Guiding Questions for short story Writing

1. Characters• Who is the main character of your story?  
• Where is this person from?  
• How old is this person?  
• What does this person do for a living? Is this person a student? An adult?  
Married? Single? Divorced? Retired?  
• What does this person look like?  
• What are this person’s family members like?  
• What are this person’s friends like?  
• What is unique about this person’s character? What makes this person  
happy? Angry? Sad? Surprised? Excited?  
• Who are some of the other characters in the story?

After the discussion, write a few paragraphs about the  
characters.

2. Setting• When does the story take place?  
• Where does the story take place?  
• What does the place look like?  
• Why does the story take place here?  
• Does the setting change in the story? If so, what are some of the other times  
and places in the story?

It is important to set the time and the place and to establish the mood at the  
beginning of a short story. Here are a few examples of ideal settings for different  
types of short stories.

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| **Type of story** | **Ideal setting** |
| A ghost story | an old house in the countryside on a rainy night |
| A detective / crime story | a hotel in the city where guests mysteriously disappear |
| An adventure story | an old ship on a stormy ocean in the days of pirates |
| A science fiction story | a spaceship travelling to a distant planet in the future |
| A fantasy | an enchanted island with talking trees and animals |

After the discussion, write a few paragraphs about the  
setting of your story.

3. Plot• What problem or conflict does the main character experience?  
• What does the main character (or other characters) do to cause the problem?  
• What does the main character (or other characters) do to resolve the  
problem?  
• How are the characters affected by the incident or the experience?  
• How does the main character change in the end?

After the discussion, write a few paragraphs about the plot of your story.

After the discussion, write a few paragraphs about the  
characters, setting and plot of your story.