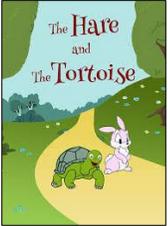
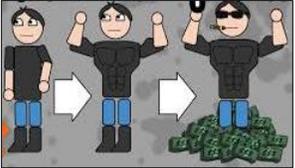


Topic	Key information	Self-testing activities
<p><b>Short stories</b> – this term you will be reading a collection of short stories. What exactly is a short story?</p> 	<p>A short story is a work of fiction that can be read in one sitting—usually between 20 minutes to an hour. At around 10 to 25 pages, short stories are much shorter than novels. A piece of fiction shorter than 1,000 words is considered a “short short story” or “flash fiction,” and anything less than 300 words is rightfully called “microfiction.”</p> <p>The <b>setting</b> of a short story is often simplified (one time and place), and one or two <b>main characters</b> may be introduced without full backstories. In this simplified format, every word and story detail has to work extra hard!</p> <p>Short stories typically focus on a single <b>plot</b> instead of lots of different ones, like you might see in longer works of fiction. Some stories follow a traditional narrative arc, with exposition (description) at the beginning, rising action, a climax (peak moment of conflict or action), and a resolution at the end. However, the short fiction written now is more likely to begin in the middle of the action (<i>in medias res</i>), drawing readers right into a dramatic scene.</p> <p>While short stories of the past often revolved around a <b>central theme</b> or moral lesson, today it is common to find stories with ambiguous (unclear) endings.</p>	<p>Can you think of any short stories you’ve read and enjoyed?</p> <p>Can you have a go at writing your own piece of ‘microfiction’, with 300 words or under?</p> <p>Which types of settings do you most enjoy reading about and why?</p> <p>Can you think of any stories you’ve read which have had a clear moral?</p> <p>Can you have a go at writing a short story which begins <i>in media res</i>?</p>
<p><b>Character development</b></p> 	<p><b>Character development</b></p> <p>You will notice that many of the characters in the short stories we read change significantly. Below are some examples of the different ways in which they might change:</p> <p><b>Change arc</b></p> <p>The protagonist is an unlikely candidate to be a hero at the start of the story, but changes in dramatic ways, often finding inner reserves of strength that he/she was previously unaware of.</p> <p><b>Growth arc</b></p> <p>The protagonist grows as a result of what happens to them. Perhaps he or she gets older, or comes up against a difficult situation. The protagonist develops in a fairly gradual, unsurprising way rather than going through huge changes.</p> <p><b>Fall arc</b></p> <p>The actions of the protagonist doom him or her to disaster, or even death. This arc is very similar to tragedy in drama.</p>	<p><b>Key terms:</b></p> <p><b>Protagonist</b> – main character</p> <p><b>Hero</b> - a man/woman who is admired for their courage or brave achievements</p> <p><b>Anti-hero</b> – a main character who lacks traditionally heroic characteristics</p> <p><b>Character development</b> – tracking how the character changes</p> <p><b>Character traits</b> – the main features of the character’s personality</p> <p><b>Character flaw</b> – an area of weakness. This often leads to the character’s downfall</p> <p><b>Plot</b> – the order of events in a story</p> <p><b>Ambiguous</b> - unclear</p> <p><b>Narrative arc</b> – a traditional story structure</p> <p><b>Exposition</b> – the description at the start of the story which sets the scene</p> <p><b>Rising action</b> – the section of the story approaching the climax, when the tension is rising</p> <p><b>Climax</b> – the most dramatic part of the short story</p> <p><b>Falling action</b> – the section after the climax, when tension is decreasing</p> <p><b>Resolution</b> – when any problems are solved and mysteries explained</p> <p><b>In media res</b> – in the middle of the action</p> <p><b>Moral</b> – the key message or lesson of the story</p>

**Key texts:** below is a reminder of some of the short stories you will read

**Self-testing activities:** can you complete the table below throughout the term?

‘A Cup of Tea’ by Katherine Mansfield is a short story set in London in the 1920s. Rosemary Fell, the protagonist and a wealthy young woman, meets a young street waif who asks her for money.



‘The Third Floor Bedroom’ is largely about loss. A young girl (Pearlie) writes letters to her brother who is in the army – she suffers so terribly from the grief of his absence that she becomes ill.

The wallpaper in her bedroom is particularly important.



‘Paradise Carpet’ by Jamila Gavin is about two boys who work hard to produce a beautiful carpet for a rich family. This story provides us with many opportunities to learn about child labour and how it remains an issue in many countries around the world.



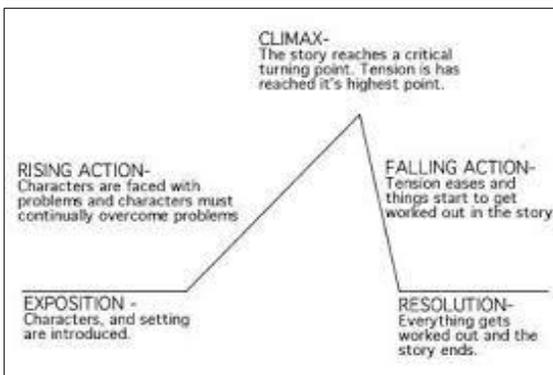
‘Mrs Silly’ focuses on the character of Michael, who goes to boarding school. His mum and dad don’t live together anymore and he enjoys going back to his mum’s house, but finds it difficult when she turns up at his school.



**Context:** Jamila Gavin was born in India but moved to England when she was young. How might this experience have inspired her to write ‘Paradise Carpet’.

Katherine Mansfield moved to London from rural New Zealand. How do you think she might have felt about the huge gap between rich and poor that she saw in London?

### Traditional story structure:



### Flash marking codes:

This term you have been introduced to the flash marking codes. Here are the ones to focus on:

- I: impressions
- O: justify opinion
- SR: select and retrieve
- E: evidence
- R: interpretation of text
- KW: key words

### Big idea

### Where did you spot it and why?

#### Conflict

What kinds of conflicts do you notice? Who are the conflicts between? What happens as a result of the conflicts?

#### Relationships

What are the relationships like between characters in the texts we have read? What can we learn from the ways they treat each other?

#### Perspectives

From whose perspective is each short story written? Are there any characters whose perspectives you’d like to hear from? Why?