The Short Story
Understanding Short Stories

- Short stories require you to understand and evaluate them on the basis of just a few details and events.
Title of the Short Story

- Think carefully about the title and its possible meanings and implications.
Elements

- The elements of short fiction include plot and structure, point of view, characterization, setting, imagery, language, and theme.
Plot and Structure

- Plot and structure are related, but plots usually center on human beings and their actions, and structure often follows the ABCDE formula (action, background, development, climax, ending).
Points of Views

- Points of view vary and include first person, second person, and omniscient.
As you analyze and evaluate the characters in a short story, consider these questions:

- Desires of characters?
- How do the characters relate to each other?
- Identify protagonist and antagonist?
- Does gender, class, race, etc. play a role?
- Trust the characters’ views of one another?
- Function of dialogue?
Setting

- Setting provides a context for actions.
Imagery and Language

- Images appeals to the reader’s senses—usually the visual sense—and may appear in the form of metaphors and other figures of speech.
Theme

- The theme of the short story is the main claim it seems to make, best identified as an assertion, a proposition, or a statement.
Writing and Argument

- In writing an argument about a short story, remember to formulate an issue worth addressing.