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To cite this article: Maryam Vaezi & Saeed Rezaei (2018): Development of a rubric for evaluating creative writing: a multi-phase research, New Writing, DOI: 10.1080/14790726.2018.1520894

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/14790726.2018.1520894

Published online: 28 Sep 2018.
Development of a rubric for evaluating creative writing: a multi-phase research

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ABSTRACT
Drawing on a modified version of Delphi technique, the researchers in this study tried to develop a rubric comprising the main criteria to be considered in the evaluation of works of fiction. Review of the related literature, as well as the administration of a Likert scale questionnaire, and a series of unstructured interviews with experts in the fields of literature and creative writing, led to the identification of ten elements which were used in the construction of the first version of the rubric. To ensure its validity, a number of distinguished creative writing professors were asked to review this assessment tool and comment on its appropriateness for measuring the intended construct. Some revisions were made based on these comments, and following that, the researchers came up with an analytical rubric consisting of nine elements, namely narrative voice, characterisation, story, setting, mood and atmosphere, language and writing mechanics, dialogue, plot, and image. The reliability of this rubric was also established through the calculation of both interrater and intrarater reliability. Finally, the significance of the development of this valid and reliable rubric is discussed and its implications for teaching and assessing creative pieces of writing are presented.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 23 June 2018
Revised 18 August 2018
Accepted 4 September 2018

KEYWORDS
Assessment; evaluation; creative writing; rubric

Introduction
Over the past two decades creative writing has established a firm position within the educational curricula as a subject for both study and practice (Harper 2013). Graduate and undergraduate programmes in universities and the high rates of enrolment in such courses are indicators of the global interest in the art of writing creatively. The proliferating efforts of a wide range of teachers, writers, and researchers who strive for the illumination of creative writing methods also subscribe to the universality of the creative writing practice (Kroll 2013).

Creative writing is justified by a spectrum of reasons ranging from self-expression and communicative purposes to economic explanations. Creative writers can tread in the way of self-development through the expression of their emotions and thoughts via the medium of language, and/or contribute to the development of many careers for which the skill of writing creatively is an essential requirement – for example advertising, journalism, writing stories for computer games, screenwriting, writing novels, short stories and so forth (Harper...
Calling it ‘an intriguing form of human communication’, Harper (2016, 503), also lays stress on the gripping role of creative writing in implicit communication through evoking a variety of affective and intellectual responses in different individuals. Thus, it can be reasonably argued that the pursuit of creative writing can serve either commercial or literary purposes depending on the writer’s intentions and contextual demands of the writing situation.

Throughout the twentieth century, the growth of creative writing as an independent field of study in a number of universities and colleges brought to the fore many considerations about the ways in which its instruction and evaluation could be improved. Among different types of creative writing, perhaps, the greatest amount of attention has been directed towards writing short stories and novels, owing to the manifold purposes served by these two genres in writing. Apart from the pleasure that reading a well-written short story or novel gives to its readers, it can teach them some invaluable lessons and provide them with a fresh perspective on life, on people and on the world in general. The imaginative power of human mind grants creative writers the ability to take their readers to fictional worlds where they can look into the hearts and minds of a number of characters and see the consequences of their actions and decisions. The insights gained by the readers through such exposures can be carried over into many aspects of their lives and help them in making critical decisions when encountering certain problems in the course of their lives. These are just some of the reasons why training creative writers, who can produce high quality works of fiction, has been so valued in almost all creative writing courses and workshops held in many European, Asian and African countries as well as the United States. Yet, instruction would be of little, if any, value when it is not accompanied by the use of appropriate methods of assessment that would provide both teachers and students with a clear impression of students’ progress. Creative writing assessment has been for years the centre of debate between the scholars who believed in the subjective evaluation of students’ works and those who strived for objectifying the assessment process through the development and use of valid and reliable evaluative measures – the most common of which are analytical or holistic rubrics (Mozaffari 2013).

Up to the present time rubrics have proved themselves successful assessment tools which can help teachers make their scoring more consistent. Moreover, they are valuable tools in diagnosing students’ specific areas of weaknesses and strengths. All this will provide students with meaningful feedback, reduce marking time, and solve many other problems associated with the impressionistic judgment of students’ creativity in writing (Burke 2003; Brookhart 2013; Gezie et al. 2012).

The use of grading rubrics in assessing the quality of creative pieces of writing can also contribute to the validation of evaluation process and make it more clear and comprehensible. Providing a list of standards in consideration of the quality of creative works, rubrics can both help students to write more effectively and teachers to do a fairer judgment of their students’ works (Rodriguez 2008). As such, this study was concerned with the development of an analytical rubric that could provide a fair, valid and consistent assessment of students’ creative writing works in the form of fiction.

**Previous studies on the assessment of creative writing**

A vast amount of current research has been dedicated to the recognition of the importance of creativity and creative practices within the educational system (Blamires and
Peterson 2014; Cheung and Leung 2013; Sandri 2013; Sternberg 2006). The unexpected challenges of the present world can be overcome only by the unmatched power of creative minds. Education has moved in the way of helping practitioners benefit from the novel ideas brought up by resourceful creative thinkers (Wang 2012). Thus, it would be understandable that, thinking of creativity as an important academic purpose can be conducive to the promotion of individual, social, vocational and educational achievement.

Delving into the nature of creativity in writing and the development of appropriate evaluative measures calls for a clear definition of this term and its underlying characteristics (Blamires and Peterson 2014). Although trying to find a definitive explanation of creativity seems to be a pointless attempt, there are some elements present in most accounts provided for the concept of creativity. Creativity is mostly associated with the production of something new, original, and unprecedented which is considered as being of high value and quality by those who are competent enough to judge the quality of such products (Knobel and Lankshear 2016).

As a ‘body of knowledge and a set of educational techniques for imparting this knowledge’, creative writing can be defined both in relation to its material outputs such as fiction, poetry, drama, etc. or as a subject requiring its students to use language innovatively and creatively to create written works of acceptable quality (Dawson 2005, 21). Some of the scholars associate creative writing with the production of narrative fictions (Nettle 2009) while some others aim to expand its realm by putting nonfiction writing under the category of creative writing by-products (Root, Steinberg, and Huber 2011). Creative writing can contribute to the enhancement of the imaginative power of human mind which can in turn lead to the improvement of the writing skill as a means for achieving several social, communicative, educational, and occupational purposes (Barbot et al. 2012; Deane et al. 2008).

The last two decades has witnessed an increase in the popularity of creative writing courses and the recognition of this field as a well-established subject within the educational curricula. Yet, the escalation of enrolment in creative writing programmes was not accompanied by the development of appropriate, reliable, and valid evaluative measures which would be applicable consistently to measure the quality of students’ creative works. Normally, student writings are evaluated based on subjective criteria and students are not informed in advance about the qualities expected to be present in their final works. Teachers also spend a large amount of time grading students’ works or discussing problems observed in their creative pieces of writing. Such circumstances made some researchers strive for the development of some grading rubrics which could eliminate the problems associated with the impressionistic assessment of creative writing.

The use of rubrics have been long proposed by many scholars including Griffin and Anh (2005), Rodriguez (2008), Mozaffari (2013), Morris and Sharplin (2013), and Tung (2015) as an effective way to deal with the problems associated with the subjective assessment of creative pieces of writing. As stated by Rodriguez (2008), the use of creative writing rubrics in evaluating student works serves multiple functions; it helps creative writing students plan and execute their stories, as well as critique each other’s pieces during workshop; and it helps creative writing faculty evaluate students’ written works, as well as develop departmental curriculum and assessment tools. Reducing students’ objections to their grades and reconciling literary and creative practices can be also added to the advantages...
associated with the use of rubrics for the assessment of creativity in writing (Rodriguez 2008).

Burke (2003) conducted a study to investigate the effect of using rubrics on the high school students’ ability to write creatively. The results indicated that the use of rubrics contributed to the improvement of students’ creative writing ability and more precisely their ability to choose appropriate language and vocabulary, incorporate novel ideas into their writings, and organise these ideas in an effective manner.

In another study, Tung (2015) tried to challenge preconceptions regarding the improbability of providing valid and reliable assessment tools to evaluate creativity in writing by developing a creative writing rubric that enjoyed acceptable levels of validity and reliability. She believed that the problems associated with creative writing assessment can be partly attributed to the polarity in teachers’ views of assessment within the present educational system. On the one hand, there are teachers who value students’ involvement in the assessment process and put great emphasis on the inclusion of assessment tasks that encourage creativity. On the other hand, there are teachers whose main concern is to provide reliable judgments of student attainments mainly through the employment of standardised assessment tools. Establishing a point of agreement between these opposing trends of assessing students’ works can offer the best solution to the troubling question of objective assessment of creative pieces of writing. Drawing on the elements proposed by scholars such as Mills (2006) and Burroway (2011) as the main constituents of an effective piece of creative writing, Tung (2015) developed her rubric in the context of Chinese language curriculum in Singapore.

According to Rodriguez (2008), any attempt for the development of assessment criteria should take place within a specific theoretical framework. Emphasising the close relationship between literature and creative writing, she drew on literary theory and tools and techniques of creating works of literature in order to develop a rubric for creative writing assessment. After asking students to read some texts including explanations of several narrative conventions and elements and providing them with some model texts to act as a basis for the production of their creative pieces of writing, Rodriguez (2008) embarked on the development of her own rubric intended to be used for the evaluation of short stories at the undergraduate level. This rubric included ten components namely format, punctuation and grammar, theme and ideology, language (diction), plot, time, setting, characters, narration, and point of view. Each of these elements ranged from zero to five points and were identified by a set of questions.

Despite all these efforts, evaluation of students’ creativity in writing has remained a thorny issue standing in need of taking appropriate measures. Most of the recommended measures for the assessment of creativity are exclusively developed for children, attend to irrelevant features of creativity, or are problematic in terms of their validity and reliability (Baer and McKool 2009). The majority of the proposed assessment tools either left out some important elements or included irrelevant criteria or the criteria that were not specific enough to be applied successfully in grading students’ creative pieces of writing (Mozaffari 2013). Lack of precision, vividness and comprehensibility can be also added to the drawbacks associated with most of the developed measures of creativity in writing (Morris and Sharplin 2013). The present study tries to overcome these problems by developing and validating a more valid and reliable assessment tool for evaluating creative writing.
Methodology

Design of the analytical rubric

The researchers in this study endeavoured to develop an analytical rubric for assessing short stories and novels written by creative writing students, which can in turn assist us in resolving the challenges in assessing creativity in writing. The procedures followed in this study for the development, validation, and reliability estimation of the creative writing rubric were based on the instructions given by Rochford and Borchert (2011), Timmerman et al. (2011), Gezie et al. (2012), Huerta et al. (2014), and Dawson (2017) for designing valid and reliable rubrics. These procedures are expanded upon in the following sections.

Defining objectives of the assessment task

Being more specific than goals, objectives are ‘clear statements about expected outcomes, such as behaviours, actions, or artefacts that can be assessed’ (Rochford and Borchert 2011). Since creative writing courses are the main contexts within which the rubric developed in the present study is intended to be used, the objectives of the assessment task should be in line with the shared objectives of these courses in a variety of teaching and learning situations.

It is at this stage that researchers should determine whether the development of holistic or analytical rubrics contribute to the fulfilment of the course objectives and meeting the expectations of both teachers and students. In the case of our study, establishing an evaluative measure which would enable assigning numerical values to students’ creative writings and thus reducing the time and energy spent on grading students’ works was not the sole aim behind the development of the creative writing rubric. Creative writing assessment would be of little value if no attention is given to the improvement of students’ performance through provision of beneficial feedback both during and after the assessment process. Having this in mind, the development of an analytical rubric was given priority over the holistic one to achieve the intended outcomes of the present study.

Another question which needs to be addressed in the first phase of rubric development is whether generic or task-specific rubrics best fit the purpose of the assessment task. The creative writing rubric presented in this study can be claimed to be a generic rubric since it purports to measure the quality of creative pieces of writing in a wide range of educational contexts and its use is not restricted to a specific task (Dawson 2017).

Identifying the main elements in the rubric

At this stage, the researcher reviewed the related studies and also checked the rubrics developed by previous researchers to avoid reinventing the wheel. To this end, works of several researchers including Burroway (1992, 2011), Arp and Johnson (2006), Deedari and Mansouri (2006), Mills (2006), Rodriguez (2008), Mozaffari (2013), and Tung (2015) were studied in order to extract the relevant elements in creative writing. Narrative voice, image, setting, characterisation, world, story, structure, mood and atmosphere, tone, dialogue, and plot were the elements which found support in the majority of relevant studies as the main constituents of a creative piece.

In order to corroborate the weight of the above elements in creative writing, these criteria along with their important aspects were presented to a panel of ten creative writing
experts in the form of a Likert scale questionnaire. These experts were requested to voice their opinions about the degree of importance associated with each of the above items in the production of a piece of creative writing. These writing experts were professors of English/Persian literature, editors of literary journals, or creative writers who had run courses in creative writing or had held creative writing workshops. They were recruited based on a snowball sampling in which each expert was helpful in introducing another willing colleague or expert to assist us in our rubric development and validation. In snowball sampling, as a non-probability sampling technique in research, participants introduce their friends, acquaintances, colleagues or any other interested participants to help the researchers with an acceptable number of participants for their research. Such sampling technique is usually used when the researchers do not have access to their participants or recruiting the participants is not an easy task – for example when doing research on illegal immigrants. Similarly, in the current research the researchers had difficulty finding willing experts to help with the rubric development and validation and that made us adopt this sampling technique.

Following that, a series of unstructured interviews were also conducted to enquire about the opinions of some of these experts regarding the appropriateness of the extracted elements. During these interviews and questionnaire administration, these experts were requested to choose ‘extremely unimportant, unimportant, neutral, important, extremely important’ as the options for the approval or discarding of a creative writing element. Accordingly, creative writing experts proposed revision of some of the elements and also explained their reasons for the elimination of some of these elements in the final rubric. Taking consideration of all of the comments made by the experts during the interview sessions as well as the results of the descriptive analysis of the data obtained through the questionnaires, ten elements including narrative voice, characterisation, world, mood and atmosphere, dialogue, story, setting, image, plot, and tone were extracted along with the descriptions of their important aspects which were later used in the construction of the first version of the rubric.

**Describing different levels of performance on each criterion**

In deciding upon the number of scale points in the creative writing rubric, we followed the guidelines suggested by Newell, Dahm, and Newell (2002) who considered four-option scales as the best solution to overcome the difficulty involved in making meaningful distinctions between student performance at different levels of quality. By making respondents choose options that are closer to either the negative or positive side of the ranking scale and thus obviating the ambiguity associated with the neutral responses, four-option scales bring about a clearer picture of the respondents’ standpoints. ‘Excellent’, ‘Above average’, ‘Developing’, and ‘Needs improvement’ were the terms used to refer to the four levels of quality describing student performance. The point values associated with these levels are four points, three points, two points, and one point respectively.

Each criterion in the rubric is divided into several sections, each section elaborating on a specific aspect of that criterion on the four mentioned levels of quality. For example, the element ‘narrative voice’ consists of three parts including use of rich and flexible language and vocabulary appropriate to the situations, events, actions, and emotions that the writer wants to express; authentic, consistent, and believable representation of the world of the
story through the use of specific details; and clarity and consistency of the point of view and its appropriateness to the genre attempted. It goes without saying that each section involves description of the quality of students’ fictional writings on the four levels of performance.

**Validity**

Collecting evidence on the validity of an instrument helps researchers determine whether that instrument truly measures what it is intended to measure (Mackey and Gass 2005). According to Timmerman et al. (2011), evidence on the validity of the content of rubrics can be collected through the following steps:

1. Review of the related literature and checking the rubrics developed previously;
2. Enquiring about the criteria used by domain experts in the evaluation of the intended construct;
3. Revision of the rubric by those who are expected to use it for pedagogical purposes; and
4. Synthesis of information and feedback received from content experts through multiple rounds of enquiry.

In the process of our rubric development, we drew on all of these four methods of validity to ensure that the criteria included in the rubric represent aspects of creative writing. After deciding upon the main constituents of a work of fiction by means of reviewing the related works in the literature, a number of rubrics developed for assessing students’ creative writing skills were also studied to check whether the extracted elements were accepted by the wider educational community as the main elements that should be incorporated in the assessment of creative writing.

The most crucial step in the validation process was taken after the construction of the first version of the creative writing rubric. This step involved asking a panel of 18 distinguished creative writing professors, at several high-ranking universities in Iran and the USA, to review the developed rubric and see whether it was useful as an instrument to provide us with a fair, valid, and reliable evaluation of students’ creative writing works. The reason we selected these experts in Iran and the US was the availability of these experts. We also did not plan to limit the rubric and its validity to the Iranian context but a wider educational context so that its generalisability and applicability would not go under question. In other words, due to the limited number of creative writing experts in Iran, we capitalised once again on snowball sampling and used our network of friends and colleagues in Iran and the US to recruit professional and willing experts in the field of creative writing. That was one of the major limitations of our research. In their evaluation of the creative writing rubric, these experts were asked to address the following questions:

- Is the developed rubric appropriate for measuring the creative writers’ ability to write a short story or novel of standard quality?
- Is the rubric appropriate in its priorities and scope?
- Do you have any specific suggestions on how to improve the rubric?
After the evaluation of the rubric in terms of its validity, the majority of the experts (88%) gave their stamp of approval to this evaluative measure and were of the opinion that it appeared desirably inclusive of what matters in the work of a creative writing student. In addition to their comments, some of these experts also made suggestions on how to improve the quality of the designed rubric. All of these comments were reviewed by the researchers and some revisions were made to the content of the rubric. These steps taken in the collection of the opinions of experts through several rounds of interviewing or survey and merging the received feedback into a unified whole as a point of agreement among the experts make up a modified version of a rigorous method of seeking experts’ opinion called Delphi technique (Timmerman et al. 2011). Delphi technique is a multi-phase research approach in which a questionnaire or interview is presented to a panel of experts in a specific field of study to seek their opinions regarding the reliability and validity of an issue under investigation (McKenna 1994). Based on this technique, the questionnaire is revised upon receiving the comments from the experts in the first round of questionnaire administration. This procedure is iteratively and systematically repeated until a desirable level of consensus among the experts is reached. Based on this technique, the final version of the rubric (see Appendix) consisted of nine elements including narrative voice, characterisation, story, setting, mood and atmosphere, language and writing mechanics, dialogue, plot, and image defined at four performance levels.

Reliability of the creative writing rubric

In order to check for the consistency with which the proposed rubric could be applied for the evaluation of the students’ creative pieces of writing, 19 samples of creative writing were collected and scored by two individual raters based on the elements of the analytical rubric developed and validated in this study. These two raters were both familiar with creative writing and had done creative writing themselves. Since no creative writing courses are offered within the Iranian English curriculum, it was not possible for the researchers to use the samples produced by students attending these courses. Thus, some of the writings for reliability estimation in this stage were chosen from among the works of students attending creative writing workshops held by the British author Clare Wigfall and some others were short stories written by the university students in the short story competitions completed by the Australian Publishing Group ‘Write4fun’. This was another limitation of our research which made us draw on these two sources.

These samples were given to two professionals in the field of creative writing who were university professors and had taught creative writing or had published papers in this field. They were requested to evaluate the samples according to the criteria included in the rubric. Some guidance on how to use the rubric was also given to these raters before the initiation of the evaluation process. Two weeks later, the evaluation of students’ fictional works based on the developed rubric was repeated by one of the raters to help the researchers investigate the consistency between the judgments of the same rater at two different points in time. Correlation coefficient for scores given by two individual raters and for subsequent ratings was 0.79 and 0.83 respectively, suggesting that the evaluators had achieved above 70% consistency in their interrater and intrarater reliability. These results helped the researchers in establishing the reliability of the rubric as an evaluative measure to evaluate creative pieces of writing such as novels and short stories.
Conclusion

The objectives of the creative process are mostly defined in relation to the specific discipline within which this concept is being investigated. In other words, pedagogical purposes are the main determinants of the characteristics of the creative process (Blamires and Peterson 2014). The direct implication for such an idea is that the assessment of the students’ creative works can play a significant role in curriculum development and syllabus design when it becomes an integral part of the teaching and learning process and the criteria used for evaluating students’ creative products constitute a large proportion of the course materials (Donnelly 2015).

As such, the rubric developed in the present study can be used for defining course objectives, curriculum development, and syllabus design in the educational context of Iran and abroad, and thus pave the way for the introduction of creative writing into language curriculum. Major aspects of writing a good short story or novel outlined in the rubric can help curriculum developers in defining educational goals and teachers in deciding upon the materials to be taught in their classrooms. Doing so, it can be ensured that instruction takes place in key domains and students are effectively trained on how to produce their own fictional works.

Analytical rubrics, if designed properly, can also pay major contributions to objective, valid, and reliable assessment of students’ creative works. Clarifying grading criteria minimises the subjectivity involved in the assessment of creativity, reduces the marking time, increases the transparency of assessment, and improves the consistency with which students’ writings are evaluated. Students will also accept the fairness of their teachers’ judgments and become less critical of their scores when they are informed that all of the students’ creative artefacts are measured equitably against a common set of standards.

Finally, the creative writing rubric proposed by the researchers in this study can play a pivotal role in the enhancement of the quality of instruction and promotion of the students’ learning. Providing diagnostic information about the students’ specific strengths and weaknesses in writing a short story or novel of standard quality, the developed rubric can help creative writing teachers link assessment to instruction, and give their students a sort of feedback which could be beneficial to the improvement of the overall quality of their creative artefacts. Such a rubric, if shared with students, can also give them an understanding of the qualities expected to be present in their final works and help them to adopt appropriate strategies in order to achieve the intended outcomes of the assessment task. It can also encourage self and peer assessment, increase students’ involvement and responsibility, and make them gain a better understanding of tools and techniques of writing a good fiction.

Acknowledgements

The researchers would like to thank the reviewers who provided us with very valuable comments. We would also like to thank all the creative writers and professors for their participation in this study.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.
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### Appendix

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<tr>
<td><strong>1. Narrative Voice</strong> 1.1</td>
<td>An original voice is created through <strong>maximal</strong> use of rich and flexible language and vocabulary which are appropriate to the situations, events, actions, and emotions that the writer wants to express and the</td>
<td>An original voice is created through <strong>several</strong> uses of rich and flexible language and vocabulary which are appropriate to the situations, events, actions, and emotions that the writer wants to express and the</td>
<td>Voice is created through <strong>minimal</strong> use of rich and flexible language and vocabulary which are appropriate to the situations, events, actions, and emotions that the writer wants to express and the</td>
<td>Voice is created through the use of <strong>poor</strong> language and vocabulary which are <strong>not</strong> appropriate to the situations, events, and actions that the writer wants to express and the overall meaning of the story.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1.2 Specific details that contribute to the creation of an authentic, consistent, and believable world of story are used to a maximum level.</strong></td>
<td>Overall meaning of the story. Specific details that contribute to the creation of an authentic, consistent, and believable world of story are used to an acceptable level.</td>
<td>Overall meaning of the story. Specific details that contribute to the creation of an authentic, consistent, and believable world of story are used to a minimum level.</td>
<td>World of story is presented as inconsistent and unbelievable through no or improper use of details.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1.3 Point of view is completely clear, totally consistent, and entirely appropriate to the genre attempted. Any shift in the point of view of the story is totally justifiable by artistic reasons.</strong></td>
<td>Point of view is consistent, clear, and appropriate to the genre attempted. If more than one point of view is used this is mostly justifiable by artistic reasons.</td>
<td>Point of view is often inconsistent, unclear, and inappropriate to the genre attempted. If more than one point of view is used, this appears to be mostly arbitrary and unjustifiable by artistic reasons.</td>
<td>Point of view is completely unclear, totally inconsistent, and entirely inappropriate to the genre attempted. Shifts in the point of view of the story are not caused by artistic reasons and seem to be totally arbitrary.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2. Characterisation</strong></td>
<td>Characters are often revealed indirectly through their physical appearance, action, thought, dialogue, setting, and symbol.</td>
<td>Characters are sometimes revealed indirectly through their physical appearance, action, thought, dialogue, setting, and symbol.</td>
<td>Readers are often directly told what a character is like with little explanation of characters' thoughts and actions, or use of dialogues, etc. to reveal the characters.</td>
<td>Readers are directly told what a character is like with no explanation of characters’ thoughts and actions, or use of dialogues, etc. to reveal the characters.</td>
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<td><strong>2.1 Characters’ actions, thoughts and dialogues contribute to the meaning of the story to a maximum level.</strong></td>
<td>Characters’ actions, thoughts and dialogues contribute to the meaning of the story to an acceptable level.</td>
<td>Characters’ actions, thoughts and dialogues contribute to the meaning of the story to a minimum level. Story often feels forced and the actions of the characters illogical.</td>
<td>Characters’ actions, thoughts and dialogues pay no contribution to the meaning of the story. Characters are not fully developed enough for the story to feel logical.</td>
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<td><strong>2.2 If characters undergo change as the result of the events in the story, the character development always seems probable and realistic due to the provision of sufficient time</strong></td>
<td>If characters undergo change as the result of the events in the story, the character development often seems probable and realistic due to the provision of time and evidence to prove it.</td>
<td>If characters undergo change as the result of the events in the story, the character development rarely seems probable and realistic due to the provision of time and evidence to a prove it.</td>
<td>If characters undergo change as the result of the events in the story, the character development seems improbable, illogical and unrealistic due to the provision of insufficient time.</td>
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### Performance Levels Criteria

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<td>3. Mood and Atmosphere 3.1</td>
<td>Characters’ actions, thoughts and dialogues, as well as the events and settings in the story are <strong>always</strong> presented through the use of appropriate language and vocabulary which contribute to the establishment of the intended mood and atmosphere.</td>
<td>Dialogues help to establish characters, introduce tension, create scenes, and direct actions and events in the story to a <strong>maximum level</strong>.</td>
<td>Dialogues help to establish characters, introduce tension, create scenes, and direct actions and events in the story to a <strong>minimum level</strong>.</td>
<td>Dialogues are <strong>never</strong> used to establish characters, introduce tension, create scenes, and direct actions and events in the story and only act as a filler to decorate the story.</td>
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<td>4. Language and Writing Mechanics 4.1</td>
<td>Rules for punctuation, capitalisation, spelling and grammar are observed by the writer to a <strong>maximum level</strong> and no grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors exist in the student work.</td>
<td>Few grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors exist in the student work.</td>
<td>Some grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors exist in the student work.</td>
<td>Rules for punctuation, capitalisation, spelling and grammar are observed by the writer to a <strong>minimum level</strong> and many grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors exist in the student work.</td>
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<td>5. Dialogue 5.1</td>
<td>Dialogues help to establish characters, introduce tension, create scenes, and direct actions and events in the story to a <strong>maximum level</strong>.</td>
<td>Dialogues are in congruency with the mental characteristics and social status of the characters to a <strong>maximum level</strong>.</td>
<td>Dialogues are in congruency with the mental characteristics and social status of the characters to a <strong>minimum level</strong>.</td>
<td>Dialogues are <strong>totally incongruent</strong> with the mental characteristics and social status of the characters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Story 6.1</td>
<td>A preliminary account of the characters and settings, dialogue, brief summary, a reference or a detail is <strong>always</strong> presented before the introduction of any sort of conflict.</td>
<td>A preliminary account of the characters and settings, dialogue, brief summary, a reference or a detail is <strong>often</strong> presented before the introduction of any sort of conflict.</td>
<td>A preliminary account of the characters and settings, dialogue, brief summary, a reference or a detail is <strong>rarely</strong> presented before the introduction of any sort of conflict.</td>
<td>No preliminary account of the characters and settings, dialogue, summary, reference or detail is used before the introduction of any sort of conflict.</td>
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### Setting

#### Setting presents both information and emotion, conveys mood, and signals change to a maximum level with a proper consideration of the purpose of the story.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Techniques of revealing time in fiction (scene and summary) are <strong>always</strong> used appropriately.</td>
<td>Techniques of revealing time in fiction (scene and summary) are <strong>often</strong> used appropriately.</td>
<td>Techniques of revealing time in fiction (scene and summary) are <strong>rarely</strong> used appropriately.</td>
<td>Techniques of revealing time in fiction (scene and summary) are <strong>never</strong> used appropriately.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.3 Confrontation and change, patterns of connection and disconnection, and trouble and effort to overcome it are presented to a maximum level in the story.</td>
<td>Confrontation and change, patterns of connection and disconnection, and trouble and effort to overcome it are presented to an acceptable level in the story.</td>
<td>Confrontation and change, patterns of connection and disconnection, and trouble and effort to overcome it are presented to a minimum level in the story.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.4 Purpose of the story is conveyed implicitly with no use of formal statements.</td>
<td>Purpose of the story is mostly conveyed implicitly with minimal use of the formal statements.</td>
<td>Purpose of the story is totally conveyed explicitly through the use of formal statements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.1 Setting presents both information and emotion, conveys mood, and signals change to a maximum level with a proper consideration of the purpose of the story.</td>
<td>Setting presents both information and emotion, conveys mood, and signals change to an acceptable level with a somewhat proper consideration of the purpose of the story.</td>
<td>Setting presents information and emotion, conveys mood, and signals change to a minimum level with an improper consideration of the purpose of the story.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.2 Setting has an effect on the actions and events in the story, behaviours of the characters, or the general outcome of the story to a maximum level.</td>
<td>Setting has an effect on the actions and events in the story, behaviours of the characters, or the general outcome of the story to an acceptable level.</td>
<td>Setting has an effect on the actions and events in the story to a minimum level.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.3 Variety and involvement are created in the story to a maximum level due to the proper use of long,</td>
<td>Variety and involvement are created in the story to an acceptable level due to the somewhat</td>
<td>Variety and involvement are created in the story to a minimum level due to the minimal use of</td>
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### Performance levels criteria

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>middle and close perspectives to describe the setting.</td>
<td>proper use of long, middle, and close perspectives to describe the setting.</td>
<td>long, middle, and close perspectives properly to describe the setting.</td>
<td>Concrete and significant details that appeal to senses and suggest ideas beyond the surface are used to a minimum level in the story.</td>
<td>Concrete and significant details that appeal to senses and suggest ideas beyond the surface are not used in the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Image</td>
<td>8.1 Concrete and significant details that appeal to senses and suggest ideas beyond the surface are used to a maximum level in the story.</td>
<td>Concrete and significant details that appeal to senses and suggest ideas beyond the surface are used to an acceptable level in the story.</td>
<td>Actions, events, and scenes are arranged in a reasonable order and a few irrelevant items which pay no contribution to the advancement of plot are included.</td>
<td>Actions, events, and scenes are put together in a way that the causal relationships among them are meaningful to a maximum level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Plot</td>
<td>9.1 The plot of the story has an artistic unity. Actions, events, and scenes are arranged in a logical order and irrelevant items which pay no contribution to the advancement of plot are not included.</td>
<td>Actions, events, and scenes are arranged in a somewhat reasonable order and some irrelevant items which pay no contribution to the advancement of plot are included.</td>
<td>Actions, events, and scenes are put together in a way that the causal relationships among them are meaningful to an acceptable level.</td>
<td>There are not any meaningful causal relationships between actions, events, and scenes in the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>Actions, events, and scenes are put together in a way that the causal relationships among them are meaningful to a maximum level.</td>
<td>Actions, events, and scenes are put together in a way that the causal relationships among them are meaningful to an acceptable level.</td>
<td>Each turn in the plot is justified by the characters and situations to an acceptable level.</td>
<td>Each turn in the plot is justified by the characters and situations to a minimum level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>Each turn in the plot is justified by the characters and situations to a maximum level.</td>
<td>Each turn in the plot is justified by the characters and situations to an acceptable level.</td>
<td>Each turn in the plot is justified by the characters and situations to a minimum level.</td>
<td>There is no justification for turns and shifts in the plot.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>