

Subject/Grade: ELA 10 A **Lesson Title:** Lesson 2: Analyzing Short Stories (1-2 classes) **Teacher:** Kate Spencer

Stage 1: Identify Desired Results

Objective/Overview:

This is Lesson 2 out of a potential 5 lesson unit on Short Stories that would typically run two class periods per lesson or 2-4 weeks depending on schedule; however, most lessons can be condensed to one period if time frame requires. This would be best achieved by switching certain in-class activities to homework. I have provided that option here with the collaborative writing assignment.

Overall, the unit aims to teach students elements of short stories like plot, narrator, setting, theme, symbolism, etc.; improve reading comprehension, analysis, and creative writing; and expose students to a variety of stories, from different periods, reflecting different themes and aims, and potentially exposing students to a style or writer they might read for enjoyment. The unit provides a look at the horror genre, First Nations' short story writing, and even graphic novels/comics.

Lesson 1 introduced short stories: defining characteristics, lasting impact on literature, and elements of narrative. Lesson 2 is an opportunity to develop close reading skills, practice analysis, and look closer at plot and structure, character development, setting, atmosphere, etc. Ideally, Lesson 3 might focus on literary devices by looking at horror. Lesson 4 might look at contemporary writers, specifically First Nations. In addition to Alexie's *Blasphemy* collection, *Never Whistle at Night: An Indigenous Dark Fiction Anthology* looks amazing. Lesson 5 might be the culmination of all these components in order to focus on writing short stories.

Outcome(s)/Indicator(s):

CR A10.4: **Read, interpret, and draw conclusions about the ideas, information, concepts, and themes** presented in a variety of literary (including poems, plays, essays, **short stories**, novels) and informational (including magazines, newspapers, and on-line information) texts.

- a) **Read, comprehend, and explain the human experiences and values** reflected in various literary and informational texts created by First Nations, Métis, Saskatchewan, Canadian, and international authors from various cultural communities.
- d) Demonstrate active reading behaviours including:
 - establishing a purpose for reading such as to **learn, interpret, and enjoy**
 - skimming, scanning, and **reading closely**
 - **identifying and analyzing explicit and implicit messages, viewpoints, and concepts**
 - **recognizing and analyzing text structures and elements** (e.g., description, compare/contrast, cause and effect, chronological sequence)
 - **relating** understanding of a range of **texts to personal experiences, purposes, audiences, and other texts**
 - identifying and analyzing persuasive techniques
 - evaluating credibility and logic
 - testing ideas and values
 - **recognizing and comprehending allusions and symbols**
 - constructing images based on text descriptions
 - **discussing and analyzing meanings, ideas, language, and literary and informational quality in a range of contemporary and historical texts**
 - **using notemaking and outlining to enhance understanding of texts.**

- e) **Read and interpret critically the main ideas, events, and themes** of a variety of literary texts including **stories**, novels, scripts, poetry, and non-fiction works, and **prepare, present, and defend critical responses** to what is read.
- f) **Read and make generalizations, supported by specific details and examples, about key concepts, characters, themes, and techniques in literary texts**

AR A10.1: Establish and apply criteria to evaluate own and others' work.

- a) Use feedback to evaluate own effectiveness and set goals in language learning and use.
- b) **Evaluate own and others' contributions to group process and provide support where needed.**
- c) **Contribute to the creation of rubrics and other assessment and evaluation tools** used to assess visual, oral, **written**, multimedia, and other products submitted.

HC10: Investigate opportunities and challenges faced by First Nations and the Government of Canada in relation to governance issues.

- Examine the impact of federal, provincial, and municipal government policies on the fulfillment of Treaties.

Key Understandings: ('I Can' statements)

I can read, comprehend, and analyze short stories.
 I can recognize elements of story, like characters, narrator, plot, and setting.
 I can analyze complicated themes.
 I can draw connections between the story and its characters and personal experiences and events.
 I can use evidence from the story to support my analysis.
 I can discuss the cultural and historical significance of a short story.
 I can evaluate my own work and others'.

Essential Questions:

How do short stories differ from other forms of fiction?
 How do elements of the story contribute to narrative, effect, atmosphere?
 Is the narrator reliable?
 What is the theme of the short story? Does the story reflect "the human experience"? If so, in what way?
 What role does the setting play in a short story? Is it more or less significant than in long form fiction?
 Can we see irony and foreshadowing at work? If so, how?
 What is the author trying to actually say? Can we support that?

Prerequisite Learning:

Lesson is part of a larger unit on short stories; students have completed Lesson 1: Introduction to Short Stories. Students can identify a short story and the characteristics that set them apart from other literature like novel, nonfiction prose, poetry, and can recognize the elements of short story i.e. plot, character, setting, theme.

Students have been briefly introduced to the concept of "close reading" and "literary analysis" both of which will further develop here and throughout unit.

Students have been introduced to Literature Circles prior to lesson: they are already in groups, know they are to determine their own roles, fulfill that role's obligations, and participate in group's discussion without significant intervention.

Additionally from previous introduction lesson, students are expecting to encounter short stories that are classical and contemporary in order to note influence and trends across the literary form (for example, students will compare Poe, his style and theme for example, to the likes of S. King who we will read both in Lesson 3: Short Story and Horror). Therefore, completion and comprehension of Lesson 2 is essential to moving forward in unit.

Instructional Strategies:

Literature Circle – encourages discussion and participation in variety of roles/tasks, allowing students to explore those that showcase strengths and develop others that require more confidence in a “safe” environment. Activity meets indicators for outcome CR A10.4: read, interpret, draw conclusions about ideas, themes, and concepts in short story

Limited Lecture – facilitate student-led learning and student-led discussion rather than lecturing

Reading Logs – encourages “active reading,” indicator (d) for outcome CR A10.4, while providing ongoing assessment tool for both teacher and student

Peer/ Rubric Evaluation – students can explore evaluation in a tangible way, demystifying process and rubric, which supports participation. Meets outcome AR A10.1

Collaborative Writing – provides opportunity to explore concepts discussed in lesson like theme, pacing, climax, narrator, character etc. in a fun, engaging way that is “low-risk” thus promoting creativity and participation

Stage 2: Determine Evidence for Assessing Learning

Formative Assessment:

-students keep Reading Logs (see handout or use journal) that provide ongoing assessment for teacher to gauge engagement with and comprehension of text. The Logs provide insight into whether texts are appropriate or challenging enough, in general or for individual student, which allows for future adjustment or adaptation.

-Peer Evaluation: Students will evaluate or workshop a collaboratively written short story based on the elements of short stories we address in this lesson; this provides further practice of close reading and a formative assessment opportunity for teacher. (See “Workshop Handout”).

-Literature Circles provide in-depth formative assessment opportunities on a weekly basis. Teachers may choose to evaluate group members’ activities, but in this unit students will evaluate their own group’s members at the end of unit based on whether members generally completed readings, participated in discussion, completed their role’s activity. Together the class will create a rubric that best reflects what the class/group expects from their peers and themselves. Additionally, students will provide a self-evaluation after fulfilling their role’s task and meeting together. In this way, the Literature Circle is less restrictive or intimidating, but also may serve as a kind of **summative assessment** at end of unit if teacher chooses. (See Literature Circle Handout).

Stage 3: Build Learning Plan

Lesson 2: Analyzing Short Stories

Total Time: 60 min

Set (Engagement):

Time: 10 min

Briefly refresh elements of short story from last class, including plot, character, setting, and theme.

Introduce today’s lesson:

-Now that we are familiar with what a short story does and how it does it, we will begin to read short stories closely, analyzing narrative and plot, its effectiveness, role of narrator, character development, setting, and theme.

Materials/Resources:

“Indian Education” by Sherman Alexie in *Blasphemy*, 2012, Grove Press, 408-416.
Handout or Project with Computer

“Reading Log”-- Handout/Student Journal
Appendix 1

Readings of “Indian Education:”
<https://youtu.be/Ar6x1kZBz7Q?si=712MxWbP8TiHSFPu>

-We will do this by exploring classical short stories, and contemporary ones, as a class, individually, and in small groups (Lit. Circles)..

Development:

Time: 30-45 mins

To demonstrate the close reading we will do throughout the unit, we will read and discuss a short story together first:

- Briefly introduce text and author (see Britannica article)
- Hand out Alexie Story/project on screen OR load youtube reading
- Hand out Reading Logs or remind students to pull out Reading Journals

Before we begin, start your journals; as we listen/read, keep in mind theme, symbolism, narrator. What is the author doing that is unique?

Read Aloud or Play Youtube Video 10 mins
(remind students to fill out Reading Logs)

Discussion: 10 mins

What are our initial impressions? What does the narrator's school years tell us? What do we relate to in his descriptions of teenage years? Is the chronological school year form effective? What is the narrator's tone? How does irony function here? How does the narrator's character develop? What is foreshadowing from his earliest years? Why does Alexie approach such difficult subject matter in a deadpan, almost superficial way? What is he trying to tell us? Is this effective? What do we know about Canada's "Indian Education"? If education is a treaty promise, how are we to read this account? How does the story potentially frame treaties?

Activity: 20 mins

Considering the story we just read, how it was broken up into "grades," lets get into our Lit. Circle groups (determined last class), and employ this same technique!

- Each student in the group will pick a grade, and write a paragraph in first person (like the Alexie's story), illustrating a moment from that period of time—something that reflects the grade, age, and experiences the narrator/character would be experiencing.
- Make sure you all have different grades.
- This is fiction! Go nuts.**
- Approach personal, embarrassing, challenging, private, uncomfortable things a student might be going through in that particular grade with that same deadpan tone, employ irony, and make the uncomfortable accessible for the reader somehow!
- You will have a couple mins to complete your "snapshot" of the grade you chose.
- When you are all finished, compile the grades in chronological order. How does your story read? What is it missing?

<https://youtu.be/YWm9bcBjsSc?si=S5hO-z4kwWMVaQar>

Paper/pens Or Shared Google Doc.

"Literature Circles" Handouts Appendix 2

Links to potential story choices

"Workshop" Handout Appendix 3

Optional:

Background on Alexie:
Kuiper, Kathleen. "Sherman Alexie".
Encyclopedia Britannica, 3 Oct. 2023,
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Sherman-Alexie>

**Possible Adaptations/
Differentiation:**

- This lesson can be condensed by making story writing a homework assignment using Google doc.
- The entire lesson could be taught via Zoom, using breakout groups in particular
- Roles in Lit. Circles can easily be adapted to students' individual needs/interests in order to ensure participation: digital art contribution, or students could share relevant music, art, video, etc. instead of a specific role.
- Contribution to story writing can be adapted too: students could again share a relevant media that reflects identity, particular school experiences, feelings reflecting grade/experience, etc.

Management Strategies:

Allowing students to complete two classes and two activities, start to finish, in the same group they will be in for Lit. Circles is intentional. This is to warm students up to each other, make them more likely to share and participate, and help expand them beyond their initial friend groups.

Student involvement/participation in rubric and evaluations is to help students remain engaged and confident they can succeed.

Establishing a weekly routine to maintain a level of structure for students who benefit from that.

Learning Closure:**Time: 10 mins**

As we are already in our Lit. Circle groups:

-Remind students of Literature Circles introduced last class, that these are their groups, and they will start their meeting schedules next class.

(Note: suggested short stories for Lit. Circle are only examples and do not represent proposed unit).

Hand out Lit. Circle Package:

- explain self and group evaluation
- explain that meeting times will be provided during the last class of the week, for the final half hour of class
- answer questions about roles, evaluation, meeting times

You will now choose your story and your roles for next class.

Remember to finish Reading Logs now too!

-For next class: have reading completed and role's task completed. Come ready to share!

Also, please keep stories for next class.

Next Class**Total Time 60 mins****Set:****5 mins**

Welcome, and remind students we are working on short story analysis and close reading.

Also, last half of class is Lit. Circles: You should be prepared.

By reading, writing in response, and critiquing, we are practicing close reading and analysis skills—while being creative!

Break into your previous groups and pull out your grade stories.

Development:**Time: 20-25 mins**

You will now have time to work out the kinks, and make sure there is a narrative apparent —remember our inspiration story though! It's not necessary narrative that links the stories in each grade.

Consider: despite the separate experiences in separate grades, what unifies the experiences to reveal something about the narrator, the story's characters, the setting of the story—the school and community it takes place—, or the potentially uncomfortable theme or message the story tells?

-After the story is tweaked/polished we will share our stories with another group, and they will offer feedback (or workshop).

Safety Considerations:

Alexie's story could be considered culturally insensitive, and ought to be approached with understanding; Similarly, other short stories explored in the unit may be difficult for some readers, and alternatives and feedback are welcomed.

Extensions:

Technology: students are welcome to use and further develop tech skills; they can use tech to complement activity if and when they finish early.

Project: Students are welcome to get a head start on end-of-unit project by starting to write down ideas and stories, read ahead, or research concepts.

Reading: Students may catch up on their ongoing Lit. Circle reading and roles.

- provide "Workshop" Handout to help guide critique. Note: This is an exercise in close reading—it is not a serious "critique" and should be fun sharing/reading others' stories. Students may provide notes on "Workshop" Handout or looseleaf.

-This will help us practice close reading and develop analysis skills!

Lit. Circle

20-25 mins

Encourage students to transition from previous activity to Lit. Circles.

They are already in their groups.

Remind students, often Summary/Discussion roles going first are effective as a refresher to text.

Help to facilitate discussion/roles if necessary

Float between groups, being available for questions or clarification, but try not to intervene if possible..

Observe participation/engagement.

Indicate that there is 5 mins left so students can begin wrapping up.

Learning Closure:

Time: 5-10 mins

While students are still in groups, encourage them to choose new stories, and new roles for next week. Earlier is better.

Ask for feedback:

How did the first Lit. Circles go?

What are we liking? Confused about? Not liking? Anything to fix in preparation for next week's meeting?

Stage 4: Reflection on Planning

I was inspired by our PLC's short story discussion and the introduction to Literature Circles. In school, so far, I often opt for lesson plans that focus on poetry because I think it's underrated/underappreciated, and that the practice and feedback would be particularly useful once in the classroom— if I really intend to make students love it. However, I had never heard of Literature Circles before our class, but my PLC had such enormous fun discussing and exploring the roles, it was inevitable that I try it. Immediately, I saw endless application for this kind of student-led discussion. Additionally, I don't typically think of self or class assessments, but inspired by and paired with the Literature Circle activity, I took on a plan for my lesson that was new and a little outside myself.

In addition, I have started to refer to Smagorinsky's *Teaching English by Design: How to Create and Carry Out Instructional Units* in my lesson planning across courses. It has been so useful as I try to move out of default lectures and into student-led lesson planning. It's where I first considered collaborative writing, workshopping, and saw Lit. Circles outside of our classroom. I gathered additional resources through online templates provided in my ECS classes, but have found they are useless if they cannot be modified properly for my purposes—might as well make a template from scratch in that case.

I chose to plan for short stories because I was reminded of how effective they are. Truly, short story writers have to be the most talented of writers and students then deserve a proper introduction to their world. Moreover, I think stories serve as a great "foundation" for literary study and analysis. I do not have a list of stories decided on, and only chose this particular Alexie story

because I thought his angsty, crass, and forward style would be great for blossoming young adults, while offering an avenue to talk about social issues quite pressing for many of us.

In short, I am trying to see my future role in the classroom as a facilitator of learning instead of the source/resource of all knowledge. I still have many questions: is this fun? acceptable? buildable?

Appendix 1

Reading Log

Name _____ Date _____

Text I'm Reading _____ Pg. _____ - pg. _____

BEFORE READING

Something about which I'm wondering from last time or something I predict will happen or I will learn . . .

DURING READING

Record questions as you read. If you come upon the answer to one of your questions, record the answer next to the question. If your answer is not in the text, jot down some ideas you have in response to your question. Please keep track of page numbers.

Questions + page #s	Answers

AFTER READING

What did you learn from your reading today? What important things happened in the plot? What do you think will happen next in the story? What is your purpose for reading next time?

Literature Circle Directions

Part One

1. For this assignment you will be put into groups of five. Each group will choose a short story to read:

- "The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson
- "A Rose for Emily" by William Faulkner
- "Killings" by Andre Dubus

- "The Sniper" by Liam O'Flaherty
- "The Monkey's Paw" by W. W. Jacobs
- "The Veldt" by Ray Bradbury

- "The Most Dangerous Game" by Richard Connell
- "Tell-Tale Heart" by Edgar Allan Poe
- "The Wretched and the Beautiful" by E. Lily Yu

2. Each member will need to choose a different role where you will be responsible for varying tasks.

Possible Roles:

- Discussion Director
- Literary Luminary
- Connector
- Word Wizard
- Illustrator/Mapper
- Character Caretaker

3. After completing your individual assignment, your group will hold a meeting during class time. During the meeting, each member of your group will get 5-7 minutes to explain what task they completed while reading and share information with group members. Come prepared and willing to participate in conversation with your group.

4. Each role's task-sheet includes a self-evaluation. Complete this after meeting together. Remember, at the end of our unit, your group will evaluate you on whether you came prepared and participated. Your final mark will reflect your self-evaluations and your groups' final evaluation.

Literature Circle Meeting Date:

Discussion Director

Name: _____ Date of Meeting: _____

Short Story Title & Author: _____

Your job is to develop a list of questions that your group might want to discuss about the short story. Do not worry about the small details; your task is to help people talk over the big ideas in the reading and share their reactions. Usually the best discussion questions come from your own thoughts, feelings, and concerns as you read. You can list your questions below, on the back of this sheet write down some of the answers that your group had in response to your questions.

Discussion Questions or Topics for Meeting -

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Self Evaluation - Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5.

How well did you **prepare**? _____ How well did you **participate**? _____

What grade do you think you deserve? _____

Why?

Literary Luminary

Name: _____ Date of Meeting: _____

Short Story Title & Author: _____

Your job is to locate a few special selections of the text that your group would like to hear read aloud. The idea is to help people remember some interesting, powerful, funny, puzzling, or important sections of the text. You decide which passages or paragraphs are worth hearing, and then explain why you decided to share this passage. You can read them aloud yourself, ask someone else to read them, or have people read silently and then discuss.

Location	Explanation for Choosing	Responses from Classmates
Page: Paragraph on page:		
Page: Paragraph on page:		
Page: Paragraph on page:		
Page: Paragraph on page:		

Possible reasons for picking a passage to be shared:

Important - Funny - Surprising - Confusing - Informative - Controversial - Well Written - Thought Provoking - Meaningful - Poetic Language - Powerful

Self Evaluation - Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5.

How well did you **prepare**? _____ How well did you **participate**? _____

What grade do you think you deserve? _____

Why?

Connector

Name: _____ Date of Meeting: _____

Short Story Title & Author: _____

Your job is to find connections between the short story your group is reading and the world outside. This means connecting it to your own life, to happenings outside school or in the community, to similar events at other times and places, to other people or problems that you are reminded of. You might also see connections between this story and other writings of the same topic or by the same author.

Some connections I found between this reading the world outside were:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Possible kinds of connections:

- Happenings at school
- World Events
- Problems you have experienced
- Similar books or authors
- Subjects studied at school

Self Evaluation - Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5.

How well did you **prepare**? _____ How well did you **participate**? _____

What grade do you think you deserve? _____

Why?

Word Wizard

Name: _____ Date of Meeting: _____

Short Story Title & Author: _____

Your job is to be on the lookout for words that may be unusual, puzzling, or unfamiliar. Try to find out their meaning from the context clues around the words. Look up the words in a dictionary and record them below. Make sure that you understand the words before you meet with the group. Lead your group through a discussion of the words and their meanings.

Word	Page #	Context Clues	Dictionary Definition

Self Evaluation - Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5.

How well did you **prepare**? _____ How well did you **participate**? _____

What grade do you think you deserve? _____

Why?

Illustrator/Mapper

Name: _____ Date of Meeting: _____

Short Story Title & Author: _____

Your job is to draw some kind of picture or thinking map related to the short story. You can draw a sketch, cartoon, diagram, or any kind of graphic organizer. You can illustrate something that is discussed specifically in the book or something that the reading reminded you of, or a picture that conveys any idea or feeling you got from the reading. Make your illustration on another sheet of paper and attach it to this one before handing in this assignment.

Presentation Plan: Show your illustration without comment to others in the group. One at a time, they get to speculate what your picture means, to connect the drawing to their own ideas about the reading. After everyone has had a say, you get the last word: tell them what your picture means, where it came from, or what it represents to you.

Comments to share with your group (reasons why you drew that illustration, what it means to you, what part of the story it represents, etc.):

Self Evaluation - Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5.

How well did you **prepare**? _____

How well did you **participate**? _____

What grade do you think you deserve? _____
Why?

Character Caretaker

Name: _____ Date of Meeting: _____
Short Story Title & Author:

The role of the Character Caretaker is to name and identify each character and give description to each. Make connections to the physical appearance of characters as well as determine qualities of their personality. You will use quotes and details to help determine the character and support your ideas. Fill in the chart below for as many characters that appear in the story.

Character Name	Physical Description	Personality/ Character Traits	Occupation	Character Type (Protagonist, Antagonist, Main Character, Minor Character)

Self Evaluation - Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5.

How well did you **prepare**? _____ How well did you **participate**? _____

What grade do you think you deserve? _____

Why?

Appendix 3

Questions to Guide Your Critique

Setting

Is the setting detailed? Can you feel as if you are there?

Are there details about the time/place/location? Is it clear when the location or time changes?

Characterization and Dialogue

Is the main character in-depth? Do they have multiple qualities/skills?

If there are other characters, are they crucial to events of the story or development of the main character?

Are there interactions between characters you wanted more of, or less of?

Is the dialogue believable? Do people actually speak like that?

Imagery

Which scenes are described well? Can you, as the reader, feel what is being described?

Which parts of the story could include more imagery? Which sense could be appealed to more?

Any scenes that could use more showing than telling?

Overall

Does the title create interest? Does it fit the story?

Is the opening line engaging?

Is the story paced well? Do events happen too quickly or are scenes too drawn-out?

If there is no ending, what ideas do you have for the writer to end the story?

Does the ending wrap up everything up?