

Unit Organizer--Seventh-Grade English Short Stories

Subject Matter and Relationship to Core Knowledge Sequence:

- ❖ Short Stories
 - “The Secret Life of Walter Mitty” by James Thurber
 - “The Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allan Poe
 - “The Purloined Letter” by Edgar Allan Poe
 - “The Necklace” by Maupassant
 - “The Gift of the Magi” by O. Henry
- ❖ Elements of fiction: plot, setting, theme, point of view, conflict (internal/external), point of view in narration (omniscient, unreliable, Third person limited, first person), suspense, and climax (*Thinking Framework = Knowledge*)
- ❖ Literary terms (Irony, flashbacks, foreshadowing, hyperbole, oxymoron, alliteration, assonance, simile, metaphor) (*Thinking Framework = Knowledge*)

Assessments:

- ❖ Class discussion (factual, cause-effect, interpretation, themes, literary terms)
- ❖ Bell work entries over key thematic and stylistic issues
- ❖ Students write their own Walter Mitty daydream and choose one per group to develop into a play/presentation in front of the class.
- ❖ Final test

Standards for Achievement and Performance:

AFTER THIS UNIT THE STUDENT SHOULD BE ABLE TO...

- ❖ Identify the plot structure of a narrative, including exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement.
- ❖ Know the techniques of good characterization, especially vivid descriptions and anecdotes.
- ❖ Comprehend the essential facts about each author’s life and historical context and how those facts affect the works studied.
- ❖ Place these authors and works in their historical, cultural, and literary contexts.
- ❖ Understand the usefulness and role of humor in writing.
- ❖ Understand the role of point of view/narration on a story’s suspense and effect.
- ❖ Understand what a twist ending is and when/why it is used.
- ❖ Understand the legacy/effect of these authors/stories on future literature.
- ❖ Understand the unique deficiencies and benefits of the short story genre.
- ❖ Understand how stylistic devices affect the impression and message of these stories.
- ❖ Apply the thematic lessons to his/her own life and cultural context (*Thinking Framework = Modeling and Creativity/Problem Solving*)
- ❖ Identify the role of different grammatical structures in an author’s purpose.
- ❖ Want to read more by these authors.

Character Traits/Habits of Mind:

The beauty of the short story unit is that it presents different substantial themes in a way that everyone connects with from an early age: as stories with their own conflicts and characters. Issues like escapism, fear, madness, the powers of observation, the redemptive potential of suffering, and sacrificial love do not come to the students in outline or expository form, but in the context of characters' struggles, joys, realizations, and regrets—Mitty's daydreams, Dupin's reasoning, Jim and Della's love. Hopefully, through this the students learn to appreciate the role of stories in their own lives and to begin to view their own lives as stories.

Previous Unit(s):

- ❖ Vocabulary
- ❖ The Call of the Wild

Next Unit(s):

- ❖ Essays and Speeches
- ❖ Continue Vocabulary
- ❖ Continue Foreign Phrases/Spelling