

Short story

A **short story** is a piece of prose fiction that typically can be read in one sitting and focuses on a self-contained incident or series of linked incidents, with the intent of evoking a single effect or mood. The short story is one of the oldest types of literature and has existed in the form of legends, mythic tales, folk tales, fairy tales, tall tales, fables and anecdotes in various ancient communities around the world. The modern short story developed in the early 19th century.

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Definition

The short story is a crafted form in its own right. Short stories make use of plot, resonance, and other dynamic components as in a novel, but typically to a lesser degree. While the short story is largely distinct from the novel or novella/short novel, authors generally draw from a common pool of literary techniques. The short story is sometimes referred to as a genre.^[1]

Determining what exactly defines a short story has been recurrently problematic.^[2] A classic definition of a short story is that one should be able to read it in one sitting, a point most notably made in Edgar Allan Poe's essay "The Philosophy of Composition" (1846).^[3] H.G. Wells described the purpose of the short story as "The jolly art, of making something very bright and moving; it may be horrible or pathetic or funny or profoundly illuminating, having only this essential, that it should take from fifteen to fifty minutes to read