LANGUAGE ARTS
STUDENT BOOK

10th Grade | Unit 8
# LANGUAGE ARTS 1008

The Short Story

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The Short Story | Unit 8

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The Short Story

Introduction

This LIFEPAC® is designed to increase your enjoyment and understanding of worthwhile literature. You will learn about the structure of the short story, one of the most popular types of literature today. By considering the themes of famous stories, you will learn how literature stimulates thinking about moral choices and the resultant effects on human lives.

You will learn through practice some of the techniques of planning and composing a literary critique and an original short story, and you will learn to appreciate the craftsmanship required for successful writing.

You will increase your mastery of the written sentence and the mechanics of punctuation, and you will have the opportunity to apply these skills to your own written work.

Objectives

Read these objectives. The objectives tell you what you will be able to do when you have successfully completed this LIFEPAC. When you have completed this LIFEPAC, you should be able to:

1. Identify three well-known short story writers by name and country.
2. Recall the most important details and characteristics of three famous stories.
3. Identify the six elements common to all short stories and recognize these elements in the stories read.
4. Recognize, explain, and give examples of three common figures of speech.
5. Explain personal beliefs and moral standards revealed in the stories.
6. Define what is meant by literary criticism.
7. Identify and express in your own words the central idea in a story.
8. Explain how an author has used setting, plot, and character to achieve his purpose.
9. Summarize the plot.
10. Select significant examples of the writer’s style.
11. Identify and describe the strong and weak points of a story.
12. Recommend the story to appropriate readers.
13. Punctuate compound and complex sentences.
14. Write and punctuate sentences containing appositives.
15. Punctuate quotations.
16. Use the apostrophe correctly.
17. Select an appropriate theme for a short story that you will write.
18. Write the setting of the story.
19. Develop interesting and believable characters.
20. Plan a coherent and interesting plot sequence.
21. Employ figures of speech and other literary devices in writing.
22. Write dialogue for a story.
Survey the LIFEPAC. Ask yourself some questions about this study. Write your questions here.
1. ENJOYING SHORT STORIES

In Section I you will be reading three well-known short stories that are very different from each other in locale, characters, and affect on the reader. You will discover what the elements of a successful short story are, how the writer reveals character through speech and action, and how he selects details to enliven his tale. These famous stories have entertained readers for many years. The three authors, Mark Twain, Frank R. Stockton, and Guy de Maupassant, are no longer living, but their work lives on in the mind of each new reader.

Section Objectives

Review these objectives. When you have completed this section, you should be able to:

1. Identify three well-known short-story writers by name and country.
2. Recall the most important details and characteristics of three famous stories.
3. Identify the six elements common to all short stories and recognize these elements in the stories read.
4. Recognize, explain, and give examples of three common figures of speech.
5. Explain personal beliefs and moral standards revealed in the stories.

Vocabulary

Study these words to enhance your learning success in this section.

- contemporary
- eerie
- novel
- omniscient
- style
- tone
- incident
- prose fiction

Note: All vocabulary words in this LIFEPAC appear in boldface print the first time they are used. If you are unsure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given in the glossary.
SHORT STORY ELEMENTS

The short story is a form of prose fiction; that is, it presents imaginary characters who meet problems and have adventures in an imaginary world created by the writer. Unlike the novel, the short story is designed to be read in one sitting. It concerns a single problem or idea and has a single plot. Everything in the story must help to create a single affect in the reader's mind.

The short-story writer must plunge into his story quickly, tell it in a series of dramatic action pictures, and conclude it in few words once the action has ended. You will see how writers demonstrate these three skills.

The musician's life story, British life in India, and the settling of a whole new colony would be too long and complex to be written as a single short story. The other three would be more suitable.

Setting. Every story must take place in some specific location and time, called its setting. Although a short-story writer may know many fascinating details about the location, he will use only those details that are important to the story. A story set in the contemporary United States may describe the setting only briefly, since most readers will know how a dentist's office or a supermarket looks, sounds, and smells. If the setting is a foreign country or if the story takes place in the distant past, more particulars may be needed. Details that are central to the action, such as the exact location of a secret room, must be emphasized.

Sometimes, the setting shows the reader something about the personality of one of the important characters. The bedroom, garden, or garage of a fussy, precise person would look very different from those of a disorganized, absent-minded individual. A woodcutter's hut in the forest will have different furnishings than the home of a wealthy landowner.

Often, the description of the setting helps the author to set the mood of the story, and to make the reader feel sad, uneasy, or confident. Writers of ghost stories know what a few cobwebs, a banging shutter, and a moaning wind can do to enhance their eerie tales.
Complete this activity.

1.1 Read the following phrases and decide which ones could be used as a basis for a short story. Put a check in the blank at the left of these items.

__________ a. the life story of a famous musician
__________ b. a championship basketball game in which a new player is the star
__________ c. a family mix-up over selecting a birthday present for Father
__________ d. an account of three generations of a British family in India
__________ e. settling the first earth colony on another planet
__________ f. the mysterious disappearance of a cake from the home economics room

Complete the following activity.

1.2 Read each of the following descriptions of settings for short stories and write one sentence to tell what kind of story you believe will follow.

a. In dreams I return each night to the cottage and smell again its sun-drenched pine walls and finger the shells left by the children long ago on the old porch table and listen once more to the sea.

b. There was no nonsense about Miss Madigan’s office. In one corner was an olive-drab metal file; and on the desk was a black telephone, a note pad, and one sharp pencil. On the wall was a district map with red and green push pins. One of the red pins was at our house, 238 Mill Street.

c. Gregory opened the door on a scene of wild confusion. Apparently he would be living with a roommate who enjoyed books, marshmallows, hamsters, open cupboard doors, weightlifting, loud music, and photography but not peace, order, or quiet study.
Characters. People in stories are referred to as characters. In the short story, the number of characters must be limited; usually, a story has no more than three or four, with one or two receiving most of the attention. The main character, the one of greatest interest to the reader, is called the protagonist from a Greek word meaning first actor. In most stories, the protagonist will be opposed by a second person called the antagonist. This term is from another Greek word meaning to struggle against, and it is related to our word antagonize. In the Bible story, David would be considered the protagonist and Goliath the antagonist.

Minor characters receive very little attention; they are quickly introduced, play their necessary parts in the action, and vanish. In this respect, the short story is very different from the novel, which may introduce any number of interesting side characters.

The skillful writer shows what his characters are like through what they do (action) and what they say (dialogue) rather than by lengthy descriptive paragraphs. He must concentrate on one or two outstanding traits in each character. He does not have the time to show all the contradictions and inconsistencies that exist in all human beings.

Complete the following activity.

1.3 Read the following descriptions of characters and, in one or two words, tell what you think each person is like.

a. In five minutes, Grandmother had hugged us, carried her own bags upstairs, straightened my blouse, sent Roger to wash his hands, whisked the dirty dishes off the table, and started to sing as she washed them.

   Grandmother is ________________________________________.

b. The young man jogged past the stand of eucalyptus trees, his whites quickly shedding the patterns of leafy shadows. A season of sunshine had gently warmed his tan complexion and had brightened his rich auburn hair. Passing by the slatted benches, he smiled encouragement to the elderly men eager to collect the memories of less-weary days. As he approached the courts, his shouted greeting was answered by the high wave of his partner’s racquet.

   The young man is ________________________________________.

c. “I’m not sure I can do this,” said Lonnie, “I’ve never even been to a banquet. And I got a D in public speaking, and even that was a—” He stopped in despair and stared hopelessly at his broken shoelace.

   Lonnie is ________________________________________.
Conflict. Every story is based on a conflict, or some sort of struggle that ends in success or defeat for the protagonist. Many stories are about physical or intellectual struggles between the main character and a real enemy, such as an animal, a force of nature, or another human being. Such stories are usually exciting; we admire the hero for his courage and persistence or his intelligence and quick wit. An example of this kind of story from the Bible is the struggle between Samson and the lion. A struggle between the protagonist and someone or something outside himself is called an external conflict.

At times, everyone experiences difficulty in making a choice between two courses of action. An example would be your own hesitation between your homework and a visit with a friend. Sometimes, the conflict is much more serious, as when a man has to choose between lying on the witness stand and sending a friend to prison. Such dilemmas are called internal conflicts because the person is struggling within himself.

His decision, however, may have important results in the outside world, for himself and for others. Such conflicts within people are often the basis for powerful and thought-provoking short stories.

Complete the following activity.

1.4 Write I on the blank if the stated conflict is internal; write E if it is external.

_____  a. A man works hard on a pioneer farm, only to have his first crop threatened by grasshoppers.

_____  b. A young woman has to choose between two careers.

_____  c. A boy blinded in an accident is afraid to go out alone.

_____  d. Two rival boatmen have an exciting race to win a trophy.

_____  e. A girl lost in a storm finds her way to shelter.

_____  f. A Christian is asked to make a secret contribution to a candidate's election. He knows office policy forbids this action.
Plot. The *plot* of a story is its plan of action—the series of events that bring the conflict to an end. A short story has one plot; a novel may also have several less important subplots interwoven with the main plot.

The short-story writer must capture the reader’s interest at the very beginning; therefore, he usually starts with an exciting or intriguing *incident*. He follows this incident with other carefully planned incidents that advance the story, add to the excitement, and keep the reader’s interest high. The protagonist may have to overcome several obstacles.

The incident that brings the action to an end and shows how the conflict is to be resolved is called the *climax*. The climax is the most interesting part of the story, the deciding moment the reader is waiting for.

The final sentences or paragraphs, which explain the outcome, tie up any loose ends, and conclude the story, are called the *denouement* (day no mon).

Plot construction can be illustrated by drawing a line like the one that follows and placing the incidents in the story in it. The illustrated plot line is based on the childhood story of “Jack and the Beanstalk.” You can see that the climax is the point of highest interest. Some authors use this kind of diagram as they plan their stories.
Complete the following activity.

1.5 Draw a story line on a piece of paper; and then plot the main events of another familiar story, such as “Cinderella” or a favorite Bible story, on your story line. After you have finished, have another student check your story line to see whether he understands it.

Theme. Often the short-story writer wants only to entertain the reader, but sometimes he has a more serious purpose. He wants to teach a lesson, express a new idea, or set the reader to thinking. His story will then have a recognizable theme. Usually, the theme can be expressed in a general sentence, such as these:

- Misfortune can be followed by good fortune. (Cinderella)
- Poor outward appearances may hide something of great beauty or value if one is patient. (The Ugly Duckling)
- Promises, once made, should be kept. (The Frog Prince)
- Each Christian should feel responsible for the care and protection of his fellow men. (The Good Samaritan)

A writer with a specific purpose or theme in mind might choose to develop different stories to illustrate his point. Intelligent readers will enjoy thinking about the theme of a good story long after they have forgotten the details of the setting or plot.

Complete the following activity.

1.6 Choose a Bible story with which you are familiar and express the theme in one sentence. Noah and the ark, the story of Ruth, or the parable of the prodigal son might be good choices.

a. name of the story __________________________________________________________

b. I think the theme of this story is ________________________________________________
Point of view. Two people experiencing the same thing will tell about it differently; they have different points of view. If you saw a robbery, you might be able to describe exactly the criminal’s clothing and facial features. Another witness might remember the car and license number, and a third might recall only her own terror when the robber shouted at her. A writer must decide at the outset who will be telling the story, and he must continue with the same point of view. Unless it is carefully explained, a shift in point of view will confuse the reader.

Sometimes one of the characters tells the story as he remembers it. It may be a main character who takes a direct part in most of the action. Occasionally, the author will have a less important character describe what he saw happening and what he thought about it. This story is still in first person because the speaker is part of the story. In a first-person story, the author relies heavily on the first-person pronouns I, me, we, mine, ours, myself, and ourselves.

When a speaker or writer uses you, yours, and yourself, he is using the second person. The second person is always the listener or reader, just as the first person is the speaker or writer. The second-person point of view is rarely used in stories because it is difficult and artificial. A story is seldom told to its subject. An example might be a story in which an excited spectator is giving a play-by-play description to the quarterback who actually participated: “You threw a wonderful pass there! And how about that forty-yard run? You were great!”

When he tells the reader a story about someone else, the writer is using the third person. The third person is neither the speaker nor the listener, but it uses the third-person pronouns, he, she, they, or it. Other third-person pronouns are his, her, their, its, himself, herself, themselves, and itself.

Most short stories are written in the third person. This technique gives the author a chance to tell the story directly and to supply all the information the reader needs at each point in the story.

Complete the following activities.

**1.7** Put the letter of each of the following words or phrases in the correct column:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. we students</th>
<th>b. I agree</th>
<th>c. her grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>d. your book</td>
<td>e. those students</td>
<td>f. their own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. thou art</td>
<td>h. thine</td>
<td>i. ye brethren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. the brown dog</td>
<td>k. ask yourself</td>
<td>l. ours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First Person  Second Person  Third Person

a. __________________________  b. _________________________  c. __________________________
1.8 Put a 1, 2, or 3 in front of each of these sentences to show whether it is written in first, second, or third person.

a. ____ Mason Bloom was a very old man when he first visited London.

b. ____ I saw the bird crash into my windshield as I swerved the car.

c. ____ The purpose of diplomacy is the protection of a nation’s interests abroad.

d. ____ “For thou art my hope, O Lord God: thou art my trust from my youth.“

e. ____ “Some trust in chariots, and some in horses...”

f. ____ “But we will remember the name of the Lord our God.”

THE CELEBRATED JUMPING FROG OF CALAVERAS COUNTY

People in the United States have always appreciated robust fun and laughter, and the humorous “tall tale” is one of this nation’s contributions to world literature. No writer has been more successful at creating this type of story than Samuel Langhorne Clemens, better known by his pen name of Mark Twain. Born in 1835, Twain worked in his brother’s print shop and later became a Mississippi Riverboat pilot. He was still a young man when Gold Rush fever struck the United States; and, with many other adventurers, he went to California. Eastern readers were eager for romantic, colorful stories about the West. Twain’s humorous accounts of the odd characters he met there had wide popular appeal.

As you read the following humorous story, try to identify the setting, characters, conflict, plot incidents and climax, and theme. The activities that follow the story will help you in this task.

Setting. Angel Camp, where “The Celebrated Jumping Frog” takes place, was a real gold camp, one of many that sprang up overnight on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the east of San Francisco. The story has made the little town famous; the citizens still continue the fun by holding an annual frog jumping contest there.

Study these words to enhance your enjoyment of the story.

- afflicted
- conjecture
- enterprising
- flume
- infamous
- interminable
- tedious

- bully-rag
- consumption
- exhort
- garrulous
- infernal
- Providence
- tranquil

- cherished
- dilapidated
- exquisitely
- impressive
- infinite
- reminiscence
- transcendent
The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County

by Mark Twain

In compliance with the request of a friend of mine, who wrote me from the East, I called on good-natured, garrulous old Simon Wheeler, and inquired after my friend's friend, Leonidas W. Smiley, as requested to do, and I hereunto append the result. I have a lurking suspicion that Leonidas W. Smiley is a myth; that my friend never knew such a personage; and that he only conjectured that, if I asked old Wheeler about him it would remind him of his infamous Jim Smiley, and he would go to work and bore me nearly to death with some infernal reminiscence of him as long and tedious as it should be useless for me. If that was the design, it certainly succeeded.

I found Simon Wheeler dozing comfortably by the bar-room stove of the old, dilapidated tavern in the ancient mining camp of Angel's, and I noticed that he was fat and bald-headed, and had an expression of winning gentleness and simplicity upon his tranquil countenance. He roused up and gave me good-day. I told him a friend of mine had commissioned me to make some inquiries about a cherished companion of his boyhood named Leonidas W. Smiley—a young minister of the Gospel, who he had heard was at one time a resident of Angel's Camp. I added that if Mr. Wheeler could tell me anything about this Rev. Leonidas W. Smiley, I would feel under many obligations to him.

Simon Wheeler backed me into a corner and blockaded me there with his chair, and then sat me down and reeled off the monotonous narrative which follows this paragraph. He never smiled, he never frowned, he never changed his voice from the gentle-flowing key to which he turned the initial sentence, he never betrayed the slightest suspicion of enthusiasm; but all through the interminable narrative there ran a vein of impressive earnestness and sincerity, which showed me plainly that, so far from his imagining that there was anything ridiculous or funny about his story, he regarded it as a really important matter, and admired its two heroes as men of transcendent genius in finesse. To me the spectacle of a man drifting serenely along through such a queer yarn without ever smiling was exquisitely absurd. As I said before, I asked him to tell me what he knew of Rev. Leonidas W. Smiley, and he replied as follows. I let him go on in his own way, and never interrupted him once:

There was a feller here once by the name of Jim Smiley, in the winter of '49—or may be it was the spring of '50—I don't recollect exactly, somehow, though what makes me think it was one or the other is because I remember the big flume wasn't finished when he first came to camp; but any way he was the curiosest man about, always betting on anything that turned up you ever see, if he could get any body to bet on the other side; and if he couldn't, he'd change sides. Any way that suited the other man would suit him—any way just so's he got a bet, he was satisfied. But still he was lucky, uncommon lucky; he most always come out winner. He was always ready and laying for a chance; there couldn't be no solitary thing mentioned but that feller'd offer to bet on it, and take any side you please, as I was just telling you. If there was a horse-race, you'd find him flush, or you'd find him busted at the end of it; if there was a dog-fight, he'd bet on it; if there was a cat-fight, he'd bet on it; if there was a chicken-fight, he'd bet on it; why, if there was two birds sitting on a fence, he would bet you which one would fly first; or if there was a camp-meeting, he would be there regular, to bet on Parson Walker, which he judged to be the best exhorter about here, and so
he was, too, and a good man. If he even seen a straddle-bug start to go anywheres, he would bet you how long it would take him to get wherever he was going to, and if you took him up, he would foller that straddle-bug to Mexico but what he would find out where he was bound for and how long he was on the road. Lots of the boys here has seen that Smiley, and can tell you about him. Why, it never made no difference to him—he would bet on any thing—the dangdest feller. Parson Walker's wife laid very sick once, for a good while, and it seemed as if they warn't going to save her; but one morning he come in, and Smiley asked how she was, and he said she was considerable better—thank the Lord for His infinit mercy—and coming on so smart that, with the blessing of Prov'dence, she'd get well yet; and Smiley, before he thought, says, “Well, I'll risk two-and-a-half that she don't anyway.”

This-yer Smiley had a mare—the boys called her the fifteen-minute nag, but that was only in fun, you know, because, of course, she was faster than that—and he used to win money on that horse, for all she was so slow and always had the asthma, or the distemper, or the consumption, or something of that kind. They used to give her two or three hundred yards’ start, and then pass her under way; but always at the fag-end of the race she’d get excited and desperate-like, and come cavorting and straddling up, and scattering her legs around limber, sometimes in the air, and sometimes out to one side amongst the fences, and kicking up m-o-r-e dust, and raising m-o-r-e racket with her coughing and sneezing and blowing her nose—and always fetch up at the stand just about a neck ahead, as near as you could cipher it down.

And he had a little small bull pup, that to look at him you’d think he wan’t worth a cent, but to set around and look onery, and lay for a chance to steal something. But as soon as the money was up on him, he was a different dog; his underjaw’d begin to stick out like the fo’castle of a steamboat, and his teeth would uncover, and shine savage like the furnaces.

And a dog might tackle him, and bully-rag him, and bite him, and throw him over his shoulder two or three times, and Andrew Jackson—which was the name of the pup—Andrew Jackson would never let on but what he was satisfied, and hadn’t expected nothing else—and the bets being doubled and doubled on the other side all the time, till the money was all up; and then all of a sudden he would grab that other dog jest by the j’int of his hind leg and freeze to it—not chaw, you understand, but only jest grip and hang on till they thronged up the sponge, if it was a year. Smiley always come out winner on that pup, till he harnessed a dog once that didn't have no hind legs, because they'd been sawed's off by a circular saw, and when the thing had gone along far enough, and the money was all up, and he come to make a snatch for his pet holt, he saw in a minute how he'd been imposed on, and how the other dog had him in the door, so to speak and he'peared surprised, and then he'd looked sorter discour-aged-like, and didn't try no more to win the fight, and so he got shucked out bad. He give Smiley a look, as much as to say his heart was broke, and it was his fault, for putting up a dog that hadn’t no hind legs for him to take holt of, which was his main dependence in a fight, and then he limped off apiece and laid down and died. It was a good pup, was that Andrew Jackson, and would have made a name for hisself if he'd lived, for the stuff was in him, and he had genius—I know it, because he hadn't had no opportunities to speak of, and it don't stand to reason that a dog could make such a fight as he could under them circumstances, if he hadn't no talent. It always makes me feel sorry when I think of that last fight of his’n, and the way it turned out.

Well, this year Smiley had rat-tarriers, and chicken cocks, and tom-cats, and all them kind of things, till you couldn’t rest, and you couldn’t fetch nothing for him to bet on but he'd match you. He ketchet a frog one day, and took him home, and said he cal-klated to edercate him; and so he never done nothing for three months
but set in his back yard and learn that frog to jump. And you bet you he did learn him, too. He'd give him a little punch behind, and the next minute you'd see that frog whirling in the air like a doughnut—see him turn one somerset, or may be a couple, if he got a good start, and come down flat-footed and all right, like a cat. He got him up so in the matter of catching flies, and kept him in practice so constant, that he'd nail a fly every time as far as he could see him. Smiley said all a frog wanted was education, and he could do most anything—and I believe him. Why, I've seen him set Dan'l Webster down here on this floor—Dan'l Webster was the name of the frog—and sing out, “Flies, Dan'l, flies!” and quicker'n you could wink, he'd spring straight up, and snake a fly off'n the counter there, and flop down on the floor again as solid as a gob of mud, and fall to scratching the side of his head with his hind foot as indifferent as if he hadn't no idea he'd been doin' any more'n any frog might do. You never see a frog so modest and straight forward as he was, for all he was so gifted. And when it come to fair and square jumping on a dead level, he could get over more ground at one straddle than any animal of his breed you ever see. Jumping on a dead level was his strong suit, you understand; and when it come to that, Smiley would ante up money on him as long as he had a red. Smiley was monstrous proud of his frog, and well he might be, for fellers that had travelled and been everywheres, all said he laid over any frog that ever they see.

Well, Smiley kept the beast in a little lattice box, and he used to fetch him down town sometimes and lay for a bet. One day a feller—a stranger in the camp, he was—come across him with his box, and says:

“What might it be that you've got in the box?”

And Smiley says, sorter indifferent like, “It might be a parrot, or it might be a canary, may be, but it ain't—it's only just a frog.”

And the feller took it, and looked at it careful, and turned it round this way and that, and says, “H'm, so 'tis. Well, what's he good for?”

“Well,” Smiley says, easy and careless, “he's good enough for one thing, I should judge—he can out-jump any frog in Calaveras county.”

The feller took the box again, and took another long, particular look, and give it back to Smiley, and says, very deliberate, “Well, I don't see no p'ints about that frog that's any better'n any other frog.”

“May be you don't,” Smiley says. “May be you understand frogs, and may be you don't understand 'em; may be you've had experience, and may be you ain't, only a amateur, as it were. Any ways, I've got my opinion, and I'll risk forty dollars that he can outjump any frog in Calaveras county.”

And the feller studied a minute, and then says, kinder sad like,

“Well, I'm only a stranger here, and I ain't got no frog; but if I had a frog, I'd bet you.

And then Smiley says, “That's all right—that's all right—if you'll hold my box a minute, I'll go and get you a frog.” And so the feller took the box, and put up his forty dollars along with Smiley's and set down to wait.

So he set there a good while thinking and thinking to hisself, and then he got the frog out and prized his mouth open and took a teaspoon and filled him full of quail shot—filled him pretty near up to his chin—and set him on the floor. Smiley he went to the swamp and slopped around in the mud for a long time, and finally he ketched a frog, and fetched him in, and give him to this feller, and says:

“Now, if you're ready, set him alongside of Dan'l, with his fore-paws just even with Dan'l, and I'll give the word.” Then he says, “One—two—three—jump!” and him and the feller touched up the frogs from behind, and the new frog hopped off, but Dan'l give a heave, and hysted up his shoulders—so—like a Frenchman, but
it wan’t no use—he couldn’t budge; he was planted as solid as an anvil, and he couldn’t no more stir than if he was anchored out. Smiley was a good deal surprised, and he was disgusted too, but he didn’t have no idea what the matter was, of course. The feller took the money and started away; and when he was going out at the door, he sorter jerked his thumb over his shoulders—this way—at Dan’l and says again, very deliberate, “Well, I don’t see no p’ints about that frog that’s any better’n any other frog.”

Smiley he stood scratching his head and looking down at Dan’l a long time, and at last he says, “I do wonder what in the nation that frog throw’d off for—I wonder if there ain’t something the matter with him—he’pears to look mighty baggy, somehow.” And he ketched Dan’l by the nap of the neck, and lifted him up and says, “Why, blame my cats, if he don’t weigh five pound!” and turned him upside down, and he belched out a double handful of shot. And then he see how it was, and he was the maddest man—he set the frog down and took out after that feller, but he never ketched him. And—

(Here Simon Wheeler heard his name called trom the front yard, and got up to see what was wanted.) And turning to me as he moved away, he said: “Just set where you are stranger, and rest easy—I ain’t going to be gone a second.”

But, by your leave, I did not think that a continuation of the history of the enterprising vagabond Jim Smiley would be likely to afford me much information concerning the Rev. Leonidas W. Smiley, and so I started away.

At the door I met the sociable Wheeler returning, and he buttonholed me and recommenced: “Well, this-yer Smiley had a yeller one-eyed cow that didn’t have no tail, only just a short stump like a bannanner, and—”

“Oh, hang Smiley and his afflicted cow!” I muttered good-naturedly, and bidding the old gentleman good-day, I departed.
Frame stories. Writers sometimes use a special device to lead the reader into the story. At the first of this story, the author is speaking, explaining how he came to hear the tale. He has been sent by an unnamed friend to ask Simon Wheeler about a man named Leonidas W. Smiley. He does so; and, instead, the old man tells him about the rascally Jim Smiley, the protagonist. The author and his question are a “frame” for the real story that begins when Wheeler starts talking. Twain completes the frame with another mention of Leonidas W. Smiley at the end. The frame adds interest, just as a picture frame enhances a photograph.

Characters. This story has two main characters: Jim Smiley and the stranger, who is the antagonist. Simon Wheeler is merely an observer, but Twain has made him an amusing character as well.

Complete the following activities.

1.9 Twain says he suspects that Leonidas W. Smiley did not exist. What was his friend’s purpose in asking Twain to inquire about him?

________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________

1.10 Twain pretends to be impatient with Wheeler’s long story. This pretense is his little joke on the reader, since, actually, he is enjoying the storytelling. Give two examples of words or phrases that describe his supposed impatience.

________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________

Complete the following activities.

1.11 Copy several sentences or phrases that describe the appearance and personality of Simon Wheeler.

________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________

1.12 Explain Jim Smiley’s main interest in life, and give one example of his way of tricking people into betting with him.

________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________
The man who finally outdoes Jim Smiley is important to the plot, yet Twain has not even given him a name. He is simply “the stranger” or, “the feller.” Perhaps the author wanted to suggest that names were not important in the gold camps where a large number of strangers were coming and going, or he may have wanted the story to sound just as an older person like Simon Wheeler would remember it.

**Plot.** Wheeler gives several examples to illustrate Jim Smiley’s betting habits. One of these, the story of the bulldog Andrew Jackson, is a little story in itself.

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**Answer the following questions.**

1.13 What had Jim Smiley taught his dog to do in a fight?

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

1.14 What happened in the dog’s last fight?

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

1.15 How did the dog behave after the fight?

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

In the final event, the frog contest, Smiley is outtricked by the stranger. This device of the tables being turned, with someone finally getting the better of a rascal, is a popular element in many folk stories.

**Answer the following questions.**

1.16 What is the conflict in this story? Is it an internal or external one?

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

1.17 How did Smiley try to fool the stranger?

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

1.18 How did the stranger get Smiley to leave him alone with the frog?

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
What did the stranger do after the contest?

What did Smiley do after he discovered the frog had been weighted?

How does Twain complete the frame of his story?

Choice of language. In this story, Twain uses a humorous dialect that adds to the reader’s enjoyment. A dialect is a speech pattern that is different from standard English in pronunciation, choice of words, and speech rhythm. Twain has Wheeler use many colorful expressions as well as grammatical errors and mispronunciations to give the flavor of the speech common to the mining community he is describing. Readers of his day enjoyed this contrast to the rather formal writing style that most authors of the time were using.

Complete the following activity.

Explain in standard English what Wheeler means when he uses these expressions:

a. feller
b. curiosest man
c. This-yer Smiley
d. They thronged up the sponge
e. He ketched a frog
f. He turned a somerset
g. He prized his mouth open
h. He wan’t worth a cent
Twain's lively writing contains many examples of figures of speech; that is, he uses words in an unusual and imaginative way to give vivid pictures. The simile is one figure of speech that compares one thing to another, using like or as. When Twain writes, “His underjaw would stick out like the fo’castle of a steamboat,” he is using a simile. Homely expressions such as “as cool as a cucumber,” “spread like wildfire,” and “cross as a bear” are all similes.

Complete the following activity.

1.23 Find two other similes in Twain’s story and copy them here.
   a. __________________________________________
   b. __________________________________________

In another figure of speech, the metaphor, the writer suggests a comparison without using like or as.
   Examples: A torrent of words (compares the speech to a swift river)
              Spectators flocked in (crowd is compared to a flock of sheep)

Complete the following activity.

1.24 Name the item or action used for comparison in these metaphors from the story.
   a. He'd nail a fly ________________________________
   b. He was anchored out __________________________
   c. He reeled off the story __________________________
   d. He blockaded me with his chair __________________

A third figure of speech Twain uses to good effect is personification. When you represent a thing, quality, or idea as if it were a human person, you are using personification. Familiar examples are Mother Nature, Jack Frost, and Uncle Sam. This story contains good examples of personification in the description of Andrew Jackson, the dog, and Dan'l Webster, the frog. Both are given some human qualities.

Complete the following activity.

1.25 List one example from the descriptions of these animals that shows them to be human, at least in Simon Wheeler’s opinion.
   __________________________________________
During the reading of the story, you may have found passages that were too good to keep to yourself. You wanted to make someone else laugh at them, too. Twain’s sense of the ridiculous, quick wit, and humorous exaggerations remain popular even today; and he is frequently quoted.

Complete the following activity.

1.26 Copy three sentences or parts of sentences that you found particularly funny and would like to share with someone else.

________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________

Complete the following activity.

1.27 On a separate sheet of paper write a one- or two-paragraph explanation of the meaning of the words “mark twain” and of the probable reasons why Samuel Langhorne Clemens chose those words as a pen name.

TEACHER CHECK

initials

date
THE LADY OR THE TIGER?

The next story was written by Frank R. Stockton, who, although less well-known than Mark Twain, was a popular American journalist and humorist of the late nineteenth century. It is a story the reader cannot forget, for the author has presented an exciting problem and left it for his readers to finish. Do not be discouraged by the first few paragraphs. The following summary will help you get into the story:

The opening paragraphs explain that a barbaric king has developed a strange method of administering justice. An accused person is led into an arena and asked to choose between two identical doors. One conceals a raging tiger, the other a beautiful woman. In the next few minutes the criminal will either be torn to pieces or forced to marry the lady behind the second door. The king can take this action because he is an absolute monarch, and, in fact, he considers it a very fair system. His people, as barbarous as he, enjoy the exciting spectacle, whichever door is opened.

Study the following words to enhance your enjoyment of the story.

- ardor
- conventional
- doleful
- exuberant
- florid
- grievous
- imperious
- parapet
- rhapsody
- untrammeled
- barbarian
- devious
- emanate
- fervent
- genial
- hilarious
- incorruptible
- rapturous
- subordinate
- bland
- dire
- epithalamic
- fervid
- gladiator
- impartial
- moiety
- retribution
- tribunal
The Lady or The Tiger?
by Frank R. Stockton

In the very olden time there lived a semi-barbaric king whose ideas, though somewhat polished and sharpened by the progressiveness of distant Latin neighbors, were still large, florid, and untrammelled, as became the half of him which was barbaric. He was a man of exuberant fancy, and, withal, of an authority so irresistible that, at his will, he turned his varied fancies into facts. He was greatly given to self-communing; and, when he and himself agreed upon anything, the thing was done. When every member of his domestic and political systems moved smoothly in its appointed course, his nature was bland and genial; but whenever there was a little hitch, and some of his orbs got out of their orbits, he was blander and more genial still, for nothing pleased him so much as to make the crooked straight, and crush down uneven places.

Among the borrowed notions by which his barbarism had become semified was that of the public arena, in which, by exhibitions of manly and beastly valor, the minds of his subjects were refined and cultured.

But even here the exuberant and barbaric fancy asserted itself. The arena of the king was built, not to give the people an opportunity of hearing the rhapsodies of dying gladiators, nor to enable them to view the inevitable conclusion of a conflict between religious opinions and hungry jaws, but for purposes far better adapted to widen and develop the mental energies of the people. This vast amphitheatre, with its encircling galleries, its mysterious vaults, and its unseen passages, was an agent of poetic justice, in which crime was punished, or virtue rewarded, by the decrees of an impartial and incorruptible chance.

When a subject was accused of a crime of sufficient importance to interest the king, public notice was given that on an appointed day the fate of the accused person would be decided in the king’s arena,—a structure which well deserved its name; for, although its form and plan were borrowed from afar, its purpose emanated solely from the brain of this man, who, every barleycorn a king, knew no tradition to which he owed more allegiance than pleased his fancy, and who ingrafted on every adopted form of human thought and action the rich growth of his barbaric idealism.

When all the people had assembled in the galleries, and the king, surrounded by his court, sat high up on his throne of royal state on one side of the arena, he gave a signal, a door beneath him opened, and the accused subject stepped out into the amphitheatre. Directly opposite him, on the other side of the enclosed space, were two doors, exactly alike and side by side. It was the duty and the privilege of the person on trial to walk directly to these doors and open one of them. He could open either door he pleased: he was subject to no guidance or influence but that of the aforementioned impartial and incorruptible chance. If he opened the one, there came out of it a hungry tiger, the fiercest and most cruel that could be procured, which immediately sprang upon him, and tore him to pieces, as a punishment for his guilt. The moment that the case of the criminal was thus decided, doleful iron bells were clanged, great wails went up from the hired mourners posted on the outer rim of the arena, and the vast audience, with bowed heads and downcast hearts, wended slowly their homeward way, mourning greatly that one so young and fair, or so old and respected, should have merited so dire a fate.

But, if the accused person opened the other door, there came forth from it a lady, the most suitable to his years and station that his
majesty could select among his fair subjects; and to this lady he was immediately married, as a reward of his innocence. It mattered not that he might already possess a wife and family, or that his affections might be engaged upon an object of his own selection; the king allowed no such subordinate arrangements to interfere with his great scheme of retribution and reward. The exercises as in the other instance, took place immediately, and in the arena. Another door opened beneath the king, and a priest, followed by a band of choristers and dancing maidens blowing joyous airs on golden horns and treading an epithalamic measure, advanced to where the pair stood, side by side; and the wedding was promptly and cheerily solemnized. Then the gay brass bells rang forth their merry peals, the people shouted glad hurrahs, and the innocent man, preceded by children strewing flowers on his path, led his bride to his home.

This was the king’s semi-barbaric method of administering justice. Its perfect fairness is obvious. The criminal could not know out of which door would come the lady; he opened either he pleased, without having the slightest idea whether, in the next instant, he was to be devoured or married. On some occasions the tiger came out of one door, and on some out of the other. The decisions of this tribunal were not only fair, they were positively determinate: the accused person was instantly punished if he found himself guilty; and, if innocent, he was rewarded on the spot, whether he liked it or not. There was no escape from the judgments of the king’s arena.

The institution was a very popular one. When the people gathered together on one of the great trial days, they never knew whether they were to witness a bloody slaughter or a hilarious wedding. This element of uncertainty lent an interest to the occasion which it could not otherwise have attained. Thus the masses were entertained and pleased, and the thinking part of the community could bring no charge of unfairness against this plan; for did not the accused person have the whole matter in his own hands?

This semi-barbaric king had a daughter as blooming as his most florid fancies, and with a soul as fervent and imperious as his own. As is usual in such cases, she was the apple of his eye, and was loved by him above all humanity. Among his courtiers was a young man of that fineness of blood and lowness of station common to the conventional heroes of romance who love royal maidens. This royal maiden was well satisfied with her lover, for he was handsome and brave to a degree unsurpassed in all this kingdom; and she loved him with an ardor that had enough of barbarism in it to make it exceedingly warm and strong. This love affair moved on happily for many months, until one day the king happened to discover its existence. He did not hesitate nor waver in regard to his duty in the premises. The youth was immediately cast into prison, and a day was appointed for his trial in the king’s arena. This, of course, was an especially important occasion; and his majesty, as well as all the people, was greatly interested in the workings and development of this trial. Never before had such a case occurred; never before had a subject dared to love the daughter of a king. In after years such things became commonplace enough; but then they were, in no slight degree, novel and startling.

The tiger-cages of the kingdom were searched for the most savage and relentless beasts, from which the fiercest monster might be selected for the arena; and the ranks of maiden youth and beauty throughout the land were carefully surveyed by competent judges, in order that the young man might have a fitting bride in case fate did not determine for him a different destiny. Of course, everybody knew that the deed with which the accused was charged had been done. He had loved the princess, and neither he, she, nor any one else thought of denying the fact; but the king would not think
of allowing any fact of this kind to interfere with the workings of the tribunal, in which he took such great delight and satisfaction. No matter how the affair turned out, the youth would be disposed of; and the king would take an aesthetic pleasure in watching the course of events, which would determine whether or not the young man had done wrong in allowing himself to love the princess.

The appointed day arrived. From far and near the people gathered, and thronged the great galleries of the arena; and crowds, unable to gain admittance, massed themselves against its outside walls. The king and his court were in their places, opposite the twin doors—those fateful portals, so terrible in their similarity.

All was ready. The signal was given. A door beneath the royal party opened and the lover of the princess walked into the arena. Tall, beautiful, fair, his appearance was greeted with a low hum of admiration and anxiety. Half the audience had not known so grand a youth had lived among them. No wonder the princess loved him! What a terrible thing for him to be there!

As the youth advanced into the arena, he turned, as the custom was, to bow to the king; but he did not think at all of that royal personage; his eyes were fixed upon the princess, who sat to the right of her father. Had it not been for the moiety of barbarism in her nature, it is probable that lady would not have been there; but her intense and fervid soul would not allow her to be absent on an occasion in which she was so terribly interested. From the moment that the decree had gone forth, that her lover should decide his fate in the king's arena, she had thought of nothing, night or day, but this great event and the various subjects connected with it. Possessed of more power, influence, and force of character than any one who had ever before been interested in such a case, she had done what no other person had done—she had possessed herself of the secret of the doors. She knew in which of the two rooms, that lay behind those doors, stood the cage of the tiger, with its open front, and in which waited the lady. Through these thick doors, heavily curtained with skins on the inside, it was impossible that any noise or suggestion should come from within to the person who should approach to raise the latch of one of them; but gold, and the power of a woman's will, had brought the secret to the princess.

And not only did she know in which room stood the lady ready to emerge, all blushing and radiant, should her door be opened, but she knew who the lady was. It was one of the fairest and loveliest of the damsels of the court who had been selected as the reward of the accused youth, should he be proved innocent of the crime of aspiring to one so far above him; and the princess hated her. Often had she seen, or imagined that she had seen, this fair creature throwing glances of admiration upon the person of her lover, and sometimes she thought these glances were perceived and even returned. Now and then she had seen them talking together; it was but for a moment or two, but much can be said in a brief space; it may have been on most unimportant topics, but how could she know that? The girl was lovely, but she had dared to raise her eyes to the loved one of the princess; and, with all the intensity of the savage blood transmitted to her through long lines of wholly barbaric ancestors, she hated the woman who blushed and trembled behind that silent door.

When her lover turned and looked at her, and his eye met hers as she sat there paler and whiter than any one in the vast ocean of anxious faces about her, he saw, by that power of quick perception which is given to those whose souls are one, that she knew behind which door crouched the tiger, and behind which stood the lady. He had expected her to know it. He understood her nature, and his soul was assured that she would never rest until she had made plain to herself this thing, hidden to all other lookers-on, even to the king. The
only hope for the youth in which there was any element of certainty was based upon the success of the princess in discovering this mystery; and the moment he looked upon her, he saw she had succeeded, as in his soul he knew she would succeed.

Then it was that his quick and anxious glance asked the question: “Which?” It was as plain to her as if he shouted it from where he stood. There was not an instant to be lost. The question was asked in a flash; it must be answered in another.

Her right arm lay on the cushioned parapet before her. She raised her hand, and made a slight, quick movement toward the right. No one but her lover saw her. Every eye but his was fixed on the man in the arena. He turned, and with a firm and rapid step he walked across the empty space. Every heart stopped beating, every breath was held, every eye was fixed immovably upon that man. Without the slightest hesitation he went to the door on the right and opened it.

Now, the point of the story is this: Did the tiger come out of that door, or did the lady? The more we reflect upon this question, the harder it is to answer. It involves a study of the human heart which leads us through devious mazes of passion, out of which it is difficult to find our way. Think of it, fair reader, not as if the decision of the question depended upon yourself, but upon that hot-blooded, semi-barbaric princess, her soul at a white heat beneath the combined fires of despair and jealousy. She had lost him, but who should have him?

How often, in her waking hours and in her dreams, had she started in wild horror, and covered her face with her hands as she thought of her lover opening the door on the other side of which waited the cruel fangs of the tiger!

But how much oftener had she seen him at the other door! How in her grievous reveries had she gnashed her teeth, and torn her hair, when she saw his start of rapturous delight as he opened the door of the lady? How her soul had burned in agony when she had seen him rush to meet that woman, with her flushing cheek and sparkling eye of triumph; when she had seen him lead her forth, his whole frame kindled with the joy of recovered life; when she had heard the glad shouts from the multitude, and the wild ringing of the happy bells; when she had seen the priest, with his joyous followers, advance to the couple, and make them man and wife before her very eyes; and when she had seen them walk away together upon their path of flowers, followed by the tremendous shouts of the hilarious multitude, in which her one despairing shriek was lost and drowned!

Would it not be better for him to die at once, and go to wait for her in the blessed regions of semi-barbaric futurity?

And yet, that awful tiger, those shrieks, that blood!

Her decision had been indicated in an instant, but it had been made after days and nights of anguished deliberation. She had known she would be asked, she had decided what she would answer, and, without the slightest hesitation, she had moved her hand to the right. The question of her decision is one not to be lightly considered, and it is not for me to presume to set myself up as the one person able to answer it. And so I leave it with all of you: Which came out of the opened door—the lady, or the tiger?
Setting. Because the story takes place in an imaginary kingdom, few details of the setting are given. Only the arena is described in detail. You can picture it as similar to a modern football stadium, although somewhat smaller. A box for the king and his court is on one side. On the opposite side, facing the king but down on the arena floor, are the two all-important doors. The criminal will enter from a doorway directly below the king's box. Seats for spectators are ranged all around the arena.

Characters. The main character is, of course, the princess. Two minor characters are the young man who is on trial and the young woman who is behind one of the doors. The king is a witness to the action but does not take part in it.

Plot. The lengthy explanation of the king's system of justice introduces the story. The main incident is the final climactic one in which the princess must make her decision. The love affair and the jealousy of the princess are described as thoughts of the princess and are not shown as actual incidents. This method helps to concentrate attention on the conflict within the mind of the princess.

The most unusual part of this story is the “trick” ending, in which the reader is asked to finish the story himself.

Complete the following statements about the setting, characters, and plot.

1.28 If he escaped the tiger, the accused person had to ____________________________ .

1.29 The king thought his system of justice was ____________________________ .

1.30 The only crime the young man had committed was ____________________________ .

1.31 The princess has managed to find out ____________________________ .

1.32 The young man hopes she will ____________________________ .

1.33 The princess experiences a conflict between the two emotions of a. ____________________________ and b. ____________________________ .

1.34 I believe that the a. ____________________________ came out of the door the young man opened, because b. ____________________________ .
**Tone.** The tone of this story is whimsical; that is, the author purposely writes of fanciful things in a serious and high-sounding manner. He expects the reader to realize that the events are imaginary, not to be taken seriously. You have probably used the same tone yourself in telling a story to children.

**Theme.** This story is a humorous one; it never really happened. If the author had written it as if it were true, the reader would probably be more horrified than amused. History records that early Christians were indeed sometimes thrown to the lions, and barbaric kings often punished their subjects severely and unreasonably. Even though readers may smile at this unlikely story, they are reminded how fortunate they are to live in a country where the Christian religion and others can be practiced without peril and where laws protect citizens from such cruel and unusual punishments.

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**Complete the following activity.**

1.35 Imagine that the story is true. Write a paragraph giving your own opinion about one of the following questions. Construct your paragraph carefully, and write it on a separate piece of paper.

a. Was the king's system of trying criminals a fair one by modern standards? Why or why not?

b. If the princess had been a Christian rather than a barbarian, what would she have done? What Christian principle is involved?

c. If the princess had made the choice you did in Question 1.34 what would probably have happened after the scene in the arena? Consider how the princess would feel as well as the events you think might take place.

d. Can you think of any examples from daily life or the news of the day that show conflicts caused by jealousy?
THE NECKLACE

Guy de Maupassant (ghee deh moh pah SAHN), a French writer of the late 1800s, based his work on his observations of French society at that time. His style is naturalistic; that is, he attempts to show people as he thinks they really are, and not as impossibly good and noble. In fact, his characters often seem to be helpless victims of their own weakness and the pressures of an uncaring society. Like other naturalistic writers, Guy de Maupassant seldom provides happy endings for his stories. De Maupassant also frequently uses a surprise ending as he does in “The Necklace.”

Study the following words to enhance your understanding of the story. Several words are borrowed from the French language. Those words are starred.

*attaché  casket  *bric-à-brac  calamity  *coquettish  *étager  incessantly  nocturnal  predicament  *quay  repast  *rivière  tempestuous  vicissitudes  

caste  distinguish  *étager  infinite  *pot-au-feu  sphinx-like  usurer  

evince  gallantries  
incongruity  
obsequious  
*quay  seductive  
*toilet (toilette)
The Necklace
by Guy de Maupassant

She was one of those charming girls, born by a freak of destiny in a family of toilers. She had no fortune, no expectations, no means of satisfying her ambitions, except by a marriage with a rich and distinguished man, and, as she knew none, in order to escape from her surroundings, she married a clerk in the office of the Minister of Public Instruction.

She dressed simply, because she had no means of adornment; but she was as unhappy as though she had fallen from a high social position, for the women who have neither caste nor race use their beauty, grace, and charm as stepping-stones to those heights from which they are otherwise barred, their natural tact and instinctive elegance and quick perceptions being their only inheritance, and, skilfully used, make them the equal of their more fortunate sisters. She suffered incessantly when she glanced around her humble home, and felt the absence of all those delicacies and luxuries which are enjoyed only by the rich. In short, all the little nothings, that another woman of her caste would not have seen, tortured and wounded her. The sight of the old Breton peasant woman who performed her simple household duties awakened in her vain longings and troubled dreams.

She dreamed of beautiful halls, discreetly lighted by candles in great bronze candlesticks, whose rich carpets gave back no sounds and whose walls were covered with silks from the Orient, and of obsequious footmen half asleep in their large armchairs, ready to attend to your every want at a moment’s notice; of large salons draped in ancient silks; of “étagers” covered with priceless bric-à-brac. She thought also of coquettish small salons, made expressly for the “five o’clock,” when one receives only one’s intimates or distinguished men of letters, from whom it is every woman’s ambition to receive attentions.

When she was seated at the table (whose cloth had already done duty for three days) or opposite her husband—who evinced his entire satisfaction with the evening’s repast by such exclamations as: “Oh, the good ‘pot-au-feu’! I know nothing better!”—her imagination carried her away to stately banquet halls, whose walls were covered with rich tapestries, portraying scenes in which ancient personages and strange birds were pictured in the middle of a fairy-like forest. She pictured the glittering silver, strange dishes, exquisitely served on marvelous plate, and gallantries whispered and listened to with the sphinx-like smile with which a woman of the world knows so well how to conceal her emotions, all the while eating a rosy trout or dallying with a wing of a lark. She had no toilets, no jewels, and it was for these things that she longed, as the fleet Arabian longs for his native desert. What pleasure to have pleased, been envied, to be seductive and sought after!

She had a rich friend, a comrade from the convent, whom she no longer visited, because she suffered from seeing the things she could not have, and on returning wept whole days for grief, regret, despair, and distress.

One evening her husband came home radiant, holding in his hand a large envelope.

“See,” said he, “here is something for you.”

She nervously tore open the envelope, drew out a card, on which these words were printed:

“The Minister of Public Instruction and Madame Georges Ramponeau beg the honor of the company of Monsieur and Madame Loisel for the evening of Monday, January 18th.”
Instead of being wild with delight, as he had expected, she threw the invitation on the table, with an exclamation of disgust, saying sullenly: “What do you wish me to do with that?”

“But, my dear, I thought you would be so pleased. You never go out, and this is an event. I only obtained it after infinite trouble. Everybody wants one; they are much sought after, and they are not generally given to employees. You will see there all of the official world.”

She looked at him with supreme disdain, and said impatiently: “What would you like me to wear?” The secret was out. Manlike, he had not thought of that.

“But—the dress—that you wear to the theatre,” stammered he. “You always look beautiful to me in that.”

He stopped speaking, stupefied and dismayed on seeing his wife in tears. Two large tears trickled slowly down her cheeks.

“What is the matter? What is the matter?” asked he tenderly. By violent effort she conquered her grief and calmly said, while wiping her humid cheeks:

“Nothing; only I have no toilet, and, of course, can not go. Give the card to one of your comrades whose wife is fortunate enough to have something suitable for the occasion.”

Despairingly he said:

“See, Mathilde, how much will a dress cost to wear to this ball; one which can also be used for other occasions—something very simple.”

She reflected a few moments, figuring in her own mind the sum she could ask without danger of immediate refusal and frightening her economical husband. Finally she hesitatingly said:

“I do not know exactly; but it seems to me I might manage with about 400 francs.”

He paled a little, because he had been saving just that sum to buy a gun for the following summer, when he would go with some of his friends to the plains of Nanterfe on Sundays to shoot larks. Stifling his regrets, however, he replied:

“Very well, I will give you 400 francs, but try to have a beautiful dress.”

The day of the fête drew near; but Madame Loisel seemed sad, anxious, and uneasy. Her toilet was ready, what could it be? Her husband said to her one evening:

“What is the matter? You have been so queer for the last few days!”

She replied: “It worries me that I have not one jewel, not a precious stone to wear. What a miserable figure I shall be! I think I would rather not go at all!”

“You can wear natural flowers; it is all the rage at this season, and for ten francs you can have two or three magnificent roses.”

But she was not convinced.

No; there is nothing more humiliating than to be poorly dressed among so many rich women.”

“But how silly you are! Go to your friend, Madame Forestier, and ask her to lend you her jewels. You are friendly enough with her to do that.”

She gave a cry of joy.

“Yes; that is true—I had not thought of it.”

The following day she went to her friend and explained her predicament. Madame Forestier went to a closet and took out a large casket, and, opening it, said:

“Choose, my dear; they are at your service.”

She saw first bracelets, then a necklace of pearls, a Venetian cross, gold and precious stones of exquisite workmanship. She tried them on before the glass, unable to decide whether to wear them or not.

“Have you nothing else?” said she.
“Oh, yes; look them over, I don’t know what might please you.”

Suddenly she opened a black satin case, disclosing to view a superb riviere of diamonds, her heart beat furiously with the desire of possession.

She took them in her trembling hands and put them on over her simple high-neck gown, and stood lost in an ecstasy of admiration of herself. Then, fearfully, hesitatingly, dreading the agony of a refusal:

“Can you lend me only that?”

“Why, certainly; if it pleases you.”

She fell on her friend’s neck, embraced her tempestuously and then left hastily with her treasure.

The day of the ball arrived. Madame Loisel was a success. Among all the beautiful women she was the most beautiful, elegant, gracious, and smiling with joy. She attracted the attention of some of the most distinguished men present, and on all sides was heard:

“Who is she?”

All the attachés of the cabinet sought her dancing card eagerly, and even the Minister himself expressed his approval. She danced with pleasure, thinking of nothing but the triumph of her beauty and the glory of her success. Intoxicated by all the admiration, she seemed to float through a cloud of happiness, intensified by her complete victory and the tribute paid to her charms, so sweet to the hearts of women. She left about four o’clock in the morning; her husband had slept since midnight in a small room, deserted except by two or three gentlemen who also awaited their wives.

He threw over her shoulders the modest cloak which she had brought, whose shabbiness seemed to mock the elegance of the ball toilet. She felt the incongruity, and walked swiftly away in order not to be seen by those whose rich furs were more in accordance with the occasion.

“Wait,” said her husband, “you will take cold; I will call a carriage.

But she heeded him not, and rapidly descended the staircase. When they reached the street, there was no carriage in sight, and they were obliged to look for one, calling to the drivers who passed by, but in vain. Shiveringly they walked toward the Seine and finally found on the quay one of those nocturnal coupés one finds only in Paris after dark, hovering about the great city like grim birds of prey, who conceal their misery during the day. It carried them to their door (Rue de Martyrs), and they slowly and sadly entered their small apartments. It was ended for her, and he only remembered that he would have to be at his desk at ten o’clock.

She took off her cloak in front of the glass in order to admire herself once more in all her bravery, but, suddenly, she cried out: “The diamonds are gone!” Her husband, almost half asleep, started at the cry and asked:

“What is the matter?”

She turned toward him with a frightened air.

“I—I have lost Madame Forestier’s necklace!”

He rose dismayed.

“What—how! But it is not possible!” And they immediately began to search in the folds of the dress, the cloak, in the pockets—everywhere, and found nothing.

“Are you sure that you had it when you left the ball?”

“Yes; I felt it while still in the vestibule at the Minister’s.”

“But if you had lost it in the street we should have heard it drop. It ought to be in the carriage.”

“Yes; it is possible. Did you take the number?”

“No; and you have not looked at it, either?”
“No.”

They looked at each other fearfully; finally Loisel dressed himself.

“I shall go over the whole ground that we traveled on foot, to see whether I can not find it.”

He went out. She sat still in her brilliant ball toilet; no desire to sleep, no power to think, all swallowed up in the fear of the calamity which had fallen upon them.

Her husband came in at seven o’clock. He had found nothing. He had been to the Prefecture of the Police, to the papers offering a reward, to all small cab companies, anywhere, in short, where he could have the shadow of hope of recovery.

She waited all day in the same state of fear in the face of this frightful disaster.

Loisel returned in the evening pallid and haggard. No news as yet.

“You must write to your friend that you have broken the clasp of the necklace and are having it repaired. That will give us time to look around.”

At the end of the week they had lost all hope, and Loisel, to whom it seemed this care trouble had added five years to his age, said:

“We must try and replace the jewels.”

The following day they went to the jeweler whose name was stamped inside the case. He consulted his books “I did not sell that necklace, madame, I only furnished the case.”

Then they went from jeweler to jeweler, racking their memories to find the same, both of them sick with grief and agony. At last, in a small shop in the Palais Royal, they found one which seemed to them like the one they had lost. With beating hearts they asked the price.

Forty thousand francs; but they could have it for 36,000 francs.

They asked the jeweler not to dispose of it for three days, and he also promised to take it back at 34,000 francs if the first one was found before the end of February.

Loisel had inherited 18,000 francs from his father. He borrowed the rest.

He borrowed a thousand francs from one, five hundred from another, five louis here, five louis there—he gave notes, made ruinous engagements, had recourse to the usurers, ran the whole gamut of money-lenders. He compromised his whole existence risking his signature, without knowing that it would be honored, terrified by the agony of the future, by the black misery which enveloped him, by the prospect of all the physical privations and mortal tortures. He went for the new necklace and deposited on the counter his 36,000 francs.

When Madame Loisel returned the necklace to Madame Forestier, she coldly said:

“You should have returned it sooner, as I might have needed it.”

She did not open the case, the one thing Madame Loisel had dreaded. What if she had discovered the change—what would she have thought? Would she not be taken for a thief?

From that time on Madame Loisel knew what life meant to the very poor in all its phases. She took her part heroically. This frightful debt must be paid. Her share of privations was bravely borne. They discharged their one domestic, changed their location, and rented smaller apartments near the roof.

She knew now what meant the duties of the household, the heavy work of the kitchen. Her pretty hands soon lost all semblance of the care of bygone days. She washed the soiled linen and dried it in her room. She went every morning to the street with the refuse of the kitchen, carrying the water, stopping at each flight of stairs to take breath—wearing the dress of the women of the people; she went each day to the grocer, the fruiterer, the
butcher, carrying her basket on her arm, bargaining, defending cent by cent her miserable money.

They were obliged each month to pay some notes and renew others in order to gain time. Her husband worked in the evening balancing the books of merchants, and often was busy all night, copying at five cents a page.

And this life then endured for ten years.

At the end of this time they had paid all the tax of the usurers and compound interest.

Madame Loisel seemed an old woman now: She had become strong and hardy as the women of the provinces, and with tousled head, short skirts, red hands, she was foremost among the loud-voiced women of the neighborhood, who passed their time gossiping at their doorsteps.

But sometimes when her husband was at his office she seated herself at the window and thought of that evening in the past and that ball, where she had been so beautiful and so admired.

What would have happened if she had not lost the necklace? Who knows? Life is a singular and changeable thing, full of vicissitudes. How little it takes to save or wreck us!

One Sunday as she was walking in the Champs Elysées to divert herself from the cares and duties of the week she suddenly perceived a lady, with a little child, coming toward her. It was Madame Forestier, still young, beautiful and charming. Madame Loisel stopped short, too agitated to move. Should she speak to her? Yes, certainly. And now that the necklace was paid for she would tell her everything. Why not?

She walked up to her and said: “Good day, Jeanne.”

Madame Forestier did not recognize her and seemed astonished at being spoken to so familiarly by this woman of the people.

“But—madame—I do not—I think you are mistaken.”

“No; I am Mathilde Loisel.”

“Oh!—my poor Mathilde, how you are changed!”

“Yes; I have had lots of trouble and misery since I last saw you—and all for you.

“For me! And how was that?”

“Do you remember the necklace of diamonds you lent me, to wear to the Minister’s ball?”

“Yes; well?”

“Well, I lost it.”

“Lost it! How could you, since you returned it to me?”

“I returned you one just like it, and for ten years we have been paying for it. You know, it was not easy for us, who had nothing—but it is finished, and I am very happy.”

“You say that you bought a necklace of diamonds to replace mine,” said Madame Forestier.

“Yes; and you never found it out! They were so much alike,” and she smiled proudly.

Touched to the heart, Madame Forestier took the poor, rough hands in hers, drawing her tenderly toward her, her voice filled with tears:

“Oh, my poor Mathilde! But mine were false. They were not worth more than 500 francs at most.”
Setting. At the time that this story took place, a young woman in France had few opportunities to earn her own living. Her fortune in life was determined solely by the income and social position of her father and, later, of her husband. The bars between the social classes were very rigid, and emphasis was on money and material things. Society gave little sympathy or help to the struggling poor. De Maupassant uses these facts as important elements in his story. He includes few details about the actual physical settings, such as the home of the Loisels and the ball room.

Characters. The French names of the characters may confuse you. In French the title for a man is Monsieur, pronounced M’s yuh. For a married woman the correct title is Madame, pronounced M’DAHM. Loisel is pronounced LwaZEL; Forestier is pronounced For REST ee aye. If they were American or British, they would be called Mr. and Mrs. Loisel and Mrs. Forestier. Madame Loisel, the young wife, is the chief character.

Complete the following activities.

1.36 Circle the adjectives that you believe describe the young Madame Loisel.
- luxury-loving
- humble
- unattractive
- frugal
- impractical
- excitable
- coarse
- pretty

1.37 Circle the adjectives that you believe describe Monsieur Loisel.
- dishonest
- indulgent
- irritable
- ambitious
- kind
- penny-pinching
- loving
- wealthy

1.38 Circle the adjectives that you believe describe Madame Forestier.
- cruel
- worldly
- basically kind-hearted
- cold in manner
- wealthy
- affectionate

Decisions. One of the interesting things about the plot is that it hinges on several critical choices made by the characters. In each case, the outcome would have been very different if a different choice had been made.
Complete the following activity.

1.39 Write a sentence on each line to indicate the other choice or choices that the characters might have made.

a. Madame Loisel's decision to marry Monsieur Loisel
   a. _____________________________________________

b. the decision to accept the invitation to the ball
   b. _____________________________________________

c. the decision to borrow jewels from Madame Forestier
   c. _____________________________________________

d. the decision to pay for the lost jewels without telling Madame Forestier about the replacement
   d. _____________________________________________

e. the decision to tell the truth at last
   e. _____________________________________________

Climax. The point of greatest excitement in the story is probably the loss of the necklace and the search for it. After a frantic search, the Loisels make the decision to replace the necklace without telling Madame Forestier. The results of this decision change the lives of the two, particularly, that of Madame Loisel.

Answer the following questions.

1.40 What did the Loisels have to do during the next ten years?
________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________

1.41 What is the effect on Madame Loisel?
________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________
The story might have ended there, but instead the author adds a surprise *denouement*. He brings Madame Loisel and Madame Forestier together again and provides a final bitter twist to the story.

**Answer the following question.**

1.42 What does Madame Forestier tell Madame Loisel that changes the effect of the whole story?

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**Issues of morality.** The theme of this story seems to be the effect of certain decisions in life, and the cruel tricks fate can play on comparatively innocent people, even when they are trying to do right. This story is a good example of one from which a person can learn to clarify his own values.

**Complete the following activity.**

1.43 Find a classmate or another person who has read this story, or ask one member of your family to read it. Discuss with that person these three questions that the story raises. Then select one question and write your response to it on a separate sheet of paper. Ask that other person to review your response.

Materialism is the belief that comfort, pleasure, and wealth are the most desirable things in life. Do you agree?

Loyalty to one’s husband or wife is highly valued in most societies, and is a part of Christian teaching. Do you think Monsieur Loisel is a good example or a bad example of this loyalty?

The story offers no evidence that the Loisels had any particular religious belief. How might such a belief have helped them?
**Point of view.** This story is told from the third-person, *omniscient* point of view. The author, however, does seem to be sympathetic toward Madame Loisel. He evidently feels she is not entirely to blame for what happens and that the punishment she receives for her carelessness is very heavy. Nevertheless, he does not rescue her with a happy ending.

**Complete the following statement.**

1.44 Give three examples of Guy de Maupassant’s naturalistic style of presenting characters and plot.

________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________

**TEACHER CHECK**

initials  
date

**Review the material in this section in preparation for the Self Test.** The Self Test will check your mastery of this particular section. The items missed on this Self Test will indicate specific areas where restudy is needed for mastery.
Select the best definition for each literary term (each answer, 2 points).

1.01 ______ character  
   a. all-powerful

1.02 ______ dialogue  
   b. speeches made by characters in a story

1.03 ______ climax  
   c. solution to a mystery

1.04 ______ internal conflict  
   d. one of the persons in a story

1.05 ______ setting  
   e. struggle within one person’s mind

1.06 ______ theme  
   f. person who opposes the hero

1.07 ______ protagonist  
   g. point of highest interest or excitement

1.08 ______ omniscient point of view  
   h. most important person in a story

1.09 ______ frame story  
   i. author is all-seeing, all knowing

1.010 ______ incident  
   j. where a story takes place

   k. a single happening in a story

   l. basic idea; what the story is about

   m. person telling the story

   n. story-within-a-story

Complete these statements (each answer, 3 points).

1.011 Details of the setting may be used to describe the a. ____________________________  
   or the b. ____________________________ of the story.

1.012 If the protagonist tells the story himself, it is told in the ___________________  person.

1.013 If the author tells the story but does not take part, it is in the ___________________  person.

1.014 When a speaker uses the words you, yours, yourself, he is using the _____________  person.

1.015 The one story in this section that uses first person is ____________________________  .

1.016 The conclusion of a story, in which all the loose ends are tied up, is called the  
   ____________________________ .

1.017 A pattern of speech in which pronunciation and choice of words differs from standard  
   English is called a __________________________ .
1.018 Four of the six elements of the short story are
   a. ___________________________, b. ___________________________,
   c. __________________________, and d. ___________________________.

1.019 The events as they happen in the story make up the _______________________.

**Answer true or false (each answer, 1 point).**

1.020 ________ Jim Smiley was more interested in betting than in anything else.

1.021 ________ Madame Forestier was a popular guest at the ball.

1.022 ________ Simon Wheeler loved to tell long stories to anyone who would listen.

1.023 ________ The princess had the power of life and death over her lover.

1.024 ________ Madame Loisel was vain and shallow but not spiteful.

1.025 ________ Jim Smiley had carefully trained his own frog, but he gave the stranger an untrained frog for the contest.

1.026 ________ In the story “The Lady or the Tiger,” the reader is told what choice the young man will make.

1.027 ________ The frog contest took place in a steamboat on the Mississippi.

1.028 ________ The king who invented the trial of the two doors was a historical person, whose name and birth date are given.

1.029 ________ Monsieur and Madame Loisel borrowed more money than was needed to pay for the lost necklace because Madame Forestier insisted on it.

**Match these characteristics and the author's name** (each answer, 2 points).

1.030 ________ a naturalistic writer a. Mark Twain

1.031 ________ French writer b. Frank R. Stockton

1.032 ________ American writer less famous than Mark Twain c. Guy de Maupassant

1.033 ________ lived for a time in California

1.034 ________ wrote about Paris society

1.035 ________ wrote about a barbaric king

1.036 ________ liked to use dialect in his stories

1.037 ________ real name was Samuel Langhorne Clemens

1.038 ________ wrote a famous story without an ending

1.039 ________ wrote humorous tales about the Gold Rush
Complete these statement (each answer, 3 points).

1.040 Because the length of his story is limited, the short-story writer must do these three things:
   a. __________________________________________________________________________________________,
   b. _____________________________________________________________________________________  , and
   c. __________________________________________________________________________________________.

Name the figure of speech illustrated by each sentence (each answer, 3 points).

1.041 Her face lit up with pleasure as quickly as a light flashing on.
   __________________________________________________________________________________________

1.042 Fame is not always kind; sometimes she tramples on the deserving and shouts the praises of the unworthy.
   __________________________________________________________________________________________

1.043 The students stampeded into the classroom.
   __________________________________________________________________________________________

Circle the letter of the choice that is closest in meaning to the first word (each answer, 2 points).

1.044 eerie
   a. weird  b. noisy  c. eagle’s nest  d. healthy

1.045 garrulous
   a. poverty-stricken  b. talkative  c. old  d. warlike

1.046 obsequious
   a. disobedient  b. deadly  c. haughty  d. submissive

1.047 rivière
   a. broken  b. crown  c. necklace  d. avenue

1.048 contemporary
   a. haughty  b. late  c. routine  d. present-day

1.049 barbarian
   a. clipped  b. splendid  c. refined  d. savage