

TEACHER'S NOTES

flash fiction

www.macmillandictionary.com

**Overview:** Suggestions for using the **Macmillan Dictionary BuzzWord** article on *flash fiction* and the associated worksheets.

**Total time for worksheet activities:** 45 minutes

**Suggested level:** Upper intermediate and above

1. If you intend to use the worksheet in class, go to the *BuzzWord* article at the web address given at the beginning of the worksheet and print off a copy of the article. Make a copy of the worksheet and the *BuzzWord* article for each student. You might find it helpful not to print a copy of the Key for each student but to check the answers as a class.
2. If the members of your class all have computer and internet access, ask them to open the worksheet before they go to the *BuzzWord* article link. Make sure they do not scroll down to the Key until they have completed each exercise.
3. As an opener, write the word *fiction* on the board and ask students what it means (books and stories about imaginary events and people). If necessary, explain the distinction between *fiction* and *non-fiction* (writing that gives facts about real events, things, or people) and the meaning of *science fiction* (fiction dealing with space travel and life on other planets, etc).
4. Encourage students to read through the questions in Exercise 1 before they look at the *BuzzWord* article. Ask them to read through the whole article carefully and answer the questions, then compare their answers with a partner. Check the answers as a class.
5. Ask students to complete Exercise 2 independently and then compare their answers with a partner. Check the answers as a class.
6. Exercise 3 is a matching activity which builds five key sentences based on the text and summarizes the gist of the article. Students complete the exercise in pairs and, as an extension activity, able students could work in pairs to expand the sentences and construct a more detailed summary of the text using a specified number of words (e.g. 200).
7. Exercise 4 focuses on some key vocabulary connected with books. Ask students to complete the exercise in pairs and give help with the vocabulary where necessary, or suggest that students look up any unfamiliar words in the [Macmillan Dictionary](#).
8. After completing the exercise, further related vocabulary could be explored, e.g. *epilogue* (an extra part added at the end of a novel), *prologue* (an introduction to the story), *foreword* (an introduction which is usually written by another writer).
9. Complete Exercise 5 orally as a class activity, inviting individual students to play the role of each speaker and then asking the rest of the class which book they think is needed. As an extension, students could choose one of the books and make up their own snippets of conversation from which the other students then guess the correct book.
10. As a wind-up activity and/or homework, ask students to write their own piece of flash fiction. You could vary the length according to time and/or student ability, e.g. ask for a *drabble* (100 words), a *dribble* (50 words) or a single page (about 250 words).

Go to the **Macmillan Dictionary BuzzWord** article at:

<http://www.macmillandictionary.com/buzzword/entries/flash-fiction.html>

## 1 Find the information

Read the *BuzzWord* article on the word *flash fiction* and answer these questions.

1. What is *flash fiction*?
2. Give two alternative terms for *flash fiction*.
3. What word is used to describe stories of exactly 100 words?
4. What is a *dribble*?
5. When did the term *flash fiction* first appear?
6. What expression is used to describe stories written by fans of a book or TV series?

## 2 Comprehension check

Choose the correct answer according to the text.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Who wrote the six-word story at the beginning of the article?                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. William Shakespeare</li> <li>b. Ernest Hemingway</li> <li>c. It is not certain who wrote the story.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. The six-word story is fascinating because ...                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. it makes people think.</li> <li>b. it makes people sad.</li> <li>c. it makes people laugh.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. The term <i>micro-fiction</i> is used to describe stories of less than ...                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 300 words.</li> <li>b. 250 words.</li> <li>c. 1000 words.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Pieces of flash fiction contain ...                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. protagonists.</li> <li>b. conflicts.</li> <li>c. protagonists and conflicts.</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. The idea of writing short pieces of fiction dates back to ...                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the 1930s.</li> <li>b. Ancient Greece.</li> <li>c. the 1990s.</li> </ol> </li> <li>6. What expression is sometimes used to describe novels written for young men?                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. lab lit</li> <li>b. lad lit</li> <li>c. chick lit</li> </ol> </li> </ol> |
|--|---|

WORKSHEET

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**3 Re-build the text**

Match the sentence halves.

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Flash fiction is a style of                 | a. all the classic story elements.  |
| 2. Flash fiction is quite different            | b. writing.                         |
| 3. There's no widely accepted                  | c. nothing new.                     |
| 4. Pieces of flash fiction contain             | d. to the concept of a short story. |
| 5. The idea of very short pieces of fiction is | e. definition of flash fiction.     |

**4 Choose the correct word**

Complete the sentences with the words from the box.

author      chapter      character      plot      story      title

1. The first \_\_\_\_\_ is a bit boring, but after that the book is really exciting.
2. It's the \_\_\_\_\_ of a woman who cycled from Perth to Sydney.
3. His last novel has a funny \_\_\_\_\_ – it's called *Breakfast with a Guinea Pig*.
4. Sara Jackson is the \_\_\_\_\_ of three best-selling novels.
5. The main \_\_\_\_\_ is a young Spanish boy named Juan.
6. The book isn't always easy to follow because the \_\_\_\_\_ is very complicated.

WORKSHEET

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5 Which book?

Match the sentences to the appropriate book, choosing from the words in the box.

atlas  
guidebook

cookery book  
notebook

dictionary  
novel

encyclopaedia  
textbook

1. I'm not sure what the word  
'conflate' means.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Tom's parents are coming for dinner and I want  
to make something special.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What are the best things to do in Paris?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. I'm doing a physics course this year.

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Can you recommend a good book to  
read on holiday?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Where exactly is Madagascar?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. I'd like to find out more about giant  
sea turtles.

\_\_\_\_\_

8. We should write that down before  
we forget it.

\_\_\_\_\_

KEY

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KEY

**1 Find the information**

1. a style of literature in which stories are extremely short (less than 300 words)
2. possible answers: *micro-fiction, sudden fiction, postcard fiction, short short, short short story*
3. *drabble*
4. a story of 50 words
5. the early 1990s
6. *fan fiction*

**2 Comprehension check**

1. c
2. a
3. a
4. c
5. b
6. b

**3 Re-build the text**

1. b
2. d
3. e
4. a
5. c

**4 Choose the correct word**

1. chapter
2. story
3. title
4. author
5. character
6. plot

**5 Which book?**

1. dictionary
2. cookery book
3. guidebook
4. textbook
5. novel
6. atlas
7. encyclopaedia
8. notebook