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## SIGNIFICANCE OF SHORT STORIES IN IMPROVING CRITICAL WRITING

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*Abstract: Literary texts, particularly, short stories are considered as instruments through which readers engage in a dialogue with the intended message of the text. At times, these texts have the power to stir and stimulate readers, particularly when they actively engage with the narrative elements such as fictional events, dramatic scenes, and poetic speakers. The essence of a literary text lies in its imaginative and artistic nature, which motivates learners to react both intellectually and emotionally while reading or responding to the text. This article aims to demonstrate the effects of stories in the improvement of critical writing skills. We hypothesize that using stories can be much more effective in the development of writing.*

*Keywords: critical writing, literary texts, short stories, vocabulary, social skills.*

### Introduction

There is a common belief that writing is a talent. However, American researcher Sokolik argues that writing is actually a skill that can be taught and learned by both native and non-native speakers. In the context of foreign language teaching, learners are typically provided with a range of resources such as course books, simplified graded readers, and authentic literary texts. These resources serve to enhance their prior knowledge and provide them with model texts that can guide their own writing. However, one thing must be mentioned, readers who have good critical writing skill can overcome their writing challenges easily.

Critical writing involves the process of analysing information to gain a comprehensive understanding of a problem or a subject from multiple viewpoints. It also involves establishing logical connections between ideas and presenting your own viewpoint on the topic, which is formed through a thorough evaluation of the evidence at hand.

Apart from the novels or other types of literary works, short stories, with their concise yet engaging narratives, have the potential to serve as a powerful tool for improving students' writing skills in English language learning environments.

Here are some researchers, who investigated the connection between writing skill and the influence of short stories to the development of it.

Turkish professor Kirkgoz conducted a study on the integration of short stories in classrooms and discovered that using short stories can effectively address learners' writing difficulties by providing them with a rich source of input. Additionally, students are given a purpose for writing when they reflect on their thoughts, opinions, feelings, and background experiences. Kirkgoz also noted that short stories expose learners to various ideas, characters, and subject matters, allowing them to be transported to an imaginary world and become acquainted with the characters. This aspect proves to be highly interesting and motivating for the learners. Other researchers also share the belief that short stories can facilitate writing. If we compare the ideas of British scholar Pardede with Kirkgoz, he suggested that short stories, being powerful and motivating, can serve as models and provide a context for creative writing, thereby aiding English language learners in developing their writing skills.

While comparing the ideas about the influence of short stories to the critical writing, we can suggest that the use of short stories helped learners to write more effectively, improve their writing skills, and expand their vocabulary choices, ultimately enhancing

their writing abilities. So, we admit that there are two main stages in which the learners can improve their critical writing by reading short stories:

1. The first stage is by developing language skills (VGR)
2. The second stage is by increasing social skills (CSC).

The first step of the initial stage is about vocabulary development. When it is mentioned about language aspects, we know that vocabulary is one special part of the English language from which students suffer more. However, while reading short stories, the future writers improve their word choice skills and learn how to paint vivid pictures for their readers. Besides, stories play a crucial role in expanding students' vocabulary as they establish connections between familiar and unfamiliar words. By immersing themselves in the context of a story, students are effortlessly motivated to acquire new words, thereby enhancing their vocabulary usage and making their learning more tangible. Moreover, stories often incorporate recurring patterns and vocabulary, providing learners with repeated exposure to the language within familiar settings. In this way, every word or structure within a story takes on a new dimension and becomes readily accepted as a novel concept or a revision opportunity for students.

Second step is grammar. Learners will acquire grammatical structures, constructions, unity, and coherence unconsciously while reading a literary text. At times, learners may even imitate the writing style of a writer as a model for their own writing. According to American researcher Leal, learners perceive the structure, grammar, structure, and vocabulary of a literary text as a model for their writing. Ben Bartan also found evidence supporting this claim in their study. Through an experimental study, they observed that the language, content, organization, and communication level improved in the post-test. These findings further reinforce the notion that reading and writing skills are closely interconnected.

The last step of this stage is reading comprehension. Reading comprehension is a complex procedure that encompasses a range of language skills and cognitive growth. Phonology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics all play a role in the capacity to comprehend written texts and derive significance from them. Proficient reading necessitates the prompt and precise identification of words, which is impacted by an individual's cognitive capabilities and past experiences. Acquiring word meanings and mastering their usage in sentences are the most effective strategies for enhancing reading comprehension. Absent reading comprehension, learners will be unable to enhance their writing skills.

If we give information about the last stage, it must be mentioned that is called improvement of social skills which goes by enhancing cultural development, sparking an original idea and critical thinking (CSC).

The first step of the last stage is about cultural development. By reading short stories, students will gain a deeper comprehension of culture, the significance of storytelling in culture, and the elements that contribute to a successful story. It is strategically designed to follow the initial community-building activities of the year, fostering a daily exchange of ideas, personal experiences, and written work among cultures. They offer students a comprehensive overview of the diverse range of writers and their chosen subjects, including gender roles, generation gaps, poverty, music, love, family, drug addiction, hegemony, migrant labor, and more.

The second step is about sparking an original idea. Reading extensively does not result in the replication of other writers' concepts. Instead, it often leads to the development of more captivating ideas of your own. Expanding your reading repertoire and delving into literature can ignite similar ideas within you. For instance, you may immerse yourself in Gothic novels and contemplate the possibilities of altering certain aspects, such as relocating the story to the present day, narrating it from an unconventional

perspective typically overlooked in the genre (like that of a parental figure or a servant), or incorporating elements from other compatible genres like contemporary horror, epic fantasy, or science fiction. This serves as just one illustration of how you can apply this approach to any literary domain that captures your interest.

The last step is about critical thinking. Literary works play a crucial role in fostering critical thinking as it provides readers and students with opportunities to enhance their analytical and problem-solving abilities. By analyzing literary texts, students can practice expressing their opinions, drawing logical conclusions, explaining cause-and-effect relationships, comparing factual information, and applying ideas to new situations.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the use of literature in the development of critical writing has been proven to be powerful and effective. It shows how writing can be influential and reading can be understood. When writing instructors incorporate literature into their classes, it makes the learning experience more exciting, interesting, and successful. This helps language learners to be more engaged, motivated, and practical in their learning process. Literature is the perfect tool for writing instructors to assist their learners in comprehending and expressing their thoughts through writing. Therefore, it is crucial to integrate literature into language learning, especially in writing skills. As it is mentioned, it works in two steps mostly. First by straightening the linguistic aspects, as vocabulary, reading and grammar; second by making better in social skills: cultural, critical thinking and originality in ideas. In other words, by reading short stories, the readers gain more knowledge not only in linguistic area, but also in cultural too. They will be aware of the usage of language of one nation, their tradition, language and life style. It allows them to write their writings expressing own culture, tradition and language. Besides, reading and analyzing short stories allows the readers to be more original and unique. They can imitate the author's style, but must create their own too. Finally, the learners can be a good critical thinker in learning area and can widen their outlook which is the best thing they can do for themselves.

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