

**DRAFT**

**LITERATURE COMPONENT FOR FORM 4**

# Short Story

**QWERTYUIOP**

**by Vivien Alcock**



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## SHORT STORY



# Introduction

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Welcome to the World of Literature and to Short Stories!

We hope you will enjoy working with this guidebook, which has been specially designed to help you prepare your students enjoy the Literature Component of the KBSM English Language syllabus.

A brief explanation of the short story genre has been provided together with suggested activities, teaching steps and worksheets/handouts. An answer key with suggested answers has been provided at the end of the guide to assist you. There is also an assessment section with contextual questions and ideas for authentic assessment and a glossary at the end of each story.

We recommend that the activities in this guidebook be adapted for your students' needs and be carried out creatively in order to develop students' appreciation and critical analysis of the short stories. Be ready to listen to students' views and opinions, and encourage them to work out the answers.

It is our sincere hope that the activities and worksheets in this guidebook will act as a springboard for your own ideas and methods of exploring the individual stories.

## SHORT STORY



# About Short Stories

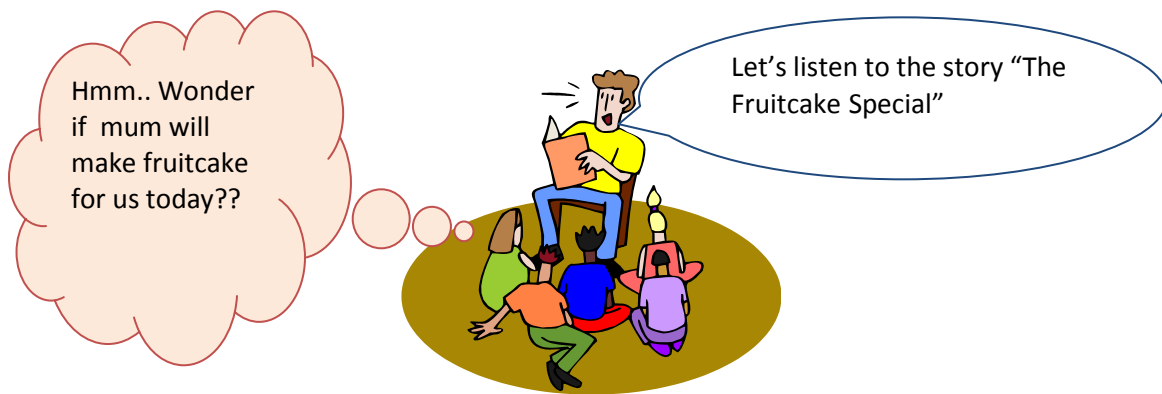
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### What is a Short Story?

Can you explain what makes a short story? Well, a short story is a short piece of fiction aiming at unity of characterization, theme and effect. It aims to produce a single narrative effect with the greatest economy of means and utmost emphasis.

Did you know that modern short story writers tend to base their narratives on their own experience? Here the focus is much more on the less spectacular aspects of life, on the significance underlying what is apparently trivial. The result of such perceptive writing is to reveal the subtleties of the human mind and of human behaviour.



### What makes a good short story?

- A short story is a piece of prose fiction which can be read at a single sitting.
- It ought to combine matter-of-fact description with poetic atmosphere.
- It ought to present a unified impression of temper, tone, colour, and effect.
- It mostly shows a decisive moment of life.
- There is often little action, hardly any character development, but we get a snapshot of life.
- Its plot is not very complex (in contrast to the novel), but it creates a unified impression and leaves us with a vivid sensation rather than a number of remembered facts.
- There is a close connection between the short story and the poem as there is both a unique union of idea and structure.

## Short Story Elements

Can you suggest some elements of a short story? Let's find out in the section below.

**Setting** -- The time and location in which a story takes place is called the setting. For some stories the setting is very important, while for others it is not. There are several aspects of a story's setting to consider when examining how setting contributes to a story (some, or all, may be present in a story):

- **Place** - geographical location. Where is the action of the story taking place?
- **Time** - When is the story taking place? (historical period, time of day, year, etc)
- **Weather conditions** - Is it rainy, sunny, stormy, etc?
- **Social conditions** - What is the daily life of the characters like? Does the story contain local colour (writing that focuses on the speech, dress, mannerisms, customs, etc. of a particular place)?
- **Mood or atmosphere** - What feeling is created at the beginning of the story? Is it bright and cheerful or dark and frightening?

**Plot** -- The plot is how the author arranges events to develop his basic idea; It is the sequence of events in a story or play. The plot is a planned, logical series of events having a beginning, middle, and end. The short story usually has one plot so it can be read in one sitting. There are five essential parts of plot:

- **Introduction /Orientation-** The beginning of the story where the characters and the setting is revealed.
- **Rising Action** - This is where the events in the story become complicated and the conflict in the story is revealed (events between the introduction and climax).
- **Climax** - This is the highest point of interest and the turning point of the story. The reader wonders what will happen next; will the conflict be resolved or not?
- **Falling action** - The events and complications begin to resolve themselves. The reader knows what has happened next and if the conflict was resolved or not (events between climax and denouement).
- **Resolution / Denouement** - This is the final outcome or untangling of events in the story.

Generally, it is helpful to consider the climax as a three-fold phenomenon:

- the main character receives new information
- accepts this information (realizes it but does not necessarily agree with it)
- acts on this information (makes a choice that will determine whether or not he/she gains his objective).

**Conflict--** Conflict is also essential to the plot. Without conflict there is no plot. It is the opposition of forces which ties one incident to another and makes the plot move. Conflict is not merely limited to open arguments, rather it is any form of opposition that faces the main character. Within a short story there may be only one central struggle, or there may be one dominant struggle with many minor ones.

Did you know that there are two types of conflict? They are ...

- 1) **External** - A struggle with a force outside one's self.
- 2) **Internal** - A struggle within one's self; a person must make some decision, overcome pain, quiet their temper, resist an urge, etc.

Conflict can also occur in the following situations:

- **Man vs. Man** (physical) - The leading character struggles with his physical strength against other men, forces of nature, or animals.
- **Man vs. Circumstances** (classical) - The leading character struggles against fate, or the circumstances of life facing him/her.
- **Man vs. Society** (social) - The leading character struggles against ideas, practices, or customs of other people.
- **Man vs. Himself/Herself** (psychological) - The leading character struggles with himself/herself; with his/her own soul, ideas of right or wrong, physical limitations, choices, etc.



Hi, can you guess what  
“character” means?

**Character** -- There are two meanings for the word character:

- The person in a work of fiction.
- The characteristics of a person.

### **Persons in a work of fiction - Antagonist and Protagonist**

Short stories use few characters. One character is clearly central to the story with all major events having some importance to this character - he/she is the PROTAGONIST. The opposer of the main character is called the ANTAGONIST.

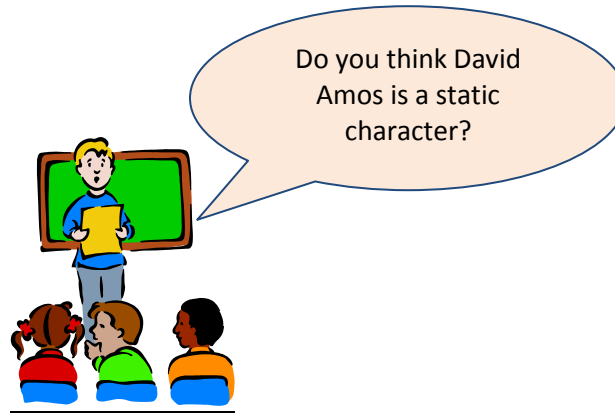
**The Characteristics of a Person** – In order for a story to seem real to the reader its characters must seem real. Characterization is the information the author gives the reader about the characters themselves. Characters are convincing if they are: consistent, motivated, and life-like (resemble real people)

Can you guess how does the author reveal a character? Well, it is done in several ways through:

- a) his/her physical appearance
- b) what he/she says, thinks, feels and dreams
- c) what he/she does or does not do
- d) what others say about him/her and how others react to him/her

## Characters can be ...

1. **Individual** - round, many sided and complex personalities.
2. **Developing** - dynamic, many sided personalities that change, for better or worse, by the end of the story.
3. **Static** - Stereotype, have one or two characteristics that never change and are emphasized e.g. brilliant detective, drunk, scrooge, cruel stepmother, etc.



## Point of View

Point of view, or p.o.v., is defined as the angle from which the story is told.

- **Innocent Eye** - The story is told through the eyes of a child (his/her judgment being different from that of an adult) .
- **Stream of Consciousness** - The story is told so that the reader feels as if they are inside the head of one character and knows all their thoughts and reactions.
- **First Person** - The story is told by the protagonist or one of the characters who interacts closely with the protagonist or other characters (using pronouns I, me, we, etc). The reader sees the story through this person's eyes as he/she experiences it and only knows what he/she knows or feels.
- **Omniscient**- The author can narrate the story using the omniscient point of view. He can move from character to character, event to event, having free access to the thoughts, feelings and motivations of his characters and he introduces information where and when he chooses. There are two main types of omniscient point of view:
  - a) **Omniscient Limited** - The author tells the story in third person (using pronouns they, she, he, it, etc). We know only what the character knows and what the author

allows him/her to tell us. We can see the thoughts and feelings of characters if the author chooses to reveal them to us.

b) **Omniscient Objective** – The author tells the story in the third person. It appears as though a camera is following the characters, going anywhere, and recording only what is seen and heard. There is no comment on the characters or their thoughts. No interpretations are offered. The reader is placed in the position of spectator without the author there to explain. The reader has to interpret events on his own.



I'm Anna. I'm going to tell my story from the first person point of view...

**Theme** -- The theme in a piece of fiction is its controlling idea or its central insight. It is the author's underlying meaning or main idea that he is trying to convey. The theme may be the author's thoughts about a topic or view of human nature. The title of the short story usually points to what the writer is saying and he may use various figures of speech to emphasize his theme, such as: symbol, allusion, simile, metaphor, hyperbole, or irony.

Some simple examples of common themes from literature, TV, and film are:

*Things are not always as they appear to be.*

*Love is blind.*

*Believe in yourself.*

*People are afraid of change.*

*Don't judge a book by its cover.*



#### Source



URL : [http://homepage.bnv-bamberg.de/gk\\_english/short\\_story](http://homepage.bnv-bamberg.de/gk_english/short_story)  
Date accessed : 13 October 2009



QWERTYUIOP



## The Writer

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**Vivien Alcock** (1924 – 2003) was an author of children's books. Born in Worthing, West Sussex, in England, her family moved to Devizes in Wiltshire when she was aged 10. She then studied at the Oxford School of Arts.

She was married to author Leon Garfield, with whom she adopted a daughter, named Jane after Jane Austen. They met during World War II, when Vivien was an ambulance driver. Her first book was *The Haunting of Cassie Palmer* which was followed by *The Monster Garden* and others. (From *Wikipedia.org*)



# Synopsis

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‘QWERTYUIOP’ by Vivien Alcock is about a young graduate named Lucy Beck who has just finished her ‘O’ levels at Belmont Secretarial College. Being a slow learner herself, she has no confidence that she will find a job. Fortunately, she is offered a job by Mr. Ross, the Manager of Ross and Bannister’s. During her first day, she encounters many peculiar incidents. Later, she finds out that there is a spirit lingering around the office who is adamant in holding on to her position as the company’s secretary. Towards the end of the story, Lucy tries to get rid of the spirit that has been haunting that place for many years by putting the spirit at peace.



# Elements

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## **SETTING**

The story revolves around two main settings: Lucy's house which she shares with her mother and her Uncle Bert, and the office of Ross and Bannister's where Lucy works as a secretary.

## **CHARACTERS**

Lucy Beck : She is a young, shy and insecure graduate of secretarial studies. She is dissatisfied with her current life and is determined to improve it. She obtains a position with Ross and Bannister's, only to find that the position comes with a chilling secret.

Ghost of Ms. : She was the previous employee of Ross and Bannister's. She is unwilling to let go of her position and continues to defend her post, even after her demise.

Lucy's mother : A housewife who lives a hard life. She has to support her brother.

Uncle Bert : Depends on his sister for support. He is also a drunkard.

Harry Darke : Ross and Bannister's handyman. He is an old man who has been working with the company for years.

Mr. Ross : The younger partner of the company.

## **THEMES**

Possible themes that can be found in the short story are determination, possessiveness, loyalty, loneliness, commitment, the supernatural, and compassion.

### **DETERMINATION:**

Despite the supernatural nature by which Ms. Broome badgers and demoralises Lucy, she shows no signs of giving in to her demand. Instead, she is steadfast in defending her position as the secretary.

### POSSESIVENESS:

Not even death could part Ms. Broome from what she feels is rightfully hers. She continues to haunt the office through her electronic typewriter.

### LOYALTY:

As with her possessiveness towards her job, Ms. Broome was also extremely loyal towards Mr. Bannister. Even after she passed on, her spirit continued in its endeavour to serve her employer.

### LONELINESS:

Loneliness can be a strong influence in a person's life. Ms. Broome had no life outside of her office. That made her more possessive of her position in the company; a possessiveness that went beyond the grave.

### COMMITMENT:

This attribute can be clearly seen in both Lucy and Ms. Broome. Both are extremely committed to their profession.

### THE SUPERNATURAL:

It is interesting that such an integral character in the story happens to be an ethereal entity. Yet this theme is rather prominent in the story.

### COMPASSION:

This theme holds water especially in the final confrontation between Lucy and Ms. Broome. It is not through hatred nor coercion that Lucy manages to outsmart Ms. Broome, rather, it was through compassion and understanding of Ms. Broome's intentions.

### **MORAL VALUES**

- Do not judge a person merely through credentials or qualifications
- We must be committed and responsible to our vocation or profession
- We must value our family.



# Twinkle Twinkle Little Plot



## Aim



To present a graphic representation of the plot of a short story



40 minutes



## Materials



Worksheet SS1



scissors, strings, glue or cellophane tape

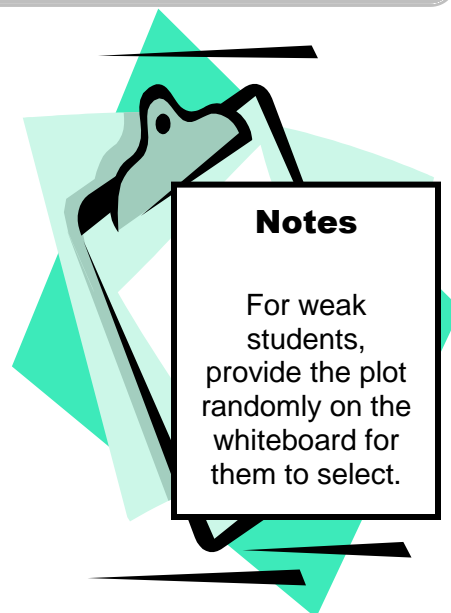


## Steps

- 1 Place students into groups of 4 – 5. Ask groups to identify the plot of the short story.
- 2 Provide the groups with the materials. Write the various events of the plot on the corresponding stars.
- 3 Cut the completed stars and string them up around the class walls.
- 4 Groups present their stories based on the information in their stars.

## Notes

For weak students, provide the plot randomly on the whiteboard for them to select.



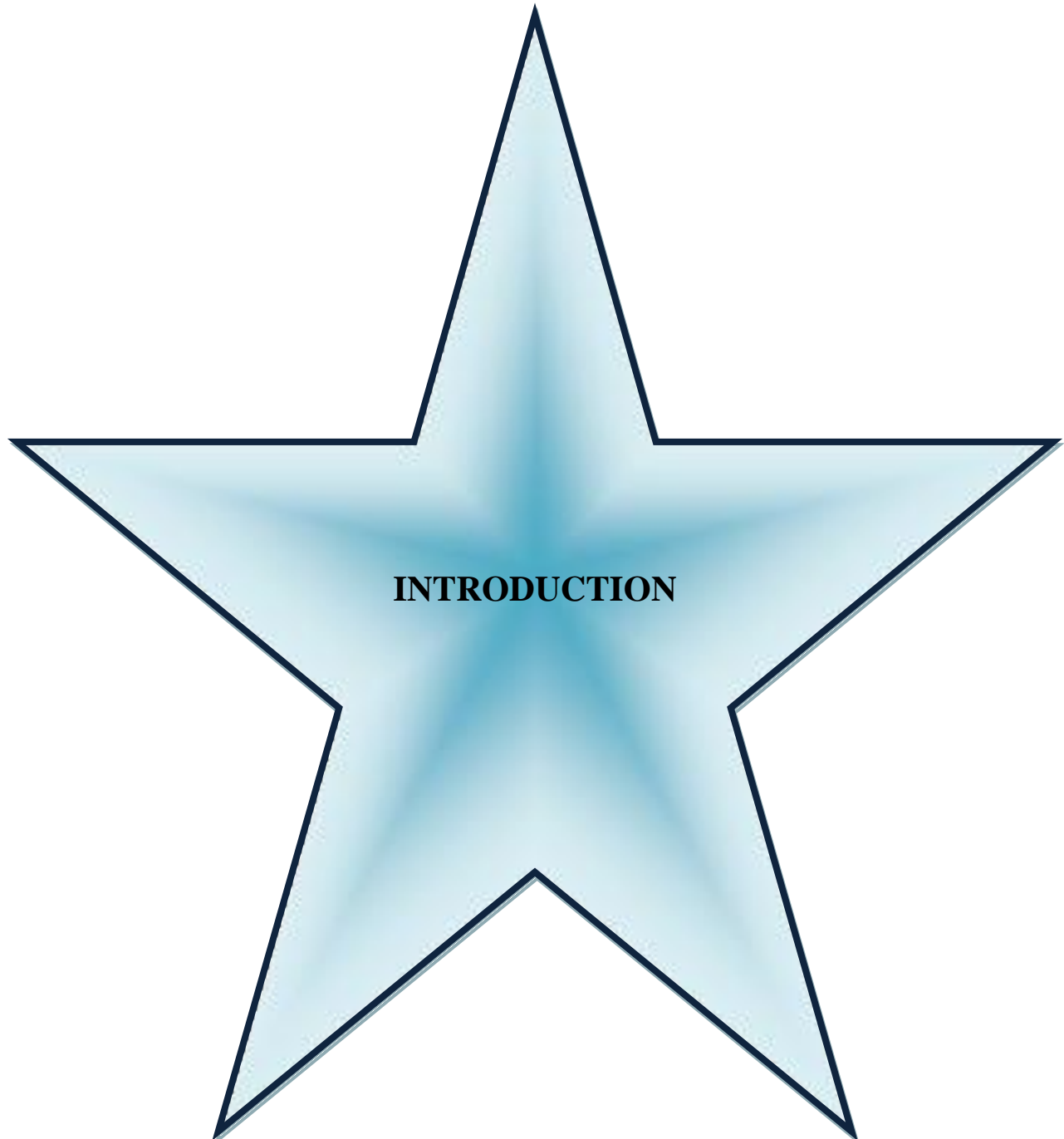


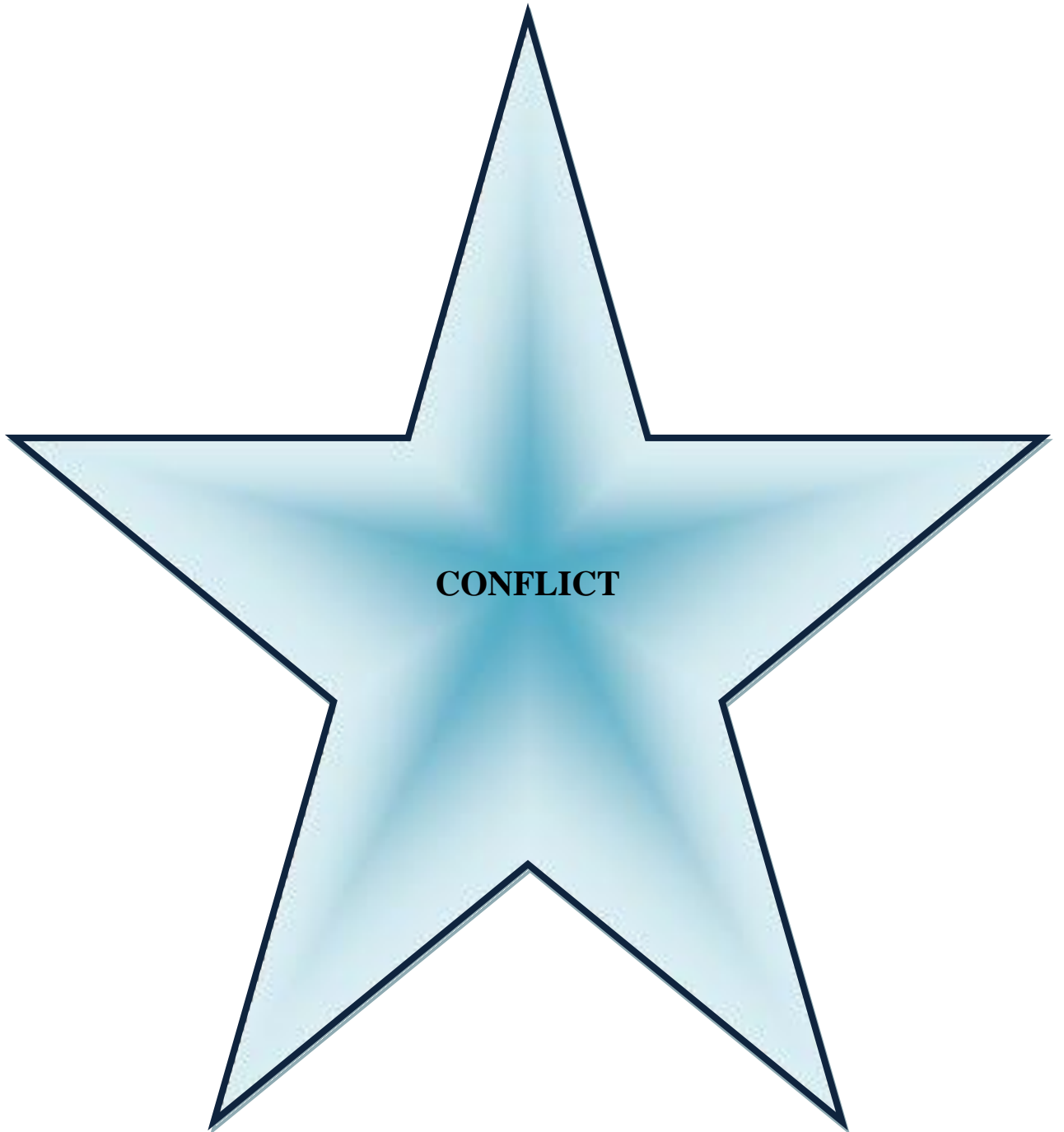
# Twinkle Twinkle Little Plot

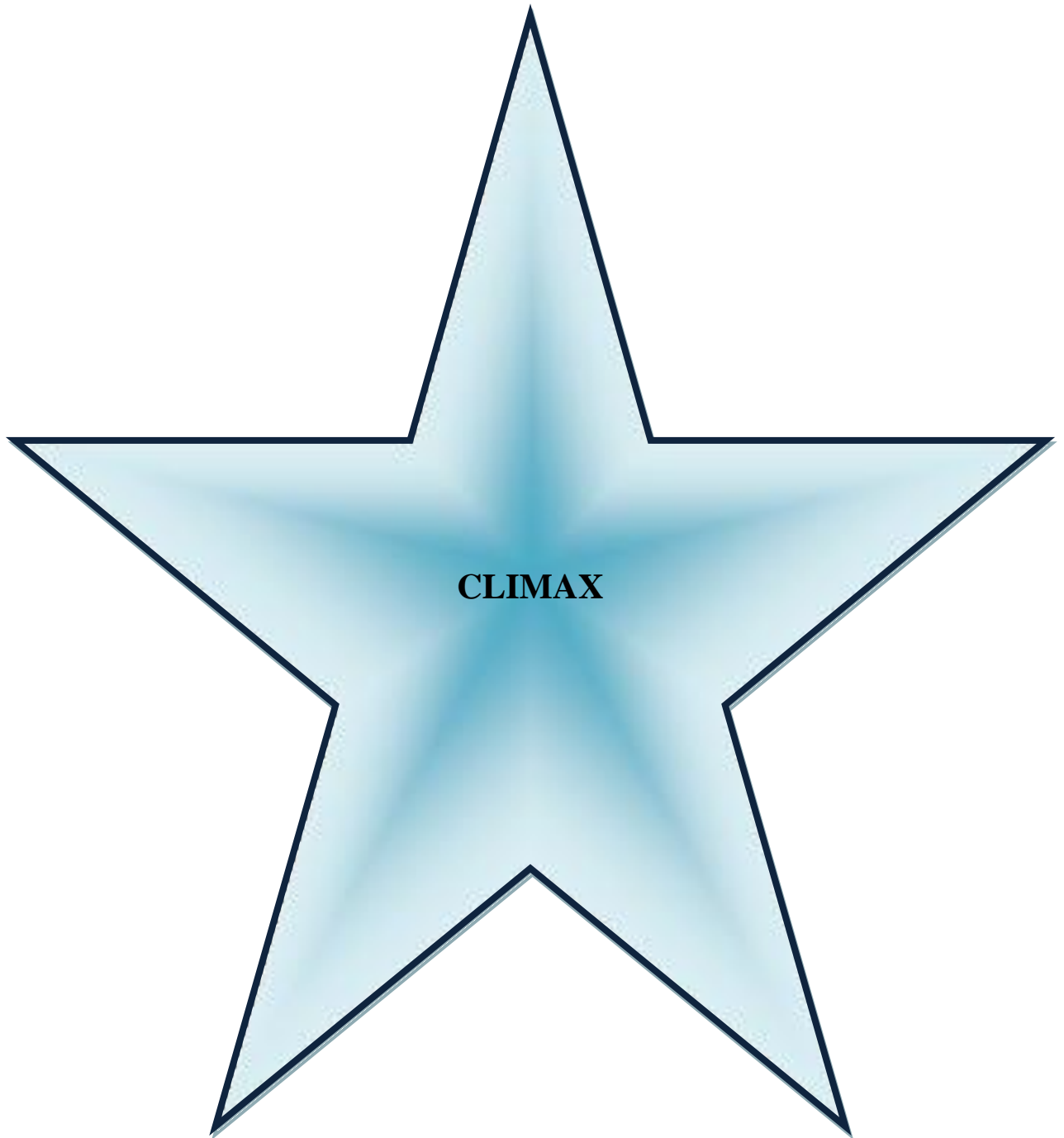
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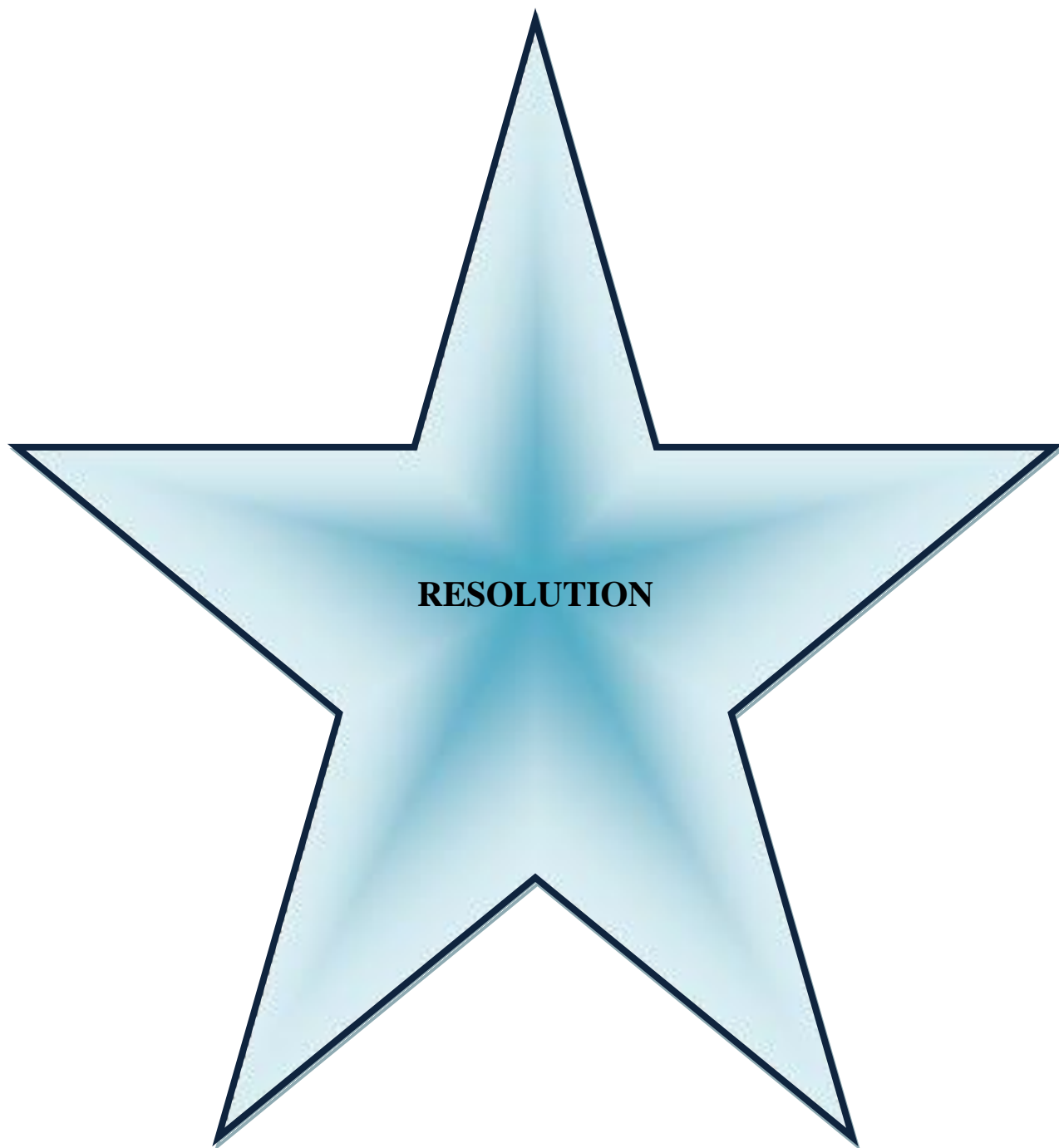
Fill the following stars with the appropriate plots from the short story.













# And Your Point Is?



## Aim



To introduce the main and sub-themes of the story:  
Determination, Possessiveness, Loyalty, Loneliness,  
Commitment, element of Supernatural



40 minutes



## Materials



Worksheet SS2



## Steps

1

Divide the class into 6 groups.

2

Distribute the extract sheet to the groups.

3

Instruct students to discuss and identify the themes based on the extract provided.

## Notes

For weaker students, provide the themes by writing them on the whiteboard.



## And Your Point Is?



### Extract 1

For an hour, she battled with the machine. As fast as QWERTYUIOPs and unwanted capitals appeared, she attacked with loaded brush. The white fluid ran down the typing paper like melting ice-cream, and dripped thickly into the depths of the typewriter.

YOU'RE DROWNING ME, it complained pathetically, and she swiped at the words with her brush.

HELP!

Another swipe.

PLEASE!

But Lucy showed no mercy. The large bottle was half-empty when she reached the end of the letter in triumph.

YOURS faithfully,

George Ross

She typed, and sat back with sigh of relief.

## Extract 2

**YOU ARE SITTING IN MY CHAIR** to inform you that **GO AWAY** a new line of **WE DO NOT WANT YOU HERE .....QWERTYUIOP**

**GO AWAY, MISS BECK**  
*Why should I?*

***I AM SECRETARY HERE***, it stated, this time in red letter

*"It's my job now, " she said. "I need it. She can't have it forever, it's not fair. It's not fair. It's my turn now."*

Mr. Darke told me you used to be secretary to Mr. Bannister...  
I AM, interrupted the typewriter,

### Extract 3

I'm Harry Darke, thirty years with Ross and Bannister's retired with a silver watch, and now come back to haunt the place. Can't keep away, you see"

She was old Mr Bannister's secretary. Been here forty-three years, girl, woman and old misery..... She didn't want to go.

..... He needs someone to look after him....

The machine was silent. Lucy waited, but it said nothing more. So she typed:

Goodbye, Miss Broome. Best of luck in your new job,

#### Extract 4

“Uncle Bert looked so lonely, so lost”, she had told Lucy. “All by himself in that horrid little room, with the worn lino and the curtains all shrunk.”

She didn’t want to go. Didn’t have anywhere worth going to- a bedsit, a gas ring... The old bag didn’t have any family who’d own her. This place was her home, this job was all she lived for.”

## Extract 5

(Lucy) was early. She smoothed down her windy hair and waited. At five past nine, an elderly man .... came..."Ah, he said, noticing Lucy, 'Punctuality is the courtesy of kings -

She must be more careful. Keep her mind on the job, not allow it to wander out the window into the sunny shopping street below. Putting fresh paper into the typewriter, she began again.

She was tempted to look at the keyboard.....

....Lucy obediently looked away, and typed to a slow tune in her head

## Extract 6

There was something odd.... What was wrong?

There was something.. Her glance fell on the  
uncompleted letter.

She stared at it in horrified bewilderment. What  
had happened? What she has done? ..... Such  
strange mistakes- QWERTYUIOP, the top line  
of letters on a typewriter, repeated over and  
over again!





## Guess Who?



### Aim



To help students make mental associations of the various characters



40 minutes



### Materials



Blank papers, colouring materials, newspaper



### Steps

- 1 Form groups of 4-5. Distribute the materials to the groups. Ask them to select a character from the short story.
- 2 List all the items that are associated with that character (E.g. Miss Lucy Beck: 'O' Level diploma, typewriter, office desk, telephone, etc).
- 3 Students cut and paste those items onto the paper given using the newspaper or draw them.
- 4 Students write five adjectives that describe the character related to the collage.

### Notes

Pictures can be cut out from magazines as well



# Climb That Mountain!



## Aim



To present a graphic representation of the plot of a short story



40 minutes



## Materials



Worksheet SS5



## Steps

- 1 Place students in pairs.
- 2 Write the various events of the plot on the corresponding boxes.
- 3 Groups present their findings to the class.
- 4 Correct the pair's findings where necessary

## Notes

Pictures can be cut out from magazines as well



# Climb That Mountain!



Fill the boxes with the appropriate information based on the short story

INTRODUCTION	CONFLICT/ DEVELOPMENT	CLIMAX	RESOLUTION



# Lights, Camera, Action!



## Aim



To evoke interest in understanding the characters through acting out the selected scenes



80 minutes



## Materials



Worksheet SS6



## Steps

- 1 Divide the class into groups.
- 2 Give the cut out copies of the scene (Handout S22) to the groups.
- 3 After discussion, they will act out the scenes given. There are three scenes to be acted out.

## Notes

Discuss with the students what they have learnt from the activity



# Lights, Camera, Action!

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**SCENE 1:**

**"Be positive," Mrs. Brice told the departing students, as she shook them by the hand in turn. "Go out into the world and win! I have every confidence in you."**

**SCENE 2:**

**Lucy : Are you from outer space?**  
**Broome : IDIOT**  
**Lucy : Who are you?**  
**Broome : MISS BROOME**  
**Lucy : How do you do? I am Miss Beck**  
**Broome : GO AWAY, MISS BECK**  
**Lucy : Why should I?**  
**Broome : I AM SECRETARY HERE**  
**Lucy : No, you're not! I am!**  
**Broome : QWERTYUIOP! QWERTYUIOP!**

**SCENE 3:**

**Lucy** : Dear Ms. Broome, Mr Darke told me you used to be secretary to Mr. Bannister...

**Broome** : I AM!

**Lucy** : I am sorry to have to tell you that Mr. Bannister ...passed on three years ago, at the age of eighty-six..

**Broome** : LIAR! I DON'T BELIEVE YOU!

**Lucy** : It's true Ms. Broome. I have seen his grave in the cemetery. It's not far from yours. I went along last night and left you flowers... Mr. Darke is worried about Mr. Bannister. He doesn't know how he will manage without you...

**Broome** : HE TOLD ME TO GO! BRASS CLOCK, WHAT DID I WANT WITH BRASS CLOCK! I WANTED MY JOB!

**Lucy** : He must miss you. He's probably in an awful muddle up there, mislaying his wings. Losing his harp. He needs someone to look after him.. goodbye, Miss Broome. Best of luck in your new job.  
Yours sincerely, Lucy Beck, secretary.



# The Moral Of The Story



## Aim



To identify possible moral values found in the text



40 minutes



## Materials



Worksheet SS7



## Steps

- 1 Identify as many moral values the students can find from the four excerpts in the worksheet.
- 2 Look for other phrases or paragraphs in the story that may contain moral values and identify them.

## Notes

As an extension, other excerpts from the text can be selected for moral value analysis



# The Moral Of The Story



Quotations	Moral Value(s)
"Be positive," Mrs. Brice told her departing students, as she shook them by the hand in turn. "Go out into the world and win! I have every confidence in you."	
She was early. She smoothed down her windy hair, and waited.	
For an hour, she battled with the machine. As fast as QWERTYUIOPs and unwanted capitals appeared, she attacked with a loaded brush.	
"Uncle Bert...." She began. "What?" He looked at her warily. "I'm sorry. I'm sorry, Uncle Bert." "I'm sorry too, Lucy," he said. "I know it's a nuisance, having me here." "No! No, it isn't! We want you," she said.	

## **Additional task:**

Look for other phrases or paragraphs in the story that show possible moral values and identify what those moral values are.





# Yes or No?



## Aim



To help students make associations of the various characters



40 minutes



## Materials



The text



## Steps

- 1 Teacher selects 8 students to represent the different characters in the story.
- 2 The rest of the class is divided into 5 groups. The cast of characters stand in front of the class. Each group takes turn to ask questions but the character is only allowed to answer "Yes" or "No". Each group is only allowed 5 questions.
- 3 Students to guess the identity of the characters by analysing the clues gathered from the question session.
- 4 The group who guesses correctly gets a score. The game ends when all characters are revealed. The group with the highest score wins.

## Notes

Teacher asks students to select questions which will give them clues on the characters.



# Draw Me



## Aim



To design or draw a character poster



40 minutes



## Materials



Any materials for poster design.



## Steps

- 1 Place students into small groups.
- 2 Each group selects a character. The group creates a poster which reveals the characteristics of the character.
- 3 Students may use any forms of illustrations to portray the characteristics, e.g. symbols or pictures. Encourage creativity in designing the posters.
- 4 The class will vote for the best illustrated poster and justify their choice.

## Notes

Same activity can be done for different scenes in the story.



# Lit Raider



## Aim



Explore the text to find examples of literary devices in the short story 'QWERTYUIOP'



40 minutes



## Materials



The text, numbered envelopes, cue cards to be put in the envelope



## Steps

- 1 Place students into groups of 5. Select a leader and a secretary for the group
- 2 Find the six envelopes placed in various places hidden around the classroom/school. Groups solve the problems given in the cue cards.
- 3 Group secretaries list the six literary terms they have learnt at each point during the game on a piece of paper.
- 4 Groups present their findings.

## Notes

Encourage students to discuss their findings and ideas.



# Where? When? What?



## Aim



Identify the settings in the short story 'QWERTYUIOP'



40 minutes



## Materials



Worksheet SS11



## Steps

- 1 Students complete the task in the worksheet.
- 2 Divide students into groups of 4-5. Discuss their answers. Modify answers based on their discussion. Discuss answers in class.

## Notes

Encourage students to discuss their findings and ideas.



## Where? When? What?



1. Who are the people involved in the story?
2. Where did the events in the story take place?
3. Why didn't Lucy and her uncle Bert get along?
4. How did Lucy's mother react to her daughter getting a job?
5. What strange thing happened to Lucy on her first day of work?
6. How did Lucy handle the situation?
7. Why was Ms. Broome unhappy?
8. How did Lucy persuade Ms. Broome to 'leave her job'?



# Narrative Writing



## Aim



To narrate an eerie or frightening experience.



80 minutes



## Materials



Exercise book



## Steps

1

Write a story about an eerie or frightening experience that you have. It can be based on a real story or imaginary. Make sure that it is as graphic and expressive as possible.

## Notes

The process writing approach can be used to improve the quality of the writing.

Students are encouraged to illustrate their work.



Dear Sir,



### Aim



To master social skills of job application.



80 minutes



### Materials



Blank paper



### Steps

1

Compose an application letter requesting the position of a secretary at Ross and Bannister's.

### Notes

Revise the conventions of formal letter writing.



# Journal Entry



## Aim



To explore the thoughts and feelings of a character through journal entries.



40 minutes



## Materials



Diary or journal



## Steps

- 1 Divide the class into three groups. Give different situations to each group. (Refer to handout)
- 2 Each group studies their situation and plans how to role play their situation.
- 3 Groups role play their situations. Peer evaluation by other groups.

## Notes

Discuss with the students what they have learnt from the activity





# Act It Out



## Aim



To encourage critical thinking.



40 minutes



## Materials



Handout SS4



## Steps

- 1 Divide the class into three groups. Give different situations to each group. (Refer to handout)
- 2 Each group studies their situation and plans how to role play their situation.
- 3 Groups role play their situations. Peer evaluation by other groups.

## Notes

Discuss with the students what they have learnt from the activity



# Act It Out



## SITUATION 1

Your house has been haunted by a ghost called Miss Broome. What would you do to get rid of the ghost?

## SITUATION 2

Imagine you are Miss Broome, the ghost typist. Lucy has shown that she is still not leaving her position in the office despite all the disturbances you have created. What would you do to get rid of her?

## SITUATION 3

Imagine you are Mr. Bannister and Lucy has come to you about the 'ghost' in her office. She wants to quit her job. Create a dialogue between Lucy and yourself. What would you say to persuade her to stay on as the typist?



# Cover Me



## Aim



To encourage creativity.



40 minutes



## Materials



Drawing block, coloured pencils, pictures, illustrations, etc.



## Steps

- 1 Place students into groups of 4 – 5. Instruct the groups to be creative when thinking of a suitable illustration for the cover page of the story
- 2 When the posters are completed, instruct the groups to present their posters and give a brief explanation of their illustration.
- 3 Display posters on the wall around the classroom.

## Notes

Encourage students to reproduce the story in a creative form.

Students may create their poster on the net and then print it out.



## Sequence Me

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**RE-ARRANGE THE SENTENCES BELOW ACCORDING TO THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS IN THE STORY.**

- a. Lucy finds out from Harry Darke who Miss Broome is. ☐
- b. She makes Miss Broome's spirit understand why she should not remain in the office any longer. ☐
- c. She continues to type and correct the letter but is constantly challenged by the typewriter. ☐
- d. Harry Darke shows her the table and typewriter that she will use. ☐
- e. As she starts typing her first letter, something unusual happens; the word QWERTYUIOP keeps appearing repeatedly. ☐
- f. Lucy is offered a position as a secretary at Ross and Bannister's. ☐
- g. Lucy is worried that she might never find a job with her present skills and qualification. ☐



# Have I Understood?



## Practice 1

Answer the following questions based on the excerpt.

Lucy Beck was young and small and mouse-coloured, easily overlooked. She had a lonely 'O' level and a typing speed that would make a tortoise laugh.

"Whoever will want to employ me?" she had asked Mrs. Price once, and Mrs. Price had been at a loss to answer.

Lucy wanted a job. More than anyone, more than anything, she wanted a job. She was tired of being poor. She was fed up with macaroni cheese and baked beans. She was sick of second-hand clothes.

1. What do you think the author means when describing Lucy as "easily overlooked"?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What is the author implying when saying that Lucy's typing speed would "make a tortoise laugh"?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Which words or phrases have similar meanings to the following?
  - a) To hire : \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Used items : \_\_\_\_\_
4. Why couldn't Mrs. Price answer Lucy when she asked whether she would ever find a job?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. If you were in Lucy's situation, how would you feel? Elaborate.  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Practice 2

Answer the following questions based on the excerpt.

She was early. She smoothed down her windy hair, and waited.

At five past nine, an elderly man, with small dark eyes like currants and a thick icing of white hair, came hobbling up the stairs. He was jingling a bunch of keys.

“Ah,” he said, noticing Mary. “Punctuality is the courtesy of kings – but a hard necessity for new brooms, eh? You *are* the new broom, I suppose? Not an impatient customer waiting to see our new range of Sunburst cushions, by any chance?”

1. In your opinion, why did Lucy arrive early that Monday morning?

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2. Which words or phrases from the story have similar meanings to the following?

a) Being on time : \_\_\_\_\_

b) Selection : \_\_\_\_\_

3. Explain what the author means when describing Lucy as a ‘new broom’.

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4. Describe the man who opened the door for Lucy.

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5. Paraphrase the excerpt: “Punctuality is the courtesy of kings-but a hard necessity for new brooms”.

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### Practice 3

Answer the following questions based on the excerpt.

For an hour, she battled with the machine. As fast as QWERTYUIOPs and unwanted capitals appeared, she attacked with a loaded brush. The white fluid ran down the typing paper like melting ice-cream, and dripped thickly into the depths of the typewriter.

YOU'RE DROWNING ME, it complained pathetically, and she swiped at the words with her brush.

HELP!

Another swipe.

PLEASE!

But Lucy showed no mercy. The large bottle was half-empty when she reached the end of the letter in triumph.

1. Describe the 'battle' between Lucy and the typewriter.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Which words or phrases from the story have similar meanings to the following?
  - a) In a sorrowful state : \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Without error : \_\_\_\_\_
3. Why was the typewriter complaining that Lucy was drowning it?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Which sentence showed that Lucy was ruthless in the 'battle'.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Describe the outcome of the 'battle'.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Structured Response



1. Describe the life of Lucy Beck. Focus on:
  - a) Her relationship with her family
  - b) Her work
  - c) Her 'relationship' with Ms. Broome
2. In your opinion, why do Lucy and her mother have a strained relationship with Lucy's Uncle Bert?
3. "Beggars can't be choosers." How does this expression apply to Lucy with regards to her job?
4. Why was Ms. Broome reluctant to let go of her job?
5. In your opinion, did Lucy do an amicable job at persuading Mrs. Broome to move on? Justify your answer.



**QWERTYUIOP**



# Answer Key



## Worksheet SS1

### INTRODUCTION:

- Lucy Beck graduates from the Belmont Secretarial College with a lonely 'O' level
- Lucy was such a slow typist that the Principal worried that she would not find a job.
- Lucy lives with her mother and uncle. She wants a job because she does not want to be poor anymore and she wants to leave the house and get away from her uncle.
- Goes for an interview at Ross and Bannister's and is immediately accepted as a secretary.

### CONFLICT:

- Lucy arrives early for work. She meets Harry Darke who explains her job description.
- After describing her job, Harry Darke leaves the office to do his errands.
- Lucy finds some letters that Mr. Ross had left for her to type.
- Lucy is a touch-typist so she doesn't need to look at the letters as she types.

### CLIMAX:

- She was shocked to see QWERTYUIOP typed repeatedly so she tears it and types again. The typewriter automatically takes over and types a threat to her.
- Lucy decides to persevere and types some questions on the typewriter. Her questions were replied by a MISS BROOME who claims to be the rightful secretary.
- The typewriter then goes berserk by typing QWERTYUIOP repeatedly. Lucy retaliates by swiping correction fluid over them every time the typo emerges. She finally finishes her letters.
- Mr. Ross returns to the office and finds some letters to be signed. He enquires if Lucy had any problems completing them.
- Harry is surprised to see Lucy back the next day. She asks about Miss Broome and he tells her of Broome's story.

#### RESOLUTION:

- The next day, Lucy goes back to work and communicates to ms Broome via the typewriter.
- Lucy tells Broome about Mr. Bannister's passing and persuades her that her services are needed more 'up there' than down on earth.
- Ms Broome finally relents and Lucy bids her goodbye.



### Worksheet SS2

Extract 1: Determination

Extract 2: Possessiveness

Extract 3: Loyalty

Extract 4: Loneliness

Extract 5: Commitment

Extract 6: Elements of the supernatural



### Worksheet SS5

#### INTRODUCTION :

- Lucy graduates with a single 'O' Level
- Gets a secretarial job at Ross and Basnnister's
- Tells the good news to her mother

#### CONFLICT/DEVELOPMENT

- Shows up for work
- Briefed by Harry Darke
- Typing work disturbed by the ghost of Ms. Broome
- 'Battles' Ms. Broome and finishes her job.

#### CLIMAX:

- Finds out about Ms. Broome from Harry
- Has an argument with Uncle Bert but reconciles
- Finally persuades Ms. Broome to move on

#### RESOLUTION:

- Folds the letter into a paper plane and launches it
- The plane is blown away by the wind
- Mr. Ross is happy with his new secretary.



## Worksheet SS7

1. We must have confidence in people's abilities.
2. We must be punctual / we must value time
3. We must not give up so easily when faced with hardship or problems
4. We must value our family members.



## Worksheet SS10

### CUE CARDS

IT IS NOT EASY TO OBTAIN AN  
OCCUPATION  
WISHING SOMEONE ALL THE BEST  
BUT EXPECTING THE WORST  
WHEN FACED WITH A HARD LIFE,  
WE MUST NOT BE CHOOSY; WE  
MUST GRAB EVERY OPPORTUNITY.  
TO FLAUNT WITH PRIDE

VIEWING SOMETHING WITH  
APPREHENSION AND SUSPICION  
BOSSES TAKE THEIR TIME; NEW  
WORKERS OBSERVE IT  
RELIGIOUSLY.

### PHRASES / QUOTATIONS

"Jobs don't grow on trees" (p. 9)

"wishing a snowman a happy summer" (p. 9)

"We are jumble sailors on the rough sea of  
life" (p. 9)

"wearing strings of 'O' levels round their  
necks like pearls" (p.10)

"as if a stranger coming late to their door" (p.  
11)

"Punctuality is the courtesy of kings – but a  
hard necessity for new brooms" (p. 12)



## Worksheet SS11

1. Lucy Beck, her mother, Uncle Bert, Ms. Broome, Mrs. Price, Mr. Ross, Harry Darke.
2. Lucy's house and Ross & Bannister's office.
3. Because she resented him for being a drunk.
4. She was surprised and almost in belief.
5. The electronic typewriter started typing on its own.
6. She decided to fight back and attacked the typewriter with correction fluid.
7. Because they let her go when she was unwilling to leave her job.
8. She managed to convince Ms. Broome that Mr. Bannister needs her help



### Assessment SS1

Question	Answer
A	6
B	7
C	5
D	3
E	4
F	2
G	1



### Assessment SS2 : Practice 1

1. Lucy does not have a commanding presence/She is not a noticeable person.
2. Her typing is very slow.
3. i) employ  
ii) second-hand
4. Because she knew that Lucy would not be a great secretary/Her qualification is not impressive.
5. Sad/Disheartened, because I know that it would be much harder for me to get a job.



### Assessment SS3

1. a) Although Lucy is close to her mother, she has a strained relationship with her uncle.  
b) She is the secretary for the Ross & Bannister's. She is determined to keep the job.  
c) She had a surprise encounter with the spirit of Ms. Broome.
2. Because they see him as a drunkard who is merely a burden to the family.
3. She has a miserable qualification. Therefore, she does not have the luxury of choosing the job she wants.
4. Because she had no life outside her occupation
5. Yes, she did. She appealed for Ms. Broome's loyalty towards Mr. Bannister instead of continually provoking her wrath in challenging her.

**QWERTYUIOP**



# Glossary

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**QWERTYUIOP**

The first alphabetic line on a keyboard

drinking up (pg 9)

(phrasal verb) taking another's money (esp. to buy alcohol)

pay packet (pg 10)

(noun) salary

damasked (pg 23)

(verb) decorated, marked

daffodils (pg 23)

(noun) A type of flowers

bedsit (pg 25)

(noun, Brit. Eng.), a room that you rent and use for living and sleeping only.

fiver (pg 26)

(informal, noun) five pounds



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