

The Short Story Form
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Intro:

What is a short story? 1000 – 7500 words

Similarities and differences with other types of writing: Sunshine vs laser

Novel	Short Story
Genre defines expectations (pacing, in media res, open/closed ending, agency, etc)	
Reader must care about the protag (sympathetic or at least understandable)	
Protag, driven by want/need; attitudes & beliefs about theme illustrated scenically	
Start as close to the end as possible (what is "as possible"?)	
Minimal backstory (protag's ghost vs shameful backstory secrets motivates his actions)	
Sensory writing; show vs tell	
Dialogue	
Succinct (what is "succinct"?)	
Mood, Voice, Emotion	
Ending answers the story question (story question more clearly stated)	
One protag, unless you are advanced	One protag
Many antags	One antag (except insofar as everyone is antag)
Can have multiple POVs; One POV per scene	One POV (usually)
Many settings	Limited settings
Can take place over days, years (millennia)	Usually one time period
Central theme, but can be multi-themed	Central theme (SF holds a mirror up to society)
Hook can be bridging tension	Hook is immediate
Multiple conflicts, subplots	Focus on one conflict; no subplots
Structure can include more obstacles/twists	Structure more direct (see below)

Read

Daniel Abraham's Short Story structure: Murder mystery (modified) or romance

	Structure	Narrative	Because	Information
1	Discovery of the body / Meet cute			
2				
3	Clue			
4	Red herring			
5				
6	Clue			
7				
8	clue			
9	Climax - reveal	Denouement		
10	Criminal brought to justice / couple finally together			

What makes this non-generic? Your theme; Does the reader care?

