

# Persuasion essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Title – Elements of the Short Story

By – Melanie Marchand

Primary Subject – Language Arts

Secondary Subjects – Language Arts

Grade Level – 11-12

The Elements of the Short Story – Lesson 1

Short Story Unit Contents:

Short Story Unit Overview

Lesson 1 – Elements of the Short Story

Lesson 2 – A Ghost Story

Lesson 3 – Modern Fear and Suspense

Lesson 4 – Shirley Jackson’s The Lottery

Lesson 5 – The Most Dangerous Game

Lesson 6 – Conclusion

Culminating Activity

Purpose This lesson is the first of several which will introduce and explore the short story. The purpose of this lesson will be to introduce the short story

to students, by exploring what a short story is, and what the elements are that makes it a distinct genre.

Objectives Upon completion of this lesson students will have:

1. Discussed and demonstrated what the definition of the short story is, and its elements;
2. Established working definitions of the elements in a short story;
3. Discussed a well known fairy tale, and applied each of the elements to it;
4. Written a quiz about the elements of the short story.

#### Activities and Procedures

1. Ask the class to begin by giving some examples of what they believe to be short stories, ask them to back up their choice with what makes it a short story.
2. As a class brainstorm characteristics that define a short story, i. e. length (words), number of characters, time span, well-defined plot, etc. From this ask the class to then come up with a working definition of the short story, the short story is a piece of prose fiction, usually under 10, 000, which can be read in one sitting (handout given by Michelle Forrest).
3. Next ask the students to further examine the uniqueness of the short story by listening to the children’s story “ The Three Little Pigs”. Read aloud to class, and then ask them to point out any techniques or approaches that

they see in this story, i. e. the title, introduction, characters, setting, plot, rising action, crisis, climax, conclusion.

Introduce any of the above that are mentioned and include the rest as the elements of the short story. Pass out the handout Elements of Short Stories Notes, which can be found at:

<http://www.wathena406.k12.ks.us/clarkson/Lesson%20Plans/elemshtstrynotes.htm>

4. As a class read and discuss the elements of the short story, pay close attention to an applying the elements to “ The Three Little Pigs” story.

5. Announce that there will be a quiz on the elements in five minutes, ask them to quickly look over their handout. The quiz will be very straight forward, it will be a matching quiz, students will be given to columns, one containing definitions, the other answers, they will simple have to match them, and then give an example of where this are found in “ The Three Little Pigs”.

Homework: For next class, which is to read “ A Ghost Story” by Mark Twain.

<http://www.cardiffgiant.com/ghost.html>

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Grade Level – 11-12

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Title - A Ghost Story

By - Melanie Marchand

Primary Subject - Language Arts

Secondary Subjects - Language Arts

Grade Level - 11-12

A Ghost Story - Lesson 2

Short Story Unit Contents:

Short Story Unit Overview

Lesson 1 - Elements of the Short Story

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Lesson 6 – Conclusion

Culminating Activity

Purpose To familiarise students with the central and defining elements of the short story, through application.

Objectives Upon completion of this lesson students will have:

1. Read “ A Ghost Story” by Mark Twain;
2. Discussed the short story;
3. Demonstrated an understanding of the central elements of the short story, and be able to point them out;

Activities/Procedures

1. As a class we will read aloud Mark Twain’s “ A Ghost Story”. Students may either volunteer to read parts, or I will read the story to the class. (Create a mood, dim the lights, pull the curtains, perhaps play some dreary music in the background.)



2. Following reading the story the class will then discuss “ A Ghost Story”.

Was it scary, suspenseful, and exciting? Who was the narrator? Where did the events take place? Etc.

3. Next I will refer to the handout of the elements of a short story. The class will then break into groups, in which they will use the handout to find the elements of “ A Ghost Story”.

4. Each group will then have the opportunity to discuss their results, and support them with parts of the story. At this time I will address any further questions that arise.

Homework: Students will be asked to write one additional paragraph that might be added to “ A Ghost Story”, either in the beginning, middle, or end. The paragraph must alter one of the elements of the story in some way. This will be handed in next class.

Title – Modern Fear and Suspense

By – Melanie Marchand

Primary Subject – Language Arts

Secondary Subjects – Language Arts

Grade Level – 11-12

Modern Fear and Suspense – Lesson 3

Short Story Unit Contents:

## Short Story Unit Overview

Lesson 1 – Elements of the Short Story

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Lesson 4 – Shirley Jackson’s The Lottery

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### Culminating Activity

Overview: This lesson will be used to open the students’ interest in the contemporary short story. By using a famous author, it is hoped that the students’ appetite will be wetted sufficiently. You are unlikely to have much resistance to the use of one of King’s stories because of the popularity of his novels, short stories, and movies. Most students should already be away of King through at least one medium.

Purpose: The main thrust of this lesson is to introduce the form in a way that the student can relate to. From there the student will be able to form opinions on what makes for a successful short story in the genre of fear and suspense. The students will then be asked to relate their findings back to classic works of fear and suspense. By the end of the unit, the student should have an understanding of the format used in short stories, as well as techniques and conventions of those are the genre of fear and suspense.

## Objectives

1. Introduce King's background (i. e. age, lifestyle, education, and inspirations).
2. Read the story aloud with the students.
3. Label the components of the “ The Reapers Image” (i. e. introduction / antagonist / protagonist, inciting incident, rising action, crisis, climax, conclusion) giving specifics for each.
4. Introduce questions to be posed to groups, followed by group discussions.
5. Set-up for next lesson.

## Activities and Procedures

1. Introduction to King's background should contain connections to his style of writing.

— Born 1947 in Portland, Maine.

— Father left when he was young, leaving behind a plethora of science fiction, fantasy, and horror novels.

— Lived on the edge of poverty until he ‘ made it’ as an author.

— Inspirations: John D. MacDonald, Ed McBain, Shirley Jackson, J. R. R. Tolkien, Ken Kesey, Margaret Mitchell, Andre North, Jack London, Agatha Christie, and Thomas Hardy.

2. Read the story “ The Reaper’s Image” aloud with the students. Either read it yourself, or have the students take turns reading paragraphs. This will allow you to gauge the students’ interest in the story.

3. Lead a critical analysis of the structure and main components of the story. This should tie back to the introduction lesson on the short story and its form. Point of view, introduction , inciting incident, rising action, crisis, climax, and conclusion should all be clearly identified.

4. Break the class up into groups of 5-6. Have each group tackle one of the following questions:

— Who is the reaper in this story? Where is he seen?

— What kind of place is the Samuel Claggert Memorial Private Museum?

— Describe the characteristics of Mr. Carlin and Johnson Spangler. What kind of person is each one?

— What does the author tell us about Delver Mirrors?

— What is the significance of the statue of Adonis? (May require a bit of background given out to the group

— Do you like the ending? Give your reasons. Continue the story with an additional episode.

5. As an assignment, have the groups pass in their finding on the following day at which time they will be discussed. This will then lead into the next short story to be studied.

Introduce the culminating activity!!!!!! (See Unit Plan)

Title – Shirley Jackson, The Lottery

By – Melanie Marchand

Primary Subject – Language Arts

Secondary Subjects – Language Arts

Grade Level – 11-12

Shirley Jackson’s The Lottery – Lesson 4

Short Story Unit Contents:

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Culminating Activity

Overview – Students will read “ The Lottery” and respond to the themes of the story through small group discussion, and personal questions.

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Outcomes –

- Students will have practise in responding to themes in a short story.
- Students will be able to use prior knowledge of elements of short stories to discuss the use of suspense and drama in writing.

Procedures –

1. As a class read Jackson’s “ The Lottery”.
2. At the end of the story ask students to write down their immediate reaction to the story and after a few minutes ask for their opinions.
3. Ask the class these important questions: Why are the townspeople holding the lottery? Why don’t they stop? From here, you can talk a little about the sacrifice rituals of other cultures, making moral judgements on those cultures. Is this writing style a type of horror? What type of atmosphere does Jackson create at first, and how does that change?
4. Have the students supply the definition of a theme or image pattern in stories and novels.
5. From their thoughts and definition, ask the students if there are some themes that appear in the story. Some typical ones are evil disguised as good, prejudice and hypocrisy, minds slipping the bonds of reality (from Friedman’s analysis)
6. In small groups ask students to look at the story again and discuss how the story provides a commentary on these situations:

— How does “ The Lottery” prevent the breakdown of society in this community?

— Respond to the roles of the men and women, how the children act, and what the social and business goals are for each facet of this society.

— Sacrifice rituals operate on the principle of “ scapegoating”. After defining the term, describe how the process of “ The Lottery” uses the scapegoat and tell what end is desired. Are there any examples in our current society of using scapegoats?

— “ The Lottery” has been used to describe the emotions of people in medicine misdiagnosis cases. Draw the parallels between elements in each situation and describe how this can be true.

7. Have the class report their findings and report back to the class.

Encourage discussion and full explanations of each report.

Evaluative Assignment - Using the knowledge of plot and short story elements, write a page long response as to how Jackson creates a sense of horror from the elements of what should be an innocent story about small town America. Comment on the use of withheld knowledge, the irony that can be seen in the names of the characters, and any of the other elements discussed in class.

Homework: Read “ The Most Dangerous Game” by Richard Connell for next class.

Title - The Most Dangerous Game

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By – Melanie Marchand

Primary Subject – Language Arts

Secondary Subjects – Language Arts

Grade Level – 11-12

The Most Dangerous Game – Lesson 5

Short Story Unit Contents:

Short Story Unit Overview

Lesson 1 – Elements of the Short Story

Lesson 2 – A Ghost Story

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Lesson 6 – Conclusion

Culminating Activity

Purpose: This lesson will focus on setting and how the setting can influence the psyche of a character.

Objectives: When the students have finished this lesson, they:

1. Will be able to define setting.

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2. Will have examined different methods that authors use to instil fear in readers.

3. Will give special attention to setting = fear in a creative assignment.

Resources: Short Story, *The Most Dangerous Game*, by Richard Connell; and movie *The Blair Witch Project*, released summer 1999, or Hitchcock's *Psycho*.

Tasks:

1. Ask what made *The Most Dangerous Game* frightening, or was it at all?

2. Define setting; talk about it in relation to *The Most Dangerous Game*. Note that setting can pertain to physical surroundings as well as state of mind (psychological setting). Where is the story set (geographically)? What kind of island is it? What are the buildings like? What is the difference between this island and one like, say, Bermuda? Would the setting be scary if General Zaroff didn't live on the island? If the island were inhabited, would the story be as scary?

3. Discuss the state of mind of Rainsford before he lands on the island versus that after he meets the General. What is different? (Especially about how he perceives animal feelings.)

4. Talk about how Connell inspires fear without obvious bloodshed/grotesqueness. Hopefully, they will come up with some of the following: isolation, setting, power/powerlessness, conflict, suspense, and control/lack of control.

5. Ask why The Blair Witch Project (or Psycho, depending on which movie you choose to use) was scary. Note that the subtlety/lack of overt violence (left up to the observer’s imagination) added to the fear.

6. Draw parallels between the movie and The Most Dangerous Game.

Homework: If you were going to direct the movie The Most Dangerous Game, how would you do it? You are going to pitch your idea to a big-shot Hollywood producer who will decide if they will fund your movie. If they agree to make the movie, you will have an unlimited budget. Pay particular attention to setting. How would you make it as frightening as possible? Who would you cast in the roles? Where would you shoot it? How would you shoot it? Would you have it narrated or would you just have it acted out? Pitch your idea to me on audiotape and hand it in next class

Title – Conclusion

By – Melanie Marchand

Primary Subject – Language Arts

Secondary Subjects – Language Arts

Grade Level – 11-12

Conclusion – Lesson 6

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Culminating Activity

Overview: This is the final lesson of the unit and this time should be used to bring a sense of closure to the previous stories and concepts that have been introduced – the parts of the short story and the use of suspense/horror in writing – in keeping with the build up to Halloween.

Outcomes:

- Students will be able to identify the various ways in which writers use suspense to create an atmosphere for the writing.
- Students will be able to discuss the different aspects of short stories as discussed and featured in previous lessons.
- Students will be able to apply their knowledge in the continuation in preparation for their cumulative activity.

Procedures:

1. Take a moment to review the titles and plots of the stories previously discussed in class by placing the information on a chart or on the board. The key concepts might also be placed there in parenthesis (i. e. narrative voice, suspense, parts of the story, etc.)

2. Ask the students from a crafting viewpoint, which story do they feel drew best on the elements of suspense, horror, form/structure, etc., and why.

3. Alternately, ask if there were any of the aspects that they did not see well demonstrated in each of the various stories:

— Did an element of horror appear in the opening “ Three Little Pigs” story?

— What made the style of Mark Twain different from that of Stephen King?

How did a psychological element come into play in the Jackson, or the Connell? Which worked better, in your opinion?

— How is the structure of the story manipulated so that suspense is capitalised?

4. Use class time to work on the culminating activity. Students should be encouraged to use their peers as editors and critiques for the design of their “ sequel” to match style, monitor pacing, and form final editing ideas. If desired, a small part of the mark could be given for the editorial participation.

Title – Culminating Activity

By – Melanie Marchand

Primary Subject – Language Arts

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Culminating Activity

by Jay Phillips

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Culminating Activity

Overview: This is the culminating activity of the unit. It is linked to lesson three, ‘ Modern Fear and Suspense – Stephen King’s “ The Reaper’s Image”’. The activity requires the students to come up with a short story detailing the events that led to one of the follow incidents with the Delver mirror: 1) during the school tour, when Sandra Bates brother saw the reaper’s image;  
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2) during the party that the English Duchess was attending in 1709; or, 3) during the evening in 1746, when the Pennsylvania rug merchant first acquired the mirror.

Motivation: This activity will test the students' knowledge of the short story (i. e. format, development, etc.), as well as their ability to use that knowledge to create a original piece of work. At the same time, the exercise will require creativity, writing skills, and grammar skills.

Activity: The students' will each come up with an original piece of work based on the short story " The Reaper's Image". The story should be approximately 3-4 (although the students may go over, within reason) typed pages in length, and time may be given in class to work on their story. The students will be informed that the following grading scheme will be used:

30%Format (rising action, climax, etc.)

20%Creativity – characterisation

20% -convention usage

20%Flow & Grammar

10%Breakdown

Grading Scheme Explanations:

Format – The student is asked to use proper short story format as discussed in earlier classes.

Creativity – The student is asked to demonstrate a certain level of creativity. This will be the most subjective of the marked areas. The student will be informed that characterisation and use of conventions will be the focus areas of creativity.

Flow and Grammar – Organisation of the story (flow) and proper sentence and paragraph structure.

Breakdown – Following the story, the student is expected to give a critique of his/her story. They should include such things as: what is the critical incident, what is the nature of the conflict, what is the climax of the story, etc., etc.

Emphasise to the students that this is a creative exercise, but that they must adhere to the format studied. Any obvious failings to do so will affect the students' mark on this project. The students' should choose one of the following plot lines for their story to follow:

1. A group of high school students are taking a tour of the Samuel Claggert Memorial Private Museum, when one of the students notices something strange in the Delver mirror. Suddenly, the student finds himself wishing he was back in his class.
2. An English Duchess has just been given the Delver mirror as a present from her fianc. Tonight, she and her future husband are throwing a party. However, their celebration will take a turn for the worse.
3. A Pennsylvania rug merchant has just had a successful business trip to New York. So successful, in fact, that he decided to celebrate his earning buy acquiring a new piece of art. Unfortunately for him, he chose the Delver

mirror. As he settles in for an evening of quiet relaxation he notices something strange about his new piece.

4. Alternately, the students may approach you individually with their own ideas. Emphasise that original plot concepts must be past by you first.

Reflection: Have the students discuss whether or not they believed that this project helped them to further understand the concept of the short story. Did it clarify how some of the conventions of fear and suspense function? Overall, did they enjoy the activity? If not, what would they change?