Narrative Writing Notes – English 8

Short stories are read for interest and most often have a point to make. It's a brief narrative with a series of related incidents carefully arranged. This is called PLOT. There is a form of CONFLICT and then an outcome in the PLOT. A short story is to entertain, it broadens and builds upon one's experience, and it promotes a better understanding of human behavior. Usually teaches a lesson.  
  
**Elements of the Short Story**  
Despite their varied content, almost all short stories have the following elements in common:  
  
I. **Setting**: time and place of a story, where and when

1. Stated-stated in the story
2. Implied-known by the context of the story
3. Time-when did the events take place
4. Place-where did the events take place
5. Introduces the first stage of plot development
6. How does setting affect character(s)
7. Usually established in the first paragraph.

II. **Conflict**: clash of ideas, struggle between opposing forces

1. One of the most important elements of stories, novels, and plays because it causes the action.
2. The main character is usually on one side of the central conflict
3. There are two types:
   1. External - character struggles with some outside force, such as:
      1. character vs. character - the character has a problem with one or more characters in the story (i.e. a fight)
      2. character vs. nature - the character has some problem caused by nature (i.e. swimmer against the current, the cold, a storm)
      3. character vs. society - the character has a problem with part of society (i.e. government, school, tradition)
      4. character vs. fate – the character has a problem with the force such as fate, look, or God.
   2. Internal - takes place within the mind of a character, the character struggles to make a decision, take an action, or overcome a feeling
      1. character vs. self -the character has a physical problem or inner mental or emotional problem

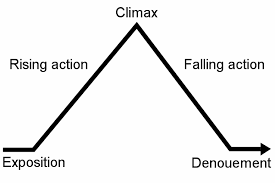
III. **Plot**: action of the story, what happens

1. chronological - in the order of occurrence
2. flashback - entire story ships back in time, new setting
3. nonlinear - does not follow a time, not chronological

Plot pyramid:

This is a visual representation of the typical structure of the story. "Plot is not a rule but a convention: it is the baseline upon which the author plays with our expectations." – Ron Block.

1. Exposition: the part of the story giving background information. Before the narrative begins, the reader is usually told a little about the setting and the characters.
2. Inciting movement: the event which introduces the conflict and sets the plot in motion beginning the narrative.
3. Rising action: the part of the plot in which opposing forces come into conflict and action becomes complex.
4. Climax: turning point in the plot, where the rising action becomes falling action. Before this point, the story is open ended, but afterwards the plot inevitably moves toward the resolution.
5. Falling action: the part of the plot in which complications are untied. Often brief and short stories.
6. Resolution: the final part of a story that makes clear the outcome of the conflict. In stories was surprise or shocking endings, this is often only a line or two. Also called denouement.



IV. **Characterization**: development of characters.

1. Round.
   1. Fully developed.
   2. Exhibits many traits. Both faults and virtues. (Strength/flaw)
2. Flat.
   1. Two dimensional.
   2. Often represents a single trait.
3. Stereotype/stock. Represents an established group
4. Dynamic.
   1. Changes or grows.
   2. Includes protagonists..
5. Static.
   1. Doesn't change,
   2. Leaves the plot as they entered it, largely untouched by the events of the work
   3. Tend to be minor characters.
6. Protagonist - main character, hero, good guy.
7. Antagonist - villain, bad guy.
8. May use dialogue

V. **Point of view (POV)**: position of the narrator, who tells the story.

A. Be consistent

B. First person - I, me, we, us.

C. Second person - you seldom used.

D. Third person - he, she, they, him, her, them

* 1. Omniscient - narrator reveals the thoughts and feelings of multiple characters.
  2. Limited - Narrator only reveals the thoughts of the main character.
  3. Dramatic-narrator only tells what can be seen, heard, or sensed externally.

VI. **Theme**: main idea, point, issue addressed.

1. While stories usually present a particular issue would often particular view about it, a number of general themes arise again and again regardless of time and place. Some of them are as follows:  
   A. Good/evil-nature of man.
2. Search for identity.
3. Man, fake, and free will.
4. Ambition/competition.
5. Man's ability to govern himself.
6. Appearance versus reality.
7. Loss of innocence (initiation)
8. Concepts of Eden and ideal life.
9. Man's relation to deity (God).
10. Sacrifice.

Additional Notes from the Rubric

* Tells a story
  + Beginning, middle, end
  + Can be fiction or non-fiction
* Elaboration
  + Contrast the character’s thinking with his/her actions or dialogue
  + Develop relationships with other characters
  + Add details that develop the lesson/theme
* Craft
  + Establish the character’s pressures/dreams
  + Use symbolism
  + Vary your tone
* 6 + 1 traits of writing
  + Ideas
    - Be sure to follow the given prompt if one is given
    - Original ideas are best
  + Organization
    - Indent new paragraphs AND every time a new character speaks
    - Beginning, middle, end
    - Transitions
  + Voice
    - Be YOU; let your personality shine
    - Use figurative language
  + Word choice
    - Use strong/power verbs (think green pages of the writer’s binder)
    - Establish mood – actions of plants/animals, weather words, color words, onomatopoeia
    - Show vs. Tell
      * Use sensory images (the 5 senses - pink pages, color words, etc.)
      * Details, details, details
  + Sentence fluency
    - Transitions
    - Begin sentences in different ways – adverb opener, prepositional opener, etc.
    - 5-10-20 vary sentence lengths
    - Should read smoothly
  + Conventions
    - Grammar
    - Punctuation
    - Spelling – do your best
  + Presentation
    - Bold
    - All CAPS
    - HOW the writing looks on the page

Update: 9-10-19

**Additional Notes:**