**Short Story**

**Short Story Definition**

A short story is a fully developed story which is shorter than a [novel](https://literarydevices.net/novel/) and longer than a [fable](https://literarydevices.net/fable/). It typically takes just a single sitting for reading. Short Story focuses on the incidents bigger or smaller and evokes strong feelings from its readers. A short story often has a few characters in the [plot](https://literarydevices.net/plot/).

**Features of a Short Story**

As a short story is mostly a short [narrative](https://literarydevices.net/narrative/) and has few features. The standard features include [exposition](https://literarydevices.net/exposition/), complication, crisis, [climax](https://literarydevices.net/climax/), and [resolution](https://literarydevices.net/resolution/) of the crisis. However, it is not essential that all short stories follow the same pattern.

## Short Story Meaning and Function

A short story presents one aspect of the life of a character. It could be an incident, an event, a description of a feeling, or even a simple act. A short story can also impact a reader and even inspire them. For persons who cannot read novels, enjoy reading the short stories. Moreover, in a short story, the characters also share their innermost thoughts, their motives, their feelings, their emotions, and different notions.

## Characteristics

**Length**: Short stories typically range from 1,600 to 20,000 words.

Although authors and critics have debated the length of the short story throughout literary history, most agree on a minimum of 1,600 and a maximum of 20,000 words. In his own contribution to the debate, **Edgar Allen Poe** suggested that a short story should take 30 minutes to two hours to read.

**Subject**: Short stories usually focus on a single subject or theme.

Subjects or themes may range from something as ordinary as a daily task or as thrilling as a ghost tale. A single, easily contained plot is one of the hallmarks of the short story and helps shape its other characteristics.

**'In medias res'**: Short stories usually take place in a single setting and begin 'in medias res', which means 'into the middle of things' in Latin.

In general, short stories tend to begin and end abruptly, with little to no prior information and no major lapses in time. As they involve just one plot line and are limited in word length, there is little room or need for the extended developments we frequently find in novels.

**Limited number of characters**: Due to the limitations of the genre, short stories typically focus on just one or a couple characters.

As short stories usually cover such brief periods of time, even a single character may never be fully developed.