

WRITING SHORT STORIES

Here you can find some examples how to deal with short stories and develop the reading and writing skills in students.

The examples are:

- Fill in a story
- Explain the story
- Guess the end
- Complete the story
- Jumbled stories
- Write a story from words

The examples are in the following pages:

FILL IN A STORY

The students receive a short story with a missing part. The students can deduce what is missing by reading what happens before and after it. At first they should discuss in groups what happens in the missing part, and then write it down.

Example

Four friends who hadn't seen each other in 30 years, reunited at a party. After several drinks, one of the men had to use the toilet. Those who remained talked about their kids.

The first guy said, "My son is my pride and joy. He started working at the bottom of the barrel and soon climbed the corporate ladder and is now company president. He became so rich that he gave his best friend a top of the line Mercedes for his birthday."

The second guy said, "Darn, that's terrific! My son is also my pride and joy. He started working for a big airline and became a partner. He's so rich that he gave his best friend a brand new jet for his birthday."

The third ...

The three friends congratulated each other just as the fourth returned from the toilet and asked: "What are all the congratulations for?" One of the three said: "We were talking about the pride we feel for the successes of our sons. What about your son?"

The fourth man replied: "My son is gay and makes a living dancing as a stripper at a nightclub." The three friends said: "What a shame, what a disappointment."

The fourth man replied: "No, I'm not ashamed. He's my son and I love him. And he hasn't done too bad either. His birthday was two weeks ago, and he received a beautiful 30,000 square foot mansion, a brand new jet and a top of the line Mercedes from his three boyfriends."

EXPLAIN A STORY

The students receive a short story with a final twist. The students discuss in groups what it means and then they report to the class.

Example

After the Great Britain Beer Festival in London, all the Presidents of the most famous breweries decide to go to the pub for a drink.

The Coors President says, "Can I have the only beer made with Rocky Mountain Spring Water: a Coors, please." The bartender gives him the drink.

Then the Budweiser President orders, "The King of Beers – a Budweiser, please." The bartender proceeds with the order.

The Amstel President walks in and orders "The Finest Beer ever – an Amstel, please." The bartender gives him the beer.

Then the Guinness President says, "I'll have a Coke, please."

The bartender is taken aback by this, but gives the Coke to him anyway. All the Presidents look over at him and ask, "Why have you ordered a Coke?"

He replies, "Well, if you all aren't drinking beer, then neither shall I."

GUESS THE END

The students receive a short story without the final lines. The students discuss in groups what it could be and then they try to write it down.

You can obviously decide to “cut” the story in different points, making it easier or more difficult to divine.

Example

Mysterious Death

There was this case in the hospital’s Intensive Care ward where the patients always died in the same bed, on Sunday morning at 11 a.m., regardless of their medical condition. This puzzled the doctors and some even thought that it had something to do with the supernatural. Why these deaths?

One day, the doctors decide to investigate the cause of the incidents and solve this mysterious puzzle once and for all. So, on the next Sunday morning a few minutes before 11 a.m., all of them go down to the ward.

Nervously they wait outside to see for themselves, what the terrible phenomenon was all about. Some are holding wooden crosses, prayer books and other holy objects to ward off the evil.

Just when the clock strikes 11,

Sandar Singh, the part-time Sunday sweeper, enters the ward and unplugs the life support system in order to use the vacuum cleaner.

COMPLETE THE STORY

The students receive the first part of a story. It doesn't really matter if the story has a conclusion or if it doesn't, since it will be invented by the students.

This is a bit similar to the previous one, but in this case there isn't a final twist, any possible conclusion is correct.

Example

The Golden House

Once upon a time, there was a little boy who lived with his family on a mountain. They lived on a small farm, and were very poor.

The boy worked hard to help his travel, and woke up early before dawn to start his day's chores.

And every day, when he woke up, as he was getting dressed, the sun rose and as it rose, the boy looked out of the window to see it rise.

And on a mountain top, on the other side of the valley, he could see a house which shone golden above the valley.

The boy was very curious about the people who lived there.

One day ...

JUMBLED STORIES

The students receive two short stories with jumbled sentences. The students first have to understand which sentences belong to the first and which ones to the second story, and then put them in the write order.

Example

Story titles:

The Loan

The Burglar

A	“That’s not so hard, George,” said his father. “Write to him and say you need the £1,000 at once.”
B	Among my best friends are Joe and his wife Alice, who live in a nice little house near Manchester.
C	“You mean the £500,” George interrupted.
D	The friend proved to be untrustworthy, and as George thought he would lose the £500, he asked his father for advice.
E	The donor neglected to send his name, and all day the couple’s question was, “Wonder who it is?”
F	“No, I don’t! Say a thousand pounds and he will write back he only owes you £500.”
G	There was a note from the burglar propped up on the pillow in the bedroom saying: “Now you know.”
H	When, as a newly married couple, they had just returned from their honeymoon, they got a pleasant surprise in the post one morning – two tickets to the best show in town.
I	George Smith had lent a friend £500 but he had nothing in writing confirming the loan.
J	They enjoyed the show, but when they reached home they found that their house had been broken into and that all their wedding presents had been taken.
K	“Then you’ll have it in writing.”

The Loan

I

D

A

C

F

K

The Burglar

B

H

E

J

G

WRITE A STORY FROM WORDS

The students only receive some key words and the beginning of a story. Then they will try to make up the story, using the key words given. Here it is not necessary to have a real story (even though it helps), because the students will be asked to invent one.

Obviously this is a much more difficult activity than the previous one.

Example

The Three Wishes

Once upon a time a poor woodcutter headed into the forest to chop down a few trees and sell the wood in the nearby town. Just as the woodcutter was about to cut down an old oak tree, he heard a voice...

"Please, kind woodcutter. Do not cut down this tree."

fairy	wife	supper	sausage
-------	------	--------	---------

*The woodcutter looked around and saw a **fairy** sitting in the tree.*

The woodcutter said, "And why not? I need wood to sell in the town so that I have money to buy food."

The fairy replied, "This is my home, and I promise if you do as I ask, good luck will be yours."

The woodcutter agreed not to cut down the tree.

The fairy was very happy and she told the woodcutter that as he had such a good and kind heart, she would grant him three wishes.

*The fairy flew into the forest and the woodcutter headed home to tell his **wife** of their good fortune.*

The woodcutter's wife was very happy when she heard about the three wishes.

"What a wonderful thing it is to have three wishes!" she said, "Let's not be hasty. Let's wait until morning before we make a single wish."

The woodcutter agreed that this was a wise idea, they would be able to think more clearly in the morning.

*However, the woodcutter was very hungry and asked his wife when **supper** would be ready.*

His wife told him that it would be ready in an hour.

*"One hour!" exclaimed the woodcutter, "But I'm starving! I wish I had a big **sausage** right now!"*

No sooner had the woodcutter said the words when a sausage appeared on the table.

"You fool!" cried his wife, "Look at what you've done! You've wasted one wish! How could you be so foolish?"

Now the woodcutter was not pleased by his wife's nagging, so he said, "I wish that this sausage was stuck on your nose!"

And immediately the sausage stuck to his wife's nose!

"You fool!" cried the wife, "Look at what you've done! Do something!"

The woodcutter tried and tried to remove the sausage, but it was no use. It was stuck there for good.

Then the woodcutter said, "There's only one thing to do. I wish the sausage was back on the plate."

The sausage landed back on the plate.

The woodcutter and his wife sat down and ate the big sausage.