Teacher Notes for Short Story Elements

Students need practice in developing the elements, not just recognizing them.

- **Character**
  - There are six main ways to develop a character in a story (handout included)
  - Characters are either:
    - Dynamic – one who grows or develops during the action
    - Static – one who remains the same throughout the action
    - Flat – have only one or two traits
    - Round – complex and many-sided

- **Setting**
  - Every short has a background or setting such as:
    - Place – where the events occur
    - Time – when the events occur
    - Sensory details – clothing, dialect, modes of transportation, etc.

- **Plot**
  - A series of events that make a story. A plot is built around a conflict:
    - Man vs. man -- an external struggle
    - Man vs. self -- an internal struggle
    - Man vs. nature – an external struggle between man and an element of nature
  - Most plots develop in five basic stages
    - Exposition – introduces the main characters and gives the purpose or problem of the story; setting is revealed
    - Rising action – happens as the plot “thickens” and the main conflict is revealed; mini-conflicts may add to the build-up of tension
    - Climax – the highest point of interest; the turning point; the outcome of the conflict is revealed
    - Falling action – the suspense subsides; may be very brief
    - Conclusion/resolution – loose ends are tied up; story ends

- **Theme**
  - The main message the author want his/her audience to take away; not all stories have a theme – for example, the purpose of a horror story may be simply to scare the reader
    - Stated – writer states the theme of the story
    - Implied – theme is not stated

- **Point of View**
  - A writer tells his/her story from three points of view:
    - First person – the author become the character
    - Third person (limited omniscient) – author limits what he tells the reader to what a single character could observe or know
    - Omniscient – when a story is told from the viewpoint of someone who can be in several places at the same time and can see into the hearts and minds of the characters

- **Atmosphere**
  - This is the mood or spirit of the story
Literary Terms

Plot - tells what the story is about
Setting - tells where and when the story takes place
Characters - the people in the story
Theme - the main point, lesson, or moral of the story
Mood - the feeling in the story; sad, happy, etc....
Conflict - the problem in the story
Fiction - a story that is not true
Protagonist - the good guy; the one trying to solve the problem
Antagonist - the bad guy; the one causing the problem
Point of View - tells who is telling the story
Climax - the high point or turning point of the story
Dialogue - conversation between characters
Foreshadowing - hints or clues of what will happen later
Autobiography - a story one writes about his own life
Biography - a story one writes about another person
Dialect - the way a person talks in a region
Stereotype - putting people into a category or group: BLONDES ARE DIZZY

5 Parts of any story:
   introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, conclusion

Classic - old valued, enjoyed by many, stands the test of time
Irony - when the opposite happens of what is expected

Types of Stories

Myth - a story that once was believed to be true but is totally false
Legend - a story that has some history to it, but part of it is not true
   (Trojan War)
Tragedy - a story that has a hero, hero dies, and his death serves a purpose
Fable - a very short story, that is told to teach a lesson and uses animals in the telling
Folktale - a story that has been handed down from one generation to the next
Essay - a short writing which expresses one idea on a subject... Explaining something