Short Story Annotation Warm-Up Task

Welcome to our short story annotation warm-up task! Your insights will help us understand stories from a unique perspective.

Purpose: We aim to gauge the psychological depth of short stories by looking at specific components. Additionally, we want to understand the likelihood of a story being AI or human-generated. Your annotations will be invaluable in this exploration.

Example Annotation for Calibration:

Before we dive into the detailed instructions, let's walk through an example to set the stage:

* Indicates required question

Story:

Emma knew there were 11 children in the cemetery. She had counted. She needed to know she wasn't alone in her suffering. Sometimes she wondered what their stories were, how their families were coping. She never saw anyone at their graves. Did nobody love them anymore? Were they lonely? Occasionally a toy would appear, leaning against a headstone, but she seemed to be the only parent who visited her child regularly. Would she ever stop coming?

Jacob's headstone bore a crescent moon above his name. They had always ended each day with a chorus of 'Love you to the moon and back'. Night-time had been their special time. After the chaos of the day, they'd settle on his bed and read; his pirate doona pulled up to his chin and Charlie bear tucked in safely beside him. Emma would breathe in the fresh scent of him as she read. Cuddles were given freely, no big boy embarrassment like at preschool drop-off. He had taken to shaking her hand the weeks before his passing. She had thought it was cute but longed to feel his little body pressed against hers. The warmth sustained her through her long days without him.

Now here she was missing everything; the warm cuddles, the soft handshakes, the whispered words before bedtime, the smell of his hair.

Emma took the store-bought flowers from her basket. A fresh bunch every week replaced the dry, drooping ones from the week before. A spider had made his home in last week's bunch, weaving his intricate web between the leaves and petals. Dewdrops shimmered like magic diamonds between the strands. She'd take the spider home and put him in her garden. Jacob would like that. He had always loved animals, especially insects. It drove her to distraction finding bugs in boxes beneath his bed, and she was never allowed to kill anything that had made its way inside her home. She relocated everything.

"Hello there. Lovely day," a groundskeeper said to her as he tended a nearby rose bush. Emma smiled and nodded, unable to return the pleasantry. She worried if she started talking, even to say hello, she would start crying—again. The well of tears never seemed to dry up. The only time she had been unable to cry was at his funeral service. She had been numb from head to toe, as if she was floating above the scene, watching another's tragedy playing out like a tableau beneath her.

She took a bottle of water from her basket and filled the vase cemented to the little grave. She'd paid extra for that. She trimmed the stalks of the flowers she had brought— yellow roses and white carnations today—with scissors from her kitchen. Yellow was Jacob's favourite colour. The ritual was almost complete. Emma said a silent prayer to a God she no longer believed in, gathered her things and began the long, lonely, silent trip home.

Sample Annotations

Here is a sample annotation that provides numeric scores on a scale of 1 to 5. Also included are brief (optional) explanations for each score.

Authenticity: 4
The story feels true to human experiences, portraying a believable psychological process of despair contrasted with hope.

Emotion Provoking: 5
The story feels true to human experiences, portraying a believable psychological process of despair contrasted with hope.

Empathy: 4
It's easy to resonate with Marie's feelings and the hope symbolized by the daisy.

Engagement: 4
The sensory details and emotional depth make one want to continue reading.

Narrative Complexity: 3
The story provides a clear contrast between past and present but could delve deeper into character relationships or internal conflicts.

Story Origin: 2 (Likely Human)

This example should give you a sense of how to approach the annotation. Remember, the purpose is to familiarize you with the process. Your own annotations might differ, and that's perfectly okay.

Now its your turn!

Read the Story:

Begin by reading the story carefully. Take your time to understand the narrative, characters, and overall mood.

Rating Components of Psychological Depth:

After reading, you'll rate the story on a scale of 1-5 (1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest) for the following components of psychological depth. We provide some questions for each component to better understand the task.

Authenticity:

- Does the writing feel true to real human experiences?
- Does it represent psychological processes in a way that feels believable?

Emotion Provoking

- How well does the writing depict emotional experiences?
- Does it explore the nuances of the characters' emotional states, rather than just describing them in simple terms?
- Can the writing show rather than tell a wide variety of emotions?
- Do the emotions that are shown in the text make sense in the context of the story?

Empathy

- Do you, as the reader, feel like you were able to empathize with the characters and situations in the text?
- Do you, as the reader, feel that the text led you to introspection, or to new insights about yourself or the world?

Engagement

- Does the text engage you on an emotional and psychological level?
- Do you feel the need to keep reading, as you read the text?

Narrative Complexity

- Do the characters in the story have multifaceted personalities? Are they developed beyond stereotypes or tropes? Do they exhibit internal conflicts?
- Does the writing explore the complexities of relationships between characters?
- Does it delve into the intricacies of conflicts and their partial or complete resolutions?

Dos and Don'ts

- **Dos:**
    - Be honest with your ratings. There are no right or wrong answers.
    - If you're unsure about a component, it's okay to give a middle score.
    - Trust your instincts. Your first impression is often the most valuable.
- **Don'ts:**
    - Don't rush through the reading or the rating process.
    - Avoid being influenced by external factors. Try to judge the story on its own merits.
    - Refrain from skipping components. If unsure, give your best guess.

Story:

If I could find one word to describe myself on our first date, it'd be stupid. I left my new alpaca gloves in the ladies at the National Theatre and didn't notice until we were halfway across Hungerford Bridge. I wasn't too thrilled when you sprinted off, leaving me under a lamppost, shouting you'd only be a minute. But when you got back, waving my scarf as well, I realised the word for you would be heroic.

If I could find one word for you as we started being we, it'd be caring. You'd bring a toothbrush wherever we went, like Bertorellis in Charlotte Street, because I balked at kissing a meaty-mouth after you walked me through Covent Garden to Charing Cross, my hand tight under your arm. Then one night you chose a falafel wrap and told me love was more important than a bacon sandwich and I cried and called you romantic.

If I could find one word for us the summer we became three, it'd be shattered, what with Clara taking so long to get used to the world. Yes, you did your share of night feeds and nappies but you still worked such long hours and it was like I lost a bit of you. When Mum went home after a second month and we agreed you'd sleep in the spare room until things settled down, I knew that what we both felt was relieved.

If I could find one word to describe myself when you confessed, it'd be inadequate, because I wasn't enough for you, and exhausted anyway from running after a four-year-old all day. Both Sarah and Mandy said I was crazy to blame myself, and I ignored them for months until your phone pinged with someone new. It seemed you weren't even being faithfully unfaithful with the first one you'd been unfaithful with and the word I used was furious.

If I could find one word to describe myself at forty-two, it's content. I have my work, my daughter, my husband – nine years now – and my hens, and I love coaxing cauliflowers from what was once a wilderness, wondering how we ever lived in Lewisham. I'm thankful Clara's growing up breathing fresh air and already sixteen so it won't be long before she's driving herself for her weekends with you, assuming she still wants to. Maybe one day she'll get married, and you and I will stand side by side in a church again and be happy for her, although what I'll feel for you will be nothing.

1. Participant ID *

    _____

2. To what degree is the story **authentic**? *

    Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Impl	○	○	○	○	○	Undeniably Real

3. Comments on authentic elements within the story (optional)

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

4. To what degree does the story evoke **empathy**? *

    Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Deta	○	○	○	○	○	Deep Resonance

5.   Comments on empathetic elements in the story (optional)

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6.   To what degree is the story **engaging**? *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Une	○	○	○	○	○	Captivating

7.   Comments on engaging elements within the story (optional)

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8.   To what degree does the story **provoke emotion** of any kind? *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Unm	○	○	○	○	○	Highly Emotional

9.   Comments on emotion provoking elements in the story (optional)

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10.   To what degree is the story **narratively complex**? *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Simp	○	○	○	○	○	Intricately Woven

11.   Comments on narrative complexity in the story (optional)

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12.   How likely do you think the story was written by a human or an LLM? *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very	○	○	○	○	○	Very Likely LLM

13.   Open Feedback
      (Use this field for miscellaneous feedback on the story as a whole)

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Thank you for participating in this warm-up task. Your insights are crucial in helping us explore the psychological depth of narratives. We encourage you to approach this task with curiosity and an open mind. Happy annotating!