

Telling Tales:

Exploring Short Stories and Story Structure Through the Language Arts

Ms. Polowick
ELA 10-1

What are short stories? Why do we tell short stories? What do they mean to me?

- Short stories are “small slices of life” that can usually be read in one sitting, but vary in length. Authors of short stories have to “squeeze in” many details in order to create a complete story, so all of the words and details are carefully chosen.
- Storytelling is humanity’s oldest form of literacy. People have been telling stories for thousands of years, and many of these stories have survived time and translation (*Aesop’s Fables*, *The Bible*, *The Odyssey*, etc.). Stories are a wonderful way to learn more about each other, the world we live in, and ourselves.
- We all have our own stories, and each experience we have adds to our own life stories. We often talk about “beginning a new chapter” in our life, so you might consider your Grade 10 experience as an important chapter in your own life.

Timeline of Readings

Telling Tales is a short unit. We will spend approximately 2 ½ weeks learning about the elements of stories, and reading some wonderful short stories that illustrate the elements we discuss. Please be prepared to do some reading at home, however, most of the reading will be done in-class using a variety of different reading activities.

Expectations

1. RESPECT yourself and others. I invite you to share your thoughts and ideas throughout our time together, but please keep in mind that respectful attention, conversation, and contributions are very important to the success of our class.
2. Be READY for class – on time with necessary materials (and homework completed).
3. Assignments will be due at the BEGINNING of class. Late assignments will not be accepted after class assignments are marked and returned.
4. Exploring the language arts are an excellent way to help us understand each other, the world we live in, and ourselves. I hope you will HAVE FUN and enjoy yourselves as we work through this unit and learn new things together.

Assignments and Evaluation

Elements Portfolio & self-assessment	15%
Journal Responses	10%
Vocabulary Log	10%
Comprehension Questions	10%
Quiz #1	10%
Unit Exam	20%
Creative Short Story Proposal Author background “Afterword”	20%
Participation	5%

Elements Portfolio

During the course of this unit you will create writing pieces that address each of the elements of short stories. You will be required to keep these items safe and wrinkle-free because you will be handing in an organized portfolio on the day of the unit exam. This portfolio will **include all of the assigned pieces**, 2 of which must be polished pieces. You will also include a self-assessment/rationale for your grade that will aim to have you reflect upon the process of writing and the quality of your work. More details to come.

Vocabulary Log and Presentations

You will be required to keep a log of vocabulary terms from our short story texts. I will provide a list of terms (posted on the class bulletin board), and each term will be assigned to a student. It will be your job to present your terms and definitions on the day we discuss the story. Your “Vocabulary Log” grade will be based on your brief presentation and the completion of your log.

The Final Project

Please see handout

I am looking forward to teaching and learning from you. Please ask if you have questions.