

# Grade 9

## 10F English

### Short Story Unit

\_\_\_ Terms

#### Comprehension

\_\_\_ Questions – Intensive Care

\_\_\_ Questions – Stains

#### Writing Piece

\_\_\_ Web Organizer

\_\_\_ Short Story Outline

## SHORT STORY TERMS

From the word list below place the word beside the definition it corresponds with.

- \_\_\_\_\_ The Point a story makes/ The Main Idea
- \_\_\_\_\_ The beginning of a story that must be interesting to catch the readers attention
- \_\_\_\_\_ The main character who faces a problem or conflict
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Basic Story line of action
- \_\_\_\_\_ Where the author begins to tell the Reader about the situation the characters find themselves in, and what the problem or conflict the main character is going to face
- \_\_\_\_\_ The person or the force that opposes the main character
- \_\_\_\_\_ The time and the place of a story
- \_\_\_\_\_ The people or animals brought to life by the author
- \_\_\_\_\_ The uses of hints/ clues by the author about the events to come to arouse anticipation

PLOT	SETTING	CHARACTERS	THEME
ANTAGONIST	FORESHADOWING	PROTAGONIST	
INTRODUCTION	LEAD		

# INTENSIVE CARE

Sitting still, in a soft chair. It's been two hours. It's quiet. I feel trapped in my mind. I want to scream out, but my mouth won't work. I've taken in the surroundings, a t.v. on the wall turned to the news station, there's no sound, just subtitles that I'm too lazy to read. Below the t.v. there is a rack of magazines with an array of Sports Illustrated, I already looked at them all. I'm becoming restless. I feel as though I could crawl out of my skin. I want an answer.

*Waiting rooms are never a pleasant place. They are a place where you feel as though you can't do anything. It's a place that you can spend hours on end and never hear an explanation or an answer. You see doctors come and go. My mom knows answers she has gotten updates but doesn't want to share.*

My girlfriend and I were supposed to hangout today. But now we are left exchanging texts instead of speaking together face to face. Instead of sitting on her couch, I sit stuck in my head, with no escape. Nothing but my thoughts, and they hurt. In the waiting room thoughts are hardly ever a good thing, at least for me; I always think the worse.

Another two hours and I'm pacing, walking around the carpeted floor. Others sit and just stare at me, I feel like a caged animal, even though I can leave, I don't want to. At this point I'm starving, but the cafeteria is closed. I snap out of my head and have a pizza delivered from Elvios. For just 20 minutes I feel like everything is normal. I'm eating, and texting, and feel like I'm at home. But I'm at the hospital.

*You lose track of time. You don't talk, you don't text, you just don't do anything. You absorb the feelings like a sponge. and you think about the small things. You get upset about things that don't matter. You just want to get an answer and get out. You can't plan for something like this but when it happens you need to figure it out on the fly. Friends come and visit but you don't really want to talk.*

*You long for touch, you long for those moments when you were little and it was ok to cry in public. When you could find comfort in the feeling of human contact. There's only one of the two people who can keep me sane here. But right now she's as useful as tits on a bull. My girlfriend is the other. She's 45 minutes away and if the worst occurs she can't be here fast enough.*

Fresh air. A rush of cold but also a rush of freedom. I sit on the icy concrete. Unsure of the temperature. Does it matter? Your mind runs off on a tangent. Does anything matter? Or even better, What does matter? Questions fill my head and leave me spinning. As of now I still don't have an answer on the condition of my father.

The time is 8:30 P.M. I've been in this room since a little before 3. The atmosphere has since changed. The hustle and bustle of people has ceased. The receptionist is gone. Old man security sits behind the desk.

It's hard to think at this point. I've waited a long time and at this point I just want to cry. I can't though. My mom had finally stopped and I just need to stay strong. My girlfriend had come to visit for a little while. But it was far from taking my mind off of things. I just sat in silence, she just held my arm tightly. I got a little fresh air while walking her to her car. But Then I was back in that silent, stuffy room.

*Suicide is not a joke. It's not something that can easily be forgotten. It's also something that is not always successful. Something that leaves families sitting in waiting rooms while their husbands or fathers are in the ICU. Leaves them sitting, praying, hoping and crying.*

My dad is that guy. The guy who tried and didn't succeed. The man that up until now I looked up to. I thought he was strong. In reality he was weak. Far from the man that I thought that he was. No longer a role model.

I'm sitting on my couch now. Watching T.V. and petting my dogs. He's in a coma until the medications he took work their way out of his system. Memorial doesn't have the resources to support him. He's stable enough that they are transporting him to Maine Med, where they have the resources to attempt to support him. Unsure if he'll make it through the night, I don't sleep.

## Short Story Responses

- 1. Identify 2 characters that are developed in the text. Describe them fully.**
- 2. Identify the setting of the text. Provide examples to support your statements.**
- 3. Identify two types of conflict in the text. Provide examples to support your statements.**
- 4. What is your opinion of the story? Provide examples to support your statements.**

A worried mother waits, and remembers

***Stains***

Short story by Sharon MacFarlane

Her wrists burn in the icy water. But the water must be cold if she is to get all the stains out. She folds the leg of the jeans, rubs the layers of heavy denim together. With the bar of harsh laundry soap she scrubs the spots over and over. The water darkens with blood. She twists the jeans, wringing out as much water as she can, sets them carefully beside the sink.

When she lifts the tee shirt a small piece of curled, white skin floats free of the jagged tear, rises to the surface. She swallows, takes a deep breath.

When the clothes—a pair of shorts, a pair of socks, the tee shirt, and the jeans—are all in the washer she sits down at the kitchen table. She's never been good at waiting. "Go home," they told her, "there's nothing you can do here. We'll call you." She stares at the clock, not sure if she wants the hands to move faster or slower. Should she call one of her friends to wait with her? She couldn't bear to make small talk, couldn't concentrate on anything but the pictures that fill her mind. The image of him—grey, unconscious, his dark blood seeping through the bandage, seeping into the white sheet of the hospital bed. No, she will wait now as she waited seventeen years ago for his birth. Alone. She sees the baby with snowy hair, the five year old in an over-sized hockey uniform, the fourth-grade wise man in the school pageant... thinks of all the hopes she had for him.

She goes to the washer as soon as it stops. There is a circle of red-tinged suds on the inside of the lid. She puts the clothes into the dryer, then with an old towel scrubs the enamel lid. She rinses the towel again and again; when it is clean, she hangs it over the tap to dry.

In the kitchen, she fills the kettle and sets it on the burner. She spoons tea leaves into a small brown pot and takes a china mug from the cupboard. When the tea is ready she sits for a moment holding the warm mug in both hands. She drinks two cups but in a few minutes she is thirsty again. Worry parches her mouth, it's always been that way.

She learned to keep a pitcher of water and a glass beside her, the nights she sat up with him when he was sick. With every illness he ran a high fever. When he was a baby and she help him in her arms in the rocking chair all night she wished that she could absorb the heat from his body into her own. Wished him cool – well again – sleeping in his crib with the white quilt tucked around him. When he was three or four, the fevers made him delirious, made him babble nonsense, reach to pluck imaginary balloons from the air. She thought then that when he was older, after he'd had all the childhood diseases, everything would be all right. If only this was as simple as a bout of croup or measles.

The fear has been with her for a long time. She realized that when the doorbell rang at 4 a.m. She awoke instantly, went to the door, saw the police officer standing there. "... Your son – there's been an accident..." She knew then that, somehow, she'd been waiting for those words.

Noon. He'd be getting up about now if this was an ordinary Saturday. He'd come into the kitchen, bleary-eyed, his hair ruffled, wearing only his wrinkled jeans. He'd go to the fridge, take a drink of milk straight from the carton. She'd say, "For Pete's sake, can't you get a glass?" He'd shrug, both of them knowing she wasn't upset about the milk but about his hangover, his boozing, his friends... A Saturday ritual that had been going on for a year now. Today – there is only the faint hum of the dryer and the ticking of the clock.

When she takes the clothes out of the dryer she spreads them on top of the machine, inspects them carefully, satisfies herself that there is no trace of stains. She folds them and puts them in his dresser. Except the shirt. She takes the shirt to the sewing machine. The gash is so long – from the shoulder almost to the hem – that it distorts the beer logo printed on the chest. Of course, he has other shirts – a red one, a soft silvery-grey one, a black one that makes him look even blonder than he is – lots of nice shirts; but he prefers this one. A stretched tee shirt that shows the world he is a beer drinker – a man.

Booze erases his shyness, gives him confidence. She should have praised him more when he was younger, criticized him less, helped him to have a better self-image. She knows that now. Maybe then he'd have excelled at something – school, sports, drama – wouldn't have needed to booze to make him feel important.

In the sewing room, she takes a cardboard box from the top shelf. She must find material to match the shirt. She turns the box upside down, spills hundreds of odd-shaped scraps onto the floor. She sifts through them carefully, picks up, then rejects, five or six. Finally, she finds a piece of soft cotton that matches exactly the faded blue of the shirt. She pins it carefully in place under the tear and starts sewing. The machine's zigzag stitches pull the edges neatly together. The mend will be almost invisible. But there is still three centimeters left to sew when the telephone rings.

## **Short Story Responses**

- 1. Identify 2 characters that are developed in the text. Describe them fully.**
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- 3. Identify two types of conflict in the text. Provide examples to support your statements.**
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# Short Story Theme Choices

1. Judgement
2. Revenge
3. Love
4. Tears
5. Anger
6. Party
7. Innocence
8. Friendship
9. Embarrassment
10. Endings

Choose 3 to complete Web Organizer

# Short Story Web Organizer

For 3 of the Themes – Expand Below - Develop a Story.

Theme

Detail /Characters

Detail / Setting

Detail /Conflict

Theme

Detail /Characters

Detail / Setting

Detail /Conflict

Theme

Detail /Characters

Detail / Setting

Detail /Conflict

Short Story Outline ---Choose 1 of the 3 themes from the completed web organizer to write a short story.

Introduction

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Paragraph One - Describe the Setting

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Paragraph Two - Describe one character (a)

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Paragraph Three - Describe another character (b)

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Paragraph Four - Describe the problem/conflict

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Dialogue

“ \_\_\_\_\_ ”

“ \_\_\_\_\_ ”

“ \_\_\_\_\_ ”

“ \_\_\_\_\_ ”

Paragraph Five - Describe thoughts of character (a)

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Paragraph Six - Describe thoughts of character (b)

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Dialogue

“ \_\_\_\_\_ ”

“ \_\_\_\_\_ ”

“ \_\_\_\_\_ ”

“ \_\_\_\_\_ ”

Paragraph Seven - Describe the resolution to the problem/conflict

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The End