

CORD Resource by Nanda Dyssou, Gluck Fellow in Creative Writing

Flash Fiction - Using the 5x5x5 Rule

Overview:

Flash fiction refers to stories that are less than 1,000 words, generally ranging from 300-600 words. Microfiction is usually 6-100 words long. These stories focus on one character and one situation, and they don't need to have a full dramatic arc. A single conflict is conveyed in a series of episodes or scenes, or one scene is shown. The art of flash fiction is the art of compression.

The elements of fiction writing according to the 5x5x5 rule are:

Who, What, When, Where, Why

Character, Plot, Setting, Conflict, Resolution

Sight, Sound, Smell, Touch, Taste

Some examples of flash fiction/microfiction stories are below:

“For sale: Baby shoes. Never worn.” – Earnest Hemingway

“Failed SAT. Lost scholarship. Invented rocket.” - William Shatner

“The baby’s blood type? Human, mostly.” - Orson Scott Card

“The mouse ran. The cat sunk to the dirt, belly down. Overhead, the hawk floated, and suddenly, the hunter became the hunted.” - Kevin Hodgson

Students may use the Internet to read and publish individual or shared writing products.

Recommended hashtags for finding more stories and sharing student work are:

#twitlit #twitfic #flashfiction #flashfic #microfiction #twitterature #SixWords #6Words

#terriblytinytales

Additional resources:

- A New York Times Article about Reading, Writing, and Teaching Flash Fiction: <https://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/10/03/short-and-sweet-reading-and-writing-flash-fiction/>
- 100 Word Story: <http://www.100wordstory.org/>
- NPR’s Three Minute Fiction Contest Winners: <http://www.npr.org/series/105660765/three-minute-fiction>
- Flashfiction Online Magazine: <http://flashfictiononline.com/main/article-categories/classic-flash/>
- Microfiction Monday Magazine’s online archive: <https://microfictionmondaymagazine.com/archives/>
- Postcard Shorts: <http://www.postcardshorts.com/story-index.html>
- Six Word Stories: <http://www.sixwordstories.net/>