

Learning Guides 7, 8 & 9: Short Fiction and Creative Writing

You will need to hand in the following:

- Worksheet on "The Man Who Had No Eyes" by MacKinlay Kantor
- Worksheet on theme in "The Possibility of Evil" by Shirley Jackson
- Theme in "The Possibility of Evil" by Shirley Jackson essay
- Short Story
- Learning Guide 7 & 8 quiz

Terms to know:

antagonist	falling action	narration	static character
character	first person point of view	narrative	stereotyped character
climax	flashback	narrator	style
colloquial	flat character	omniscient point of view	suspense
conflict	foreshadowing	plot	symbol; symbolism
connotation	genre	point of view	sympathetic character
denotation	indirect presentation	protagonist	third person narration
dialogue	internal conflict	resolution -- types	theme
direct presentation	irony (situational, verbal, dramatic)	rising action	tone
dynamic character	limited omniscient point of view	round character	
external conflict		setting	
exposition; expository		slang	

Activity 1: Review of Plot and Narration Terms in "The Man Who Had No Eyes" by MacKinlay Kantor

The plot of a narrative is how the author arranges events to develop his basic idea. It is the sequence of events in the story. The "things that happen" in a story are called '*incidents*', but a story needs more than random incidents to make it work. Every story must also have *conflict*, which creates the dramatic tension that keeps a reader engaged in the story and wanting to find out what happens next.

Read "The Man Who Had No Eyes" by MacKinlay Kantor beginning on page 328 in your *Sightlines 10* textbook.

After you have attended the seminar to review plot and narration terms in “The Man Who Had No Eyes”, complete the plot worksheet in this learning guide.

There will be questions from this reading and the worksheet on the unit test.

Activity 2: Character and Theme in “The Possibility of Evil” by Shirley Jackson

1. Read “The Possibility of Evil” by Shirley Jackson, beginning on page 249 of your *Sightlines* textbook.
2. Complete the “Theme in the Possibility of Evil” worksheet included in this guide.
3. Write a brief essay of at least 200 words on the following question:

What is the theme of “The Possibility of Evil” by Shirley Jackson?

Remember to include the format (short story) author and title in the first paragraph of your essay. You should plan to make at least three points, and support each point with an explanation of what you mean, and an example or quote to support this from the story.

Literary Response Marking Sheet -- Theme	mark
Name:	
Theme is clearly stated, and is a correct theme statement	/6 (*3)
Title and author are identified in opening and well-integrated into the discussion. Title and author are properly punctuated.	/6
Understanding of the text is shown at an inferential level, and response is insightful.	/6
Three points are made to support the theme statement. Each of these points is explained.	/6 * 2
References are made to the text and integrated into the writing.	/6
It exhibits an effective writing style, varied sentence structure, and a sophisticated use of language.	/6
The mechanics and conventions (spelling, grammar, punctuation, and syntax) are appropriate for English 10.	/6
Total	/60

Activity 3: Write a Short Story

Your assignment is to write a short story which has the following theme: "Sometimes the mistakes people make come back to haunt them." This story must be written in the third person (the narrator is not part of the story, and doesn't use "I"). You can have any number or types of characters; any setting; and of course, any plot, but they must be original, not copied from another source.

The criteria for the short story are attached to this learning guide. You should go over them before you begin writing your story.

Activity 4: Unit Quiz

This is a 25 question multiple quiz that you may take in class. The main purpose of the quiz is to make sure you read and understood both stories, and that you understand the terms related to plot, narration, character and theme.

Plot of “The Man Who Had No Eyes”

by MacKinlay Kantor

Directions: for each plot element listed below, quote a sentence from the story, or give a specific example.

a. Exposition (introduction)

Provides the background information needed to properly understand the story, such as the problem in the beginning of the story, characters, and setting. It can be also used to summarize the topic. It often establishes the place and time, or setting, of the story. In some texts there is a very direct exposition, like in a fairy tale. (“Once upon a time, there was . . .”) A story that starts with action before any exposition is said to start *in medias res*, which is Latin for “in the middle of things”.

b. Initiating Incident

The initiating incident is the first thing that happens in the story. It starts the plot moving, and is the beginning of the conflict.

c. Rising action

Rising action is made up of all of the **complicating incidents**. It is everything that happens between the initiating incident and the climax, and forms the conflict.

d. Climax & Turning Point

The climax is the most emotionally intense moment in the plot. In a short story, it is usually very close to the turning point, as it is in this story.

The turning point marks a change for the better or the worse, in the protagonist's affairs. Usually, the protagonist takes some action that leads on inevitably to the conclusion. We can't often tell where the turning point is as we read, but we can figure it out once we know the resolution.

e. Falling action

This comes after the climax. The conflict between the protagonist and the antagonist unravels, with the protagonist winning or losing against the antagonist. The falling action might contain a moment of final suspense, during which the final outcome of the conflict is in doubt.

f. Resolution

The resolution is the correct name for the conclusion, or end of the story. We often class resolutions as happy endings, sad endings, tragic endings, cliff-hanger, or indeterminate endings. What is the end of this story? What kind of ending is this?

g. Conflict

The conflict is the main problem faced by the protagonist of the story. What is the main conflict?

We usually classify conflicts first as internal or external, and then by whether they are person against person, person against the environment, person against the supernatural, or person against self. What kind of conflict is this?

h. Narration

Any story that has a plot and a conflict is said to be a *narrative*, and the voice telling the story is called the *narrator*. It is important not to confuse the narrator with the author. Authors can make up a different *persona*, with opinions, attitudes, and life experiences different from their own and tell the story from that *point of view*. For example, the **author** of the novel *The Art of Racing in the Rain* is a person called Garth Stein, but the narrator of the story is a dog.

We classify the story first by whether it is first person (the narrator uses "I") or third person. Which is this story?

We also discuss whether the narrator is biased (clearly favouring one character over others) or objective (just giving the facts). Which do you notice in this story?

Theme Worksheet for "The Possibility of Evil"



1. Complete each of the following theme statements based on your understanding of "The Possibility of Evil" by Shirley Jackson.

A: People who set themselves up as guardians of other people's morality are

B: Sometimes, a person who attempts to make the world perfect _____

C: Evil is _____

2. Check each of your statements above and see if each meets the following criteria for a theme statement. Check each box below as you assess them. If your statement is not a theme statement, correct it.

Statement A	Statement B	Statement C
<input type="checkbox"/> Forms a sentence <input type="checkbox"/> About life in general, not just this story <input type="checkbox"/> Central concept of story <input type="checkbox"/> not a cliché	<input type="checkbox"/> Forms a sentence <input type="checkbox"/> About life in general, not just this story <input type="checkbox"/> Central concept of story <input type="checkbox"/> not a cliché	<input type="checkbox"/> Forms a sentence <input type="checkbox"/> About life in general, not just this story <input type="checkbox"/> Central concept of story <input type="checkbox"/> not a cliché

3. Pick your favourite theme statement, and complete the other side of this worksheet.

The theme of "The Possibility of Evil" by Shirley Jackson is " _____

How does the title of the short story suggest this theme?

What are two or more details from the plot that suggest this theme?

What objects, colours, or repeated images suggest this theme? (Hint: Miss Strangeworth uses the same multi-coloured not paper that everyone in town uses? Why? What does this tell you about her motivations? What do the roses and the old house have to do with anything?)

Find at least five "loaded" words used in the story. What do they suggest?

What is one quote that you feel supports your theme statement? Don't forget to write down the page number – you will need it to write your essay.

Short Story 10

	Approaching Expectations	Meeting Expectations at a Satisfactory Level	Fully Meeting Expectations	Meeting Expectations at an Exceptional Level
SPECIFIC TO ASSIGNMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is not related to the assigned theme. ▪ Written in the first person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hints at theme, but may not be central focus ▪ Written in the third person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shows theme clearly, may be directly stated ▪ Written in the third person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shows theme clearly, but implicitly ▪ Written in the third person
MEANING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ sense of audience ▪ integration of story elements ▪ plot ▪ character ▪ theme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ little sense of audience or purpose ▪ limited story elements ▪ no underlying structure or development ▪ stereotypic characters ▪ no theme or controlling idea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ some sense of audience; little impact ▪ includes most story elements ▪ easy-to-follow storyline with a simple conflict; does not build to a climax ▪ flat, superficial characters ▪ simple, superficial theme or controlling idea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ sense of audience; some impact ▪ has all story elements; development is inconsistent ▪ storyline has some originality or complexity ▪ characters are clearly presented ▪ theme or controlling idea is appropriate for Grade 11. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ strong sense of audience; engaging story ▪ control & ease with story elements ▪ efficiently developed around relatively mature conflict ▪ develops “round” characters ▪ some complexity in theme or controlling idea
STYLE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ voice & tone ▪ syntax ▪ word choice ▪ techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ little narrative voice ▪ only simple sentences, little variety, or errors in sentence structure. ▪ basic vocabulary; may make errors ▪ immature style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ narrative voice & point of view may slip ▪ some sentence variety ▪ some variety in word choice ▪ direct, conversational; little description, imagery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ tries to match narrative voice to purpose, context ▪ varies sentences ▪ varied word choice, visual description ▪ some risk-taking to create effects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ creates & sustains effective narrative voice ▪ syntactic maturity ▪ effective word choices ▪ takes risks, often showing originality & inventiveness
FORM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ beginning ▪ structure & sequence ▪ transitions ▪ dialogue ▪ ending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ beginning unclear ▪ passage of time is often confusing or overemphasized ▪ few transitions; may seem disjointed ▪ dialogue seems random ▪ features frequent errors ▪ weak ending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ begins by explaining the situation ▪ passage of time is often awkward, obtrusive ▪ transitions awkward; paragraphing inconsistent ▪ dialogue poorly integrated ▪ unrealistic or anticlimactic ending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ begins with an incident; may over explain ▪ manages passage of time clearly; may falter ▪ transitions make sequence clear; appropriate paragraphing ▪ appropriate dialogue ▪ resolves story in a logical, predictable way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ beginning is immediately engaging ▪ appropriate pacing; manages the passage of time effectively ▪ well-chosen transitions & effective paragraphing create continuity ▪ dialogue is effective ▪ ending has some “punch”
CONVENTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ spelling ▪ sentence structure & punctuation ▪ paragraph structure ▪ usage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ frequent noticeable errors in basic sentence structure, spelling, & usage that distract the reader & may interfere with meaning ▪ no paragraphs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ noticeable errors that may cause the reader to pause or reread; often surface errors could be fixed by careful proofreading ▪ paragraphing seems random. ▪ New paragraph is not used for each speaker. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ few errors; these do not affect meaning; appears to have been carefully edited & proofread ▪ paragraphing is correct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ few errors; these do not distract the reader (may only be noticeable when the reader looks for them) ▪ paragraphing is effective and correct