

Creative Writing

Mr. Monsen

Flash Fiction

Directions: Follow steps 1-13 below to complete the assignment. All work should be done in your notebook first and then typed.

Step 1: Read and **copy** the definition of Flash Fiction below into your notebook:

Flash Fiction is a genre of fiction, defined as a very short story (usually 500 words or less).

Step 2: Brainstorm ideas by following the five steps below::

- 1) Write down five ideas you have for a story.
- 2) Rank those ideas from 1-5, with #1 being the best/most interesting idea to you.
- 3) Now write about the # 5 idea on your list for five minutes. Don't think too much; just write whatever comes to your mind about the idea.
- 4) Next, write about the # 3 idea on your list for five minutes. Don't think too much; just write whatever comes to your mind about the idea.
- 5) Lastly, write about the # 1 idea on your list for five minutes. Don't think too much; just write whatever comes to your mind about the idea.

Step 3: Read the sample Flash Fiction piece on the next page.



Zero to Sixty

By John Ritchie

He looked over the edge and jumped. The force of the warm wind quickly rushed past his gray beard and wrinkled face, hugging his ears and creating a vacuum of silence where all he could hear now were his thoughts.

As he plunged towards the ground, he realized he forgot to close the Smith account before lunch like he promised himself he would do. These days remembering to do anything was a chore, as was life itself. Descending past the sixtieth floor he began to long for those days of the past where everything was simpler.

“Where has the time gone,” he began to think to himself. His fortieth birthday party was a blast, a bit more subdued than the prior parties, but still fun. The face of a man in his prime, but beginning to age with stress, eyed the ground below that approached rapidly.

Money, house, wife, children. Life couldn’t be better. These are the things we dream of, but can’t appreciate because we lose focus, don’t have time, even lose desire. The fresh faced thirty year old looked as confident as he felt, even as he rushed past the thirtieth floor at an alarming rate.

A smile washed over his relaxed young face when thinking about all the fun of college. Being on your own was such a thrill. Meeting new people, going to parties, every day was a new adventure. These are the things we remember in life. Now the image of the ground became clearer as he rushed past the twentieth floor.

The look of uncertainty grew on the pimpled face boy as he approached the fifteenth floor and remembered all the ups and downs of high school. Things seemed so complicated then, but only now did he realize how simple life really was after reflecting back on those times years later.

The cracked and gum stained sidewalk was in full view now and closer than he could have imagined. The young boy flashed a look of appreciation for all he had, no matter how simple. Funny thing was, it was too late; it was over. Impact.

Word Count: 390 words

Step 4: Read the “Five Elements of Flash Fiction” below:

Five Elements of Powerful Flash Fiction

Brevity — Flash fiction tells a complete story in 500 words or less. Some contests require even fewer words. With the surging popularity of Twitter, some writers have now exchanged word counts for 140 characters.

Character — All fiction requires characters, or at least some sort of presence through which the story is told. The reader identifies with the characters in a story. In flash fiction, characters have little time to be developed and described, so you must make the most of your opportunities. Show them in action. Describe the little details that bring the character to life in the reader’s mind.

Surprise Endings — Flash fiction is famous for its twist endings which often surprise or shock the reader. Think of a punch line to a joke as a good example of this.

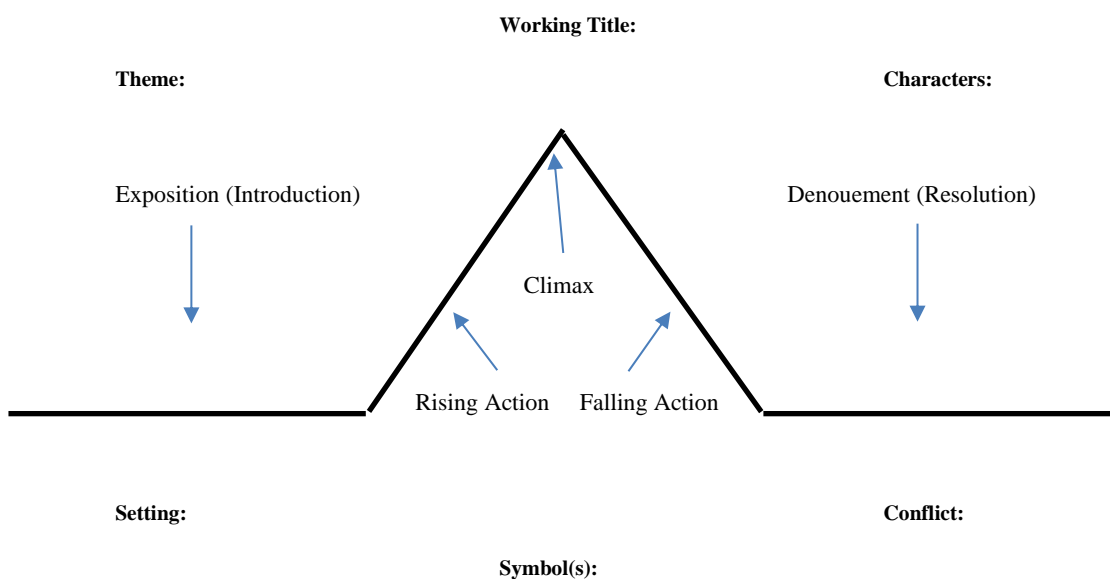
Rich Language — Flash fiction exists somewhere between the realms of poetry and short story and uses poetic language to weave the tale efficiently. The format is fluid, allowing the writer to experiment and play with words and form.

Change — Even though flash fiction doesn't have a lot of words, a lot of action is packed into each story. Something has to happen during the course of the story

Step 5: Complete the Freytag's Pyramid (plot line) using the directions below:

Directions for Completing Freytag's Pyramid - Copy the Freytag's Pyramid (a.k.a. plot diagram) below into your notebook and fill it in with one of your Flash Fiction story ideas. Be sure to complete each section that accompanies it. For example, under the "Characters" section, you would put potential names and descriptions for each character in your story. For the "Theme" section, you would write what your theme for the story is. Do this until the entire chart is complete with information about your story. You have the entire period to work on this.

Freytag's Pyramid



Step 6: Copy the “Writing Effective Leads” notes below into your notebook and then write two different versions of a lead for your chosen topic:

Writing Effective Leads:

An Effective Lead (beginning) will draw the reader in so they want to read more of your writing piece. There are five major techniques that writers use to do this. They are self-explanatory.

Effective Leads

- 1) THE DRAMATIC LEAD
- 2) STARTING IN THE MIDDLE OF A SCENE
- 3) BEGINNING AT THE ENDING
- 4) INTRODUCING THE NARRATOR
- 5) KEEP ‘EM GUESSING

Step 7: Copy the “Five Simple Rules for DIALOGUE” notes below into your notebook and then try to add some dialogue to your piece.

Five Simple Rules for DIALOGUE

Dialogue should do one, if not all, of the following:

1. Reveal characters’ relationships to one another.
2. Move the story forward.
3. Increase the tension.
4. Start a new paragraph for each new speaker.
5. Use speaker tags to reveal who is speaking (i.e. He said, Stephanie exclaimed as she left the room).

***Sometimes speaker tags can be left out altogether to increase the pace of the conversation.

Step 8: Copy the “Show, Don’t Tell” notes below into your notebook and then try to use this skill in your piece.

Show, Don’t Tell

When you **Show, Don’t Tell**, you create an image for the reader with words, instead of just telling the reader what is happening. Use senses – sight, sound, smell, taste, touch – to do this. Instead of saying “It was cold”, say “Mary shivered as she touched the ice-covered window”. That gives an image of it being cold and makes the reader think more and become engaged in the story.

Excerpt One: (this excerpt doesn’t really show, but instead tells)

The morning I was to receive my package, I went downstairs and watched television. I thought about how excited I was as I ate breakfast. I wondered what my best friend had bought for me in South America and decided that I would call her as soon as I received the package. I was really looking forward to her return to the United States. I thought about all the things we would do together once she returned. All of a sudden, the doorbell rang, and I went to the door. I opened the door and looked outside.

Excerpt Two: (this excerpt shows better by using imagery)

The morning I was to receive my package, I bounded down the stairs and flipped on the kitchen television. After I grabbed a bagel and settled down in my favorite chair, my mind began to race. “What did she send me?” I wondered aloud. I pictured the possible contents of the package: a bag of aromatic South American coffee beans, colorful pottery crafted by villagers, or perhaps a brilliant, hand-woven tapestry. I grabbed my cell phone off the counter so that I could call Sarah the instant I received the package. When I glanced over at a picture of us at our favorite restaurant, I smiled. I couldn’t wait to visit Moe’s Eatery with her again when she returned to the United States. The doorbell chimed, and I sat straight up in my chair. It was here! I shoved my chair away from the table and raced to the door, nearly tripping over my dog. I flung open the door and stuck my head outside. “Where do I sign?” I nearly shouted.

Step 9: Copy the “Effective Titles” notes below into your notebook and then write down three different potential titles for your piece.

Effective Titles

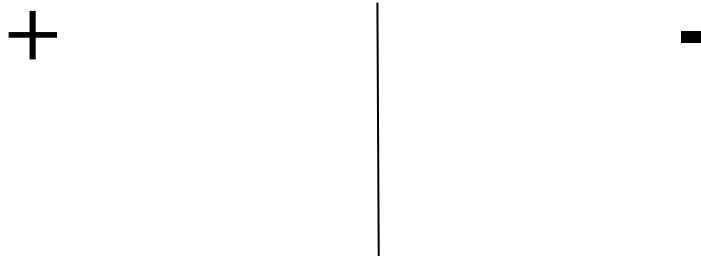
A good title can do several things for a writing piece:

- a title can encourage a person to read a writing piece
- a title can make a writing piece more memorable
- a title can help a reader predict the content of a writing piece

How To Make Your Title Effective

- Make it reflect the theme
- Make it be “mysterious”, but not too vague
- Make it relatable
- Don’t use clichés
- Be original
- Make it memorable

Step 10: Copy the +/- chart below into your notebook. *Use the directions below the chart to revise your Flash Fiction piece.*



Directions for revising your Flash Fiction: Write down all the things that you think are good about your Flash Fiction piece in the + column and all the things that you think need work in the – column. Then, answer the questions below.

What is the best part about this writing piece?

Which part of this piece could use improvement?

Did you notice any mistakes that were made frequently throughout the writing piece?

Are there any skills I used that really helped the piece? Or are there any that were missed that would help the piece? *See the list of skills we learned for this piece below:*

Use the skills below in your Flash Fiction piece

- Using Freytag's Pyramid
- Effective Leads
- Effective Dialogue
- Show, Don't Tell
- Effective Titles

Step 11: Write the rough draft of your Flash Fiction piece in your notebook.

Step 12: Proofread the Rough Draft of your Flash Fiction piece.

Step 13: Type up the Final Copy of your Flash Fiction piece and submit it to Google Classroom by the deadline on the calendar.