notice that at the end of the writing task, there is a checklist to help students remember the stages of the writing process that they will go through to complete their short story.

### Checklist

1. Planning the narrative
2. Drafting the narrative
3. Revising the drafts (peer response)
4. Editing the drafts (peer editing)
5. Typing the final copy
6. Recording the story on a CD

It is important that students go through the stages of the writing process as they develop their short stories with their group members. A story that is carefully planned and drafted and that goes through several revisions and edits is more likely to be successful than a story that is hastily written in one go.

"Many ideas grow better when transplanted into another mind than the one where they sprang up."

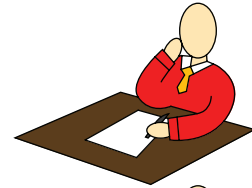
Oliver Wendell Holmes

## The Writing Process

When students work in groups to write a short story, it is important that they have a clear understanding of the writing process. Whether working individually or collaboratively, there are five basic steps that writers go through in order to produce a finished product. The five steps of the writing process are as follows:

### Step 1: Pre-writing / Planning

First choose a topic. Then plan and organise what you are going to write. You can use a mind map or graphic organiser to help you plan and organise your ideas.



### Step 2: Drafting

Write a rough draft of your ideas. Do not worry too much about making mistakes. You can correct them later. Just write!



### Step 3: Revising

Get other readers' responses to what you have written. Make revisions based on their comments and your own ideas to improve your draft. Think about what to add, what to cut and what to change.



### Step 4: Proofreading / Editing

Read your revised draft carefully and look for mistakes in grammar, spelling, capitalisation and punctuation. Correct any mistakes that you find. Then get other readers to help you find errors that you have missed.



### Step 5: Publishing / Presenting

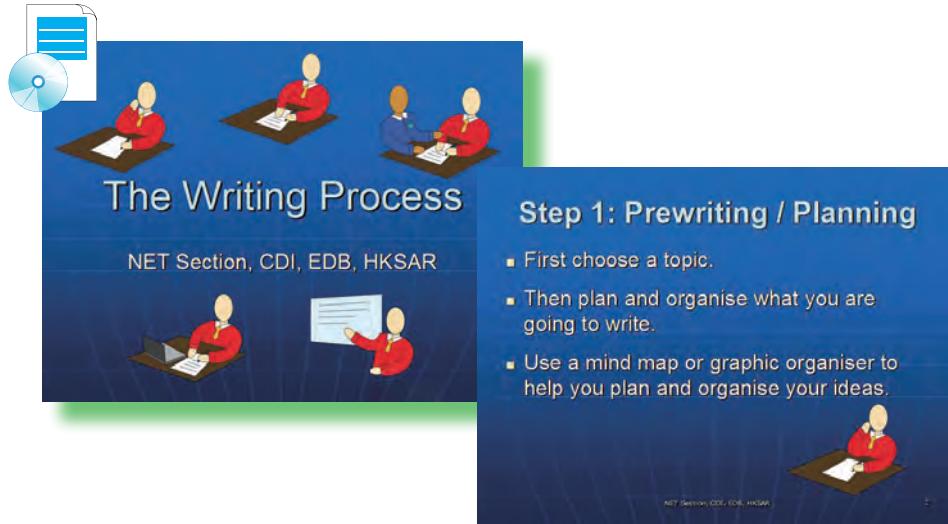
Complete your final copy. Share it with others by publishing it or presenting it.



#### Note

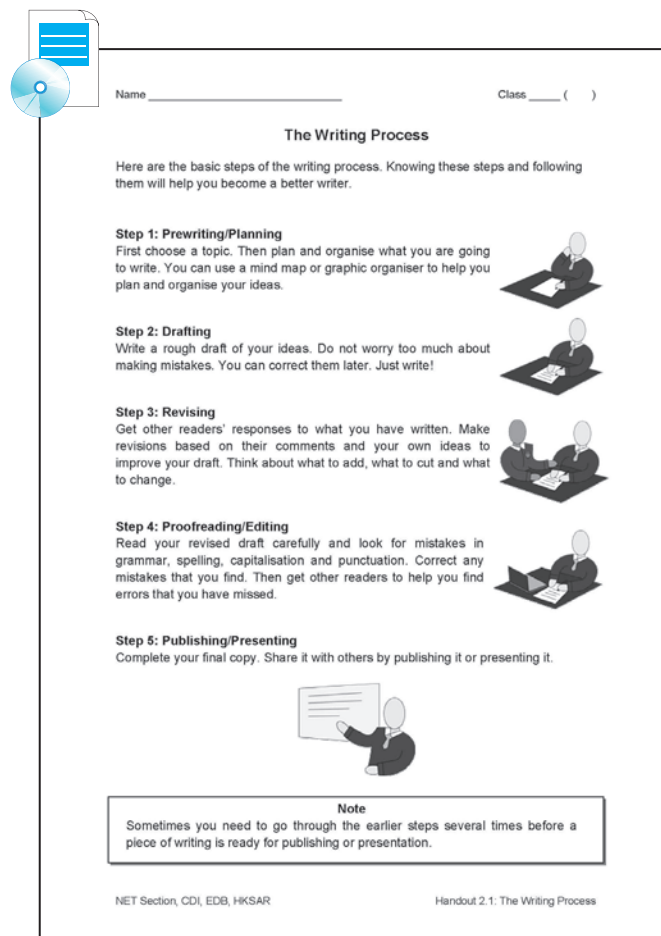
Sometimes you need to go through the earlier steps several times before a piece of writing is ready for publishing or presentation.

The following PowerPoint slides can be used to introduce the writing process to students.



*PowerPoint 2.1:  
The Writing  
Process*

The following handout is also available on the Resource CD.



*Handout 2.1:  
The Writing  
Process*



## Peer Response

After drafting a piece of writing, students can engage in peer response in order to receive feedback from their peers on what they have written. Peer response can be done in pairs or in small groups of three or four.

With students who are more proficient in English, peer response can be done orally. Student writers read their work aloud and ask their peers for feedback. The response from peers can begin with simple acknowledgements and impressions, such as:

*'Thank you for sharing your work.'*

*'I really enjoyed that.'*

*'That was interesting.'* (sad, exciting, inspiring, etc.)

Peer responders should then try to give constructive feedback to the writer, using such expressions as:

*'I like this part because...'*

*'I don't understand what you mean in this part. Can you explain it to me?'*

*'I think you should add more details to this part.'*

*'I think you should delete this part.'*

*'I think you should change this part. Instead of saying..., why don't you say...'*

When engaged in peer response, students should not spend too much time commenting on errors in grammar, spelling or punctuation. This type of response is called 'peer editing' and can be done at a later stage in the writing process.

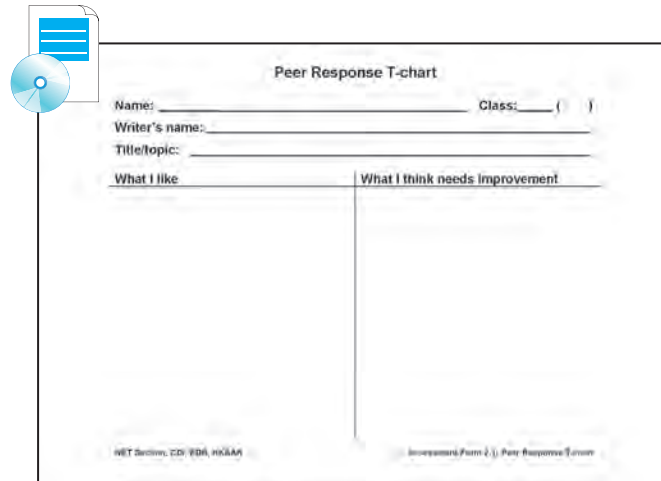
The main purpose of peer response is for students to help one another improve the content and organisation of their writing. Peer responders should stay focused on these two aspects of their writing.

To facilitate peer response, student writers can prepare photocopies of their written work for their peers so that the peer responders can highlight parts of the text and make notes in the margins.

"If you have an apple and I have an apple and we exchange these apples then you and I will still each have one apple. But if you have an idea and I have an idea and we exchange these ideas, then each of us will have two ideas."

George Bernard Shaw

A peer response feedback form like the one below can help students give written feedback to one another. It is a simple T-chart for recording what students like about their peer's writing and what they think needs improvement.



**Peer Response T-chart**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

Writer's name: \_\_\_\_\_

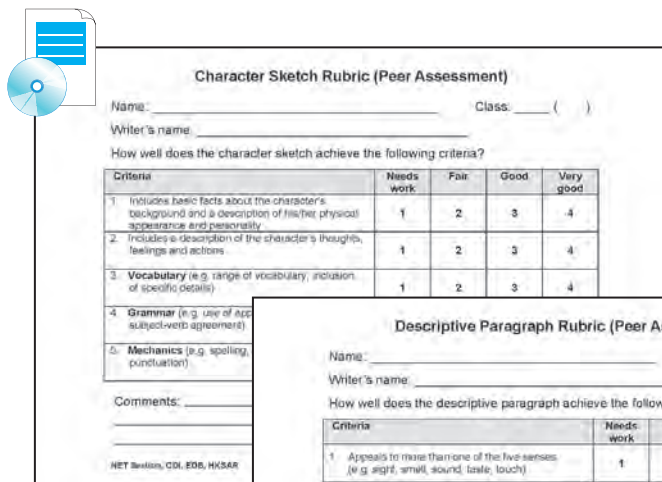
Title/topic: \_\_\_\_\_

What I like	What I think needs improvement

NET Section, CDI, FDI, HK&A  
Assessment Form 2.1: Peer Response T-chart

*Assessment Form 2.1: Peer Response T-chart*

When students are expected to meet specific criteria, a peer assessment rubric can be used. Assessment Form 2.2 below is for writing a character sketch and Assessment Form 2.3 is for writing a descriptive paragraph. The rubrics should be shown to students before they write so that they are aware of the criteria. After students have completed their work, they can then use the rubrics to provide feedback to one another through peer response.



**Character Sketch Rubric (Peer Assessment)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

Writer's name: \_\_\_\_\_

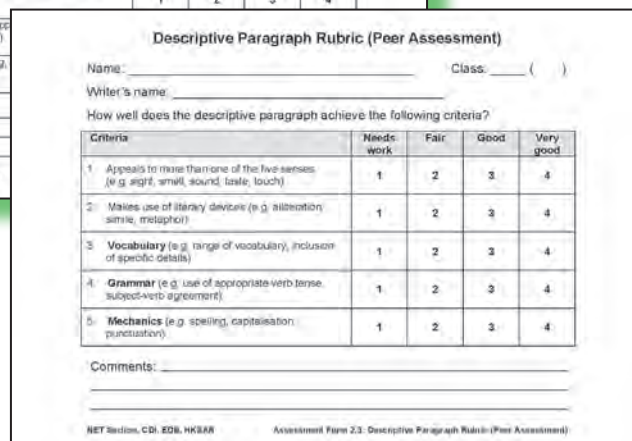
How well does the character sketch achieve the following criteria?

Criteria	Needs work	Fair	Good	Very good
1. Includes basic facts about the character's background and a description of his/her physical appearance and personality.	1	2	3	4
2. Includes a description of the character's thoughts, feelings and actions.	1	2	3	4
3. <b>Vocabulary</b> (e.g. range of vocabulary, inclusion of specific details)	1	2	3	4
4. <b>Grammar</b> (e.g. use of app. subject-verb agreement)	1	2	3	4
5. <b>Mechanics</b> (e.g. spelling, punctuation)	1	2	3	4

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

NET Section, CDI, EDI, HK&A

*Assessment Form 2.2: Character Sketch Rubric (Peer Assessment)*



**Descriptive Paragraph Rubric (Peer Assessment)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

Writer's name: \_\_\_\_\_

How well does the descriptive paragraph achieve the following criteria?

Criteria	Needs work	Fair	Good	Very good
1. Appeals to more than one of the five-senses (e.g. sight, smell, sound, taste, touch)	1	2	3	4
2. Makes use of literary devices (e.g. alliteration, simile, metaphor)	1	2	3	4
3. <b>Vocabulary</b> (e.g. range of vocabulary, inclusion of specific details)	1	2	3	4
4. <b>Grammar</b> (e.g. use of appropriate verb tense, subject-verb agreement)	1	2	3	4
5. <b>Mechanics</b> (e.g. spelling, capitalisation, punctuation)	1	2	3	4


Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

NET Section, CDI, EDI, HK&A  
Assessment Form 2.3: Descriptive Paragraph Rubric (Peer Assessment)

*Assessment Form 2.3: Descriptive Paragraph Rubric (Peer Assessment)*

Notice that vocabulary, grammar and mechanics are included in both rubrics. Students should be reminded not to focus too much on these. Tell them to “look at the forest first before they look at the trees.”

Students can also engage in peer response after completing a draft of the entire short story. Assessment Form 2.4 below will help them to do this.



**Short Story Rubric (Self Assessment)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

Names of group members: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of story: \_\_\_\_\_

Read the draft of your group's short story. Consider the following criteria and circle a number to indicate how well you think you've done in each area. Give comments on how you think the story can be further improved.

**A. Content and Organisation**

Criteria	Needs work	Fair	Good	Very good
1. <b>Characters:</b> Are the characters well-developed? Do they have thoughts, feelings and actions?	1	2	3	4
2. <b>Setting:</b> Is the setting (time and place) described clearly? Is the setting appropriate?	1	2	3	4
3. <b>Use of dialogue:</b> Do the characters speak? Are the conversations realistic?	1	2	3	4
4. <b>Plot structure:</b> Are the events well sequenced? Is there an orientation, complication, climax and resolution?	1	2	3	4
5. Does the story end in a logical way? Does the main character learn a lesson? Is there a twist?	1	2	3	4

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**B. Use of Language**

Criteria	Needs work	Fair	Good	Very good
1. <b>Vocabulary:</b> Is there a wide range of descriptive words and phrases?	1	2	3	4
2. <b>Grammar:</b> Is the story told in the past tense? Do the verb tenses all seem to be correct?	1	2	3	4
3. <b>Use of literary devices:</b> Are there examples of devices like simile, metaphor and alliteration?	1	2	3	4

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_


\_\_\_\_\_

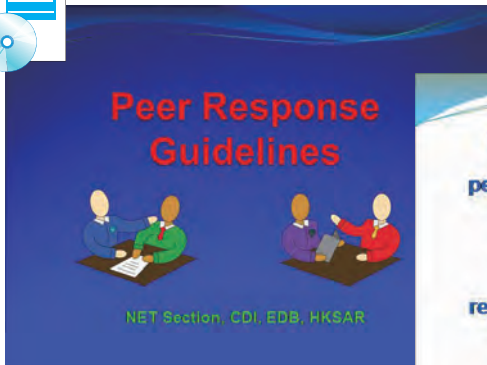
NET Section, CDI, EDB, HKSAR Assessment Form 2.4 - Short Story Rubric (Self Assessment)

*Assessment Form 2.4: Short Story Rubric (Self Assessment)*

Students should take the feedback they receive from their peers into consideration when revising their drafts, but ultimately each student (or group) can decide whether or not to take on the suggestions they receive from peers.

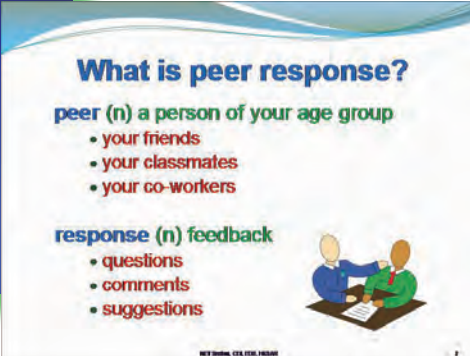
The following PowerPoint slides can be used to introduce students to the practice of peer response.





**Peer Response Guidelines**

NET Section, CDI, EDB, HKSAR



**What is peer response?**

**peer (n) a person of your age group**

- your friends
- your classmates
- your co-workers

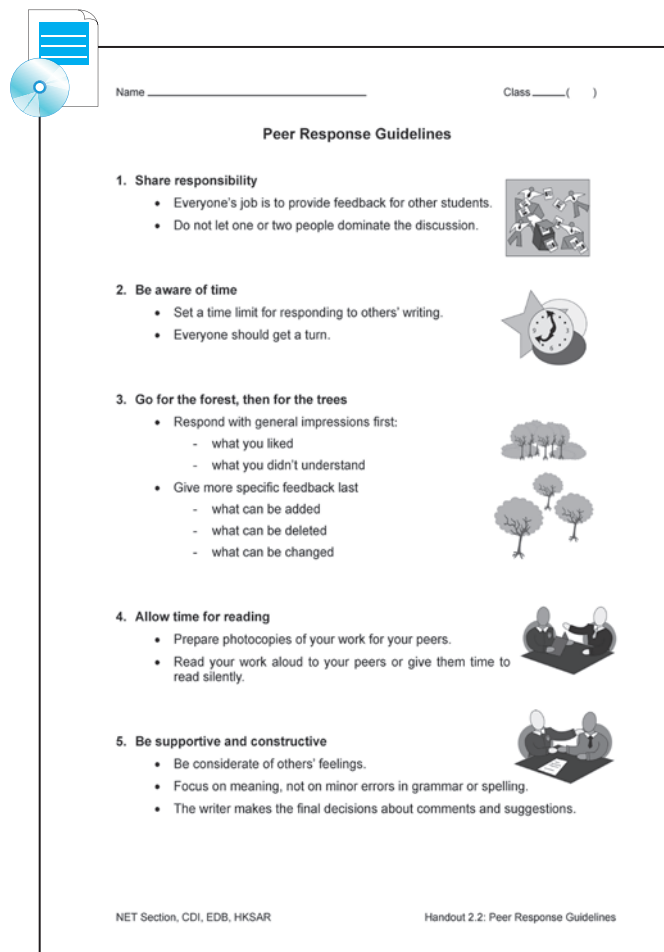
**response (n) feedback**

- questions
- comments
- suggestions

NET Section, CDI, EDB, HKSAR

*PowerPoint 2.2: Peer Response Guidelines*






The following handout for students is also available on the Resource CD.



The handout is titled "Peer Response Guidelines" and includes a name and class field at the top. It lists five guidelines, each with a bulleted list of instructions and a small illustration. The guidelines are: 1. Share responsibility (illustration of people talking), 2. Be aware of time (illustration of a clock), 3. Go for the forest, then for the trees (illustration of trees), 4. Allow time for reading (illustration of people reading), and 5. Be supportive and constructive (illustration of people writing). At the bottom, it says "NET Section, CDI, EDB, HKSAR" and "Handout 2.2: Peer Response Guidelines".

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

### Peer Response Guidelines

- 1. Share responsibility**
  - Everyone's job is to provide feedback for other students.
  - Do not let one or two people dominate the discussion.
- 2. Be aware of time**
  - Set a time limit for responding to others' writing.
  - Everyone should get a turn.
- 3. Go for the forest, then for the trees**
  - Respond with general impressions first:
    - what you liked
    - what you didn't understand
  - Give more specific feedback last
    - what can be added
    - what can be deleted
    - what can be changed
- 4. Allow time for reading**
  - Prepare photocopies of your work for your peers.
  - Read your work aloud to your peers or give them time to read silently.
- 5. Be supportive and constructive**
  - Be considerate of others' feelings.
  - Focus on meaning, not on minor errors in grammar or spelling.
  - The writer makes the final decisions about comments and suggestions.

NET Section, CDI, EDB, HKSAR Handout 2.2: Peer Response Guidelines

*Handout 2.2:  
Peer Response  
Guidelines*

Engaging in peer response may be difficult for students for various reasons. Some students may not be comfortable with the idea of 'criticising' a piece of work written by a peer. Others may not feel qualified to give meaningful feedback. Students tend to value feedback from the teacher more than from their classmates. Giving meaningful feedback in English, a second language for most students, presents an additional challenge.

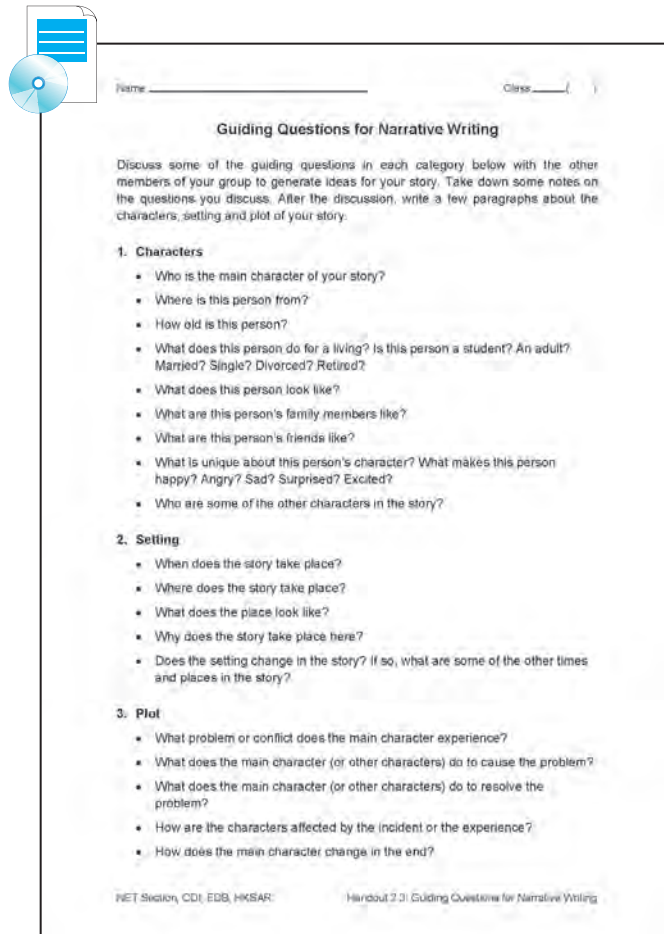
With proper training and practice, however, students can benefit greatly from engaging in peer response. They will develop a greater awareness of what makes a piece of writing 'good' and they will gain confidence both in writing and in responding to the works of others. They will be able to see writing as a social process and will develop a greater understanding of 'purpose' and 'audience'. Engaging in peer response in English also gives students much needed practice with their oral communication skills.

As students collaborate in groups to plan, draft and revise the different parts of their short story, peer response can be used at various points along the way.

# Planning a Short Story

## Using Guiding Questions

Handout 2.3 can be used to help students plan their story. It provides with a series of guiding questions about characters, setting and plot. Give students time to discuss ideas for their story in groups using the questions to guide the discussion and ask them to write down their ideas for later reference.



Handout 2.3 is a worksheet titled "Guiding Questions for Narrative Writing". It includes a header for "Name" and "Class", a paragraph of instructions, and three numbered sections of questions: 1. Characters, 2. Setting, and 3. Plot. The bottom of the page contains the text "NET Section, CDI, EDB, HK SAR" and "Handout 2.3: Guiding Questions for Narrative Writing".

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

### Guiding Questions for Narrative Writing

Discuss some of the guiding questions in each category below with the other members of your group to generate ideas for your story. Take down some notes on the questions you discuss. After the discussion, write a few paragraphs about the characters, setting and plot of your story.

- 1. Characters**
  - Who is the main character of your story?
  - Where is this person from?
  - How old is this person?
  - What does this person do for a living? Is this person a student? An adult? Married? Single? Divorced? Retired?
  - What does this person look like?
  - What are this person's family members like?
  - What are this person's friends like?
  - What is unique about this person's character? What makes this person happy? Angry? Sad? Surprised? Excited?
  - Who are some of the other characters in the story?
- 2. Setting**
  - When does the story take place?
  - Where does the story take place?
  - What does the place look like?
  - Why does the story take place here?
  - Does the setting change in the story? If so, what are some of the other times and places in the story?
- 3. Plot**
  - What problem or conflict does the main character experience?
  - What does the main character (or other characters) do to cause the problem?
  - What does the main character (or other characters) do to resolve the problem?
  - How are the characters affected by the incident or the experience?
  - How does the main character change in the end?

NET Section, CDI, EDB, HK SAR Handout 2.3: Guiding Questions for Narrative Writing

*Handout 2.3:  
Guiding Questions  
for Narrative Writing*

"Organising is what you do before you do something, so that when you do it, it is not all mixed up."

A. A. Milne

## Using Graphic Organisers

Before students begin writing a short story, they need to plan their story carefully. Students can do this by mapping the details of their story with a graphic organiser like the one below.

Worksheet 2.2: Mapping the Narrative is a structured form for planning a short story. It begins with fields for 'Name' and 'Class'. The main section, titled 'Mapping the Narrative', is organized as follows:

- Setting (place):** A box asking 'Where does the story take place?'.
- Setting (time):** A box asking 'When does the story take place?'.
- Main character:** A box asking 'Who is the main character?'.
- Other characters:** A box asking 'Who are the other characters?'.
- Title of Story:** A central circle connected to the main character and other characters boxes.
- Plot (sequence of events):** A box connected to the title of story.
- Beginning:** A large box asking 'What happens at the beginning of the story?'.
- Middle:** A large box asking 'What happens in the middle of the story?'.
- End:** A large box asking 'What happens at the end of the story?'.

Arrows indicate a flow from the plot box down to the beginning, middle, and end boxes. At the bottom, it is attributed to 'NET Section, CDI, EDB, HKSAR' and 'Worksheet 2.2: Mapping the Narrative'.

*Worksheet 2.2:  
Mapping the  
Narrative*

This graphic organiser is useful for mapping the basic story elements. Students can write down details about the setting (where and when the story takes place), the characters (who the story is about) and the plot (what happens in the story). Students should already be familiar with these terms from the first part of the module.

### Suggested Procedures

1. Arrange students in groups of three or four.
2. Distribute Worksheet 2.2 and check comprehension of the terms and concepts.
3. Tell students to refer to the writing task in Worksheet 2.1. Have them brainstorm ideas and map the details of their story on Worksheet 2.2.
4. Collect Worksheet 2.2 for assessment and feedback.

After mapping the story elements, students can also use a graphic organiser like this one to map the plot structure of the story in more detail.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

**Mapping the Plot Structure**

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**Climax:**

**Orientation (Exposition)**  
Who?  
When?  
Where?  
What?

**Complication (Events, Problems)**  
What happens?

**Resolution (Solutions)**  
How are the problems solved?

**Coda (Lesson)**  
How does the main character change? Is there a lesson?

**Theme (Central idea)**  
Is there a theme or central idea?

NET Section, CDI, EDB, HKSAR

Worksheet 2.3: Mapping the Plot Structure

*Worksheet 2.3:  
Mapping the  
Plot Structure*

This graphic organiser is useful for mapping the plot structure. Students can write down details about the orientation (the beginning of the story where the setting, the characters and the situation are established), the complication (problems and events), the climax (the most exciting event), the resolution (how the problems are resolved), and if possible, the coda (the lesson) and the theme (the main idea). Students should already be familiar with these terms from Handout 1.12 in Part 1 of this book.

#### Suggested Procedures

1. Arrange students in groups of three or four.
2. Distribute Worksheet 2.3 and check comprehension of the terms and concepts related to plot structure.
3. Tell students to refer to the writing task in Worksheet 2.1 and their notes in Worksheet 2.2. Have them brainstorm ideas and map the details of their story on Worksheet 2.3.
4. Collect Worksheet 2.3 for assessment and feedback.

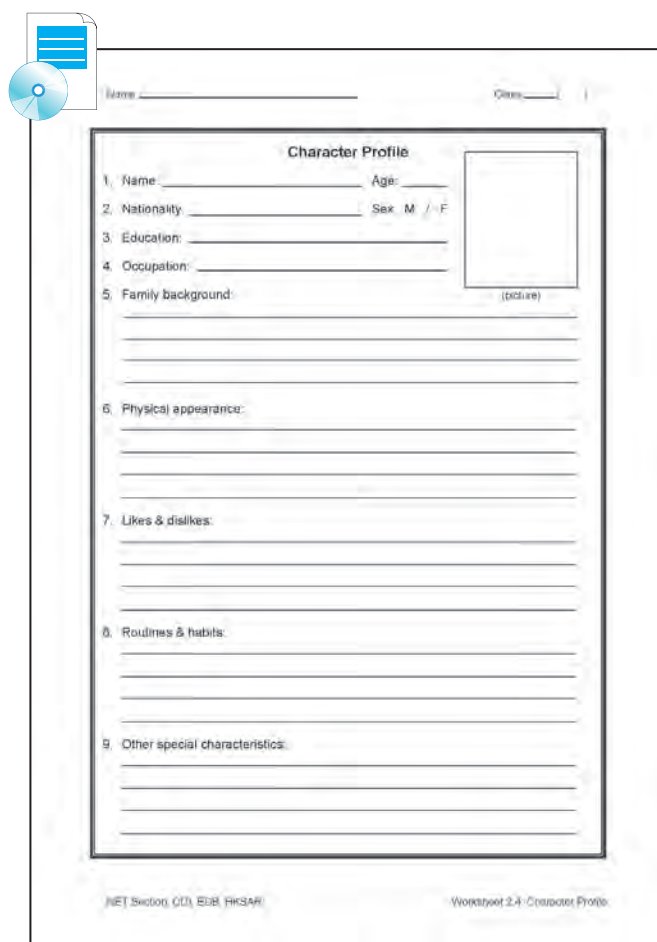
"In nearly all good fiction, the basic - all but inescapable - plot form is this: A central character wants something, goes after it despite opposition, perhaps including his own doubts, and so arrives at a win, lose, or draw."

John Gardner

# Developing Characters

## Character Profiles

After mapping out the details of their story, students are ready to begin developing their characters. With a character profile form like the one below, students can create profiles for each of the main characters in the story.



The image shows a worksheet titled "Character Profile" with a grid of fields for student input. At the top, there are fields for "Name" and "Class". The main form is titled "Character Profile" and contains the following sections:

- 1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: M / -F
- 3. Education: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Family background: \_\_\_\_\_ (picture)
- 6. Physical appearance: \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Likes & dislikes: \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Routines & habits: \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Other special characteristics: \_\_\_\_\_

At the bottom of the form, there is a small box for a picture. The footer of the worksheet includes "NET Section: GD, EBI, HRSAR" and "Worksheet 2.4: Character Profile".

*Worksheet 2.4:  
Character  
Profile*

## Suggested Procedures

1. Arrange students in groups of three or four.
2. Distribute Worksheet 2.4 and check comprehension of terms.
3. Tell students to discuss who will complete the profile for the main character and who will complete the profiles for the other characters in the story.
4. Tell students to complete the character profiles. Each student works on a profile for a different character. If there are not enough characters in the story, more than one student completes a profile for the main character.
5. Tell students to compare their character profiles and make adjustments to the details if necessary so that there is consistency. Students should keep the character profiles in a writing folder.



## Background Information

One way to develop a character in a short story is to provide background information about the character. This is often done in the orientation of a story.

Details about a character's background might include:

- name
- age
- gender
- place of birth / nationality
- place of residence
- family relationships
- education
- occupation
- likes and dislikes
- daily routines and habits, etc

In 'The Knock at the Door' by Stuart Mead, there is a short character description at the beginning of the story that provides background information about Joey Carter, the main character.

*Joey Carter was thirteen. He lived with his mother. He hadn't seen his father for a long, long time – not since he was in kindergarten. He couldn't remember his father's face very well. But at night, he could still hear him say, "Good night, Joey. I love you."*

What does the reader learn about Joey Carter from this description?

We learn about Joey's name and how old he is. We know that he is a boy. We also learn that he lives with his mother, but not with his father. In fact, Joey has not seen his father in a very long time. He cannot remember his father's face very well, but he remembers his father's voice. We can infer that Joey loves his father and misses him very much. All of this information is important for the development of the story.

"First, find out what your hero wants. Then just follow him."

Ray Bradbury

The following worksheet can be used to prepare students for writing a character description providing background information like the description of Joey Carter in 'The Knock at the Door'.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Background Information

One way to develop a character in a short story is to provide background information about the character. Details about a character's background might include:

- name
- age
- gender
- place of birth/nationality
- place of residence
- family relationships
- education
- occupation
- likes and dislikes
- daily routines and habits

Here is a character description that contains some background information about the character Joey Carter from the short story 'The Knock at the Door' by Stuart Mead:

*Joey Carter was thirteen. He lived with his mother. He hadn't seen his father for a long, long time – not since he was in kindergarten. He couldn't remember his father's face very well. But at night, he could still hear him say, "Good night, Joey, I love you."*

In this paragraph, what do you learn about the background of the main character? Highlight the main points, and fill in the details below.

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Family relationships: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Anything else: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NET Section, CCI, EDB, HKSAR Worksheet 2.5: Background Information

Worksheet 2.5:  
Background  
Information

### Suggested Procedures

1. Arrange students in groups of three or four.
2. Distribute Worksheet 2.5 and go over the list of items that might be included in a description of a character's background.
3. Read the character description of Joey Carter with students.
4. Tell students to highlight details about Joey Carter's background and fill in the details in the spaces that follow.
5. Check the answers with the class.

### Extension Idea

Students each write a paragraph based on the model that provides background information about the main character of their story. Students should keep the character descriptions in their writing folders.

## Physical Appearance

Another way to develop a character in a short story is to describe the character's physical appearance.

A description of a character's physical appearance might include the following vocabulary:

Characteristics	Descriptive words and phrases
body	big/small, tall/short, heavy/thin, fat/slim, of average build, well-built, strong, muscular, athletic, big-boned, bony, skinny, petite, etc
face	round, thin, freckled, pimpled, scarred, bearded, clean-shaven, attractive, handsome, pretty, beautiful, ugly, prominent/small nose, thick/thin lips, straight/crooked teeth, pointy chin, square jaw, red cheeks, shiny forehead, etc.
skin	dark/light, rough/smooth, dirty/clean, hairy, spotty, wrinkled, etc.
hair	long/short, shoulder-length, straight, curly, wavy, permed, dyed, black, brown, blonde, grey, silver, white, tied in a pony tail, shaved head, receding hairline, bald, etc.
eyes	big/small, round/narrow, almond-shaped, bright, brown, blue, green, hazel, bloodshot, teary, watery, watching, a black eye, bags under the eyes, thick eyebrows, long eyelashes, etc.
clothing	white shirt, blue jeans, grey jacket, long dress, short skirt, black hat, red scarf, old shoes, etc.
other	appears confident/weak, wears glasses, wears earrings, wears a watch, wears lipstick, walks with a cane, walks with a limp, has a nervous tick, speaks with a stutter, speaks with a lisp, drools, etc.

Here is a good example of a character description that provides details about a character's physical appearance. This is a description of Alvin's grandfather in the story 'Victim' by Adrian Tilley.

*The old man was slumped close to his plate, shovelling the rice in clumsily with his shaking hands. Alvin took in the details he knew so well. The pink shiny head with the greasy strips of hair stuck to it like wisps of string. The thin wrinkled face, the squashed, pitted nose. The eyes glassed over with age, always watering but always watching. Alvin hated the way he was always watching. The slack, distorted mouth, twisted to one side after last year's stroke. The thin arms, bulging veins... he couldn't look at him anymore. He thought he could smell him though - a waft of stale piss.*

This paragraph gives the reader a detailed picture of Alvin's grandfather. The language is very descriptive. The old man doesn't just eat his rice, he shovels it in 'with his shaking hands'. The author uses repetition of grammatical structures for added effect: 'The thin wrinkled face, the squashed, pitted nose' and 'The eyes ... always watering but always watching.'

We also learn something about the main character, Alvin, from this paragraph. Notice the sentences in red. These sentences give us information about how Alvin feels about his old grandfather as he observes him. We can infer that Alvin does not like his grandfather very much.

The following worksheet can be used to prepare students for writing a description that focuses on a character's physical appearance, similar to the description of Alvin's grandfather in 'Victim'.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

### Physical Appearance

Another way to develop a character in a short story is to describe the character's physical appearance.

A description of a character's physical appearance might include:

Characteristics	Descriptive words and phrases
body	big/small, tall/short, heavy/thin, fat/slim, of average build, well-built, strong, muscular, athletic, big-boned, bony, skinny, petite, etc.
face	round, thin, freckled, pimpled, scarred, bearded, clean-shaven, attractive, handsome, pretty, beautiful, ugly, prominent/small nose, thick/thin lips, straight/crooked teeth, pointy chin, square jaw, red cheeks, shiny forehead, etc.
skin	dark/light, rough/smooth, dirty/clean, hairy, spotty, wrinkled, etc.
hair	long/short, shoulder-length, straight, curly, wavy, permed, dyed, black, brown, blonde, grey, silver, white, tied in a pony tail, shaved head, receding hairline, bald, etc.
eyes	big/small, round/narrow, almond-shaped, bright, brown, blue, green, hazel, bloodshot, teary, watery, watching, a black eye, bags under the eyes, thick eyebrows, long eyelashes, etc.
clothing	white shirt, blue jeans, grey jacket, long dress, short skirt, black hat, red scarf, old shoes, etc.
other	appears confident/weak, wears glasses, wears earrings, wears a watch, wears lipstick, walks with a cane, walks with a limp, has a nervous lick, speaks with a stutter, speaks with a lisp, drools, etc.

You can create a mind map about a main character like the one below:

NET Section, CCI, EDB, HKSAR Worksheet 2.6: Physical Appearance

Worksheet 2.6:  
Physical  
Appearance

### Suggested Procedures

1. Arrange students in groups of three or four.
2. Distribute Worksheet 2.6 and go over the vocabulary for describing a character's physical appearance.
3. Read the character description of the old man aloud with students and clarify any words or phrases that students do not understand.
4. Tell students to highlight in yellow details about the old man's physical appearance and highlighter in pink information about Alvin.
5. Tell students to answer the questions and draw a picture of Alvin's grandfather.
6. Check the answers with the class.

### Extension Idea

Students each write a paragraph describing the physical appearance of one character in their story. For an additional challenge, students could write a character description through the eyes of another character, as in the example by Adrian Tilley. Students should keep the character descriptions in their writing folders

"Words - so innocent and powerless as they are, as standing in a dictionary, how potent for good and evil they become in the hands of one who knows how to combine them."

Nathaniel Hawthorne

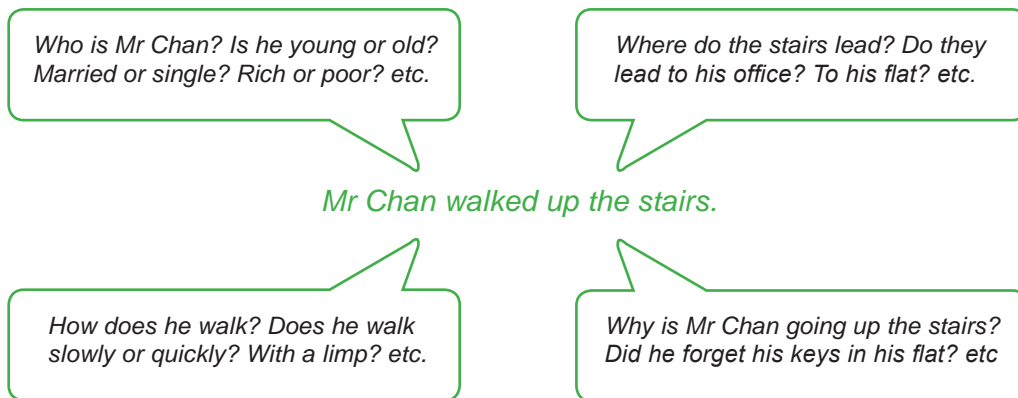
## Thoughts, Feelings and Actions

In addition to background information and physical appearance, skilful writers also provide details about their main character's thoughts, feelings and actions. This is what really brings the character to life.

To illustrate this with your students, show them a simple sentence about a character engaged in an activity. Here is an example:

*Mr Chan walked up the stairs.*

Tell students to ask Wh- questions about the character, Mr Chan. Ask them to think about how to make the sentence about Mr Chan more descriptive.



Guide the class to come up with a more descriptive sentence about Mr Chan. The result might look something like this:

*Old Mr Chan walked slowly up the stairs to his flat.*

Point out that although this is more descriptive than the original sentence, old Mr Chan is still not fully developed as a character. We still do not know anything about what he thinks or how he feels as he walks up the stairs.

In the following descriptive paragraph about old Mr Chan written by Stuart Mead, we can really visualise old Mr Chan as he struggles to climb the stairs.

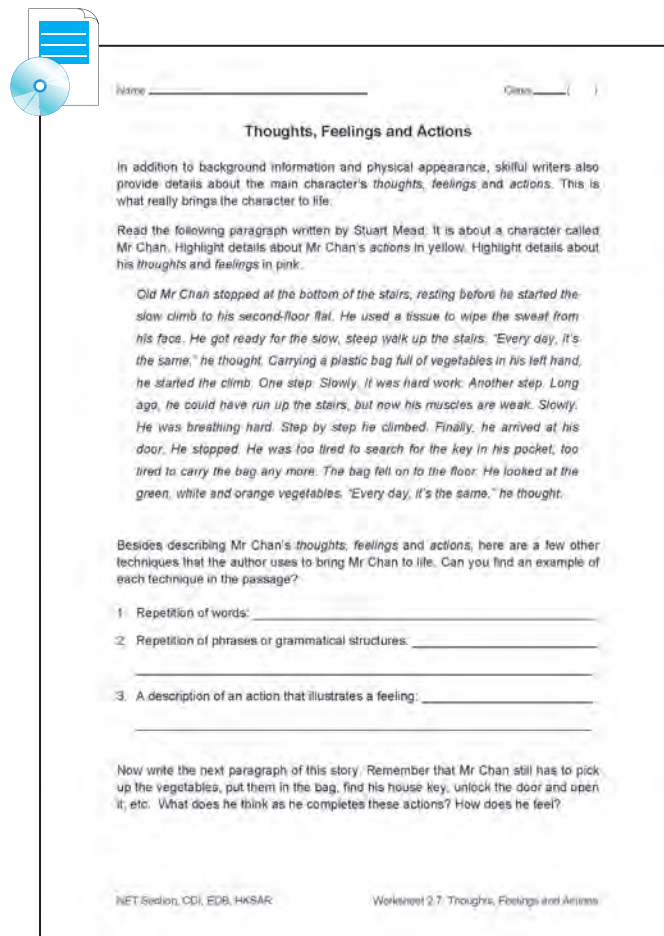
*Old Mr Chan stopped at the bottom of the stairs, resting before he started the slow climb to his second-floor flat. He used a tissue to wipe the sweat from his face. He got ready for the slow, steep walk up the stairs. "Every day, it's the same," he thought. Carrying a plastic bag full of vegetables in his left hand, he started the climb. One step. Slowly. It was hard work. Another step. Long ago, he could have run up the stairs, but now his muscles are weak. Slowly. He was breathing hard. Step by step he climbed. Finally, he arrived at his door. He stopped. He was too tired to search for the key in his pocket, too tired to carry the bag any more. The bag fell on to the floor. He looked at the green, white and orange vegetables. "Every day, it's the same," he thought.*

Old Mr Chan is now more fully developed as a character. There are more details about how he climbs the stairs to his flat. From the sentences in red, we also know what old Mr Chan is thinking and how he must feel.

Notice also the use of repetition. Words like 'slow', 'slowly', 'climb' and 'step' are repeated several times. 'The slow climb' becomes 'the slow, steep walk'. The structure, 'too tired to (v)...' is used twice. "Every day, it's the same" is a thought that comes to old Mr Chan twice.

In the worksheet that follows, students will read Stuart Mead's character description of old Mr Chan and continue the story, further developing the character by describing his thoughts and feelings as he picks up the vegetables, puts them back in the bag, finds his house key, unlocks the door, opens it, etc.

The worksheet is designed to give students practice with developing a character by combining details about what the character does (i.e. actions) with information about what he thinks and how he feels (i.e. thoughts and feelings).



The worksheet is titled "Thoughts, Feelings and Actions" and includes a header for "Name" and "Class". It contains an introductory paragraph about character development, a reading passage about Mr Chan, and three numbered questions for analysis. The reading passage includes several sentences in red and pink. The questions are:

1. Repetition of words: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Repetition of phrases or grammatical structures: \_\_\_\_\_
3. A description of an action that illustrates a feeling: \_\_\_\_\_

At the bottom, there is a prompt: "Now write the next paragraph of this story. Remember that Mr Chan still has to pick up the vegetables, put them in the bag, find his house key, unlock the door and open it, etc. What does he think as he completes these actions? How does he feel?"

Worksheet 2.7:  
Thoughts,  
Feelings and  
Actions

### Suggested Procedures

1. Write the sentence 'Mr Chan walked up the stairs' on the blackboard.
2. Guide the class to make the sentence more descriptive by asking Wh-questions about Mr Chan and adding more details to the sentence.
3. Distribute Worksheet 2.7 and read the character description of old Mr Chan aloud with students, providing support, if necessary, to help students comprehend the description better.
4. Tell students to highlight old Mr Chan's actions in yellow and his thoughts and feelings in pink.
5. Point out some of the narrative writing techniques that the author uses to bring old Mr Chan to life, such as the use of repetition (words, grammatical structure) and physical descriptions to illustrate emotion.
6. Tell students to find examples from the descriptive paragraph of each narrative writing technique and to write them on Worksheet 2.7 in the spaces provided.
7. Check the answers with the class.
8. Tell students to write the next paragraph in the story. Tell students that Mr Chan still has to pick up the vegetables, put them in the bag, find his house key, unlock the door, open it, etc.
9. Remind students to make Mr Chan look old and tired, and to make him move slowly. Ask: 'What does he think?' 'How does he feel?' 'What can we see in Mr Chan's face, in his eyes?' etc. Students keep the character descriptions in their writing folders.

### Extension Idea

Students each write a descriptive paragraph about one character from their story engaged in a simple activity. Encourage students to describe the character's thoughts, feelings and actions and to use some of the narrative writing techniques that are used in the descriptive paragraph by Stuart Mead. Students should keep the character descriptions in their writing folders.

"It begins with a character, usually, and once he stands up on his feet and begins to move, all I can do is trot along behind him with a paper and pencil trying to keep up long enough to put down what he says and does."

William Faulkner



## Show, Don't Tell!

When describing a character's feelings, skilful writers do not just 'tell' the reader how the character feels. They 'show' the reader by using imagery. Imagery is language that paints a vivid picture in the mind of the reader, often by appealing to the five senses: sight, sound, smell, taste and touch.

Look at the following sentences:

1. Joey missed his father.
2. Alvin hated his grandfather.
3. Old Mr Chan was hot and tired.

These three sentences 'tell' us how each character feels, but there is no imagery. They do not 'show' us anything.

Notice how the same three ideas in these sentences are expressed by the authors, who use imagery to appeal to the senses:

1. Joey missed his father.

*[Joey] hadn't seen his father for a long, long time – not since he was in kindergarten. He couldn't remember his father's face very well. But at night, he could still hear him say, "Good night, Joey. I love you."*

2. Alvin hated his grandfather.

*Alvin hated the way [his grandfather] was always watching. The slack, distorted mouth, twisted to one side after last year's stroke. The thin arms, bulging veins... he couldn't look at him anymore. He thought he could smell him though – a waft of stale piss.*

3. Old Mr Chan was hot and tired.

*[Old Mr Chan] used a tissue to wipe the sweat from his face. He got ready for the slow, steep walk up the stairs. "Every day, it's the same," he thought.*

These descriptions offer the reader vivid images that illustrate how the characters feel. We can hear the voice of Joey's father, smell the odour of Alvin's grandfather and feel the sweat on the face of old Mr Chan as he wipes it away with a tissue.

Here are a few more examples that illustrate the difference between ‘telling’ and ‘showing’.

Do not tell the reader...	Show the reader!
<p>Joey was afraid. There was a storm. The lights went out.</p>	<p>The lights suddenly went out. In the darkness, the wind and rain grew louder and seemed closer... Joey sat still, his heart beating fast. It made a ‘thump, thump, thump’ noise in his chest.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Stuart Mead, ‘A Knock at the Door’</p>
<p>Alvin’s mother was angry. She hit Alvin. It hurt a lot.</p>	<p>She had moved so quickly, her hand going back and across in one movement, slapping his left cheek with a crack that silenced the room. The pain hung hot on his cheek.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Adrian Tilley, ‘Victim’</p>
<p>Bill was frightened. He thought someone was behind him.</p>	<p>It seemed a shadow had fallen over him. But there was no shadow. His heart had given a great jump up into his throat and was choking him. Then his blood slowly chilled and he felt the sweat of his shirt cold against his flesh.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Jack London, ‘All Gold Canyon’</p>

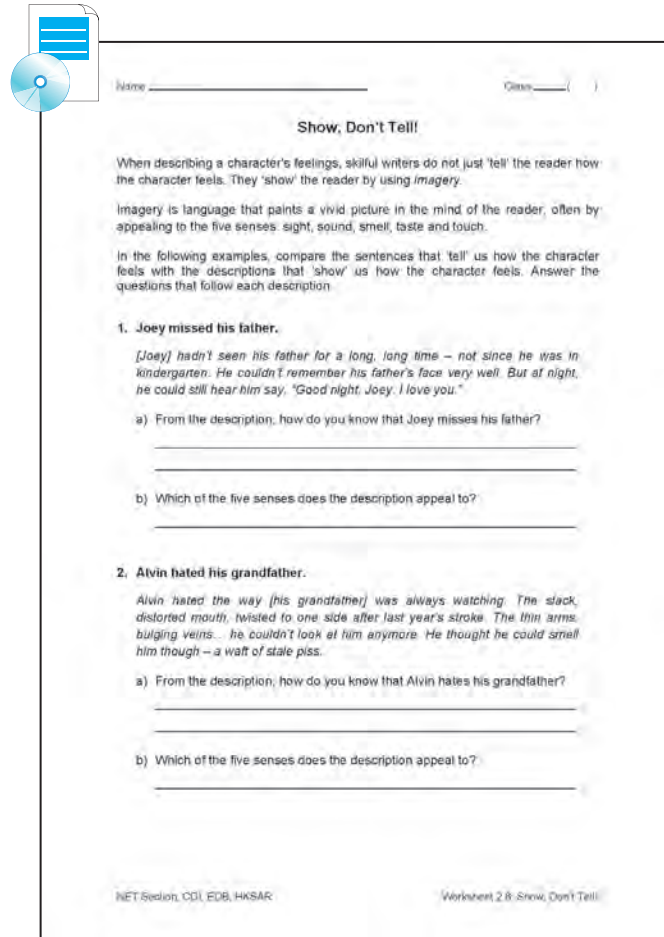
Advise students to avoid using adjectives like afraid, angry, excited, happy or sad when describing a character’s feelings. Instead, students should appeal to the senses and focus on the character’s physical reaction to the emotion.

Skilful writers describe the physical manifestations of their characters’ emotions. They focus on the face, the eyes, the mouth, the hair, the skin, the heart, the blood, the pulse, the sweat, the breath and the tears, etc, to ‘show’ the reader how their characters feel.

“Don’t tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass.”

Anton Chekhov

The following worksheet can be used to give students practice with ‘showing’ the reader how a character feels by using imagery that appeals to the senses.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

### Show, Don't Tell!

When describing a character's feelings, skilful writers do not just 'tell' the reader how the character feels. They 'show' the reader by using *imagery*.

Imagery is language that paints a vivid picture in the mind of the reader, often by appealing to the five senses: sight, sound, smell, taste and touch.

In the following examples, compare the sentences that 'tell' us how the character feels with the descriptions that 'show' us how the character feels. Answer the questions that follow each description.

**1. Joey missed his father.**

*[Joey] hadn't seen his father for a long, long time – not since he was in kindergarten. He couldn't remember his father's face very well. But at night, he could still hear him say, "Good night, Joey. I love you."*

a) From the description, how do you know that Joey misses his father?  
\_\_\_\_\_

b) Which of the five senses does the description appeal to?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**2. Alvin hated his grandfather.**

*Alvin hated the way [his grandfather] was always watching. The slack, distorted mouth, twisted to one side after last year's stroke. The thin arms, bulging veins... he couldn't look at him anymore. He thought he could smell him though – a waft of stale piss.*

a) From the description, how do you know that Alvin hates his grandfather?  
\_\_\_\_\_

b) Which of the five senses does the description appeal to?  
\_\_\_\_\_

NET Section, CQI, EDB, HKSAR Worksheet 2.8: Show, Don't Tell!

Worksheet 2.8:  
Show, Don't  
Tell!

### Suggested Procedures

1. Distribute Worksheet 2.8. Explain that when skilful writers describe a character, they often create an image in the mind of the reader by appealing to the five senses: sight, sound, smell, taste and touch.
2. Go through the first sentence and description about Joey with the whole class.
3. Tell students to work in pairs to complete the next two sentences and descriptions about Alvin and Bill.
4. Check the answers with the class.
5. Read the sentences and descriptions in the table and ask students to identify which of the five senses the authors appeal to in each description.
6. Point out that in each case, the author describes a character's physical response to an emotion.
7. Tell students to rewrite 'I was in the waiting room. I was nervous.' using descriptive language that appeals to the senses and focuses on the physical body.

# Describing the Setting

## The Five Senses

When describing a place in more detail, skilful writers 'show' the reader what the place is like by appealing to more than one of the five senses. See the table below.

The five senses	Wh- questions
Sight	What can you see in the place? What does it look like?
Sound	What can you hear in the place? What does it sound like?
Smell	Does the place smell? What does it smell like?
Taste	Does the place leave a taste in your mouth?
Touch	How does the place make you feel?

When asked to describe a place, students tend to focus on what it looks like. They should be encouraged to add details about the sounds and the smells of the place, or the tastes and feelings that the place evokes to make the description more vivid.

Students can also use other literary devices such as metaphor, simile or alliteration when describing a place. See Handout 1.11 in Part 1 of this book for reference.

"For me, a page of good prose is where one hears the rain [and] the noise of battle."

John Cheever

## Beginning the Story

At the beginning of a short story, the setting does not have to be described in great detail. It only needs to be described in enough detail to get the story started.

It is important to set the time and the place and to establish the mood at the beginning of a short story. Here are a few examples of ideal settings for the different short story genres.

Short story genre	Ideal setting
A ghost story	an old house in the countryside on a rainy night
A detective/crime story	a hotel in the city where guests mysteriously disappear
An adventure story	an old ship on a stormy ocean in the days of pirates
A science fiction story	a spaceship travelling to a distant planet in the future
A fantasy	an enchanted island with talking trees and animals

Once students have established a setting that is ideal for the type of story they plan to write, they will need to think about how to begin their story.

Skilful writers know how to begin their stories in an interesting way. Compare the following story beginnings. Which one is more interesting?

- a. It was a sunny day. Five friends went to the beach. They went swimming, then had a barbecue lunch. Everyone was happy.
- b. It was a sunny day. Five friends went to the beach, but only four returned.

The first story beginning gives the reader information about the time (a sunny day), the place (the beach) and the mood (happy). It even gives some information about the characters and what they do (five friends, swimming, barbecue). But it is not very interesting.

The second story beginning has fewer details, but is far more interesting. It makes the reader wonder, 'Why did only four return?' This creates a different mood. We want to read more to find the answer.

Advise students to put a mystery, problem or question at the beginning of their story. This will make the reader interested enough to want to read the next sentence, the next paragraph, and so on.

The following worksheet can be used to prepare students for writing a story opening that introduces the setting in an interesting way.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

### Beginning the Story

**Part 1:** At the beginning of a short story, the setting does not have to be described in great detail. It only needs to be described in enough detail to get the story started.

It is important to set the time and the place and to establish the mood at the beginning of a short story. Here are a few examples of ideal settings for different types of short stories.

Type of story	Ideal setting
A ghost story	an old house in the countryside on a rainy night
A detective / crime story	a hotel in the city where guests mysteriously disappear
An adventure story	an old ship on a stormy ocean in the days of pirates
A science fiction story	a spaceship travelling to a distant planet in the future
A fantasy	an enchanted island with talking trees and animals.

1. What type of story is your group writing?  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the setting of your story?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. In the box below, draw a picture of your setting.

NET, Seeloh, CDL, EDB, HKSAR  
Worksheet 2.9: Beginning the Story

*Worksheet 2.9:  
Beginning  
the Story*

### Suggested Procedures

1. Arrange students in groups of three or four.
2. Distribute Worksheet 2.9. Point out that the setting of a short story does not have to be described in great detail. It is important to set the time and the place and to establish the mood at the beginning of a short story. Go over the ideal settings for each type of short story in the table.
3. Tell students to answer the questions and draw pictures of the story setting in the box provided.
4. Tell students to compare the story beginnings in Part 2 of Worksheet 2.9. They should tick the boxes of the more interesting story beginnings.
5. Point out that skilful writers begin their stories with a mystery, problem or question to capture the interest of the reader.
6. Give students time to write the beginning of their stories.

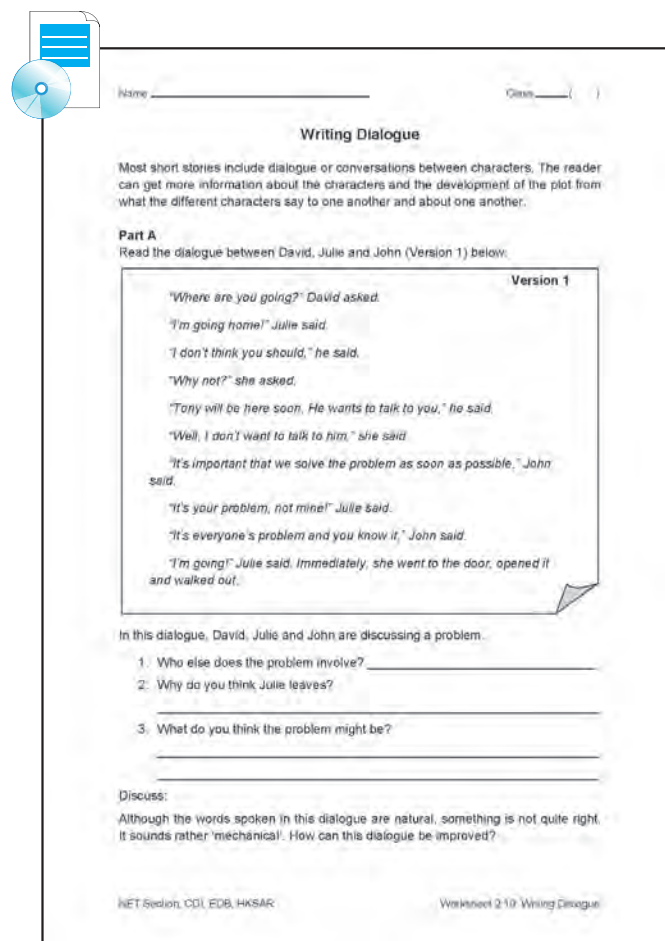
# Writing Dialogue

## Techniques for Writing Dialogue

Most short stories include 'dialogue', or conversations between characters. The reader can get more information about the characters and the development of the plot from what the different characters say to one another and about one another.

Writing realistic dialogue is challenging. There are conventions and techniques for writing dialogue that students can learn by studying examples of dialogue in the short stories they read.

In Worksheet 2.10, there are three versions of the same dialogue written by Stuart Mead designed to illustrate some of the most common techniques that students should be aware of when writing dialogue.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

### Writing Dialogue

Most short stories include dialogue or conversations between characters. The reader can get more information about the characters and the development of the plot from what the different characters say to one another and about one another.

**Part A**  
Read the dialogue between David, Julie and John (Version 1) below.

**Version 1**

"Where are you going?" David asked.

"I'm going home!" Julie said.

"I don't think you should," he said.

"Why not?" she asked.

"Tony will be here soon. He wants to talk to you," he said.

"Well, I don't want to talk to him," she said.

"It's important that we solve the problem as soon as possible," John said.

"It's your problem, not mine!" Julie said.

"It's everyone's problem and you know it," John said.

"I'm going!" Julie said. Immediately, she went to the door, opened it and walked out.

In this dialogue, David, Julie and John are discussing a problem.

1. Who else does the problem involve? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Why do you think Julie leaves? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What do you think the problem might be? \_\_\_\_\_

**Discuss:**  
Although the words spoken in this dialogue are natural, something is not quite right. It sounds rather 'mechanical'. How can this dialogue be improved?

NET (Seddon, CCI, EDB, HKSAR) Worksheet 2.10: Writing Dialogue

Worksheet 2.10:  
Writing Dialogue  
(Part A)

## Suggested Procedures for Part A

1. Distribute Worksheet 2.10 and point out that most short stories include dialogue, or conversations between characters. Dialogue helps us learn more about the characters and the plot development.
2. Tell students to work in pairs to complete the questions about the dialogue.
3. Check the answers with the class.
4. Read the dialogue aloud while students listen.
5. Lead the class in a discussion about how the dialogue can be improved. Elicit from students (or point out) why the dialogue sounds so mechanical.

If the students can understand that the writer uses 'he said' and 'she said' too many times, they are ready to read Version 2.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

**Part B**  
Read Version 2 of the dialogue below. Highlight the places where there are differences between this version and Version 1.

**Version 2**

"Where are you going?" David asked.  
"I'm going home!" Julie answered.  
"I don't think you should."  
"Why not?"  
"Tony will be here soon. He wants to talk to you," he explained.  
"Well, I don't want to talk to him," she declared.  
"It's important that we solve the problem as soon as possible," John added.  
"It's your problem, not mine!" she argued.  
"It's everyone's problem and you know it," John continued.  
"I'm going!" Julie insisted. Immediately, she went to the door, opened it and walked out.

The writer has made two types of revisions. What are they?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Discuss:**  
How have these revisions improved the dialogue? What else can the writer do to make further improvements? How can the writer make the conversation even more natural and realistic? How can he bring the characters to life?

NET Section, CD1, ED6, HKSAR  
Worksheet 2.10: Writing Dialogue

Worksheet 2.10:  
Writing Dialogue  
(Part B)



### Suggested Procedures for Part B

1. Refer students for Version 2 and point out that there are differences between this version and Version 1.
2. Tell students to work in pairs to highlight the changes in Version 2 and to identify the two types of revisions that the writer has made.
3. Check the answers with the class.
4. Read the dialogue aloud while students listen.
5. Lead the class in a discussion about how the dialogue can be further improved. Elicit from students (or point out) that the dialogue now sounds a bit more natural, but that there is still something missing.

The students are ready for Version 3 if they can understand the following points:

- In Version 2, the writer has replaced the word ‘said’ with much stronger, more meaningful verbs: ‘answered’, ‘explained’, ‘declared’, ‘added’, ‘argued’, ‘continued’ and ‘insisted’. They show more detail about the speakers’ intentions.
- In Version 2, the writer has left out ‘he said’ and ‘she asked’ once each. The reader clearly knows who says these two sentences, so there is no need to repeat ‘he’ or ‘she’. Later, when there are three people talking, it is important for the reader to know exactly who is saying what.
- The writer can still make further improvements by adding more information about what the characters are thinking, feeling and doing (i.e. thoughts, feelings and actions) as they speak.

“The story is not in the plot but in the telling.”

Ursula K. LeGuin



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Part C**  
Now read Version 3 of the dialogue below. Highlight the places where there are differences between this version and Version 2.

**Version 3**

*As Julie grabbed her bag and stood up, David asked, "Where are you going?"*

*"Home!" she answered sharply.*

*"I don't think you should."*

*"Why not?" She stared at him. She was beginning to dislike him.*

*"Tony will be here soon. He wants to talk to you," he explained calmly but firmly.*

*He looked into her eyes, waiting for her reaction.*

*"Well I don't want to talk to him," she declared. She was about to continue towards the door when John suddenly joined the conversation.*

*Not looking at either of them, he advised, "It's important that we solve the problem as soon as possible."*

*There was silence for a few seconds, as both Julie and David thought about their next move.*

*"It's . . ." Julie began, not yet sure of her words. "It's your problem, not mine!" she argued. She stood her ground, angry.*

*John continued, slowly but surely. "It's everyone's problem and you know it." Still he refused to look at her, which made her even angrier.*

*Seeing that neither John nor David was interested in listening to her, she decided it was better to leave.*

*"I'm going!" she insisted.*

*Without waiting for their response, she marched to the door, opened it and walked out.*

Notice how the writer skillfully combines what the characters say with what they think, feel and do. The words, thoughts, feelings and actions all happen at the same time.

NET Section, CQI, EDB, HKSAR Worksheet 2.10: Writing Dialogue

**Worksheet 2.10:  
Writing Dialogue  
(Part C)**

**Suggested Procedures for Part C**


1. Refer students to Version 3 point out that there are differences between this version and Version 2.
2. Tell students to work in pairs to highlight the changes in Dialogue 3.
3. Check the answers with the class.
4. Read the dialogue aloud while students listen.
5. Lead the class in a discussion about how the dialogue has been improved. Elicit from students (or point out) that we now know what the characters are thinking, feeling and doing as they speak.

**Extension Idea**

Students each write a dialogue based on the model in which the characters in their story discuss a problem that needs to be resolved. Students should keep the dialogues in their writing folders.

## Speaking Verbs

Handout 2.4 has a list of verbs that students can use instead of 'said' and 'asked' when writing dialogue. These verbs have more specific meanings and give the reader more information about the thoughts and feelings of the characters who are speaking.




Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

**Speaking Verbs**

Here is a list of verbs that students can use instead of 'said' and 'asked' when writing dialogue. These verbs have more specific meanings and give the reader more information about the *thoughts* and *feelings* of the characters who are speaking.

say ⇔ said				ask ⇔ asked			
advise	advised	decide	decided	offer	offered	beg	begged
add	added	demand	demanded	promise	promised	challenge	challenged
admit	admitted	deny	denied	repeat	repeated	enquire	enquired
agree	agreed	explain	explained	reply	replied	query	queried
answer	answered	guess	guessed	order	ordered	question	questioned
argue	argued	insist	insisted	suggest	suggested	nag	nagged
begin	began	joke	joked	shout	shouted	petition	petitioned
conclude	concluded	laugh	laughed	warn	warned	plead	pleaded
continue	continued	lie	lied	whisper	whispered	request	requested
cry	cried	object	objected	yell	yelled	wonder	wondered

To find more speaking verbs, look up 'say', 'ask' or any of the other verbs above in your thesaurus. If you do not have a thesaurus handy, go to <http://thesaurus.com/>.



NET Section, CDI, EDB, HKSAR
Handout 2.4: Speaking Verbs

*Handout 2.4:  
Speaking Verbs*

# Completing the Story

## Revising and Editing

After students have had ample practice with developing characters, describing a setting and writing realistic dialogue, they will need to go back to the Short Story Writing Task (Worksheet 2.1) and the original plans they drafted for their collaborative short story (Worksheets 2.2 - 2.4).

Through discussion, students should come to final agreement on the plot structure of the story. It is useful at this stage to have students revisit the questions on Handout 2.3, particularly the questions about plot:

- What problem or conflict does the main character experience?
- What does the main character (or other characters) do to cause the problem?
- What does the main character (or other characters) do to resolve the problem?
- How are the characters affected by the incident or the experience?
- How does the main character change in the end?

Once the storyline is clear, students will need to put the ideas from their preliminary drafts together and complete a final draft of the short story. Engaging in peer response will help students revise their preliminary drafts and make improvements to the final draft of their collaborative story. Students should keep all of their preliminary drafts in their writing folders so the teacher can later assess their individual work.

Before submitting the final draft of the collaborative story to the teacher, students should also engage in peer editing. Peer editing involves each member of the group proofreading the draft for errors in grammar (verb tenses, verb forms, parts of speech, use of articles, plurals, prepositions, etc.), spelling, punctuation, capitalisation and formatting.

## Formatting Guidelines

Students should be given clear guidelines regarding the word count and formatting. For a collaborative short story, 300 words is a reasonable word count. This is the minimum requirement for the 'Shorts' competition. The maximum word count is 1,200 words.

The formatting guidelines for 'Shorts' are as follows:

- Use A4-size, white paper.
- Use 'Times New Roman' pt 12 font.
- Set the margins at 1" on all sides and double-space lines.
- In the header, type the full names and class numbers of all group members.
- In the footer, insert page numbers.

Ask students to submit their short story with Worksheet 2.1.

## Assessment Criteria

Assessment Form 2.5 can be used to assess the collaborative short stories.

Names \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) Class \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

Title of Short Story \_\_\_\_\_

### Short Story Assessment Rubric

	Needs work	Fair	Good	Very good	Score
<b>1. Content:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Originality of ideas</li> <li>• Appropriateness of setting</li> <li>• Development of characters and plot</li> <li>• Other points of interest, e.g. use of dialogue, point of view, irony, symbolism, themes</li> </ul>	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	
<b>2. Organisation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plot structure, e.g. orientation, complication, climax, resolution</li> <li>• Coherence and cohesion of ideas</li> <li>• Paragraphing</li> <li>• Other points of interest, e.g. flashback, story within a story, transitions, twist</li> </ul>	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	
<b>3. Language and style:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Range and appropriateness of vocabulary</li> <li>• Range and accuracy of grammatical structures</li> <li>• Accuracy of spelling, capitalisation, punctuation</li> <li>• Appropriateness of tone and register</li> <li>• Use of narrative writing techniques, e.g. varying short and long sentences, appealing to the five senses, withholding details to create suspense</li> <li>• Use of literary devices, e.g. alliteration, onomatopoeia, simile, metaphor, personification</li> </ul>	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	
<b>Total:</b>					/30

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

HET Section, CDI, EDB, HKSAR Assessment Form 2.5: Short Story Assessment Rubric

*Assessment Form 2.5: Short Story Assessment Rubric*

Teachers should give students the rubric and go over the criteria before students begin revising and editing their drafts. Understanding the criteria will help students improve their collaborative short stories before they submit them for assessment and feedback.

“Australian Aborigines say that the big stories – the stories worth telling and retelling, the ones in which you may find the meaning of your life – are forever stalking the right teller, sniffing and tracking like predators hunting their prey in the bush.”

Robert Moss, *Dreamgates*

## 'Shorts' Short Stories

The following short stories were written and recorded by students for the 'Shorts' competition and are available in the Resources folder on the Resource CD:

- 'The Magic Door' by Alexandra Li Yik-ki, Christie C. Cheng, Anthea Pang Yin-seng and Nicole Hurip from Marymount Secondary School. (First Prize, 'Long Shorts' category, 'Shorts' 2010 competition.)
- 'The Machine' by Ho Wui-hang, Law Yuen-sun, Lee Dustin and Felix Tom Kin-lok from Wah Yan College, Hong Kong. (First Prize, 'Short Shorts' category, 'Shorts' 2011 competition.)

There are two versions of these stories on the Resource CD. The annotated version highlights some of the narrative writing techniques that the students used.

**The Magic Door - Annotated**

**A 'Shorts' Prize-winning Story**  
**The Magic Door**

NET Section, CDI, EDB, HKSAR

**The Machine - Annotated**

**A 'Shorts' Prize-winning Story**  
**The Machine**

NET Section, CDI, EDB, HKSAR

These collaboratively written short stories serve as authentic models for other students in Hong Kong to read, enjoy, analyse, evaluate and emulate.

# Part 3

## Telling Stories

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# Sharing Stories

## Introduction

The Suggested Schemes of Work for the Elective Part of the Three-year Senior Secondary English Language Curriculum (Secondary 4-6) recommends that students be given an opportunity to share stories in English in the final part of the Learning English through Short Stories elective module.

The stories students share can be 'stories they have recently read, traditional stories, stories they have heard or learned about, or stories their families tell, etc'. This is to help students 'learn the basic storytelling skills to prepare them for performing their own module story later in this part'. (p. 23)

The suggested activities outlined here aim to develop students' oral presentation skills through retelling fables or other folktales in English. After students have practised telling stories, they are given an opportunity to read their collaboratively-written short story aloud and record it in the form of a radio broadcast following the guidelines from the NET Section 'Shorts' competition.

A suggestion for using the unedited clips from the NET Section 'Clipit' competition to engage students in creating a short story film is also provided here.

"There have been great societies that did not use the wheel, but there have been no societies that did not tell stories."

Ursula K. LeGuin



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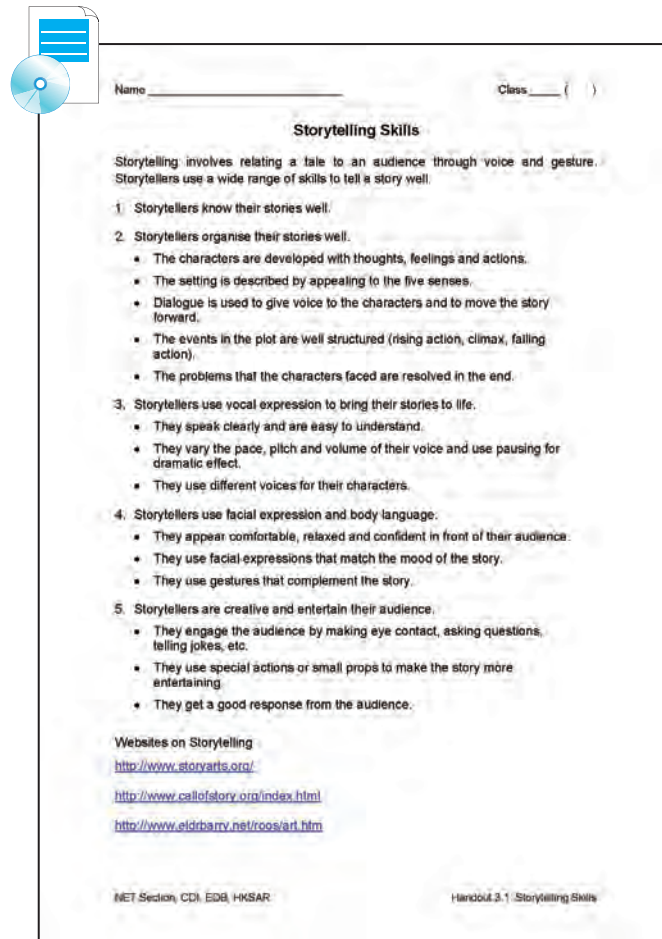
## Storytelling

Storytelling involves relating a tale to an audience through voice and gesture. In the oral tradition, storytellers told stories to explain beliefs about the world, relate the great deeds of past kings and heroes, teach moral principles or simply to entertain an audience. The need to tell stories is a part of human nature.

Storytellers use a wide range of skills to tell a story well.

1. Storytellers know their stories well.
2. Storytellers organise their stories well.
  - The characters are developed with thoughts, feelings and actions.
  - The setting is described by appealing to the five senses.
  - Dialogue is used to give voice to the characters and to move the story forward.
  - The events in the plot are well structured (rising action, climax, falling action).
  - The problems that the characters faced are resolved in the end.
3. Storytellers use vocal expressions to bring their stories to life.
  - They speak clearly and are easy to understand.
  - They vary the pace, pitch and volume of the voice and use pausing for dramatic effect.
  - They use different voices for their characters.
4. Storytellers use facial expression and body language.
  - They appear comfortable, relaxed and confident in front of their audience.
  - They use facial expressions that match the mood of the story.
  - They use gestures that complement the story.
5. Storytellers are creative and entertain their audience.
  - They engage the audience by making eye contact, asking questions, telling jokes, etc.
  - They use special actions or small props to make the story more entertaining.
  - They get a good response from the audience.

The following handout can be used to introduce the skills of storytelling to students.



*Handout 3.1:  
Storytelling  
Skills*

After going over the storytelling skills outlined in Handout 3.1, model telling a simple story in English, preferably one that students are familiar with.

Using one of Aesop's fables for this purpose would work well since the stories are short and easy to remember. They also illustrate a moral, which you could have students infer and discuss. Here are a few suggestions to consider.

Aesop's Fables	Moral
The Ant and the Grasshopper	Prepare for the future.
The Fox and the Cheese	Beware of flattery.
The Hare and the Tortoise	Slow and steady wins the race.
The Lion and the Mouse	One good turn deserves another.
The North Wind and the Sun	Gentle persuasion is more effective than force.

These fables can easily be found in print or on the Internet. Refer to Handout 1.2: Fables and Parables for a few recommended web sites.

When demonstrating the storytelling skills outlined in Handout 3.1, it is important that you retell the story in your own words and not just read the story aloud. Keep in mind that you are demonstrating how to tell a story, which requires different skills from reading a story aloud.

To follow up, you could also show students a video clip of a storyteller telling a simple story in English online. After students have listened to the story, ask them to evaluate how well the story was told based on the storytelling skills outlined in Handout 3.1.

### Retelling Folktales

To give students practice with telling stories in English, ask them to select one fable or folktale that they know well. You might want to encourage students to select one of the fables or parables from Chinese folklore that illustrate idioms commonly used in Chinese today. This will give students an opportunity to share something about Chinese culture with the Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) and other native speakers of English in the school.

Here are a few well-known Chinese fables and parables that you can suggest to your students.

Chinese Fables/Parables	Meaning
The Frog in the Shallow Well	Describes a person who is too proud or boastful.
The Fox Borrows the Tiger's Terror	Describes a person who takes advantage of a leader's power to bully others.
Plucking Up a Crop to Help it Grow	Describes a person who does not allow a situation to take its natural course.
A Loss May Turn Out to Be a Gain	Describes a situation in which an unlucky event results in good luck or vice versa.

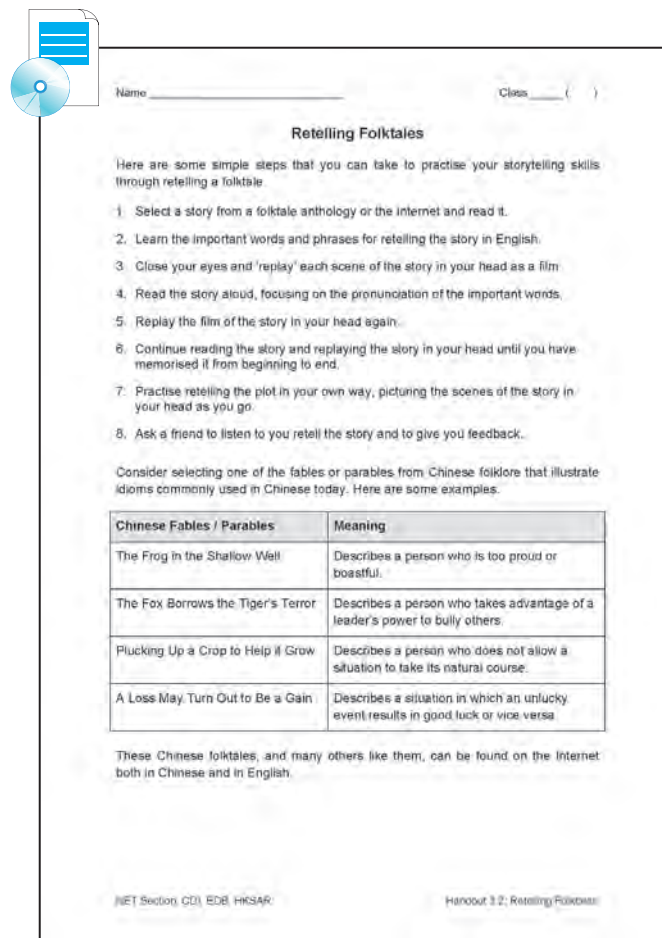
These Chinese folktales, and many others like them, can be found on the Internet both in Chinese and in English.

## Remembering the Story

Once students have selected a story, they will need to remember the storyline and practise retelling it. Here is one method that students can use.

1. Select a story from a folktale anthology or the Internet and read it.
2. Learn the important words and phrases for retelling the story in English.
3. Close your eyes and 'replay' each scene of the story in your head as a film.
4. Read the story aloud, focusing on the pronunciation of the important words.
5. Replay the film of the story in your head again.
6. Continue reading the story and replaying the story in your head until you have memorised it from beginning to end.
7. Practise retelling the plot in your own way, picturing the scenes of the story in your head as you go.
8. Ask a friend to listen to you retell the story and to give you feedback.

Handout 3.2 can be used to introduce these steps to students.



Handout 3.2: Retelling Folktales. The handout includes a title, a list of 8 steps for retelling folktales, a table of Chinese fables/parables with their meanings, and footer information.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

### Retelling Folktales

Here are some simple steps that you can take to practise your storytelling skills through retelling a folktale.

1. Select a story from a folktale anthology or the internet and read it.
2. Learn the important words and phrases for retelling the story in English.
3. Close your eyes and 'replay' each scene of the story in your head as a film.
4. Read the story aloud, focusing on the pronunciation of the important words.
5. Replay the film of the story in your head again.
6. Continue reading the story and replaying the story in your head until you have memorised it from beginning to end.
7. Practise retelling the plot in your own way, picturing the scenes of the story in your head as you go.
8. Ask a friend to listen to you retell the story and to give you feedback.

Consider selecting one of the fables or parables from Chinese folklore that illustrate idioms commonly used in Chinese today. Here are some examples.

Chinese Fables / Parables	Meaning
The Frog in the Shallow Well	Describes a person who is too proud or boastful.
The Fox Borrows the Tiger's Terror	Describes a person who takes advantage of a leader's power to bully others.
Plucking Up a Crop to Help it Grow	Describes a person who does not allow a situation to take its natural course.
A Loss May Turn Out to Be a Gain	Describes a situation in which an unlucky event results in good luck or vice versa.

These Chinese folktales, and many others like them, can be found on the Internet both in Chinese and in English.

NET Section, CDI, EDB, HRSAR Handout 3.2: Retelling Folktales

*Handout 3.2:  
Retelling  
Folktales*

Students may find it useful to map out the story on a storyboard. This will help them visualise each scene of the story and remember the sequence of events more easily.

Worksheet 3.1 is a storyboard template that students can use to map out the story.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

Storyboard

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

1. 2. 3.

4. 5. 6.

NET Section, CDI, EDB, HKSAR

Worksheet 3.1: Storyboard

**Worksheet 3.1:**  
**Storyboard**

### Suggested Procedures

1. Distribute Worksheet 3.1.
2. Show students the sample storyboard of 'The North Wind and the Sun' in the Answer Keys folder on the Resource CD.
3. Tell students to draw pictures of the main events for the story they selected in the frames of the storyboard and to complete the text boxes for each frame.
4. Collect Worksheet 3.1 from students for assessment and feedback.

"No, no! The adventures first, explanations take such a dreadful time."


Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking-Glass*

## Rehearsing the Story

In a follow-up lesson, return Worksheet 3.1 and give students time to practise retelling their stories in small groups. Students can work in their collaborative writing groups for this activity.

Set a time limit for the storytelling so that the stories do not become too long. Students should be able to retell a simple folktale in 2-3 minutes.

Students can give feedback to one another using Assessment Form 3.1.



**Storytelling Skills (Peer Assessment)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

Storyteller's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Story: \_\_\_\_\_

Listen to your peer's story. Circle the number in each area to indicate how well you think they've done. Write your comments below.

Criteria	Needs work	Fair	Good	Very good
1. <b>Familiarity with the story:</b> The storyteller knows the story well. The story is detailed and well organized.	1	2	3	4
2. <b>Language:</b> The storyteller speaks clearly and fluently. The story is easy to understand.	1	2	3	4
3. <b>Delivery:</b> The storyteller speaks with expression and uses eye contact, facial expression and body language to make the story more interesting.	1	2	3	4

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

NET Section, CDI, EDS, HKSAR Assessment Form 3.1: Storytelling Skills (Peer Assessment)

*Assessment Form 3.1: Storytelling Skills (Peer Assessment)*

## Presenting the Story

After students have rehearsed their stories and received feedback from their group members, they should be ready to present their stories to the class and receive feedback from the teacher. This could be set up in any of the following ways:

1. Set aside two or three lessons for the story presentations.
2. Ask a few students to share their stories at the beginning of each lesson until all of the students in the class have had a chance to present.
3. Schedule each group to come and see you after school to present their stories in small groups.

Assessment Form 3.2 can be used to assess students and give feedback on their storytelling presentations.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Storytelling Skills**

	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	Score
<b>A. Familiarity with the Story</b>	The storyteller does not seem to know the story very well. <input type="checkbox"/>	The storyteller knows the story but does not present the characters, setting and plot very well. <input type="checkbox"/>	The storyteller knows the story and does a good job presenting the characters, setting and plot. <input type="checkbox"/>	The storyteller knows the story very well and does a very good job presenting the characters, setting and plot. <input type="checkbox"/>	/20
<b>B. Vocabulary and Grammar</b>	The storyteller uses a limited range of vocabulary and makes frequent errors in grammar. <input type="checkbox"/>	The storyteller uses a basic range of vocabulary and makes some errors in grammar. <input type="checkbox"/>	The storyteller uses a good range of vocabulary and makes a few errors in grammar. <input type="checkbox"/>	The storyteller uses a wide range of vocabulary and makes few or no errors in grammar. <input type="checkbox"/>	/20
<b>C. Pronunciation and Fluency</b>	The storyteller is not very fluent or intelligible due to frequent errors in pronunciation, intonation and stress. <input type="checkbox"/>	The storyteller is not very fluent but is intelligible, making some errors in pronunciation, intonation and stress. <input type="checkbox"/>	The storyteller is quite fluent and intelligible, with good pronunciation, intonation and stress. <input type="checkbox"/>	The storyteller is very fluent and intelligible, with very good pronunciation, intonation and stress. <input type="checkbox"/>	/20
<b>D. Vocal Expression</b>	The storyteller speaks with little or no expression and does not vary the voice for different characters. <input type="checkbox"/>	The storyteller speaks with some expression, but does not vary the voice much for different characters. <input type="checkbox"/>	The storyteller speaks quite expressively, using different voices for different characters. <input type="checkbox"/>	The storyteller speaks very expressively, using different voices for different characters. <input type="checkbox"/>	/20
<b>E. Body Language</b>	The storyteller uses little or no eye contact, facial expression or body language to engage the audience. <input type="checkbox"/>	The storyteller does not use eye contact, facial expression or body language very effectively to engage the audience. <input type="checkbox"/>	The storyteller uses eye contact, facial expression and body language quite effectively to engage the audience. <input type="checkbox"/>	The storyteller uses eye contact, facial expression and body language very effectively to engage the audience. <input type="checkbox"/>	/20
<b>Total</b>					/100

NET Section, CDI, EDB, HKSAR Assessment Form 3.2: Storytelling Skills

**Assessment Form 3.2: Storytelling Skills**

It is suggested that teachers show students the assessment form and go over the criteria with the whole class before students present their stories. Understanding the criteria will help students better prepare for their presentations.

### Storytelling Websites

Further information on storytelling can be found in the links provided on Handout 3.1.

“Your tale, sir, would cure deafness.”

William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

# The Module Story

## Performing the Module Story

Once students have had practice telling simple stories in English, they are ready to begin preparing for the oral performance of their collaboratively-written short story.

The suggested activities that follow are based on the oral component of the NET Section 'Shorts' competition, in which each group is required to read their short story aloud and record it in the form of a radio broadcast.

In the 'Shorts' competition, it is recommended that one student take the part of the storyteller and narrate the entire story from beginning to end. If there is dialogue in the story, the other students can read the spoken lines of the different characters.

In the elective module, however, the teacher may require that each student narrate one part of their group's story. For example, if there are four students in a group, the story can be cut into four roughly equal parts and each student can be the storyteller for one part. This will make it possible to assess students individually on the oral performance of the story.

The teacher can ask students to submit their 'radio broadcast' recordings on a CD for assessment and feedback. If time allows, the teacher may also ask students to perform their stories in front of the class.

## Narrating a Story

Reading a story aloud, or narrating a story, requires many of the same skills as improvised storytelling. Although the story is already written down, the narrator must know the story very well. This requires a great deal of preparation. The narrator must practise reading the story again and again until they know it almost by heart.

The narrator must use vocal expression in order to breathe life into the story. This means speaking clearly, varying the pace, pitch and volume of the voice and pausing at all the right moments for dramatic effect. It also means using different voices for the different characters that appear in the story.

When narrating a story in front of an audience, it is important for the narrator to appear relaxed and confident. Using facial expressions that match the mood of the story and small gestures that complement the story will make the performance more interesting and lively.

To really engage the audience, the narrator can pause to ask a few questions from time to time. Special actions or small props might also make the performance more entertaining.





## Rehearsing the Story

Before students record the radio broadcast of their short stories, give them time in class to practise narrating the short stories in their groups. Students can give feedback to one another using Assessment Form 3.3.

**Narrating a Story (Peer Assessment)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

Narrator's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Story: \_\_\_\_\_ Part: \_\_\_\_\_

Listen to your peer's narration. Circle the numbers in each area to indicate how well you think they've done. Write your comments below.

Criteria	Needs work	Fair	Good	Very good
1. <b>Language:</b> The narrator speaks clearly and fluently. The story is easy to understand.	1	2	3	4
2. <b>Delivery:</b> The narrator speaks with vocal expression, varying the pace, pitch and volume of the voice, and pausing for dramatic effect.	1	2	3	4

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

NET Section, CDI, EDB, HK SAR Assessment Form 3.3: Narrating a Story (Peer Assessment)

*Assessment Form 3.3: Narrating a Story (Peer Assessment)*

## Recording the Story

After students have rehearsed their short stories and received feedback from their group members, they are ready to record their stories in the Multi-media Learning Centre (MMLC).

To do this, students will need to use software that enables them to record their voices, add background music or sound effects if desired and save the audio file in WAV or MPEG format before burning the final product on to a CD. The computer technicians at the school should be able to advise students on how to produce the recording.

When recording the story, students should read and record their parts from beginning to end without stopping. If students make a mistake or are not happy with their first recording, they should start their part again from the beginning.

The CDs of the short story radio broadcast should be clearly labelled with the title of the short story and the name and student number of each member of the group. Students should submit the CDs to the teacher for assessment and feedback.

## Assessment and Feedback

Assessment Form 3.4 can be used to assess students and give feedback on their performance after they submit the CD recordings of their short story radio broadcasts.

**Short Story Radio Broadcast**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

Narrator's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Story: \_\_\_\_\_ Part: \_\_\_\_\_

	1-5	5-10	11-15	16-20	Score
<b>A. Pronunciation and Fluency</b>	The narrator is not very fluent or intelligible due to frequent errors in pronunciation, intonation and stress. <input type="checkbox"/>	The narrator is not very fluent but is intelligible, making some errors in pronunciation, intonation and stress. <input type="checkbox"/>	The narrator is quite fluent and intelligible, with good pronunciation, intonation and stress. <input type="checkbox"/>	The narrator is very fluent and intelligible with very good pronunciation, intonation and stress. <input type="checkbox"/>	/20
<b>B. Vocal Expression</b>	The narrator speaks with little or no expression (e.g. does not vary the voice or use pausing). <input type="checkbox"/>	The narrator speaks with some expression (e.g. does not vary the voice much or use pausing often). <input type="checkbox"/>	The narrator speaks quite expressively (e.g. sometimes varies the voice, and pauses for dramatic effect). <input type="checkbox"/>	The narrator speaks very expressively (e.g. often varies the voice, and pauses for dramatic effect). <input type="checkbox"/>	/20
<b>Total</b>					/40

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

NET (Section, CD), EDB, HKSAR Assessment Form 3.4: Short Story Radio Broadcast

*Assessment Form 3.4: Short Story Radio Broadcast*

It is suggested that teachers show students the rubric and go over the criteria with the whole class before students record their short stories. Understanding the criteria will help students better prepare for their presentations.

"A story has its purpose and its path. It must be told correctly for it to be understood."

Marcus Sedgwick

# Using 'Clipit' Films

## What is 'Clipit'?

'Clipit' is a film-editing competition organised by the NET Section for secondary school students. Students are given a CD with several four-minute unedited clips to choose from on a variety of themes. After choosing a clip, students are required to:

- select and sequence the images using film-editing software;
- write a script based on the images;
- add voice-over narration, subtitles, sound effects and other special effects;
- add a title at the beginning and credits at the end; and
- create a three-minute 'Clipit' film.

## 'Clipit' Short Story Films

In a previous 'Clipit' competition, two of the unedited clips were based on short stories written by Adrian Tilley from his collection, *Cheung Chau Paradise and Other Stories*.

The first clip, based on the short story, 'Victim', features a young boy in secondary school who is the victim of bullying. He lives with his mother and his grandfather. The boy does not have a good relationship with his grandfather, but his grandfather can sense that something is wrong. In the end, his grandfather shows the boy some old photographs and shares his experience of being a soldier in World War II. In so doing, he gives the boy the courage and strength to stand up to the bullies.

The second clip is based on the short story, 'Number One Daughter'. It features a young girl in secondary school who feels inadequate in comparison to her elder sister, who is physically attractive and excels in music, sports and academics. The girl dreads the day that the results of the public examination will be released. She goes up to the top of a very tall building contemplating suicide. When she gets there, however, she encounters another girl around her age. They strike up a conversation and agree to meet again sometime.

When the results of the public examination are finally released, the girl learns that her results are very good and her parents are pleased with her. The story takes a strange twist in the end when she tries to get back in touch with her new friend. She realises that their meeting was not a coincidence and she learns to appreciate the possibilities that life has to offer.

"I actually think one of my strengths is my storytelling."

Quentin Tarantino

Both unedited clips are available in the Resources folder on the Resource CD.



Clip 1: based on 'Victim' by Adrian Tilley



Clip 2: based on 'Number One Daughter' by Adrian Tilley

### Student-created Films

As an alternative to giving students static images of characters and settings to frame their short stories, you can ask students to choose one of the unedited clips, write a short story based on the images and create their own 'Clipit' short story film.

Here are the procedures for creating a 'Clipit' short story film.

Students will:

- work in groups of four, select an unedited clip and decide which images to cut and how to sequence the images for the short story;
- use film editing software to cut and sequence the images, create smooth transitions between the images and add other special effects such as slow motion, fade out and freeze frame;
- plan and draft the short story based on the images in the clip and submit it to the teacher for feedback;
- revise and edit the short story, making adjustments to the images as needed;
- add a title at the beginning of the film and credits at the end;
- use film editing software to add the voice-over narration and subtitles;
- burn the film onto a disc in AVI or WAV format; and
- submit the disc to the teacher for assessment.

In the end credits, students should acknowledge themselves and anyone else who has helped them create the film.

The following student-created films from 'Clipit' are available in the Resources folder on the Resource CD:

- Untitled film by Sprindy Wong Yi-man, Sam Kok Man-chun, Ken Ho Cheuk-him and Watery Choi Chin-wa from Po Leung Kok Tang Yuk Tien College.  
(First Prize, Senior Secondary category, 'Clipit' 2010 competition.)
- 'The Precious Thing' by Hong Kiu, Tang Pui-shan, Kwan Siu-hoi, Lam Sze-wa and Wong Shing-lung from Hoi Ping Chamber of Commerce Secondary School.  
(Second Prize, Senior Secondary category, 'Clipit' 2010 competition.)

These student-created films can be shown to students as models.

Adrian Tilley's short stories, 'Victim' and 'Number One Daughter', are also available in the Resources folder on the Resource CD.

"A short story must have a single mood and every sentence must build towards it."

Edgar Allan Poe

# Appendix: The Knock at the Door

by *Stuart Mead*

1 Joey Carter was thirteen. He lived with his mother. He hadn't seen his father for a long, long time – not since he was in kindergarten. He couldn't remember his father's face very well. But, at night, he could still hear him say, "Good night, Joey. I love you."

5 Joey's mother never talked about his father. There were no photographs of him anywhere in the house. Joey didn't ask about his father, but he secretly hoped his father would return one day. He felt sure that he would.

The old house they lived in was built by Joey's grandparents. They were dead, but Joey always felt that they were still there, watching over their house and everyone who lived in it. He never told his mother about that. Maybe she'd think he was silly.

10 One stormy night, there was a telephone call. Joey's mother answered it. She listened to the other person talking. She said nothing for a while. Then she said simply, "That's right." She looked worried.



15 "I have to go out," she said. She didn't even look at Joey.

She put on her coat and her old shoes and took her umbrella.

20 As she got to the front door, she turned to face Joey. "I won't be long," she said. "I can't tell you where I'm going. Don't go outside. And don't open the door if anyone tries to get in. Promise?"

Joey nodded.

She left quickly. The door closed behind her with a bang.

25 It was all so fast – the phone call, the goodbye, the promise, the closed door. Joey didn't know what to think. He just stood in the middle of the room. All around outside, the storm was a raging beast. The rain lashed against the house and the wind howled.



30 BANG! Something hard hit the roof. Joey jumped. He sat down on the sofa and held on to the book he had been reading. It was a scary story about a dead man coming back to life and returning to his family.

The lights suddenly went out. In the darkness, the wind and rain grew louder and seemed closer.

35 Joey sat still, his heart beating fast. It made a 'thump, thump, thump' noise in his chest.

Where had his mother gone? And why? It was a very bad night to be outside. It was a bad night to be reading a scary story, too. In the story, there was also a storm, and an old house, and a young boy, and a ...

40 BANG! Again there was a loud noise on the roof. Again Joey jumped. He held the book more tightly. The wind and the rain suddenly stopped. There wasn't a sound. Just the dark night. Joey waited.

BRRRING! BRRRING!

The telephone!

45 Then it stopped, even before Joey had moved.

Then there was nothing. Just the darkness. The same darkness as in the story. Joey put the book down on the sofa, then got up and walked slowly to the window. He wanted to see if the storm really had stopped. Carefully, he opened the window and looked out. There were a few lights in the distance – other houses.

50 Again: BRRRING! BRRRING!

Joey ran to answer it.

"Hello."

Nothing.

He put the phone down.

55 BRRRING! BRRRING!





Quickly he picked it up again.

"Hello. Who's there?"

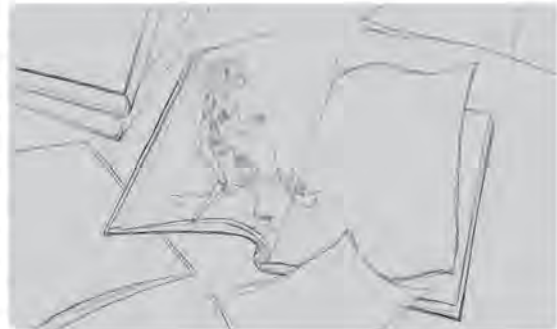
Nothing.

"Is that you, Mum?"

60 Nothing.

He put it down a second time. He waited for it to ring again. It didn't.

65 He went back to the open window. Just as he got there, a strong wind came into the house – whoosh! – blowing books, magazines and other things all over the room. The book Joey had been reading was open at the page where there was a picture of the dead man who had returned on a stormy night.



70 Joey rushed to close the window. The wind was strong! He had to work hard to stand up. Then the rain came back. The wind blew the rain through the window. The rain was cold – like death – and it felt angry.

As he closed the window, he got totally wet. What would mum think? "Get some dry clothes," he said to himself. As he passed the telephone, it rang again.

75 BRRRING! BRRRING!

When he put out his hand to pick it up, it stopped.

Then, with a 'click!' the lights came back on.

"Good!" Joey thought.

Then the lights went off again.

80 The BANG! on the roof again.

The BRRRING! BRRRING! again.

Then there were three knocks on the front door.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

“Mum!” Joey thought immediately. “But why doesn’t she come in? She has a key.”

- 85 Joey walked slowly and silently to the door. He put his ear up close to the door to listen.

Nothing.

He waited some more.

Nothing.

- 90 Then, all of a sudden, came the three knocks on the door again. They were loud, as if made by a man.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

Joey jumped back.

“Mum! Is that you?” he called out hopefully.

- 95 There was no answer from the person at the door.

He stepped forward, reaching for the door. His hand was shaking and his mouth was dry.



- 100 “Don’t open it! It’s him!” came a shout from behind him.

Joey’s heart almost stopped. He turned around. His mother was running across the room towards him. She must have come in through the back door.

“Who?” he asked.

“It’s him! It’s him!” I’m sure it’s him!” his mother shouted.

- 105 Her clothes were wet, and her long, wet hair fell across her face. Joey thought she

looked a bit crazy – or very scared.

“I told him you were alone. And I told you not to let anyone in. Oh, where is it? Where did I put it? He can’t come in yet. Not until...”

She stopped suddenly.

110 Joey looked at her, not understanding, but becoming more afraid.

“What’s happening? Who is it?” he asked.

Again there were three loud knocks on the door.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

It was like the dead man in the story – trying to get into the house.

115 Joey’s mother screamed, “No, no, no!”

Joey started screaming, “What? What? What?”

“Got it!” she shouted, holding up her hand with something in it.

Joey couldn’t see what she was holding. The room was too dark.

“Open the door!” she shouted.

120 “No!” Joey shouted. “It’s him!”

“I know it’s him!” his mother replied. “We have to let him in.”

“No, we don’t!” Joey said.

“He has to come in,” his mother said firmly.

“No, he doesn’t! He has to stay outside!” Joey said.

125 He was thinking about the man in the story. He knew it was him!

“Let him in!” his mother said. “I have it now.”

“Have what?” Joey asked.

“The money,” she answered.

“What money?” he said.

130 “The money for the pizza,” she explained.

Very slowly, Joey opened the door.

“Seafood pizza?” asked a very wet and very cold young man.

.....

That night, Joey and his mother sat in their dark house and ate pizza for dinner. While they were eating, someone knocked at the door.

135 KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!