

SHORT STORY

FOR SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
COLLEGE OF BASIC EDUCATION

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◆ Kinds of prose :

- 1- Fiction
- 2- The novel
- 3- The short story
- 4- Composition
- 5- Essay
- 6- Biography
- 13 - Sermon
- 7- History
- 8- Criticism
- 9- Journal
- 10 - Letters
- 11 - Philosophy
- 12 - Speech

◆ A short story is an invented narrative/prose, like the novel but brief. It deals with few characters and events. It aims at the unity of effect, that's why it concentrates on mood rather than plot.

What are the oldest forms of storytelling?

They are epic, for example 'Beowulf' and drama, for example *Macbeth* and a third long form is the novel.

What are the main characteristics of the classic style of the short story?

1. It is limited to a single series of events.
2. It introduces one main character or at most two.
3. It establishes a dominant mood (sad/happy/mysterious...etc.), because the events are limited.
4. The writer pictures life realistically and introduces economic, social and moral problems.

Who is the prominent story teller or writer?

One of the greatest story writers is Somerset Maugham. He is a story writer of the highest rank, because his stories are written with skill and craftsmanship.

ELEMENTS OF THE SHORT STORY

1. Plot

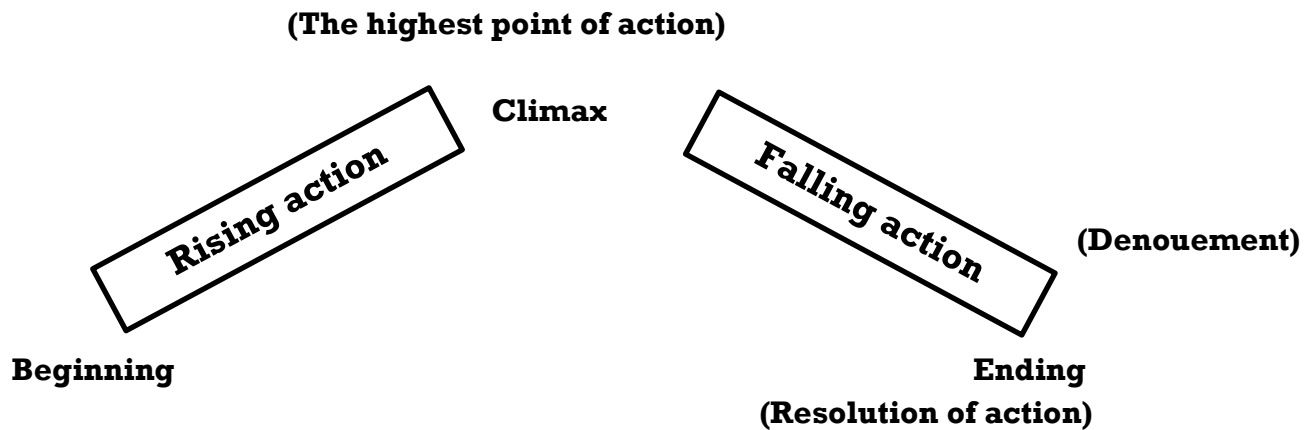
It is a sequence of related events. It is one of the most basic elements of the short story.

2. Conflict

It is a physical contest between the main character and another character, (two opposing) characters or groups of characters or it may be a moral struggle between the central character and a universal force or power like fate, nature or an institution in society like law, the educational system or the bourgeoisie (Middle class).

3. Development and Movement of Action

The plot could be illustrated in a diagram as follows:



4. Characters

A character is the agent that acts and achieves the action.

Characters are of two types:

1. Active

It develops and undergoes a significant moral and spiritual transformation in personality and ideas.

2. Static (passive character)

It remains the same without an increase in awareness or change in character.

5. Theme

It is the idea that the author of the story wants to communicate.

6. Narration

It is the act of telling a story. The story is usually told from the point of view of the major character (the central character) or a minor character. The first person pronoun (I) or the third person pronouns are used in this respect.

The Open Window

H. H. Munro (Saki)

"My aunt will be down presently, Mr. Nuttel," said a very self-possessed young lady of fifteen; "in the meantime you must try and put up with me." Framton Nuttel endeavoured to say the correct something which should duly flatter the niece of the moment without unduly discounting the aunt 2 that was to come. Privately he doubted more than ever whether these formal visits on a succession of total strangers would do much towards helping the nerve cure which he was supposed to be undergoing. "I know how it will be," his sister had said when he was preparing to migrate to this rural retreat; "you will bury yourself down there and not speak to a living soul, and your nerves will be worse than ever from moping. I shall just give you letters of introduction to all the people I know there. Some of them, as far as I can remember, were quite nice." Framton wondered whether Mrs. Sappleton, the lady to whom he was presenting one of the letters of introduction came into the nice division. "Do you know many of the people round here?" asked the niece, when she judged that they had had sufficient silent communion. "Hardly a soul," said Framton. "My sister was staying here, at the rectory, you know, some four years ago, and she gave me letters of introduction to some of the people here." He made the last statement in a tone of distinct regret. "Then you know practically nothing about my aunt?" pursued the selfpossessed young lady. "Only her name and address," admitted the caller. He was wondering whether Mrs. Sappleton was in the married or widowed state. An undefinable something about the room seemed to suggest masculine habitation. "Her great tragedy happened just three years ago," said the child; "that would be since your sister's time." "Her tragedy?" asked Framton; somehow in this restful country spot tragedies seemed out of place. "You may wonder why we keep that window wide open on an October afternoon," said the niece, indicating a large French window that opened on to a lawn. "It is quite warm for the time of the year," said Framton; "but has that window got anything to do with the tragedy?" "Out through that window, three years ago to a day, her husband and her two young brothers went off for their day's shooting. They never came back. In crossing the moor to their favourite snipe-shooting ground they were all three engulfed in a treacherous piece of bog. It had been that 3 dreadful wet summer, you know, and places that were safe in other years gave way suddenly without warning. Their bodies were never recovered. That was the dreadful part of it." Here the child's voice lost its self-possessed note and became falteringly human. "Poor aunt always thinks that they will come back someday, they and the little brown spaniel that was lost with them, and walk in at that window just as they used to do. That is why the window is kept open every evening till it is quite dusk. Poor dear aunt, she has often told me how they went out, her husband with his white waterproof coat over his arm, and Ronnie, her youngest brother, singing 'Bertie, why do you bound?' as he

always did to tease her, because she said it got on her nerves. Do you know, sometimes on still, quiet evenings like this, I almost get a creepy feeling that they will all walk in through that window - " She broke off with a little shudder. It was a relief to Framton when the aunt bustled into the room with a whirl of apologies for being late in making her appearance. "I hope Vera has been amusing you?" she said. "She has been very interesting," said Framton. "I hope you don't mind the open window," said Mrs. Sappleton briskly; "my husband and brothers will be home directly from shooting, and they always come in this way. They've been out for snipe in the marshes today, so they'll make a fine mess over my poor carpets. So like you menfolk, isn't it?" She rattled on cheerfully about the shooting and the scarcity of birds, and the prospects for duck in the winter. To Framton it was all purely horrible. He made a desperate but only partially successful effort to turn the talk on to a less ghastly topic, he was conscious that his hostess was giving him only a fragment of her attention, and her eyes were constantly straying past him to the open window and the lawn beyond. It was certainly an unfortunate coincidence that he should have paid his visit on this tragic anniversary. "The doctors agree in ordering me complete rest, an absence of mental excitement, and avoidance of anything in the nature of violent physical exercise," announced Framton, who laboured under the tolerably widespread delusion that total strangers and chance acquaintances are hungry for the least detail of one's ailments and infirmities, their cause and cure. "On the matter of diet they are not so much in agreement," he continued. 4 "No?" said Mrs. Sappleton, in a voice which only replaced a yawn at the last moment. Then she suddenly brightened into alert attention - but not to what Framton was saying. "Here they are at last!" she cried. "Just in time for tea, and don't they look as if they were muddy up to the eyes!" Framton shivered slightly and turned towards the niece with a look intended to convey sympathetic comprehension. The child was staring out through the open window with a dazed horror in her eyes. In a chill shock of nameless fear Framton swung round in his seat and looked in the same direction. In the deepening twilight three figures were walking across the lawn towards the window, they all carried guns under their arms, and one of them was additionally burdened with a white coat hung over his shoulders. A tired brown spaniel kept close at their heels. Noiselessly they neared the house, and then a hoarse young voice chanted out of the dusk: "I said, Bertie, why do you bound?" Framton grabbed wildly at his stick and hat; the hall door, the gravel drive, and the front gate were dimly noted stages in his headlong retreat. A cyclist coming along the road had to run into the hedge to avoid imminent collision. "Here we are, my dear," said the bearer of the white mackintosh, coming in through the window, "fairly muddy, but most of it's dry. Who was that who bolted out as we came up?" "A most extraordinary man, a Mr. Nuttel," said Mrs. Sappleton; "could only talk about his illnesses, and dashed off without a word of goodbye or apology when you arrived. One would think he had seen a ghost." "I expect it was the spaniel," said the niece calmly; "he told me he had a horror of dogs. He was once hunted into a cemetery somewhere on the banks of the Ganges by a pack of pariah dogs, and had to spend the night in a newly dug grave with the creatures snarling and grinning and foaming just above him. Enough to make anyone lose their nerve." Romance at short notice was her specialty.

The Open Window by Saki

Glossary

1	Endeavour	attempt to do something
2	Sufficient	enough
3	Letters of introduction	A polite social interaction in which people introduce themselves
4	Rectory	A priest or Pastor's house, owned by the Church
5	Caller	visitor
6	Habitation	the state or process of living in a place
7	Moor	open land for shooting
8	Snipe	type of bird found in marshes and wet meadows
9	Engulf	surround or cover completely
10	Treacherous	dangerous, often because something is hidden
11	Bog	wet, muddy ground
12	Falteringly	hesitantly; unsteadily

13	Shudder	Shake or shiver out of fear
14	briskly	quickly
15	Fragment	a small part
16	Ailment	minor illness
17	Infirmity	physical or mental weakness
18	desperate	hopeless
19	Imminent	about to happen
20	Ganges River	river in northern India and Bangladesh. Considered sacred by Hindus.
21	French windows	a pair of floor-to-ceiling windows that open like doors
22	hungry	long to
23	delusion	false belief
24	Pariah dogs	Stray dogs
25	Romance	Making up stories

★ Who is Saki?

Saki is the pen name of Hector Hugh Munro, or H.H. Munro, a British writer known mostly for his short stories. Saki was born in Burma in (1870) and died in (1916).

PLOT

Mr. Nuttle suffers a nervous condition and has come to a village as the doctor prescribed. His sister sets up introductions for him with a few members of the community as she used to live there for some time in a rectory. His first visit is to the Sappleton family where he meets Vera, Mrs. Sappleton's young niece. The self-possessed girl keeps Nuttle company while he waits for the lady of the house Vera provides Nuttle with information about the family knowing that Nuttle knows no one in the Sappleton's family.

Vera informs Nuttle that three years ago, while going shooting Snipes, Mr. Sappleton and Mrs. Sappleton's brother drowned in the marshes. Vera describes these men's' clothes, behavior and the dog that accompanied them. She gives this information as an explanation for the window that is kept open at this time of the year, because the grief-stricken lady is still expecting their return.

Coming downstairs, Mrs. Sappleton tells Nuttle that she expects her husband and brother's arrival from hunting any minute. Nuttle listens to her, thinking that she is crazy. Suddenly, Mr. Nuttle shudders with fear as she tells him that they have returned from hunting. He looks at Vera who looks as if she had seen a ghost. He turns to look at the open window which he sat opposite to, to see the 'dead men' approaching the house. He rushes out of the house with fear without a word. Mr, Mrs. Sappleton, and the brother do not understand the strange behavior of Mr. Nuttle, but Vera explains the reason for his behavior, that he is dead afraid from dogs as he spent a whole night in a cemetery with wild dogs. Not until the end of the story, the reader comes to know that Vera has tricked everybody, because 'Romance at short notice is her specialty', which reveals the theme of the story and unveils the character Vera.

Major Characters

Vera and Mr. Nuttle

Minor Characters

Mrs.Sappleton, Mr. Sappleton, (Ronnie) the brother, and sister

Themes

1. Appearance & reality

What appears true to Nuttle is not real to Sappleton and what appears true to Sappleton is not real to Nuttle.

2. Deception

Without this, the story would not have happened. Vera deceived everyone in the story.

3. Wit

Being clever and witty, Vera had the ability to convince every member of her story.

4. Fertile imagination

Vera has a fertile imagination, which enabled her make stories/romances at short notice.

✦ Literary devices :

1. **Irony** : An example of irony is when Vera says that a “great tragedy” happened to her aunt . This kind of irony is called “verbal irony” because the story told by Vera is not true and the truth is there is no tragedy at all since the hunters are alive .
2. **Contrast** : can be seen between Vera and Nuttel . Vera is self-possessed and confident girl of fifteen while Nuttel is a confused character with a weak personality .
3. **Symbolism** : the most important symbol in the Open Window Story is the open window itself. It is a symbol of the aunt's hope that her husband and brothers will return and a symbol of Vera's expansive imagination. Vera uses the window as a means to escape the boring, adult world and reimagine a more fantastical reality.

The use of Irony in Saki's 'The Open Window'

Definition

Irony is the use of words to convey a meaning that is opposite of what is actually said.

Types of irony with examples from 'The Open Window':

1. Verbal Irony: What is said is different from what is real.

Example 1 - is found in your text book.

Example 2 - the name Vera means 'truth' in Slavic (Russian), while Vera is a liar in the story.

2. Situational Irony: a contrast between expectation and reality.

Example 1 – is that Mr. Nuttle has visited the Sappletons to treat his nervous condition/to calm, but instead he has become even worse after meeting Vera.

Example 2 – Mr. Nuttle misunderstands Mrs. Sappleton and the hunting gang, and they misunderstand him, however, the only one who knows the truth is the liar-Vera.

3. Dramatic Irony: The audience knows something that the characters don't know about.

Example 1 – Mrs. Sappleton waits for the hunters to come home. This is dramatic irony, because at this point what the reader knows is that they are dead.

Example 2 – The reader finds out that Vera has tricked everybody at the end of the story, while all other characters don't know.

Definition Of Symbolism

When something represents something else or idea like a flag represents a country. Examples are found in your text book.

Questions

1. Who are the protagonist and the antagonist of the story?

Framton Nuttle, an anxious young man who goes to the country to settle his nerves and ends up more anxious is the protagonist. Vera, a young girl, Mrs. Sappleton's niece who tricked Mr. Nuttle and other family members is the antagonist.

2. Describe Vera

A fifteen-year old girl. She is the niece of Mrs. Sappleton. She seems to enjoy tricking people and getting a reaction out of them.

3. What lies does Vera tell?

1. She tells Nuttle that her uncle and his two brothers (and dog) go hunting and they are sucked into the bog. They leave the window open hoping they will return after 3 years.

2. She told her aunt that Framton was scared to death of dogs and ran away, because of the hunting spaniel. Vera claimed that he was hunted by dogs in a cemetery and spent the night in a cave with them snarling at him.

4. Who is the narrator (point of view)?

The narrator is 3rd person (omniscient/knowing all). The story teller is not one of the characters, but knows everything.

5. How does the 3rd person narrator affect the outcome of the story?

Even the reader gets tricked like Nuttle.

6. What might have been different if Framton were the narrator?

We would have never known that Vera was tricking him. We found this out after Framton ran off.

7. Where is the climax in the story?

Climax occurs when Nuttle looks at Vera who is shocked with fear and then the dénouement when Nuttle runs out of the house.

8. What is the conflict?

Framton tries to settle his nerves by visiting the country. He gets tricked by Vera and ends up more of a nervous wreck.

9- Who said that and to whom "My aunt will be down presently"?

Self-possessed young lady of fifteen is called Vera , and she said that to Mr. Nuttel.

10- What did Mr. Nuttel doubt privately?

He doubted more than ever whether these formal visits on strangers would do much towards helping the nerve cure

11- What had Mr. Nuttel sister's said when he was preparing to migrate to his rural retreat ?

a - You will bury yourself down there.

b- Your nerves will be worse than here

c - I shall give you a letter of introduction to all the people I know there.

12-Why did Vera say to Mr. Nuttel that "Do you know many of the people around here ?"Because she judged that they had had sufficient communion.

13- Why was Mr. Nuttel wondering whether Mrs. Sappleton was in the married or widowed state ?

Because something about the room seemed to suggest masculine habitation.

14- When did the great tragedy happen?

Three years ago

15- Where did the great tragedy happen ?

Out through that window three hunters' (Mrs. Sappleton husband's and her two young brothers) went out for their day's shooting in crossing the marches. They were all engulfed in a treacherous piece of bog and their bodies were never recovered.

16- What did Vera say to Mr.Nuttel about the reason of the opening window ?

She said to him that "My poor aunt always thinks that they will come back someday with their dog through that window as they used to do.

17- What did Mrs. Sappleton say to Mr. Nuttel?

She said "I hope you don't mind that the window is open because my husband and brothers will be home directly through it, they have been out for shooting today"

18- What did Mr. Nuttel say to Mrs. Sappleton to turn the talk onto a less ghastly topic ?

He talked about his illness and how he`s going to cure it . The doctor's agree in ordering me complete rest, an absence of mental excitement and avoidance of violent physical exercise.

19- What did Mr. Nuttel do when Mrs. Sappleton cried "here they are at least"?

He shivered slightly and turned to Vera with a comprehension look .

20-What did the hunters look like?

They all carried guns under their arms. One of them burdened himself with a white coat, another one was singing.

21- What did Mr.Nuttel do when he saw the hunters (three figures) ?

He grabbed at his stick and hat, the hall door , the gravel drive and the front gate .

22- How did Mrs. Sappletons describe Mr. Nuttel to her husband?

Extraordinary man, just talk about his illness and dashed off without a word of good-by or apology when you arrived.

23 - What did Vera say to her Aunt's about Mr. Nuttel?

She said that he had a horror of dogs. He was once hunted into a cemetery by a pack of dogs so he had to with the creatures spent the night in a newly dug grave snarling above him.

ESSAY

What is an essay?

It is analytic or interpretative literary composition usually dealing with its subject from a limited or personal point of view.

The essay is divided into two varieties:

a - The Formal Essay:

It is a piece of writing that informs or persuades its audience. In general, a formal essay is at least five paragraphs long and contains an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. It is used for the business, legal, academic or professional purpose.

b - The Informal or Personal Essay

A broad term for speech or writing marked by a casual, familiar, and generally colloquial use of language. Informal writing is one which is used for personal or casual purpose. An informal writing style is often more direct than a formal style and may rely more heavily on contractions, abbreviations, and short sentences. Examples of informal writing include: Comic books, social media posts, personal blogs and text messages.

Questions

1 - Who is the father of the English essay?

Bacon can rightly be called the father of English Essay.

When did the essay find its appropriate readers?

In the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries when the periodicals (newspapers , journals , reviews) appeared .

3 - Who is William Hazlitt (1778 – 1830)?

He is an English essayist, drama and literary critic, painter, social commentator and philosopher. His **On Going on a Journey** is regarded as a masterpiece essay on the adventure of travel and the rewards for traveling alone.

4. What does Hazlitt say about going on a journey?

One of the pleasantest things in the world is going a journey; but I like to go by myself. I can enjoy society in a room; but out of doors, nature is company enough for me.

5. What is the soul of a journey according to Hazlitt?

He says "the soul of a journey is **liberty**...to think, feel, do, just as one pleases".

6. Why does the writer avoid company during a journey on going a journey?

The writer begins with praise of a journey. He expresses delight in journeying alone with nature being his only companion. He hates being in the company of fellow travelers who like to chat and worry about the world when they travel. He loves his solitude and freedom.

7. Who does Hazlitt refer to as 'my old friend' in on going a journey?

Hazlitt refers to **Samuel Taylor Coleridge** as his old friend