

Short Story Genres

The major short story genres are listed in the table below.

Short story genres	Features	Well-known examples
Fables and animal tales	<p>Fables are stories that feature animals, plants or forces of nature as characters.</p> <p>There is a moral lesson explicitly expressed at the end of the story.</p>	<p>'The Fox and the Crow' is one of Aesop's Fables.</p> <p>'The Frog in the Shallow Well' is a Chinese fable.</p> <p>'Rikki Tikki Tavi' is a modern fable written by Rudyard Kipling.</p>
Folktales and fairy tales	<p>Folktales include a wide range of traditional narratives including myths, legends, fables, fairy tales and tales about ordinary people.</p> <p>Fairy tales are folktales that feature imaginary characters such as fairies, giants or talking animals. The stories tend to be about royalty and the events are magical.</p>	<p>'The Fisherman and His Wife' by The Brothers Grimm</p> <p>'The Emperor's New Clothes' by Hans Christian Andersen</p> <p>'The Happy Prince' by Oscar Wilde</p>
Ghost stories	<p>Ghost stories feature ghosts or other supernatural beings. They play on people's superstitious fears and beliefs.</p>	<p>'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow' by Washington Irving</p> <p>'Number 13' by M. R. James</p> <p>'The Judge's House' by Bram Stoker</p>
Horror stories	<p>Horror stories explore the dark side of human nature. They play on people's psychological fears.</p>	<p>'Young Goodman Brown' by Nathaniel Hawthorne</p> <p>'The Tell-Tale Heart' by Edgar Allan Poe</p> <p>'The Landlady' by Roald Dahl</p>
Crime and mystery stories	<p>Crime stories or mystery stories often feature a clever detective who must solve a mysterious crime. These stories are also called detective stories.</p>	<p>'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' by Edgar Allan Poe</p> <p>'The Red-headed League' by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle</p> <p>'The Heroine' by Patricia Highsmith</p>

Short story genres	Features	Well-known examples
Adventure stories	Adventure stories feature strong characters engaged in a conflict, usually against the forces of nature.	'Typhoon' by Joseph Conrad 'To Build a Fire' by Jack London 'The Most Dangerous Game' by Richard Connell
Love stories	A love story features a romantic relationship between a man and a woman. Often, the romantic lovers must overcome obstacles before they can find their happy ending.	'Bliss' by Katherine Mansfield 'A Lesson in Love' by O. Henry 'The Jilting of Jane' by H. G. Wells
Science fiction	Science fiction stories usually explore how science and technology impact the future. Characters can include aliens, robots or other forms of artificial intelligence.	'The Man Who Could Work Miracles' by H. G. Wells 'Travel by Wire!' by Arthur C. Clarke 'The Fun They Had' by Isaac Asimov
Modern stories with a 'twist'	Some modern stories have a clear plot structure (rising action, climax, falling action), and end with a 'twist' or a surprise.	'An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge' by Ambrose Bierce 'The Necklace' by Guy du Maupassant 'The Gift of the Magi' by O. Henry
Modern 'slice-of-life' stories	Other modern stories have little plot structure, but focus on characterisation, offering a 'slice-of-life' snapshot of a character in conflict.	'The Horse Dealer's Daughter' by D. H. Lawrence 'The Garden Party' by Katherine Mansfield 'Old Man at the Bridge' by Ernest Hemingway