All The Short Story Notes You’ll Need!

## The Major Elements of the Short Story

**Setting**

* WHEN and WHERE a story takes place; usually includes:
  + Place
  + Time
  + Weather conditions
  + Social conditions
  + Mood or atmosphere

The atmosphere of a story is the *mood* or feeling that the reader feels when reading the story. The atmosphere of the story can be sad, gloomy, suspenseful, happy, etc. The atmosphere is created through the author's creation of setting, characters and point of view in the story. The author creates specific events and uses specific language and scenes in the story to create an impression.

**Conflict**

* Is the opposition of forces – it is any goal or problem that the main character is faced with.
* There are usually (but not always) multiple conflicts, but only one main one.
* There are two types of conflict:   
  1)  External - A struggle with a force from the outside.

2)  Internal - A struggle within (the character must make some decision, overcome pain, resist an urge, etc.)

* There are four *kinds* of conflict:

1) Human vs. Human: leading character struggles against other humans or animals

2)  Human vs. Nature: leading character struggles against nature or fate

3)  Human vs. Society: leading character struggles against beliefs or customs of other people.

4)  Human vs. Self: leading character struggles with ideas of right or wrong, choices, physical limitations, etc.

**Characters**

*Protagonist* is the main character of the story (the hero): all major events have some importance to this character

*Antagonist* is whatever causes the conflict with the protagonist (the villain, etc.): can also be nature, society, etc.

**Theme**

* is the author's main idea or moral
* usually is what the main character learns about life from overcoming the conflict
* Some simple examples of common themes in literature, TV, and film:
  + “don't judge a book by its cover”
  + “things are not always as they appear to be”
  + “people are afraid of change”
  + “love is blind”
  + “believe in yourself”

**Plot**

* The sequence of events in a story
  + Has a beginning, middle, and end
  + Short stories usually have one plot so it can be read in one sitting
  + There are five essential parts of plot



**Point of View**

First Person Narrative – the narrator uses “I” and participates in the action.

Third Person Narrative – the narrator uses “he” and “she” and is an outside observer.

**Irony**

Irony – contrast or contradiction of what is expected and what results.

Verbal irony – occurs when a character or narrator says one thing but means the opposite.

Dramatic irony – occurs when the reader knows more than the character.

Situational irony – occurs when the contrast between what appears to be and what actually exists.