



Short Stories Unit – How To Use this Unit

Activity 1 – Interactive Short Stories Unit

Open the activity by clicking the *Start Activity* link. Once open, the main navigation appears in the lower left hand corner of the activity.

This fully contained and animated unit begins by walking students through the basic elements of the short story (Plot Diagram, Setting, Character, Conflict and Theme). Each of these topics includes a description, followed by several short activities that illustrate the concept. Usually this is followed by a short interactive review quiz that can be used to test retention of the ideas presented.

Following the elements, there is also a section dedicated to analyzing and breaking down three popular short stories – Never, by H.E. Bates; Harrison Bergeron by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.; and The Lottery by Shirley Jackson. Each of these analyses follows the same pattern. First a Pre-Reading interesting idea is presented that relates to the major theme of the story. Secondly, the story is presented, both visually and with audio (illustrations and printable versions are also included). Finally, students are encouraged to download an Active Reading Guide created specifically for the story. These guides can be used to walk through the main elements of the story. Interactive directions for the guides are available in the unit. Each story analysis ends with web links to further information about that story.

The Interactive Short Story Unit also contains a glossary of common literary terms that students will often encounter.

Activity 2 – Plot Diagram

This activity is contained within the main Short Story Unit (Activity 1), but is also provided here for easier access. Open the activity by clicking the *Start Activity* link. Instructions are self contained within the animation, however, the main gist of the activity is:

view the video in the upper left of the screen. Then click each thumbnail in the lower left to view that short (3-8 second piece). Drag the thumbnail to the place that it occurs in the plot diagram “rollercoaster” on the right hand side of the screen. Feedback will prompt you if you are correct or not.

Activity 3 – Setting

This activity is contained within the main Short Story Unit (Activity 1), but is also provided here for easier access. Open the activity by clicking the *Start Activity* link.

This activity will help students to realize the different aspects of creating a setting in their own stories. Instructions are self contained within the animation. It is very important to read the text provided as the audio instructions are not fully comprehensive.



Activity 4 – Character

This activity is contained within the main Short Story Unit (Activity 1), but is also provided here for easier access. Open the activity by clicking the *Start Activity* link.

This activity will help students to realize the different aspects of character. It is predicated on the study strategy WATO, where character traits are revealed through the Words of a character, the Actions of a character, the Thoughts of a character and the Opinions of other characters.

In the activity, students are asked to view short clips of a movie and determine how the character's traits are being revealed (i.e. which part of WATO is being revealed).

A printable WATO sheet is provided. Look for the “Support Materials” section on this webpage.

Activity 5 – Conflict

This activity is contained within the main Short Story Unit (Activity 1), but is also provided here for easier access. Open the activity by clicking the *Start Activity* link.

This activity helps students learn the three main forms of conflict in a story: Man vs. Himself, Man vs. Man and Man vs. Environment. Detailed instruction are provided within the animation. The student will be asked to watch a simple story about a princess on a journey home and identify the types of conflict she encounters. Feedback is provided whenever a student is asked to make a choice.

A printable Conflict Types sheet is provided. Look for the “Support Materials” section on this webpage.

Activity 6 – Theme

This activity is contained within the main Short Story Unit (Activity 1), but is also provided here for easier access. Open the activity by clicking the *Start Activity* link.

This activity will show students that the theme of a story is inherent in all of the other elements of that story. Detailed instructions are provided within the animation. The student will be asked to make several choices which will create a story. The theme that they have built will then be discussed. Feedback is provided whenever a student is asked to make a choice.