

Short Story Analysis

1. Identify the **conflict** in the story and explain whether it is **Internal** or **external**.
2. The **lead** in a story usually introduces the main character, the setting, the conflict and the narrative point of view. Study the **lead** (opening section) and explain how successful it is in grabbing the reader's attention.
3. Why was the **title** chosen? Consider the sense of intrigue or curiosity in it, its connection to a theme or the plot. Suggest a better one! Justify the title you created.
4. **Minor characters** may advance the plot, convey information, create tension, reveal a new dimension to the story, raise or relieve tension. Identify two minor characters in the story, and explain the function each performs.
5. Find a good example of each of these techniques the author uses to deepen our understanding of the characters.
 - a) **physical description**
 - b) **dialogue**
 - c) **character's actions**
 - d) **reactions of other characters.**
6. Why are the **characters' names** interesting or effective?
7. Identify the **narrator's perspective** in the story as either first person (I) or third person (he/she). Explain why the author chose to use this perspective.
8. The **central theme** in the story is often the main issue in the story, the problem that emerges in the conflict between the main characters. For example, a central theme in "Mirror Image" is the difference between appearance and reality: all the other characters see that Alice appears, physically, completely different after the operation. They wonder now who she really is. Identify the main **theme** in the story, and explain the idea that is conveyed in the story.
9. There is often a significant **change** in a short story. This **change** may involve the main character's **situation**, or the reader's **opinion** of the character, or the main character's **opinion** of something. This change often involves the main theme of the story. Identify the **change** in the story, and what it has to do with the theme.
10. What is the **tone** of the story? Light? Serious? Ironic? Sarcastic? Relaxed? Urgent? What are the best words to describe the tone? Assess the effectiveness of the tone.
11. **Significant details**, which may be objects that have an importance in the story, or may be things a character says, are often suggest important things about the characters or the meaning of the story. Identify one or two (or more if you notice them) significant details, and explain why they are significant.
12. Find an example of how a character's **physical movement** is significant in the story.
13. Explain the **central crisis**. Explain when it happens and what the issue is.
14. Explain how the **resolution** (the way in which the conflict is ended) occurs.
15. Assess the effectiveness of the **ending**.
16. Find an example of **irony** in the story, and explain it.