

Semester 2 Unit: Short Fiction

Content Area: **Language Arts**
Course(s): **English 4A**
Time Period: **Semester 2**
Length: **4 - 6 weeks**
Status: **Published**

Enduring Understandings

Students will understand the following:

Short Story is an art form unto itself.

Short stories offer unique snapshots into life and ideas of family, identity, and language.

Short stories are unique in their limitations in length, but the lessons have great impact.

The short story is a distinct artistic form with its own conventions that can be observed or violated for effect.

A short story allows the reader to examine a small moment with great intensity and focus.

Short stories are enjoyable to read.

Essential Questions

What are the conventions of short stories?

How do writers follow and subvert those conventions?

How can short stories be adapted into other media?

How do we confront the unique challenges short fiction presents?

How is short fiction suitable for exploring ethical questions?

Knowledge and Skills

Students will

-reflect on how they read and why they read.

-develop facility grappling with challenging texts.

- conduct close readings, and this kind of work with text requires engaged textual analysis that can help build independent and original claims.
- develop the habits of well-practiced readers of complex texts, such as reading with a pen or pencil in hand and making comments in the margins or on post-it notes.
- attend to how parts of an essay speak to one another, contradict one another, or complicate one another.
- recognize that short stories tend to begin in media res, have limited settings and characters, and take place in a short amount of time.
- appreciate the limited space in comparison to the impact of the message.
- appreciate the craft short story telling requires.
- improve their reading and understanding through inference and searching for what necessarily is left “unsaid.”
- develop vocabulary generally and use terminology specific to the study of fiction and academic English.
- increase their imaginative capacity as they encounter new settings and characters.
- develop media and technological literacy as they convey their understanding through authentic forms of assessment

(adapted from: Rutgers Almanac 2016)

Additional Resources

When planning for this unit, teachers may focus instruction on the following stories and/or other works of short fiction included in the anthology *Literature and Composition: Reading, Writing, Thinking* (Jago, Shea, Scanlon, and Aufses).

- “Finishing Touch” by Claire-Louise Bennett
- “The Man of the Crowd” by Edgar Allan Poe
- “Americaa” by Aimee Bender
- “Bigfoot Stole My Wife” by Ron Carlson
- “Puppy” by George Saunders
- “Cell One” by Chimimanda Ngozi Adichie
- “The Family M” by Budi Darma

- “A Volcano is Born” by Brenda Lozano
- “Paper Menagerie” by Ken Liu

Transfer Goals

Students will independently be able to discuss the origins, traditions, and voices in the dialogue of short fiction.

Students will contribute to the tradition of expressing short stories to an audience.