



**INDIAN SCHOOL MUSCAT**  
**SENIOR SECTION**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**  
**CLASS X**  
**STORY WRITING**

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### **Five Elements of A Short Story**

**Character:** A character is a person, or sometimes even an animal, who takes part in the action of a short story or other literary work.

**Setting:** The setting of a short story is the time and place in which it happens. Authors often use descriptions of landscape, scenery, buildings, seasons or weather to provide a strong sense of setting.

**Plot:** A plot is a series of events and character actions that relate to the central conflict.

**Conflict:** The conflict is a struggle between two people or things in a short story. The main character is usually on one side of the central conflict.

On the other side, the main character may struggle against another important character, against the forces of nature, against society, or even against something inside him or her (feelings, emotions, illness).

**Theme:** The theme is the central idea or belief in a short story.

### **Points to Remember**

1. Have a clear theme. What is the story about? It is the underlying message or statement behind the words. Get this right and your story will have more resonance in the minds of your readers.

2. An effective short story covers a very short time span. It may be one single event that proves pivotal in the life of the character, and that event will illustrate the theme.

3. Don't have too many characters. Each new character will bring a new dimension to the story, and for an effective short story too many diverse dimensions (or directions) will dilute the theme. Have only enough characters to effectively illustrate the theme.

Make every word count. There is no room for unnecessary expansion in a short story.

5. Focus. The best stories are the ones that follow a narrow subject line. What is the point of your story? Its point is its theme. It's tempting to digress, but in a 'short' you have to follow the straight and narrow otherwise you end up with either a novel beginning or a hodgepodge of ideas that add up to nothing.

### **SAMPLE**

#### **A Hole in the Fence**

There once was a little boy who had a bad temper. His Father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, he must hammer a nail into the back of the fence.

The first day the boy had driven 37 nails into the fence. Over the next few weeks, as he learned to control his anger, the number of nails hammered daily gradually dwindled down. He discovered it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence.

Finally the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all. He told his father about it and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail for each day that he was able to hold his temper. The day passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone. The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence. He said, "You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence."

The fence will never be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one. You can put a knife in a man and draw it out. It won't matter how many times you say I'm sorry, the wound is still there. A verbal wound is as bad as a physical one.

Friends and loved ones is a very rare jewel, indeed. They make you smile and encourage you to succeed. They lend an ear, they share a word of praise, and they always want to open their hearts to us. Water your relationships with kindness... and they will grow. So be careful little lips what you say! And you won't chase friendships away.

### **PRACTICE QUESTION**

- a) .....suddenly it started raining and thunder rumbled. The animals frightened by the streaks of lightening and the roar of thunder, broke loose and began to run.....

Write a story in about 150 words which can have a different beginning and end but the middle must be the same as above.

- b) On the basis of the outline given, write a story in your own words.

<p>Citizen journalist Anita----fond of nature specially caring for trees-----sal trees in her village-- -prone to insect attack---Anita tries to find a cure---grandfather's remedy---effort to save village trees---opposition from the villagersand final victory for Anita</p>
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