



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1983 Volume III: Reading the Twentieth Century Short Story

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## Teaching Elements of the Short Story

Guide for Curriculum Unit 83.03.09

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This unit is designed to be used by English and Reading teachers in the seventh and eighth grades. We have selected classic short stories which are available at a lower reading level as well as their original-form. Each story can be used with high achieving students in its original form and is available in a form with a readability level of third, fourth or fifth grade for use with lower achieving students. All stories mentioned in this unit are available in books which are currently being used in the New Haven School System.

By providing classic stories available on varying reading levels, we can give all students equal exposure to works of merit and hopefully bridge the gap which exists between high and low achievers. Too often our low achieving students are provided with reading material which was written for an eight-year old. This material is not of interest to a seventh or eighth grader even though his ability to read may well be that of an eight-year-old.

We intend to expose students to the elements of the short story. For each element we will provide both reading and writing activities which revolve around that element. These activities can be used as a means of evaluating the students' understanding of that element.

We believe students should write for themselves and others. It is critical that students at the middle and high school level, specifically grades seven through twelve, edit their papers and those of other students. We are opposed to students focusing on the teacher as the sole audience. The teacher is only one source of feedback for students. We need to encourage students to use others as viable and valuable resources and audiences.

The culminating activity of this unit is the students' original short story. This story will be read by another student who will fill out an activity sheet to determine whether or not the story contains all of the elements.

(Recommended for 7th and 8th grade English and Reading)

### **Key Words**

*American Short Stories Elements*

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