

LITERARY SHORTS

CREATIVE, CRITICAL AND
COMPARATIVE APPROACHES AT KS3

AN EMC PHOTOCOPIABLE CLASSROOM RESOURCE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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SUGGESTED GROUPINGS

Length of story

Shorter stories

The Open Window

I Used to Live Here Once

Oliver's Evolution

Dog, Cat, and Baby

The Flowers

One of These Days

Longer stories

The Diamond Necklace

A Matter of Fact

Old Mrs Chundle

Mrs Silly

The Hitch-hiker

Resigned

KS3 National Curriculum categories

Pre-1914 literature

The Diamond Necklace (1884)

A Matter of Fact (1892)

Subha (1898)

Old Mrs Chundle (written c.1890 pub. in 1929)

Seminal world literature

Subha (India)

A Cup of Tea (New Zealand)

One of These Days (Colombia)

The Return (Kenya)

The White Trousers (Kurdish – Turkey)

The Flowers (USA)

I Used to Live Here Once (Dominica)

Two Words (Chile)

Oliver's Evolution (USA)

Dog, Cat, and Baby (USA)

The Third-floor Bedroom (USA)

Key features of short stories

Narrative voice/point of view

Dog, Cat, and Baby
Resigned
The White Trousers
The Diamond Necklace

Unexpected endings

The Gulf
The Open Window
Oliver's Evolution
The Diamond Necklace
The Hitch-hiker

Setting

A Matter of Fact
The Return
The White Trousers
One of These Days

Character

Subha
The Hitch-hiker
Mrs Silly

Language

Two Words
The Flowers
The Gulf

Suspense and tension

The Open Window
The Gulf
A Matter of Fact

Plot and structure

The Third-floor Bedroom
The Open Window

Genre

Happily Ever After
Mrs Silly

Thematic links

Parents and children

Resigned
Subha
Mrs Silly
Oliver's Evolution
Happily Ever After

A child's point of view

The Third-floor Bedroom
The Flowers
The White Trousers
Resigned

Growing up/loss of innocence

The Flowers
I Used to Live Here Once
The Third-floor Bedrooms
Resigned

Revenge

One of These Days
Dog, Cat, and Baby

Children at work

The Paradise Carpet
The White Trousers

Unusual love stories

Two Words
Happily Ever After

A woman's place

Resigned
Happily Ever After
Subha
A Cup of Tea

Mystery

A Matter of Fact
The Open Window
The Third-floor Bedroom

Vanity

A Cup of Tea
Old Mrs Chundle
The Diamond Necklace

Outcomes

Critical writing

Looking closely at the language of the story (The Gulf)

Helicopter view and hawk's view (The White Trousers)

Critical writing (The Paradise Carpet)

What does the trickster add to the story? (The Hitch-hiker)

Make a case (One of These Days)

Critical writing challenge (A Cup of Tea)

Other types of written response

Writing a review (The White Trousers)

Writing a letter (Old Mrs Chundle)

Email to the editor (The Gulf)

Entering the mind of the writer – blog (I Used to Live Here Once)

Developing different narrative voices – diary (The Diamond Necklace)

Letter from Mum (Resigned)

Miss Smith's diary/magazine article (A Cup of Tea)

Extension activity – a tabloid newspaper article (A Matter of Fact)

Creative and re-creative writing

Updating Old Mrs Chundle (Old Mrs Chundle)

A story with two trails (The Open Window)

The story of a trickster (The Hitch-hiker)

A story with unusual features (Oliver's Evolution)

Using a motif (The Third-floor Bedroom)

Oral work

Class assembly (The Paradise Carpet)

Delivering a speech (Two Words)

Exploring thoughts (Happily Ever After)

Creating a voice

Creative writing (The Flowers)

Exploring the past (I Used to Live Here Once)

A disappointing journey (The Return)

Writing from the future (Mrs Silly)

1. WHAT IS A STORY?

Different uses of the word 'story'

- In pairs, discuss the questions below.
 - When and how do people use the word 'story' in the different ways listed below?
 - Which of the examples do you use in your everyday life?
 - Can you sort the listed phrases into two or three broad categories?
 - What do English teachers tend to mean when they talk about stories?

Made up story	The inside story	Story of my life	Story time
Fairy story	Love story	Life story	Usual story
True story	Newspaper story	Hard luck story	Tall story
Sob story	Story telling	Ghost story	Short story
The real story	Likely story	Same old story	Story book

Your definition

- On a strip of paper, or a Post-it note, write down your own definition of 'story'.
- Share different definitions round your class and discuss any key similarities and differences. Write your own definition on a new strip of paper or Post-it note if the discussion has given you new ideas about what you think a story is.
- Display your different definitions on your classroom wall to refer to when you are doing further work on stories.

Different types of story

All of the examples on pages 16-17 can be called stories in one way or another.

- In small groups, read each in turn. Discuss in what ways each might be called a story. (You might refer to some of the ways the word is used from the previous activity.)
- Imagine you are English teachers. Choose one that you think you could teach to a class studying stories. Feed back to your class two or three reasons for your group's decision.

3. LANGUAGE IN STORIES

Activities using the extracts on page 26

What are stories made of? The answer, on a very simple level, is language: words, built up into phrases, extended into clauses, developed into sentences, grown into paragraphs and ending up as stories. Sometimes, when reading a story, we get so carried away with the plot and the characters that we don't actively think about the language. But that language is one of the things that makes the story so captivating in the first place. The activities that follow require you to look closely at the language in different story extracts and to make decisions about how language is used differently on different occasions.

Your teacher will direct you to which activities to complete. Some require you to work with all of the extracts, others to select one or two.

Personal response

- In small groups, read each extract one at a time and discuss what you think about each one.
- Discuss whether or not the extract makes you want to read the rest of the story and give reasons for your answers.
- Select the extract your group likes best and feed back to the class your reasons for choosing it.

Exploring vocabulary

1. Favourite words

- In small groups, select your favourite word or phrase from each extract.
- From the words and phrases you have selected, identify your absolute favourite.
- Feed back to the rest of the class what your favourite is and why you selected it. For example, because of its sound, its meaning or the way it is positioned in the sentence.
- Discuss as a class what makes a word or phrase really stand out in a piece of writing.

2. Improving the writer's work!

- On your own, rewrite one of the passages by changing five or more of the words, but keeping the same sentence structures. (You may want to use a thesaurus for this activity.)
- Swap your re-write with a partner who has worked on a different extract. See if you can each identify the changed words without referring back to the originals. Think about what it is that helps you identify the words.
- In your pair, compare the original extracts with your own versions. Discuss why the original words were particularly effective and whether or not yours are an improvement.

3. Lipograms: grappling with language

A 'lipogram' is a form of writing that deliberately does not use a particular letter. Believe it or not, one writer has written a 300-page novel without using the letter 'e'!

- In pairs, re-write as much of one extract as you can without using the letter 'e'. You can change sentence structures as well as individual words, as this is an extremely hard task.

2. VENN DIAGRAM COMPARISONS

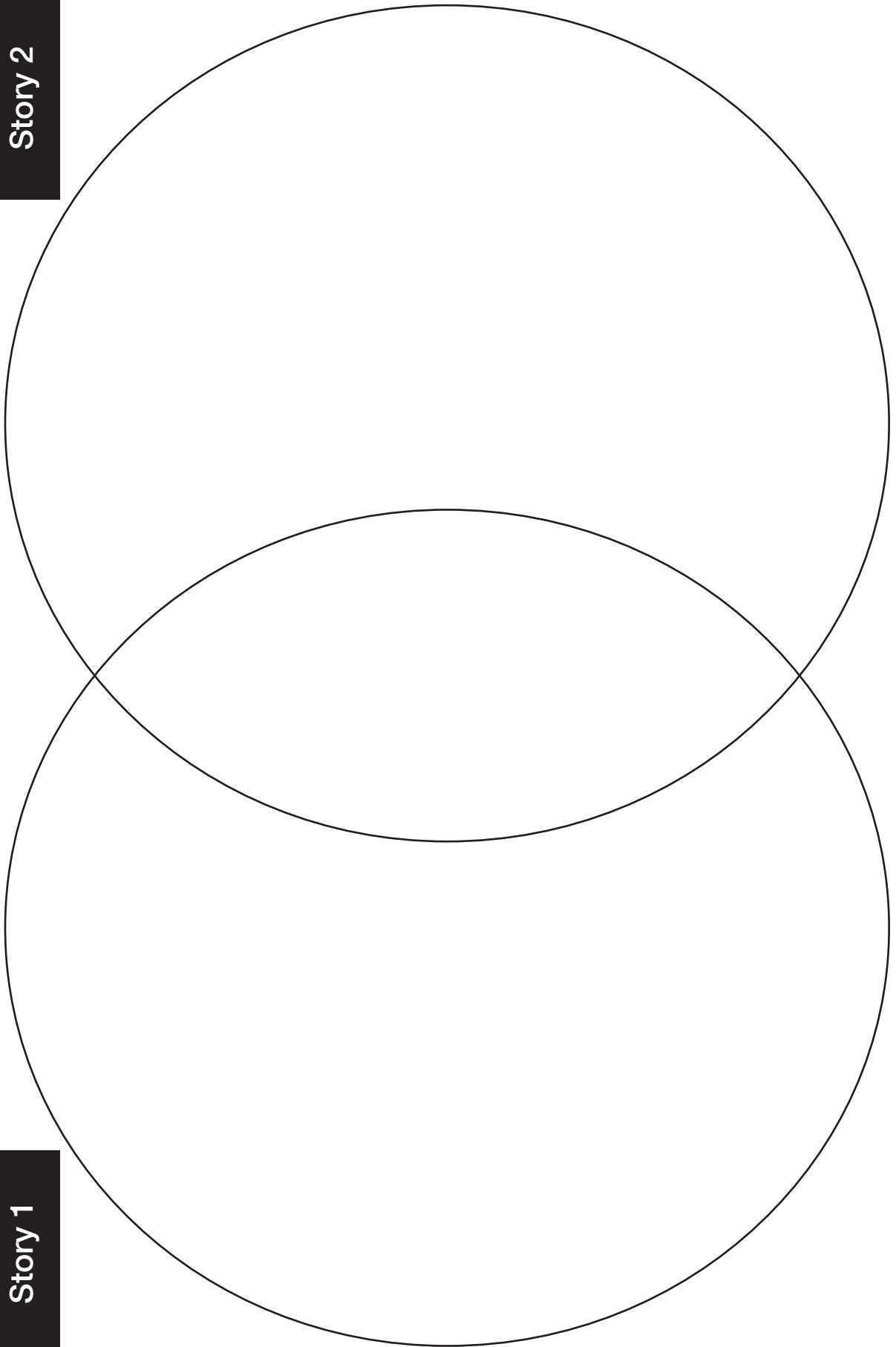
For this activity, you will need a Venn diagram on an A3 sheet of paper, like the one on page 63, and some Post-it notes or some small pieces of paper with Blu-tack.

- Working in pairs, choose two stories to work on that you are both familiar with. Allocate one story to each person in your pair.
- Label each circle on the Venn diagram with one of the story titles.
- In your pairs, choose an aspect of the story from the 'Aspects to compare' section on page 64, for example 'character'.
- Working individually, think of as many ideas as you can for this aspect of your story, using the prompts to help you. You will need to be able to explain why you thought this, referring to evidence in the story. Note your ideas on Post-its or small pieces of paper.
- Working with your partner, share your points.
 - Explain one of your points, referring back to some evidence in the story.
 - When you have shared your point, discuss with your partner where on the Venn diagram to put it. For example, one of you may have a character that changes during the story. If the same is true for the other story, put this point in the middle. If the other story has a main character that stays the same, this point should be placed in the circle for the story it applies to.
 - If you disagree with where your partner wants to put a particular point, see if you can persuade your partner to change their mind.

VENN DIAGRAM

Story 2

Story 1



Aspects to compare

A main character

- First, do the work on character on pages 27-30.
 - Does your character seem realistic, strange, larger than life, or fantastical?
 - Is your character human?
 - Is your character likeable?
 - Is there more than one main character in this story?
 - Does your character tell the story?
 - Does your character change as the story progresses?
 - Does your character have a problem that has to be solved in the story?
 - How is your character presented? For example, through dialogue, through what they do, how others respond to them and so on.
 - Anything else you can say about this character...

Setting

- First, do the work on setting on pages 42-46.
 - Is the setting somewhere you are familiar with?
 - Does the setting affect the characters?
 - Does the setting affect the plot?
 - Does the writer really help you to imagine the setting?
 - Would you say the setting is very important to the story?
 - Anything else you can say about this setting...

Plot and structure

- First, do the work on plot and structure on pages 31-34.
 - Does this plot follow the usual story structure? (See page 32.)
 - Does the story open in a way that made you want to read on?
 - What is the climax of the story? How far into the story is the climax?
 - Is the ending surprising in any way?
 - Is the ending open (leaves you with lots of questions) or closed (ties up all the loose ends)?
 - Does tension build as this story progresses?
 - Anything else you can say about the way this story is structured...

A CUP OF TEA

BY KATHERINE MANSFIELD

DURING READING



What is Rosemary like?

- After reading the first two paragraphs try to picture in your mind what kind of person Rosemary is. For example, is she kind, lively, dull, friendly? Share your thoughts with a partner.
- In your pair, read the statements about Rosemary below. Decide whether or not you agree with each statement based on what you have read.
- Discuss what has helped you to make your decision: is there factual evidence in the text, or have you inferred your answer based on what is hinted at?

Rosemary is a young woman.
Rosemary has a strong regional accent.
Rosemary loves her husband dearly.
Rosemary spends a lot of her time shopping.
Rosemary loves going out and enjoying herself.
Rosemary gives very little attention to her appearance.
Rosemary is a mother.
Rosemary is devoted to her child.
Rosemary is very aware of how lucky she is.

From story to script

- In groups of three, read the conversation that takes place between Rosemary and the unnamed girl from “*Madam, may I speak to you a moment?*” to “*If I’m the more unfortunate, you ought to expect...*”.
- Prepare a dramatic reading of the passage, one of you speaking Rosemary’s words, one the girl’s and one the sentences in the narrative voice.
- Turn your reading into a short performance. Whoever reads the narrative voice should direct the other two members of the group, advising them on where to stand, how to move and how to deliver their lines.
- As a class, discuss your performances, focusing on what you have learned about the relationship between Rosemary and the girl from your reading and acting.