**Objective**

In other parts of the Specialization, exercises focus more narrowly on one or another aspect of the story as a form. Meantime, this short assignment should help dispel any notions you may have that the ability to compose a piece of fiction is some kind of mystic gift. Of course, we can hope to improve them, but just getting one on the page does not require an advanced degree. We all tell stories all the time. Just write one. It will be fun, and it will be agony.

**Assignment**

Write a short story, complete with beginning, middle, end, characters, setting, plot, the whole shebang—in approximately 600 words. For reasons I’ll explain later, it’s important to keep it very close to 600 words, not much more, or much less.

Focus on writing with nouns and verbs—with people and things and what they do. Remember that a story at its basis is an imitation of action. Convey that action on the page with nouns and verbs.

Audre grew up in Nnewi, Nigeria. Unlike the general assumption that Africans are poor, people in Nnewi are not. The villagers owned huge acres of land and exported the produce to foreign countries. Money was never a problem at Audre's family. She was the youngest in her family. She had 4 brothers and 3 sisters. Her dad was a merchant and her mom took care of the ranch. They would have lived a happy life in the beautiful African landscape if her mom and dad had loved each other. But, no. They fought constantly. Audre did not feel connected with her siblings either.

As years rolled, Audre grew up to become a beautiful young woman. Her brothers took care of her father's business. Her sisters went abroad and graduated from reputed colleges. Audre never felt drawn towards anything. She liked putting on makeup and collecting cute, beautiful objects. She dropped out of school and stayed at home, trying on different kinds of makeup. Now and then, she went on trips to her sister's place and shopped lavishly. Audre’s siblings eventually got married and settled in different countries across the globe.

Other than her family, Audre hardly interacted with anyone. She had no boyfriends or even friends for that matter. Her mom was worried that Audre might end up alone and set Audre up on a blind date with her friend’s son, John, who was a doctor. The date went well. Audre, as usual, neither hated nor liked John. Since Audre had no reason as to why she did not like John, Audre's mother insisted that they should go on another date. One date happened after another. Under the insistence of their parents, John and Audre got married.

After a couple of years, for no obvious reason, John divorced Audre and married a farm girl. Audre was unfaced. She took all happenings in stride and marched her life ahead in confidence. She lived on the huge mansion that her dad had gifted during the wedding, all by herself. She frequently visited her sisters. She never read any books or watched any movies, she went about doing her regular activities.

It is human to want to be loved. Audre of all people on earth wanted to be loved as well. But she did not realize or accept that at all. She thought she had it all, and that there was nothing that she wanted. After a few years, when her parents died of old age, she felt out of place in Africa. She sold her mansion and bought a bungalow at Beverley Hills, close to her elder sister's home. She bought it not because she loved her sister but rather than she enjoyed life at the Hills.

At 55 years, little did she know that her life was soon going to change. She carried on her life at Beverley Hills doing nothing unusual, but her regular day to day chores. Her sister's daughter, Amber visited her occasionally. She was born and brought up in America and was 12 years old. Having never been to Africa, she was so fascinated by Audre. She asked Audre to tell more and more about Africa. Every night, Amber visited Audre after dinner and asked Audre to say something about Africa. Soon, this became a ritual.

Without realizing, Audre slowly fell in love with Amber. Amber’s curiosity, fresh perspective on the world, her love and care softened Audre's heart that had hardened with time. Audre lived till the ripe age of 72 and died at sleep, on a cold November morning. Like many on earth, Audre was immensely loved.

**Assess the balance of nouns and verbs versus other parts of speech. Are there places where the verbs are especially vague? Are there places where an unexpected noun or verb leapt out at you and made the moment in the story shine?**

**Stella Iduku**

The nouns and verbs are well balanced

**CARLOS ESTEBAN ARCINIEGAS HURTADO**

I think the balance was good. But for example, in sentences as "she liked putting on makeup and collecting cute, beautiful objects" you could eliminate or cute or beautiful and leave just one. Seek for this type of errors along the rest of the text.

**Luis Miguel Perhat Bandeira de Oliveira**

Mostly, nouns and verbs are well used and the request is fulfilled.

**Is the piece an imitation of an *action*? That is, does it succeed in *moving* from one moment to the next? By the end of the piece, what has changed?**

**Stella Iduku**

yes one moment moves to the next. At the end of the piece, the character turns out to be a different person.

**CARLOS ESTEBAN ARCINIEGAS HURTADO**

I think that it was very clear... the transitions through the different ages made the "movement" very clear. What has changed? Her life... Audre's life

**Luis Miguel Perhat Bandeira de Oliveira**

The story certainly moves and by the end the main character's entire life has been covered. That being said, not much actual "action" occurs, but that has to do with the style that was chosen to tell the story, which consists on narrating succinctly from a distance.

**Does the piece have a beginning, a middle, and an end? Can you reflect on these elements so that the writer can get some idea of how well she’s communicated the arc of what she hoped to say? Is this a story you’d like to see expanded into a longer, more complex piece, perhaps as part of the Capstone Project?**

**Stella Iduku**

The story does have a beginning, middle and end. It would be nice as a longer piece

**CARLOS ESTEBAN ARCINIEGAS HURTADO**

Yes, I would be very happy if you could expand the story I liked it.

**Luis Miguel Perhat Bandeira de Oliveira**

It does have defined structure and the meaning is clear. I think this is a very good concept not yet executed to it's fullest potential. It could perfectly be an inspiration for the Capstone, but I wouldn't do a text of this style for that project. How I think it could be of use is as a sort of sketch or outline. I say this because this text presents a great concept of a story, just not yet a great story, but there is potential and there was the word limitation. Convert this to something longer and with more action, drama and thought and you might have a Capstone worth project!