



An Introduction to Short Story

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WHAT IS A SHORT STORY?

- It is a prose narrative that usually ranges between one thousand and twelve thousand words.
- Also , it is a type of writing that is shorter than a novel.
- The short prose fiction is nearly as old as language itself such as the epic of Gilgamesh, Beowulf and Roman myths.

THE ELEMENTS OF SHORT STORIES

- The **setting** of a short story is often simplified (one time and place).
- One or two **main characters**.
- Short stories typically focus on a **single plot** instead of multiple subplots, as in the novels. Some stories follow a traditional narrative arc, with exposition(description) at the beginning, rising action, a climax (peak moment of conflict or action), and a resolution at the end. However, contemporary short fiction is more likely to begin in the middle of the action, drawing readers right into a dramatic scene.
- While short stories of the past often revolved around a **central theme or moral lesson**, today it is common to find stories with an ambiguous endings. This type of unresolved story invites open-ended readings and suggests a more complex understanding of reality and human behavior.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SHORT STORIES AND NOVELS

1- **Length**: The short story is shorter than the novel. It doesn't exceed 15000 words which can be read in one sitting unlike the novel that is bulky and demands a long time to accomplish.

2- **Characters**: the novel employs a large number of characters to be able to cover all its events while the short story employs a fewer number of characters.

3. **Setting**: The setting in a short story is limited, unlike in a novel, which is detailed. In a novel, the writer can portray many places and describe the atmosphere of the setting and the events in detail, but in a short story, the writer has limited scope to describe either the time or the place.

4- **Conflict**: the conflict in the novel is wider and completely described whereas the short story conflict is hinted rather than explained.

THE HISTORY OF THE SHORT STORY

- Short-form storytelling can be traced back to ancient legends, mythology, folklore, and fables found in communities all over the world. Some of these stories existed in written form, but many ~~were~~ passed down through oral traditions. By the 14th century, the most well-known stories included *One Thousand and One Nights* (Middle Eastern folk tales by multiple authors, later known as *Arabian Nights*) and *Canterbury Tales* (by Geoffrey Chaucer).
- It wasn't until the early 19th century that short story collections by individual authors appeared more regularly in print. First, it was the publication of the *Brothers Grimm's* fairy tales, then *Edgar Allan Poe's* Gothic fiction, and eventually, stories by *Anton Chekhov*, who is often credited as a founder of the modern short story.
- The popularity of short stories grew along with the surge of *print magazine and journals*. Newspaper and magazine editors began publishing stories as entertainment, creating a demand for short, plot-driven narratives with mass appeal

QUESTION TO PONDER ON

- what is the difference between a traditional and a modern short story ?



THE END

