

## Writing Flash Fiction

Adapted from an article by G. W. Thomas, <http://www.fictionfactor.com/guests/flashfiction.html>

With the creation of the Internet, editors are looking for shorter works, more easily read on a computer screen. This is known as "flash fiction", a tale between 300-1000 words long. Flash fiction is usually a story of a single act, and it often explains the consequences of action that happened before the story began. In other words, the story begins in the middle, with much of the action already occurred.

### 1) The small idea

Look for the smaller ideas in larger ones. To discuss the complex interrelationship of parents and children you'd need a novel. Go for a smaller piece of that complex issue. How kids feel when they aren't included in a conversation. What kids do when they are bored in the car. Bad report card, a reaction after seeing an ex. . Find a smaller topic and build on it.

### 2) Short Exposition

When you write your story, don't take two pages to explain all the setting, characters, and conflict. Find a way to set it all in the first paragraph, then get on with the rest of the tale.

### 3) Start in the middle of the action

Drop the reader into an event that has already occurred, and your character is reacting to that event. A man is running. A bomb is about to go off. A monster is in the house. Don't describe any more than you have to. The reader can fill in some of the blanks.

### 4) Focus on one powerful image

Find one powerful image to focus your story on. A war-torn street. An alien sunset. They say a picture worth a thousand words. Paint a picture with words. It doesn't hurt to have something happen inside that picture. Use IMAGERY to create SENSORY LANGUAGE. Use FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE to create mental images and metaphors that have deep meaning with few words: "She was a rose" is shorter and more powerful than saying, "she was extremely beautiful and delicate."

### 5) Make the reader guess until the end

A little mystery goes a long way. Your reader may have no idea what is going on for the majority of the story. This will lure them on to the end. When they finish, there should be a good pay off or solution.

### 6) Use allusive references

By using references to a commonly known story you can save yourself all those unnecessary words. Refer to historical events. Use famous situations from literature. If the story takes place on the Titanic you won't have to explain what is going to happen, who is there, or much of anything. Beware of using material that is too obscure. Your reader should be able to make the inferences.

### 7) Use Irony of Situation (A plot twist)

An unexpected ending allows the writer to surprise the reader. Flash fiction is often twist-ending fiction because you don't have enough time to build up sympathetic characters and show how a long, devastating plot has affected them. Like a good joke, flash fiction saves the best until the end.