



Short Story Lesson Plan

Topic:

Short Story Writing

Duration:

Flexible

Materials Needed:

- Writing utensils and paper
- Optional: laptops/tablets
- Print or digital copies of [Narrative Arc image](#) (1 per writer, or 1 image projected onto the board)
- Print or digital copies of [Narrative Arc resource](#) (1 per writer)
- Print or digital copies of [“The Yellow Wallpaper”](#) (1 per writer)

Grade Level(s):

9-12

Standards:College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards:

- CCSS.6-12.W.3
- CCSS.6-12.W.4
- CCSS.6-12.W.5
- CCSS.6-12.W.6
- CCSS.6-12.W.10
- CCSS.6-12.SL.1
- CCSS.6-12.SL.3
- CCSS.6-12.SL.6
- CCSS.6-12.R.1
- CCSS.6-12.R.2
- CCSS.6-12.R.3
- CCSS.6-12.R.4
- CCSS.6-12.R.5
- CCSS.6-12.R.6
- CCSS.6-12.R.10

Outline:

1. Warm Up - Read & Annotate
2. Map
3. Describe
4. Listen & Provide Feedback
5. Plan
6. Write

1. Warm Up - Read & Annotate

Read the short story, [“The Yellow Wallpaper.”](#) by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. As you read, practice annotating the story by doing the following:

- **Circle** words you do not recognize. Look them up and make a record of their definitions in handwriting or a digital document.
- **Underline** sentences that feel especially important to the plot. Feel free to make comments in the margins about why you think these lines are important (perhaps

predicting what is to come, or connecting to information previously presented in the story).

- **Draw a question mark** next to any lines or sections of the text that you do not understand. Write your questions in the margins.

When you've completed your annotation, turn and talk with a peer or the class. Compare your underlines and questions, and work together to research or answer each other's inquiries. What similarities and differences do you notice about your annotations?

2. Map

Take a look at Write the World's [narrative arc diagram](#). For more information about narrative arc, please [read this resource](#) (to break this resource up, you might "popcorn read" with small group partners or the class, or pick one part of the narrative arc to become an expert on, and to teach your class about—puzzling your understandings together "jigsaw" style).

Next, try to draw a narrative arc diagram for "The Yellow Wallpaper." Return to your underlined lines, those you identified as particularly significant, for cues and clues about which plot moments might belong on your narrative arc.

3. Describe

Once you have a draft narrative arc, write a brief description, about 1-5 sentences, explaining why you chose certain plot moments for each stage in the narrative arc. How did you know your chosen inciting incident was, indeed the inciting incident? What about the author's writing style or technique helps to signify the climax of the story?

4. Listen & Provide Feedback

When you've completed your descriptions, turn and talk with a peer. Compare and contrast your answers. Consider:

- How did this activity feel? Accessible? Challenging? Intriguing?
- How did this activity change your understanding of the short story?
- What similarities and differences do you notice between your and your peer's responses?
- Are there any edits you wish to make on your diagram(s) based on this discussion?
- What do you most appreciate about your peer's work, and why?

5. Plan

Return to the [narrative arc diagram](#). Taking what you learned from your mapping of the Gilman story, sketch out a narrative arc map for your own short story. Your piece will be shorter than Gilman's, but it can still comprise all of the essential elements of a narrative arc.

Sometimes, it's helpful to begin with the central conflict and determine its climax—the height of the story. Who will your characters be? What are their motivations, hopes, dreams, fears? What's at stake for them? Will their central conflict be internal (like grief) or external (like an earthquake), and why?

Once you've determined your central conflict and climax (and the characters who will be navigating it), you can work backwards (and forwards) to map the other elements: inciting incident, rising action, falling action, and conclusion/denouement.

Feel free to get creative: draw, paint, or create a digital design to bring your original narrative arc to life!

6. Write

Once you've drafted your narrative arc, it's time to get to work—to bring your story to life on the page! Check out Write the World's [short story competition](#) prompt and accompanying resources to reference as you begin transitioning your map into paragraph/story form.

Happy writing!