

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

وزارة التعليم العالي و البحث العلمي

MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC

RESEARCH

جامعة عباس لغرور خنشلة

UNIVERSITY OF ABBES LAGHROUR –KHENCHELA



كلية الآداب و اللغات

FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES

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## Enhancing reading comprehensive skills Using Short Stories

The Case Study of Second Year LMD Students of English at  
Mohamed L'amin Dabaghine- Setif

*Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language and Culture*

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September 2021

## **Dedication**

To my parents for their suportand engagement

To my wife Sarra, my son Adem and my daughter Rokayia

To my brothers and sister

To all my best friends

## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost I am extremely grateful to my supervisor Miss Ramdane Sonia for her support, guidance and precious instructions at every single stage and for her sharing time, research skills and experience with me throughout this dissertation.

My immense and sincere gratitude extends to my neighbor Prof. Belaifa Rachid and Dr. Hachemi Hechich who encouraged me to accomplish this research.

**Lagraa Messaoud**

## Abstract

The present paper aims to prove that the use of short stories in developing reading comprehensive skills is one of the major important tasks which EFL learners need to develop their performance in reading. Short stories therefore were selected for the purpose to enhance the reading skill of Algerian learners of English as a foreign language EFL, precisely second year students at the university of Mohamed L'amine Dabaghine. Two tests were carried out on a reading lesson by presenting two short stories entitled *Fighting For The Forest* and *Running For Her Life From A Book Stories of Courage* By Glare Gray .Each test is a set of comprehensive questions. The tests were addressed to 25 second year students year students. For the data, they were collected through reading comprehensive questions pre-reading, while reading and after reading. Then, data were analyzed through quantitative and qualitative descriptive analysis. Findings revealed that the use of short stories helps the students to improve their reading comprehensive skills. The results of the test implied that the employment of reading strategies gave an influence to the improvement of the students reading comprehension.

**Keywords:** reading comprehension, EFL students, short stories, foreign language acquisition, enhancing reading, improvement, development, pre-reading, during reading, post- reading

## List Of Abbreviations and Acronyms

- EFL** English As a Foreign Language
- EL** English Language
- FLA** Foreign Language Acquisition
- SL** Second Language
- TEFL** Teaching English as a foreign Language

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## **General Introduction**

### **1. Background of the Study**

Promoting students' reading skills is one of the most important tasks which EFL learners need to develop throughout their learning. Indeed, reading is invaluable for helping students communicate and understand how the parts of language go together. Reading makes our thoughts and experiences vivid and long lasting and helps us to learn new things in every subject area. In many ways, reading is the way we make sense of our world.

Helping learners master the skill of reading and enabling them to read effectively and interactively is, then, one of the main objectives of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). Moreover, reading plays an essential role in promoting language acquisition as learners experiment with new words, sentences, and large chunks to communicate their ideas effectively and to reinforce the grammar and vocabulary they learn in class. One of the major failing in the traditional curriculum could be attributed to the lack of attention given to reading, which is an important avenue for thinking.

Reading includes several genres such as reading short stories, poems, plays, novels, essays, and descriptions. These pieces of writing aim at conveying a specific, direct and clear message to a specific audience. It includes also several areas such as reading instructions, formal letters, notes, invitations, advertisements, and reports.

The educational value of story reading is widely accepted, especially compared to the acceptance accorded to storytelling. Storybook reading has been demonstrated to be beneficial to students in a variety of other ways as well. Story reading clearly is not just for fun, it also helps students learn to be better users of language, and may also help them to become more comprehensive citizens. Story reading also plays an important role in the development of learners' reading comprehension.

### **2. Statement of the Problem**

In the light of the researcher's observations and experiences in the field of English language teaching, little attention is attached to short story reading in EFL classes in Algerian schools. We often hear from Algerian teachers who teach English that Algerian

students at all levels do not read, and if they do, they do not have enough proficiency in reading. This statement, however, is not amazing if we analyze the Algerian English teaching materials as textbook of the second-year literary streams which do not act as stimuli to encourage further reading in English. Therefore, considering that reading skill could be fostered if the learners are provided with authentic materials since earlier stages of language learning. Due to the variety of themes and ideas, literary authentic materials such as short stories may offer learners the aesthetic language they use; they may also be useful means to foster the reading skill of Algerian learners at all levels among learners. With an appropriate selection of materials and teaching methodologies, a short story may act as a stimulus to enhance the learners' reading skills and to encourage them to engage in further reading. That is why they are frequently advised to read in order to enhance their vocabulary and lexical store. But, how can reading short stories influence the extension of reading? Can this reading extension be reflected in the matter of stories? In other words, to what extent can reading short stories enhance learners' reading comprehension that can be measured through the short story?

### **3. The Aim of Study**

This research study aims at investigating the role of short stories to enhance the reading skill of Algerian foreign languages streams second year learners. It starts from the assumption that Algerian learners lack reading competence, not only because of the teaching methods and approaches but also because of the inappropriateness of the reading materials provided in English textbooks used. This research work also seeks to find appropriate approaches and activities to teach reading through short stories in a way which will enhance the learners' reading comprehension and skills at earlier steps of language learning and will encourage them to practice reading as a personal activity.

### **4. Hypotheses and Assumptions**

In carrying out this research, I make the following assumptions. First, I assume that Algerian learners at pre-intermediate levels do have a respectful skills in reading in English, which can enable them to read some short stories that suit their level as second year learners. Second, I hypothesize that short stories maybe a useful tool to foster the reading skill of Algerian foreign languages streams learners in the target language.

## **5. Tools of Investigation**

I have chosen to direct a test to second year Algerian foreign languages streams pupils who have a pre\_intermediate level in English in order to analyze their reading styles and preferences, reading habits and needs in reading short stories in English. My choice of the population was a convenient one, since I have selected a sample that is most accessible to me. In addition to this, I found it adequate to present lessons about the use of short stories as authentic literary texts which will serve as a practical suggestion to what can be done with short stories in the reading classroom. Moreover, these lessons can be considered appropriate and beneficial since I tested them in a real teaching situation.

## **6. Organization of the Research**

This research study consists of three main chapters dealing with theory and practice of the importance of reading short stories in enhancing learners' reading skill. The first chapter is theoretical and deals with the reading skill. Likewise, the second chapter is theoretical but presents basically many concerns about the short story and its elements. The third chapter is practical and it focuses on testing the significance of using the short story in teaching the reading skill.

The first chapter is devoted to reading. It includes a definition of reading, reasons for reading, models, strategies, types of reading, and also the role of the teacher in the management of a reading lesson. It also speaks about reading comprehension as a means to develop the reading skill proficiency in English.

However, the second chapter is devoted to literature. First, we would define the short story, its usefulness in teaching the reading skill. It also provides the different definitions of the important elements that comprise the short story such as the plot, the setting, the style, the characters and the theme. The chapter, also, presents the significance of using the short story in teaching the reading skill. In addition to that, we would highlight the importance of using short stories as teaching materials for reading comprehension.

The last chapter is a practical one. It is divided into two parts. The first part is about the tests description and the second is about the analysis of the tests in addition to

the findings of both qualitative and quantitative data. It attempts to analyze all the data collected from the learners' productions in the two tests, considering theoretical information presented in the earlier chapters.

## **Chapter One: Reading in English as a Foreign Language**

### **Introduction**

This first chapter will be about reading a foreign language (FL) and more particularly about reading English as a foreign language (EFL). It discusses some important issues about the reading skill, its definition, reasons, models, strategies, types, and the role of the teacher in the reading process and how he should manage it. Different overviews to the definition of reading have been suggested by many thinkers. This reflects its importance in the teaching and learning processes inside classroom.

#### **1.1. Definition of Reading**

There is no clear definition of the term “Reading”. Many people use it in different ways, so much confusion can arise from consequent misunderstandings. It is difficult, therefore, to give a precise definition of what reading is. Anderson Urquhart wrote “It might seem foolish to answer the question what is reading? (Cited in: Boughouas, 2008, p.32)

According to the Longman Dictionary of American English (2004, p.10) and the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2000, p. 101), reading is the ability or skill of looking at and understanding written or printed words or symbols.

Nuttall stated that “In reading, the main focus is on the extraction of meaning from writing. Our business is with the ways the reader gets a message from a text” (2003, p.54) Thus, according to this scholar, reading occurs when the reader receives a message from the writer, and the most important thing is to focus on the ways the reader receive this message and decode it.

Another definition of reading is used by the Partnership for Reading, the National Reading Panel, and the federal Reading First law. According to this definition, reading is “a complex system of deriving meaning from print” that requires:

- An understanding of how speech sounds are related to print,
- Decoding (word identification) skills,

- Fluency,
- Vocabulary and background knowledge,
- Active comprehension strategies, and
- A motivation to read.(Susan McShane, 2005, p.66)

According to the psycholinguist point of view, reading is considered as the process in which the reader grasps the text and obtains the information he /she needs from it. Reading is cognitive process that requires the reader awareness through a kind of interaction between the reader and the text being read.

Reading is a set of skills that involves making sense and deriving meaning from the printed word. In order to read we must be able to decode (sound out) the printed words and also comprehend what we read. For Foreign- language learners there are three elements which impact reading: the child's background knowledge, the child's linguistic knowledge of target language, and strategies or techniques the child uses to tackle the text. (Caroline, 2005, p.08)

Smith (1991, p.100) suggested that reading is not an easy task to be defined because "It has a multiplicity of meanings".The meaning of any word can be understood where it occurs in the context. For Smith the word reading sometimes entails comprehension and sometimes not. For that reason, Smith advised to stop looking for the definition of reading and consider instead what is involved in reading.

## **1.2. Goals of Reading**

There are many reasons related together while getting to read in English as a fundamental skill that students have to develop in learning. Some students read in English for the sake of entertainment, future career or simply for studying and learning purposes. Harmer (2010, p.100) also suggested that "In the first place, many students want to be able to read texts in English either for their careers, for study purposes or simply for pleasure". Moreover, any exposure to any English text is a good and an effective way for learning that language, especially the text is very interesting for the reader. According to Harmer (2010, p. 100) "Reading is useful for language acquisition. Provided that students

more or less understand what they read, the more they read, the better they get at it".Reading a text also provides the opportunity to study the target language components like grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation..."Reading texts also provides good models for English writing. At different times we can encourage students to focus on vocabulary, grammar or punctuation" he suggested (2010,p.100). Nuttal on the other hand, (1982, p.23) argued"you read because you wanted to get something from the writing: facts, ideas, enjoyment... you wanted to get the message that the writer had expressed" .In other words, the learner reads because he/she wants get ideas, information from that text.

There are also some other reasons that can be divided in two: **Instrumental** and **Pleasurable**.

- **Instrumental Reasons**

A large amount of reading takes place because it will help to achieve some clear aims. For example, to read a telephone directory or to read educational magazines .Furthermore, reading text is extremely good model in English. If a teacher wants to teach, for example,how to write a paragraph or an essay in English, he needs to show his students a sample or model of reading text. Reading is also a good opportunity to study any aspect of the foreign language like: grammar, vocabulary, conjugation and punctuation, the way to constructing sentences, paragraphs, and texts.

- **Pleasurable Reasons**

In this type, the main purpose of reading is for pleasure. For example, reading short stories, novels, poems, magazines... Instrumental reading can be pleasurable too, while reading historical, cultural texts, or books .And this can be done only through funny ways so that students can be motivated. The idea of reading for pleasure is introduced by Davies (1995, p.?) who claims that foreign language learners read for pleasure and enjoyment.

There are also different benefits which the reader of Second FL can get while reading for instrumental or pleasurable goals:

- Reading broadens target learners' vocabulary which is important for effective communication.

- Moreover, Skills learned through reading are transferred to other areas of language such as writing, and speaking.
- Reading also provides a good opportunity to learn about different people, different cultures, and outlooks.
- Reading texts expose learners to different registers of the target language.

### **1.3. Models of Reading**

The study of language and psycho-linguistics has witnessed significant developments which led many researchers to deal with more challenging discussions about language learning and teaching. One of those discussions is concerned with the way reading takes place and thus the most appropriate models to develop this skill. Research carried out by Cognitive psychologists in the 1970s tested the hypothetical models of the reading process as it thought to take place in human's mind. Researchers also describe what happened when people read which resulted in the emergence of the three models for the reading process: the bottom-up model, top-down model and the interactive model.

#### **1.3.1. The Bottom-up Model**

The bottom-up theory sustains that the reader constructs the text from the smallest units (letters to words to phrases to sentences...etc). In Gough's (1972) model, the reader begins with letters, which are recognized by a scanner. The information thus gained is passed to a decoder, which converts the string is then passed to a librarian, where with the help of the lexicon, it is recognized as a word. The reader then fixates on the next word, and proceeds in the same way until all the words in a sentence have been proceeded.

According to this view, Gough holds that meaning is built up from the smallest units, letters and sounds ...etc.This means that the reader progress letter by letter to identify sounds which are combined together to reach a higher level of phrases and sentences .Therefore, this implies from a pedagogical point of view that the teaching of reading in the foreign language should begin from smaller units of texts, phonemes, syllables and words in order to reach a global understanding of the whole text.

Rayner and Pollatsek (1989, p.232) point out that Gough's model is explicit enough to be tested at various points, with the result that the straightforward bottom-up direction has had to be improved in a text. In addition to sound recognition, the bottom-up model involves also the identification of some grammatical and lexical forms which will help the reader decode and recognize the written text such as word formation, ellipsis, cohesion devices...etc.

### **1. 3. 2. The Top-down Model**

The top-down theory argues that readers bring great deal of knowledge, expectations of the reader, assumption, and questions to the text, and given a basic understanding of the vocabulary. The top-down model is the second model which is developed by Goodman (1988) often cited as the representative of the top-down approach. He tries to explain the processing of information during the reading activity. With this model, the reader begins by dealing with the text as a whole, then proceeds to smaller units, paragraphs and then down to individual sentences, ending with single letters. "For top-down theorists, the ability of getting the meaning of words is of high importance with the reliance to background knowledge, then the recognition of words". Therefore, this model places minimal attention to word recognition skill and focuses more on what is called "higher order" source of information (Davies, 1995).

Goodman emphasizes that in reading, the reader's schematic knowledge of the word is indispensable to depict meaning from the whole text. Stanovitch (1980, p. 34) explains the top-down model as higher level processes interact with the flow of information through lower level processes.

According to Byrne, the linguistic knowledge of the reader is not enough to achieve complete comprehension of authentic literary text or a short story:

When we expose our learners to authentic literary texts, we use our systemic knowledge will be sufficient to guide their comprehension. However, if there is a failure to transfer their L1 schemata to the L2 code, this will not be sufficient. (2003, p. 1)

### 1.3.3. The Interactive Model

It is also called ‘The Interactive School of Theories’; as its name implies the interactive view to reading involves building ‘a match between our schematic knowledge and the knowledge of the language which is encoded systematically’ (Nunan, 1991, p.68). According to Aebesold & Field (1994, pp. 28 -29) these theories describe a process that involves both bottom-up and top-down, depending on the type of text as well as on the reader background knowledge, language proficiency level, motivation, strategy used, and culturally shaped beliefs about the reading.

The interactive model has been proposed by Laberge and Samuel as the promising model to the theory of reading today. Grabe and Stoller (2002, p.10), in this context, assert that the reader can take useful ideas by following a bottom-up perspective and combine them with the ideas he takes from a top-down view and this leads to a self-contradictory model which is the interactive model. According to this latter, the reader begins the processing of the information from highest level (top-down processing) then he moves to the lower level (bottom-up processing) in order to process and understand the text. In other words, the interactive model stresses the importance of both the ability of word recognition, decoding the linguistic items and the ability of constructing the meaning when the reader relates the information of the text to his/her background knowledge.

Weber (1984, p.113) notes that “The interactive model of reading gives emphasis to the interaction between graphic display in a text, various levels of linguistics knowledge and processes, and various cognitive activities”. This means that in reading, these processes of building up meaning from smallest linguistic units to have a general idea of a particular text using at the same time our experiences about the world to occur interactively with the language and information to have a clearer interpretation of the text.

As Carel, Devine and Eskey explain” An interactive model of reading assumes that skills at all levels are interactively available to process and interpret the text so that it subsumes both top-down and bottom-up strategies” (1995, p. 4). So, it is then appropriate to say that this model suits better the teaching of reading through short stories, since the

latter requires not only exploration of texts within the linguistic scope, but also the learners' knowledge about the world that may be found within a short story.

#### **1.4. Types of Reading**

There are many types of reading that are classified according to the purpose and use of reading. The most common are skimming, scanning, careful reading, intensive and extensive reading

##### **1.4.1 .Skimming**

It is said to be a quick running of one's eyes over a text to get the gist of it. The reader asks: What is this text as a whole about? While avoiding anything which looks like detail. When we skim, we glance rapidly through the material to determine its general idea or gist. Generally speaking, when skimming, 75% of the text is regarded, so the key to skimming is to find the main idea(s) of the paragraph and to be able to synthesize them into an organic whole by way of generalization. This is best illustrated by Greenwood (1981, p.91) "Skimming implies the eye runs quickly over the text to discover what is about the main idea(s), gist".

##### **1.4.2. Scanning**

Reading selectively, It is a quick going through a text to find a particular piece of information and to achieve very specific reading goals. In Urquhart & Weir 'example (1998, p.103) finding the number in a directory, finding the capital of Bavaria. The main feature of scanning is that any part of the text which does not contain preselected symbol(s) is dismissed. It may involve looking for specific words /phrases, figures/ percentages, names, dates of particular events or specific items in an index. Greenwood (1981,p.29)" The reader is in the lookout for a particular in the items he believes text".

##### **1.4.3. Careful reading**

Urquhart & Weir (1981, p.103)point out that careful reading is associated with reading to learn.The reader attempts to handle detailed information in the text. Thus, reading rate seems to be rather slower than other types of reading because in this type of reading, readers often require rereading and inferencing to connect information with

background knowledge. For example, using science texts is often included in this type of reading.

#### **1.4.4. Intensive reading/Reading for accuracy**

It is reading shorter texts usually to extract specific information; this is more an accuracy activity that involves reading for details. For Nuttal (1982, p.23), intensive reading lesson is intended primarily to train students in reading strategies through approaching the text under the close guidance of the teacher or under the guidance of a task which forces the student to pay attention to the text. The aim of extensive reading is to arrive at a profound and detailed understanding of the text not only of what it means, but also of how the meaning is produced.

#### **1.4.5. Extensive Reading/Reading for Fluency**

Reading longer texts usually for one's own pleasure; this is a fluency activity which involves global understanding of a text or a short story. This type of reading is often done outside the classroom. It means reading in quantity and in order to gain general understanding of what is read. It aims to develop a reading habit, to build up knowledge or vocabulary and structures, and to encourage linking for reading.

### **1.5. Reading strategies**

Foreign Language learners find it important to employ reading strategies to read English texts more effectively. In order to understand those English texts, learners need to extract a faster and a better comprehension (Grellet, 1995. Cited in Benyahia, (2002, p.54) for the required information efficiently. For this, they should apply different reading strategies. Based on this reason, many researchers have centered on exploring reading strategies when reading an English text.

Before talking about the different reading strategies, a definition of the strategy needs to be discussed at the beginning. The term reading strategy is very ill-defined and there is controversy among researchers concerning the definition of this concept (Benyahia, (2002, p.54). According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, the word strategy entails the process of planning something or putting a plan into operation in a successful way (dictionary definition). Urquhart and Weir (1988, p.7) explained that "is

the purposeful means of comprehension the author message”. In addition to Urquhart and Weir, Grabe and Stoller (2002, p.7) also said that strategy is best defined as “an ability that is potentially open to conscious technique used intentionally by the reader for the sake of understanding what is being read”.

Pritchard (1990, p.275 cited in Boughaouas et al, 2008) defined reading strategies as a “deliberate actions that readers take voluntarily to develop an understanding of what they read”. And Davies (1995, p. 50) who refers to strategy as “a physical or mental action used consciously or unconsciously with the intention of facilitating text comprehension and or /learning”.

“The word strategy refers to the mental operations involved when readers purposefully approach a text to make sense of what they read. They may

be either conscious techniques controlled by the reader or unconscious processes applied automatically. Both 'good' successful and poor (Unsuccessful) strategies exist, yet the term strategy as used in Pedagogical material often implies those which are successful”. Barnett's (1989, p.66)

June Preszler (2005, p. 4) stated that reading strategies can often be divided into three categories: before, during and after.

Reading strategies tend to be those that activate our students' prior knowledge. When strategies are incorporated, students tell us what they know before the process of teaching the students are started by teachers. Research indicates that by spending a considerable amount of time on before reading strategies, student involvement in the learning process are increased , and our teaching are allowed to be more directed toward student levels and needs. During reading strategies are those that help students progress and manage complex information as they read and learn. These strategies often employ organizers or frameworks which allow students to efficiently categorize information. After reading strategies allow students to reflect on what they have learned and to share what they've learned. The strategies tend to be interactive so that students learn from each other.

In addition to June Preszler ,The Pennsylvania Reading Instructional Handbook (1998,cited in Grave and Stoller (2002) suggested a various of reading strategies that are involved while reading process and classified them to serve as guide both teachers and learners of second language. These strategies were represented into three steps which were: before reading, during reading, after reading.

### **1.5.1. Before reading strategies**

During this stage learners do most of the time a plan as the following:

#### **1.5.1.1. Overview**

According to P.I.H. there are two methods to obtain an overview either by surveying or skimming. These are only concerned with reading the most important parts of the text. Once the reader gets long sections of the text, he may survey part of it and skim the remaining sections that can be difficult to be understood .Thus, the main objective is to get main ideas general theme.

#### **1.5.1.2. Planning Purpose**

Lattali et al (2011) stated that the planning of learners purpose means to take a few sections before they begin reading .So this process give them the most useful mental set for getting the information needed.

#### **1.5.1.3. Question**

For Grellet ( 2008, p.238), he stated that a good time to record the question is after the first step overview and planning of purposes. The reader asks himself questions that should be the same sequence as they appear in the material. Moreover, learners can also use the basic interrogations of who, what, when, how, why....to add aids in the concepts in all reading selections.

### **1.5.2. During reading strategies**

Boughouas et Al (2008, p.239) state that one of the familiar techniques of reading which constitute the heart of this act is reading carefully and thoughtfully. This does not mean only the familiar line-by-line reading, but reading which is guided by learners' purpose and questions.

### **1.5.3. After reading strategies**

#### **1.5.3.1. Summarizing**

For Nuttal (1996, p.206), summarizing is organizing the ideas and supporting points that learners have just get from reading a specific text. This organization of the ideas should be expressed in the form of notes taken while reading. In other words, each paragraph in the text will have one or two ideas. This strategy aims at putting on outline of questions reflecting major ideas and concepts mentioned in the reading passage.

#### **1.5.3.2. Testing**

Urquhart and Weir (1998, p.29) state that the main purpose of this step is to provide the learners with the ability to test and examine their understanding. This simply means that they must produce the answers just as they already predict it. This test seems to fix the information more firmly in learners' mind so that they retain it better.

#### **1.5.3.3. Understanding**

Benyahia ( 2003, p.10) states that the end product of the process of reading is to ensure that learners understand every important question. If the learners answer the required questions incorrectly, they have to go back and review that point immediately from the text.

### **1.6. Teacher's Role in the Reading Process**

In FL learning reading, a criterion of skills and strategies that the student must learn for himself to be able to understand completely certain reading tasks; and that the measure of the teacher' success is how far the student learns to do without his help. Teachers play an important role in teaching of reading skill .Their role is mainly centered around guiding and directing the learners reading to find specific items and information they look for. In classroom, the teacher has a crucial role in intensive reading. Harmer (2000, p.?) states that students will get involved enthusiastically in class when teachers work to create interest in the topic and tasks. In addition, he may play the role of an organizer through which he has to tell the students exactly what the purpose of

their reading is and guide them by giving direct instructions about how to achieve it through practice in using the reading techniques and sub-skills with varied materials. The teacher may also be an observer. Here, when the students are reading, the teacher can observe them and see their progress. Thus; the teacher can easily know and has an idea about how his students are working either individually or collectively. However, when they have finished the given task, the teacher can make a feedback session in order to check to what extent the students completed the task successfully.

Teachers play an equally important role in teaching extensive reading. Harmer (2000, p.50) reports that most students will not get a lot of extensive reading by themselves unless they are encouraged to do so by their teachers. In other words, the teacher is the one who will motivate his students and make them involved in reading texts so as to get benefits from them. For instance, he can read aloud any text and the likes. Then, through his way of reading, he shows to his learners how interesting and beneficial the text is. Moreover, the teacher can also organize programs where he indicates to the students how many books he expects them to read. Nuttall (198, p.23) claims that the teacher can propose and suggest which kind and type of books to be read such as short stories because it is easier to handle work on short stories which can be read in a short period of time. Other types include romantic novels, science-fiction, and so on as to make appropriate level of choices. Hence, the teacher will perform acts as part organizer and part tutor.

Moreover, conscious development of reading skills is important because it is obviously for us to familiarize our students with every text they will ever want to read. Instead we must give them techniques for approaching texts of various kinds, to be read for various purposes. One of the teachers' jobs is to make sure that the bridge is built between the specific and the general. And one way of helping the student to generalize his skills is to make sure that he/she reads a lot and has a lot of practicing the specific skills required for reading the material.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, the reading skill is the most important skill to be developed from short stories starting by defining the concept according to different scholars, objectives, moving to introduce the different models that underlie the reading process ; presented through different types. This chapter has tackled the reading strategies and procedure, and ending up with the role of the teacher as a motivator of his/her learners in the reading lesson that is different from other language lessons.

## **Chapter Two: The Use of Short Stories in Teaching Reading Skill**

### **Introduction**

This second chapter discusses a number of concerns about the short story and its usefulness in teaching the reading skill. It provides the different definitions of the short story, its characteristics, and the important elements that comprise the short story such as the plot, the setting, the style, the characters and the theme. The chapter, also, presents the significance of using the short story in teaching the reading skill.

### **2.1. Definition of the Short Story**

According to (M.Bensemmane, et al, p. 89), the word short story can define itself. It is not necessary to be short but what makes a short story is its characteristic of “concision”. A short story has a beginning, middle, and an end. The short story is like a miniature picture. Still it is a complete artistic work. It should be read at a single setting as Edgar Allan Poe specified: “no longer than can be read in a single setting”. Thus, according to Rust Hills (1977, p. 11) a short story is a piece of narrative fiction which treats incidents or events and characters avoiding the complex results and developments that the novel proposes. In other words, the writer does not allow for much complex developments, but rather simple ones. (M.Bensemmane, et al, p. 89).

According to J.A.Cuddon, the short story is a narrative prose fiction that is shorter than a novel .Biblical stories, Greek myths, legends, and fables are considered as the ancestors of the short story. In the short story, the main literary elements such the plot, the setting, and the characterization, are used with greater compression and concision than in the novel. Short stories also vary in length. An extended short story is called a novelette or, when slightly longer, a novella. The short story is different from a sketch in the sense that a short story tells something that happens to someone in particular setting (movement) while a sketch is just a description of someone (character) or a place. For example, the character described in sketch remains constant throughout the plot. Rust Hills (1977, p.12) sustains that the novel differs from the short story in more than just length. The first provides a long trip, there is space, time for a quantity of incidents and

effects, while the latter provides "a single and unique effect" as it was stated by Edgar Allan Poe.

## **2.2. History of the Short Story**

The history of short story from early time till 20<sup>th</sup> century is discussed by Regional Net Coordinating Team (August.2012) which stated that Short stories are important aspect of any culture. The short stories' root can be seen in the oral tradition of storytelling. Stories were told to discuss the world's beliefs(myths), to remember what great kings as well as heroes did in their times( legends) to teach moral values (fables and parables) or for the sake of entertainment (folktales, and fairy tales).

A myth is a traditional story which explains both natural and human world. The main characters would be gods and supernatural heroes, animals..... A legend is a traditional story about the past. It is similar to the myth but the characters can be heroes, kings, queens. Some examples of famous legends are Odysseus. A fable is a short story which intended to teach a moral life lesson. The main characters are usually animals, or objects in nature (e.g. mountains, lakes, stones). The most famous ones in Western tradition are Aesop's fables from Ancient Greece. A parable is also a brief story that illustrates a moral value through the use of a metaphor. Unlike fables, the main characters of parables are human beings. A folktale is an anonymous story passed on through generations by word to mouth. Folktales are often timeless and placeless, with formulaic openings like: "Once upon a time" in a faraway kingdom. A fairy tale is a traditional folktale involving imaginary creatures such as fairies, wizards, elves, trolls, gnomes, goblins and fire-breathing dragons. G. K. Chesterton states "Fairy tales are more than true: not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten" (2001 p.15).

In the 19th Century, the short story developed as a literary form. It also became more popular and widely read. In 19th Century, writers contributed to the development of the short story as a literary form. These writers are frequently anthologized in collections of short stories. Then, by the 20th Century, the short story has become a well-established literary form in Europe as well as in America, thanks to the influence of earlier famous writers like Edgar Allan Poe, Guy de Maupassant, and Anton Chekhov. The short story

continued to flourish throughout the 20th Century due to the proliferation of popular magazines. Writers began to use the literary form of the short story to explore a variety of genres, including love stories, fantasy and horror stories, private, crime and mystery stories, and science fiction.

Many short stories written in the early 20th Century reflect issues related to the Age of European Industrialization, World War I, the Great Depression and World War II form the backdrop to many of the best short stories written in the first half of the 20th Century in north and Latin America. However, Short stories written in the latter part of the 20th Century reflect the pressures of modern life and deal with issues that affect society, the family and the individual. The application of science and technology also becomes a major theme in many short stories written in the years after World War II. The genre of science fiction is popularized by writers like Arthur C. Clarke, Isaac Asimov and Ray Bradbury.

English has truly become a global language and there are more and more writers, both male and female, from different countries and cultures all over the world writing their stories in English, offering, hence, a good means for readers as well as learners of foreign language the opportunity to appreciate such piece of writing and learn much about language for them.

### **2.3. Characteristics of the Short Story**

According to Regional Net Coordinating Team (August.2012), a Short story tends to be less complex than a novel and a novella. Usually, a short story focuses on only one incident, a single plot, a single setting, and a limited number of characters. In longer forms of fiction, the short story tends to contain certain core elements of dramatic structure: the exposition (the introduction of setting, the situation and the main characters); the complication (the event of the story that introduces the conflict); the rising action, the crisis (the decisive moment for the protagonist and their commitment to a course of action); the climax (the point of highest interest in terms of the conflict and the point of the story with the most action); the resolution (the point of the story when the conflict is resolved); and the moral. Because of their short length, the short story may or may not follow this pattern. Some do not follow patterns at all. For example, modern

short stories occasionally have an exposition. They are likely to have an unexpected beginning, starting directly from the middle of the action. However, the endings of many short stories are sudden and open. They also may or may not have a moral or practical lesson. Of course, as with any art form, the exact characteristics of a short story will vary from one author to another.

Furthermore, a short story is usually concerned with very few characters. It can contain no more than two or three characters with one significant and clear incident. Although the main characters will interact with other characters and with circumstances surrounding them, usually the relationships are described fairly and briefly, for the shortened form of the story does not permit great deal of development about how a human character changes in response to other human beings and different environments.

In fact, in a short story, the writer concentrates on the moment of crisis and change which affects the life of an individual. So much, within the story, we realize that events change fundamentally the life of a particular character. The situation at the end of the story is recognizably different from that of the beginning; that is to say that a short story is a witness of the inner evolution of the central character (protagonist). Also, the short story cannot provide a change of different tones and moods but rests essentially on the mastering of a single, unique tone.

As for addressed ideas, the short story usually has two levels of meanings. One is about specific characters and situations. The other one is concerned with general meanings. It informs the reader about the man and his environment and introduces implicitly some issues about his life.

The form and the technique of the short story have changed through years. The modern short story tends to investigate little deeper issues. It uses more realistic dialogues and focuses upon dramatic scenes. In a word, it has a greater respect for the intelligence of the reader; for it does not assume that it should tell him everything that is happening at each turn in the plot. Modern short story has a tendency to provide much for the reader's own interpretation by allowing several reading questions to be answered.

Finally, the modern short story operates on more than one level and aims at enlarging the reader's knowledge of the world by telling him something true and valuable about man, life, and society.

## **2.4. Elements of the Short Story**

Elements of the short story in general can be used by the reader to increase their enjoyment and understanding of different literary pieces. Once students are aware that all stories have elements such as characters, setting, plot, theme, point of view, style, and tone, they can be encouraged to ask themselves to identify the characteristics of each element in a particular story. The more familiar they become with the different kinds of elements, the better they will understand and critically analyze different types of stories.

Among writing instructors and bestselling authors, there appears to be little consensus regarding the number and the composition of the fundamental elements of the short story. It was mentioned in *Writer's Digest Handbook of Novel Writing* (1992, p. 160) that "a charged image evokes all the other elements of your story—theme, character, conflict, setting, style, and so on". According to Bell (2004, p. 16), "for writers, the spices you add to make your plot your own include characters, setting, and dialogue." Besides, Evanovich (2006, p. 83) states, "Contained within the framework of a story are the major story elements: characters, action, and conflict." She resumes, "Effective writing requires an understanding of the fundamental elements of storytelling, such as point of view, dialogue, and setting." (Evanovich 2006, p. 39) The debate continues as to the number and the composition of the fundamental elements of fiction to include and many other elements such as style, tone, and theme...etc.

### **2.4.1. The Setting**

According to Campbell, (2006, p. 44) setting is the physical and social context in which the action of a story occurs. The major elements of a setting are the time, the place, and the social environment that express the characters. The setting is important to the creation of a complete work. Physical places such as deserts and outer space, and cultural settings such as hospitals and universities help determine characters' conflicts, aspirations, and destinies. These elements establish the world in which the characters act.

Sometimes the setting is lightly sketched, presented only because the story has to take place somewhere and at some time. However, the setting is often more important; it gives the reader the feeling of the people who move through it. Rozelle (2005, p. 2) “the setting is sometimes referred to as a milieu, to include a context (such as society) beyond the immediate surroundings of the story”. In some cases, setting becomes a character itself and can set the tone of a story. Setting can be used to evoke a mood or an atmosphere that will prepare the reader for what is to come.

There are several aspects of a story's setting if one considers the setting's contribution to a story: First, place represents geographical location and where the action of the story is taking place. Second, time points to the historical period, the time of day, the year... etc when the story is taking place. Next, different other aspects like weather conditions, social conditions as well as mood and atmosphere may be included. For example, the setting in the story “Running for her life” is in Cuba, in 1989-1995.

#### **2.4.2. The Characters**

The word character in Greek terminology means “a mark or stamp”. By extension, the word's meaning became “a distinctive feature”. By the mid-eighteenth century, the word *character* came to mean an individual, named personality, in literature or in life. In modern literature, the word “character” has been defined by many literary writers. According to (M.Bensemmane, et al,p. 89), a character is the thinking person, or things presented as persons in a novel, a short story, a play, or a narrative poem. A character can be dynamic or static. Dynamic (stationary) characters have some changes either in their personality or attitude in the piece of a literary work. However, Static (moving or movable) characters would be the same throughout the narrative. Characters can also be presented in the narrative as flat or around. Flat characters are characterized only by having one or two traits. They are often mere stereotypes. They have no more than two traits; they are complex and their personalities are more developed.

Another important distinction between flat and around characters is made by E. M. Forster in *Aspects of the Novel* (1927). Foster stated that “The flat character—one without mystery, simple, palpable, and self-contained—reassures us of our efficient grasp

of reality...The round character (in Shakespeare, James, or Proust's works for example) satisfies a different purpose; our wish to experience a large number of fictional beings. Indeed, as we turn pages, we pursue, inexhaustibly, a person who fascinates us, and who has not nearly finished giving away meanings. For instance, in the story "Fighting for the forest" by Clare Gray, there was only one character who is Chico Mendez.

### **2.4.3. The Plot**

Compbell (2007, p. 48) defines the plot as "the order in which things move and happen in a story". It also refers to the narrative and the thematic development of the story. That is what happens and what these events mean. The English novelist E. M. Forster, an author of works such as *A Room with a View* (1908) and *Howards End* (1910), referred to the plot as a "narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality". By this statement, Foster meant that the plot is a series of events that depend on one another.

For Ansen (1988, p.12) "The plot is the things characters do, feel, think, or say, that make a difference to what comes afterward." It is the arrangement of events that make up a story and whatever happens in it. Many plots turn on a conflict, or struggle between opposing forces, that is usually resolved by the end of the story. Typical fictional plots begin with an exposition that provides background information needed to make sense of the action, describes the setting, and introduces the major characters. These structures develop a series of complications or intensifications of the conflict that lead to a crisis or moment of great tension. The conflict may reach a climax or a turning point, a moment of greatest tension that fixes the outcome; then, the action falls off as the plot's complications are sorted out and resolved (the resolution or *dénouement*). In the story of "The river to freedom" by Clare Gray, the plot involves around Matthew was enjoying a quiet evening with his father. Suddenly, soldiers arrived and captured him.

The plot is a planned, logical series of events having a beginning, middle, and an end. The short story usually has one plot so it can be read in one setting. There are five essential parts of the plot. First, the introduction that is the beginning of the story where the characters and the setting are revealed through some hints. The rising action which is where the events in the story become complicated and the conflict in the story is revealed (events between the introduction and climax).The Climax which is the highest point of

interest and the turning point of the story. The reader wonders what will happen next; will the conflict be resolved or not? The falling action is where the events and complications begin to resolve themselves. The reader knows what has happened next and if the conflict was resolved or not (events between climax and denouement). The denouement is the final outcome of events in the story.

#### **2.4.4. The Conflict**

The conflict is essential to the plot and without conflict there is no plot. According to J.A.Cuddon (2005, p.12), the conflict is the tension in a situation between characters, or the actual opposition of forces which ties one incident to another and makes the plot move. Within a short story there may be only one central struggle, or there may be one dominant struggle with many minor ones. There are two *types* of conflict: external and internal. An external conflict is a struggle with a force outside one's self. The internal one, however, is a struggle within one's self; a person must make some decisions, overcome pain, quiet their temper, resist an urge...etc.

There are four *kinds* of conflict: First, Man vs. Man (physical): The leading character struggles with his physical strength against other men, forces of nature, or animals. Second, Man vs. Circumstances (classical): The leading character struggles against fate, or the circumstances of life facing him/her. Third, Man vs. Society (social): The leading character struggles against ideas, practices, or customs of other people. Finally, Man vs. Himself/ Herself (psychological): The leading character struggles with himself/herself; with his/her own soul, ideas of right or wrong, physical limitations, choices, etc.

#### **2.4.5. The Point of View**

According to Campbell (2007, p. 62), the point of view refers to who tells the story and how it is told. The possible ways of telling a story are many, and more than one point of view may exist in one single story. However, the various points of view that storytellers draw upon can be grouped into three broad categories. The First Person narrator is where the story is told by the protagonist or another character that interacts closely with the protagonist or other characters (using first person pronouns "I", "me",

“we”...etc). The reader sees the story through this person's eyes as he/she experiences it and only knows what he/she knows or feels. The Second Person narrator is not used very often. The main character in the story is referred to by the use of the second person pronoun “you”. The Second Person is most often used in training manuals, role-playing games. The Third Person narrator is where the story is told by the use of a narrator who is located outside of the action of the story and uses third person pronouns such as “he”, “she”, “his”, “her”, “they” etc. The third person point of view can be broken up into three different types: the Omniscient that literally means, “All knowing”.

Using the third person omniscient point of view, the narrator can move from character to character, event to event, having free access to the thoughts, feelings and motivations of any character and can introduce information where and when he or she chooses. The Limited Omniscient is where the story is told by a third person narrator but from the viewpoint of a character in the story, usually the main character or protagonist. The reader has access to the thoughts and feelings of only one character. The Objective tells the story in the third person. It appears as though a camera is following the characters, going anywhere, and recording only what is seen and heard. There is no comment on the characters or their thoughts. No interpretations are offered. The reader is placed in the position of spectator without the author there to explain. The reader has to interpret events on his or her own.

#### **2.4.6. The Style**

In the Handbook of Literary Terms the word style is derived from the Latin *stilus*, a stake, stem, or stalk; therefore also describes the pointed stylus used to make marks in waxed tablets (the ancient method of writing). Generally speaking, the style in literary works refers to the author's special way of using language. It can be seen in the arrangements of words, sentences, units which translates the intentions of the author when stressing his individuality.

A good explanation of what the style is in literary works was given by Rust Hills (1977, p.173). For him, the style usually is limited to mean the element of language: words, syntax, punctuation, and so on. A writer's style reflects the world he perceives and

helps to create the world he reveals in the work. The style is the most significant aspect for a good fiction technique where there are many things involved in a successful well written style include features like: the lengths and constructions of sentences, verb tenses (use of past and present tense), and the use of conditional forms. The effect of various grammatical mechanics can contribute to write a good style: as, for instance, differences in punctuation, such as setting off parenthetical matter in dashes, or commas, or whatever. Paragraphing and italics and exclamation points must matter.

#### **2.4.7. The Symbolism**

Broadly speaking in the Handbook Literary Terms, the word symbol derives from the Greek verb 'symballeinr' which means to throw together, and its noun is "symbolon" which means 'mark', 'emblem', 'token' or 'sign'. It is an object, animate or inanimate, which represents or stands for something else. For example the followings are some familiar symbols: Scales, for example, symbolize justice; the orb and scepter symbolizes monarchy and rule; a dove symbolizes peace; a goat symbolizes lust; the lion symbolizes strength and courage; the bulldog symbolizes tenacity; the rose symbolizes beauty. In literary works, a symbol combines an image with a concept (words themselves are a kind of symbol). It may be public or private, universal or local. A very simple definition of what symbol is that given by M.Bensemmane (2011, p.417) " it is an image; it can be an object, person, place, or action that has a meaning in itself. Generally speaking each culture has its own symbols and their interpretations".

According to Morrell (2006, p. 151), Symbols may be universally known by most literate people like the white dove the black color. Conventional/cultural symbols have meanings that are widely recognized by a society or culture. For instance: the Star of David, a swastika, a nation's flag. A literary or contextual symbol is private, created by the author. It can be a setting, a character, action, object, name, or anything else in a specific work that maintains its literal significance while suggesting other meanings. For example, the white whale in Melville's Moby Dick takes on multiple symbolic meanings in the work, but these meanings do not automatically carry over into other stories about whales.

#### **2.4.8. The Tone**

According to Campbell (2007, p. 52) the tone refers to the attitude that the story creates toward its subject matter. For example, a story may convey an earnest and sincere tone toward its characters and events, signaling to the reader that the material is to be taken in a serious, dramatic way. In most cases, the tone is the author's implicit attitude toward the reader, subject, and/or the people, places, and events in a work as revealed by the elements of the author's style. It may be characterized as serious or ironic, sad or happy, private or public, angry or affectionate, bitter or nostalgic, or any other attitudes and feelings that human beings experience. For example, in the story of "A Doctor, a Father, and his Son" the tone is a happy feeling where people can find pity and self-relief at the worst times.

#### **2.4.9. The Theme**

Of the various elements of fiction, theme is probably the most difficult element to discuss. Morrell (2006, p. 151) states that a story's theme is the main idea that the writer expresses. It can also be defined as the underlying meaning of the story or the central insight of a story. Theme in the short story is rarely presented at all; it is abstracted from the details of the characters and the actions that compose the story. It provides a unifying point around which the plot, characters, setting, point of view, symbols, and other elements of a story are organized in literature. Some simple examples of common themes are: things are not always as they appear to be - Love is blind - Believe in yourself - People are afraid of change- Don't judge a book by its cover.

#### **2.5. Reasons for Using the Short Story in Foreign Language Classes:**

According to Collie and Slater (1990,p.3), there are four most important reasons which lead a language teacher to use the short story as a teaching material in the classroom. The short story serves as a valuable authentic material; it provides cultural enrichment, language enrichment and personal involvement. In addition to these four main reasons, universality, non-triviality, personal relevance, variety, interest, economy and suggestive power and ambiguity are some other factors that requires the use of the short story as a powerful material in the classroom context.

### **2.5.1. Valuable Authentic Material**

The short story is an authentic material. Most works and genres of literature are not created basically for teaching a language. Many authentic samples of language in real-life contexts are included within recently developed course materials. Thus, in a classroom context, learners are exposed to actual language samples of real life situations like settings. The short story can act as a beneficial complement to such materials. In reading short stories, because students have also to cope with language intended for native speakers, they become familiar with many different linguistic forms, communicative functions, and meanings. For example in the story “Fighting for the forest”, students will learn how people behave in certain situations toward forest destruction, or toward businessmen who use the Amazon Rain Forest excessively.

### **2.5.2. Cultural Enrichment**

For many language learners, the ideal way to increase their understanding of verbal and nonverbal aspects of communication in the country within which that language is spoken - a visit or an extended stay - is just not probable. For such learners, literary works, such as novels, plays, short stories, etc. facilitate understanding of how communication takes place in that country. Though the world of a novel, a play, or a short story is an imaginary one, it presents a full and colorful setting in which characters from many social and regional backgrounds can be described. A reader can discover the way the characters in such literary works see the world outside. For example, their thoughts, feelings, customs, traditions, possessions; what they buy, believe in, fear, enjoy; how they speak and behave in different settings. This colorful created world can quickly help the foreign learner to feel for the codes and preoccupations that shape a real society through visual literacy of semiotics. The short story is perhaps the best complement to other materials used to develop the foreign learner's understanding into the country whose language is being learned. Also, the short story adds a lot to the grammar of the learners.

### **2.5.3. Language Enrichment**

The short story provides learners with a wide range of individual lexical or syntactic items. Students become familiar with many features of the written language where reading is a contextualized body of a text. They learn about the syntax and discourse functions of sentences, the variety of possible structures, and the different ways of connecting ideas, which develop and enrich their own writing skills. Students also become more productive and adventurous when they begin to perceive the richness and diversity of the language they are trying to learn and begin to make use of some of that potential for themselves. Thus, they improve their communicative and cultural competence in the authentic richness and naturalness of the texts.

### **2.5.4. Personal Involvement**

The short story can be useful in the language learning process owing to the personal involvement it fosters in the reader. Once the student reads a literary text, he begins to inhabit the text. He is drawn into the text. Understanding the meanings of lexical items or phrases becomes less significant than pursuing the development of the story. The student becomes enthusiastic to find out what happens as events unfold via the climax; he feels close to certain characters and shares their emotional responses. This can have beneficial effects upon the whole language learning process. At this respect, the prominence of the selection of a literary text in relation to the needs, expectations, and interests, language level of the students is evident. In this process, he can remove the identity crisis and develop into an extrovert student.

In addition to these reasons, Maley (1989, p.12) lists some of the reasons for regarding literature and particularly the short story as a potent resource in the language classroom as follows. Universality is where the themes of the short story deals with are common to all cultures such as death, love, nature ...etc. Non-triviality is where the short story does not talk down. It is about things which mattered to the author when he wrote them. It may offer genuine as well as merely “authentic” inputs. Personal Relevance is where the story deals with ideas, things, sensations and events which either constitutes part of the reader’s experience or which they can enter into imaginatively, they are able to relate it to their own lives. Variety includes within it all possible varieties of topics.

Interest deals with themes and topics which are intrinsically interesting. Economy and Suggestive Power where the short story invites us to go beyond what is said, since it suggests many ideas with few words. Ambiguity refers to the short story that speaks different meanings to different people. It is rare for two readers to react identically to any given text.

## **2.6. Benefits of Using Short Stories**

Good short stories offer unlimited benefits for EFL learners and teachers. If those stories are wisely used and selected; they can make the process of teaching and learning pleasurable, easy and worth undertaking. Because of such benefits Wright (2003, p.7) believed that “in using stories in language teaching, we are using something much bigger and more important than teaching itself”. Garive also shared the same idea of that of Wright but he added the use of short stories not only for linguistics benefits but also for socio-cultural, emotional, cognitive, aesthetic and personal ones.

### **2.6.1. Linguistics Benefits**

Sort stories can provide authentic texts for processing new language (like English). According to Collie, J. and Slater (1991, p.102) “Short stories can serve as model for language learners to become familiar with different forms and conventions in that language”. The EFL learners can be exposed to a wide variety of styles. A further linguistic benefit is that stories can provide simple language structure as well as huge amount of vocabulary words used in context.

### **2.6.2. Socio-Cultural Benefits**

The use of short stories in EFL classrooms can also have socio-cultural benefits. They can provide with learners insight into the country and the people whose language is being learned as well as provide them with cross-cultural comparison between target and native culture. As a result they can encourage their ability to interpret discourse in different, social and cultural target contexts. This may make EFL learners respect and appreciate the culture of the target language they are learning. Accordingly, Wright (2003, p.7) states that short stories can contribute in the development of various social

dimensions of learners' personality and provide the shared social experiences and language learners would share the same emotional states with the writer.

### **2.6.3. Personal and Emotional Benefits**

The short stories have emotional, social appeal. It is the human instinct that makes people to tell and hear stories. Human beings take their experience from critical life of either from families or from others through telling stories. Thus, reading a story can inspire EFL learners to make model and imitate the protagonist' behaviors and actions .Moreover, reading stories can prepare learners to cope with such struggles and conflicts of the hero in real life situations. The emotional voices of the characters help EFL learners to understand the complexity of human emotions, responses; as it is said by Maley (1989, p.12) “we cannot teach children emotions (of characters) we can only help them reveal them and understand them through short stories”.

### **2.6.4. Cognitive Benefits**

The use of short stories in EFL classrooms has many cognitive implications. While using stories learners would not only master the target language but also develop various individual learning strategies. Learners can get and comprehend the whole meaning by applying blooms taxonomy theory. When reading those stories, students predict guess the meaning via contextual clues. So predicting and guessing are essential strategies in developing language competence. As the learners read short stories, they would enter realm of imagination through involving themselves in the characters as well as identifying themselves with characters. Such imaginative experience of the students, according to Mourao, S. (2009, p.66), “helps to develop their personal creative power and can contribute in the development of their higher level thinking skills as well”.

Other benefits of using short stories in the EFL classrooms are offered by teachers Kimberly Hill Campbell (2007). Heather Lattimer (2003) and school librarian Lynn Rashid (2008) sustained that the use of short stories instead of novels provides additional exposure to authors, whether classical, multicultural, or contemporary. In class, the reading of a short story allows teachers to observe students reading and to provide

individualization and intervention as needed. Also, the focus on a single story encourages deep reading and analysis of literary elements.

Another benefit of the short story worth mentioning is that it provides us with the opportunity to explore literary terms and the elements of fiction in support of writing craft. As Carole Hamilton and Peter Kratzke (1999, p.45) noted in their edited collection of essays supporting short story use in the classroom: “Teachers challenge students to care, widening the tiny cracks in their students' intellectual and emotional armor and opening the way to deeper insight. The short story provides the perfect occasion to do that, for it resists facile assumptions, presenting an enigma, not an explanation. The short story demands contemplation and rewards interrogation, offering up its sweetest secrets to those who probe it in earnest.”

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, an attempt to give an overview of the short story, its usefulness and its importance in teaching reading skills. The chapter provides different types of the short story, manners and the most significant elements of short story as plot, setting, and style

## Chapter Three: Field Work

### Introduction

The third chapter is an attempt to put into practice the theoretical knowledge presented in the first and the second chapter to prove the effectiveness of reading short stories' in enhancing learners' reading comprehension. Two tests were carried out on a reading lesson by presenting two short stories entitled 'Fighting for the Forest' and 'Running for Her Life' taken from the book 'Stories of Courage' by Clare Gray. We conducted a pre-reading test and a post reading test with second year English students at the university of Setif 2 to check the validity of our hypothesis.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section is about the description of the tests in terms of their aims, the population, and the context in which they took place. The second section is devoted to the analysis of students' reading comprehension answers and the evaluation of these analysis to check whether there is an improvement in the students 'reading comprehension' through short stories or not.

### 3.1. Test Description

The study provides two different tests related to reading comprehension process. Each one includes a set of activities aiming to measure learners comprehension after reading.

#### 3.1.1. Test Presentation

##### A. The First Test: (The Story: Running for Her Life)

Name: ..... Group: .....

##### Reading Comprehension:

Read the short story and answer the following questions (4.5 pts)

1/ Who is Ana Quirot? What was she famous for?

.....

2/ How many medals did she win?

.....  
3/ Who did help Ana in all her races?  
.....

4/ Add the necessary information in the table belo **(05 pts)**

<i>When?</i>	<i>What happened?</i>
Age 13	
1987	
	She had a terrible accident. She was badly burned
	She was gold for the 800 meters in Stockholm
1996	

5/ How did Ana solve her problems? Complete these sentences referring to the story. **(2.5 pts)**

- Ana’s school asked her to leave, so.....
- Ana was badly burned in the accident, so.....
- After her accident, Ana wanted to run again.....
- Ana wanted to exercise in her hospital room, so.....
- Ana’s skin burned easily in the Cuban sun, so .....

6/ List the words that you have got difficulty in understanding. Say how did you get their meanings without using dictionary? **(2 pts)**

.....  
.....  
.....  
..

7/ In few expressions what did you learn from this story (themes)? **(2 pts)**

.....  
.....  
.....

8/ What passage did you like from this short story? Say why you did so in few words? (2 pts)

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

9/ Summarize the story in your own words focusing on important points and events. (2 pts)

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**B. The Second Test: (The Story: Fighting for the Forest)**

Name: ..... Group: .....

**Read the short story and answer the following questions**

**Activity1:** Who is Chico Mendez? What was the struggle about? (1.5 pts)

.....  
 .....  
 .....

**Activity 2:** Finish these sentences according to the text (2.5 pts)

- 1/ The Amazon rain forest is probably the most important area in the world for man's.....
- 2/ Big business was important to the Brazilian.....
- 3/ As Chico's ideas became more popular, he made more.....
- 4/ In 1988, some of Chico's ideas became part of the Brazilian.....
- 5/ Many people believed that they knew Chico's murder, But it was impossible to .....

**Activity 3:** Not all of people's actions are bad for the rain forest. Complete the table below with information from Chico's story. Add your own information. (5 pts)

<u>Bad for the rain forest</u>	<u>Not bad for the rain forest</u>
Burning trees for new farm land	

**Activity 4:** Paraphrase the following passage in your own words. (3pts)

“Chico Mendez's intelligent message was not only about money, it was the world's future. It was the message that people needed to hear”.

.....  
 .....  
 .....

.....  
.

**Activity 5:** Who do you think killed Chico Mendez? Why? Who thought he was dangerous? (2 pts)

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity 6:** What is the overall theme (s) of this short story? (1 pts)

.....  
.....

**Activity 7:** Briefly, Summarize the story. (5 pts)

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**3.1.2. The Aim**

The aim of the tests is mainly to determine the effectiveness of reading short stories in enhancing the students' reading comprehension.

**3.2. Population of Study**

The target population of this study is second year English students at the University of Setif 2. They are around twenty six (26) students belonging to one group. The reason for choosing this population is that at this level, students have just been

introduced to reading techniques and skills, and we suppose that through reading short stories, their reading comprehension will continuously improve.

### **3.3. Technical Information**

- ❖ The grade level: second year students at the university of Setif 2.
- ❖ Proficiency level: Pre-advanced level.
- ❖ Titles of the short stories:
  - a. Running for her Life
  - b. Fighting for the Forest
- ❖ The author : Clare Gray
- ❖ Objectives: By the end of the lesson, learners will be able to:
  - a. Read and understand the short story.
  - b. Answer the questions.
- ❖ Time allocated: three hours

### **3.4. The Procedure**

The tests were conducted with one second year group which consists of twenty six students. During reading techniques' lecture, the time devoted was three hours for the two tests. For both tests, half an hour was allocated for the pre-reading test and the rest of the time for the post-reading test.

The two tests were basically reading comprehension activities on the two short stories. Students were to answer some questions before reading the short story. These pre-reading questions served to better understand the topic, the title, the pictures, and the background of the short story during half an hour discussion.

After reading the short story, the post-reading test required from the part of the students to answer questions concerning the main character, the end of the story, their own interpretation to some key events in the story, or even complete some tables with information they grasped from the story, and paraphrasing or summarizing a particular passage. Other questions involving the theme, the main idea of the story, predicting another end for the story were also asked. Time devoted to the post reading test was one hour.

By the end of the session, we collected the learners' papers analyzed and evaluated the students' achievements.

### **3.5. Analysis of Reading stages**

The analyses deals with main stages which includes

#### **3.5.1. The Pre-Reading Tests Analysis**

As it is stated in chapter one, pre-reading strategies play a significant role in raising learners' motivation and involving them in the short story they are to read. For our test, the pre-reading phase was made within a class discussion framework on the two short chosen stories "Running for her Life" and "Fighting for the Forest". Pre-reading questions serve as a warm-up which would inform us about the learner's predictions and guesses about the topic, the short story, the title, and the author...etc.

We started the presentation first by asking learners to provide us with a definition to the word "short story" in order to prepare them for the piece of literature they are to read. The learners' answers were different. Some of them said that "the short story is a story that is short in length" and others said that "it is short in matter of events".

#### **3.5.2 The Post-Reading Tests Analysis**

After the students had read the short story silently, they were to do different activities that would help them learn how to grasp the basic and explicit meaning of the events from story and check their comprehension. The aim of activity one was to identify the main idea of the story, also detailed information of the short story, the characters, the main events, and the students' own interpretation. Questions as: What is the main idea of the short story, who is Chico Mendez, and who did help Ana in all her races? Moreover, we aimed also to make students learn new vocabulary items which help them better understand the short story. By asking learners to find in the text words that are close in meaning to some given expressions, we aimed at teaching new vocabulary from the short story.

Learners were guided by many questions to check their comprehension. We requested from them to summarize the short story by the end of the post-reading test where they used their own words, and without considering illustrations and details.

### 3.6. The Results of the Tests Analysis

The test is composed of two tasks; the pre- reading tasks. Indeed, students are supposed to analyze, predict and diagnose the short story before reading it. They are also asked to answer some reading comprehensive questions about the short story. They read the short story in the class and answer the questions in one hour. The aim of the second task is to check the students' ability of scanning, using contextual clues, summarizing, and paraphrasing...etc.

#### 3.6.1. Quantitative Data Analysis of the Test

**Table 1**

*The Students' Results*

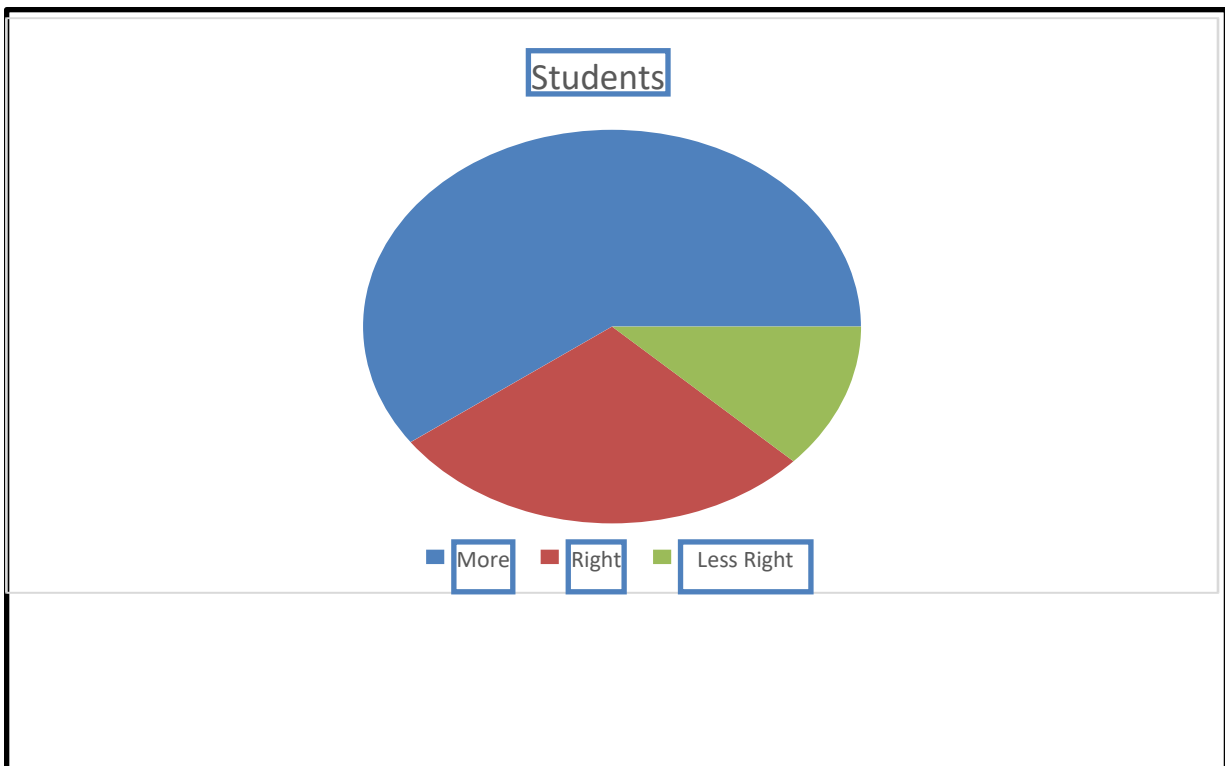
Number	Name	Test One	Test Two
1.	BENTAMINE KENZA	14	15
2.	BOUAIT SIHEM	10	15,5
3.	BOUTOBBA RABEB	14	12,5
4.	BRIOUT SAFA	10	11,5
5.	CHAIR HOUSSEM	16	17
6.	CHARBT NESSRIN	11	11
7.	CHEBOUK FADHILA	8.5	14,5
8.	CHELIAL NOUR EL- Amal	13.75	14
9.	CHENANEF RACHID	12	13,5
10.	CHEREF FATIHA	11.75	17
11.	DAKHIL RAHMA	12	16,5
12.	DALI SIHEM	13	16,5
13.	DAROUÏ MARWA	8.5	13
14.	DJAMAI SABRINA	12	13
15.	DJAOUAL NADJIYA	10.25	14,5

<b>16.</b>	Drissi Zineb	14.25	18
<b>17.</b>	GHAREZ NOUR-HODA	14	14
<b>18.</b>	GHEGAGLIA KENZA	11.75	15,5
<b>19.</b>	GHOUAFRIA HOCINE	13.5	16
<b>20.</b>	GOMRI NASSRINE	9.5	16
<b>21.</b>	GUETTOUCHE MADIHA	14.75	16
<b>22.</b>	HADDAD NOUREL-IMENE	8.5	16
<b>23.</b>	HADJI MEREIM	16	15,5
<b>24.</b>	HALILOU WIDAD	09	18
<b>25.</b>	HAMOUDI BESMA	12.75	15,5

**Table 2**

*Percentage of Learners' Right Answers to the Test*

	<b>Number of Students 25</b>	<b>Percentage 100%</b>
More Right Answers	<b>15</b>	<b>60%</b>
Right Answers	<b>7</b>	<b>28%</b>
Less Right Answers	<b>3</b>	<b>12%</b>



*Figure1. Learners' Answers to the Test 1*

The tables (1&2) and the figure above show that a great number of the total population answered the questions correctly. The first category of students presents 60 % of the total population. The students of this category provided six or more right answers out of eight. These results illustrate that most students use reading strategies to answer the comprehensive questions.

The second category presents the right answers which are limited to five answers. Only four students out of twenty five missed three answers. This group presents 28 % of the total population. Students of this category did not either summarize or paraphrase well their short story.

The third category presents the minority of the total population. Only one student out of twenty five provided just four correct answers.

Thus, the first category which presents the majority 60% illustrates that short stories often enhance reading comprehension ability and competence because the results of this category prove that students are putting into practice the use of reading comprehension strategies such as skimming, scanning, purposeful reading for such type of literary texts. The second group 28% and third group 12% provided four to six correct answers out of

nine. The performance of both groups, even though acceptable, highlights the importance of raising students' awareness about the importance of short stories in enhancing reading comprehension which is actually the E.F.L teachers' roles.

### **3.6.2. Qualitative Data Analysis of the Test**

After we had collected samples of the learners' results in the given tests, we attempted to analyze these results qualitatively. First, the results of the tests were very promising. The majority of the students answered correctly. They were capable of choosing the appropriate comprehensive strategies to comprehend the short story as a genre of literary texts. Hence, we can say that the richness of the short stories is of a substantial benefit in enhancing E.F.L learners' reading comprehension.

From the analysis of the results obtained in the practical part, we have reached that many of the story techniques and strategies we used in the tests were positively beneficial for learners. This has been reflected in the number of participants who correctly answered the questions after reading the short story.

The results obtained in the tests indicate that short stories could help learners improve their reading comprehension through analyzing certain elements in the short story such as the characters, the themes, the symbols ....etc. Therefore, we can conclude that using short stories to teach reading comprehension is a fruitful means in developing the learners' perception of reading in general, and reading English literary pieces of writing in particular.

### **Conclusion**

As formerly mentioned in this chapter, the researcher has used a both qualitative and quantitative research instruments and a test method. The present chapter has also displayed the results gained from this tool. The test method shows how implementing short stories contributes to the development of reading comprehensive skills.

## **General Conclusion**

All in all, to enhance the reading comprehension skill, the learner must have the ability to understand the meaning of individual words and phrases on a local or word-to-word and sentence-to-sentence level and on a global level or constructing meaning from the text as 'a whole'. This interacts with the prior knowledge, interest and motivations that the learner brings to the task of reading.

Therefore, it could be concluded from the present study that employing short stories would increase reading comprehension ability of EFL learners in general and Algerian ones in particular since we noticed that the group which received short stories as their reading test attained good results . However it is worth mentioning that when selecting the literary texts for the use in language classes, the language teacher should take into account needs, motivation, interests, the cultural background and the language level of the students. One main factor to take into account is that a particular work is able to show the kind of personal involvement by arousing the learners' interest and eliciting strong, positive reactions from them. Reading a literary text when it is meaningful and entertaining has a valuable effect upon the learners' linguistic and extra linguistic knowledge. Choosing books relevant to the real-life experiences, emotions, or dreams of the learner is of great importance. Language difficulty has to be considered as well. We believe that if the language of the literary work is simple, this may facilitate the comprehensibility of the literary text. Interest, appeal, and relevance are also prominent issues felt to be related to the heart of people's concerns which create the pleasure of encountering one's own thoughts or situations exemplified clearly in a work of art. The other, equal pleasure of noticing those same thoughts, feelings, emotions, or situations presented by a completely new perspective. All these are motives helping learners to cope with the linguistic obstacles that might be considered too great in less involving material.

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## **Appendices**

**Appendix A: Story One Running For Her Life**

**Appendix B: Test One**

**Appendix C: Fighting for the Forest**

**Appendix D: Test Two**

2/4

# Stories of Courage

Clare Gray



**Acquatro**  
FOR A BETTER SYSTEM

Series Editors: Andy Hopkins and Jocelyn Potter

*Ben Stiallah Bachin*

Activities 1

What's the book about?

- 1 This book is about brave people. Who do you know who is/was very brave? Make notes on two people in the box. Then tell another student about them.

Name	Brave Act(s)
1	
2	

- 2 Match each of the pictures (A-D) with a sentence below.



- 1 This person is still fighting for Burma's freedom today.
- 2 This young American lost an arm in a terrible accident.
- 3 This famous runner won gold medal for Cuba.
- 4 This person wanted to protect the trees around the Amazon from big business.

What happens first?

Look at the text of Story 1, the words below it, and the pictures in the story. Are these sentences about Ana Quirot true (✓) or not (X)? What do you think?

- 1 Ana will become the fastest woman in Cuba.
- 2 Ana will win an Olympic gold medal.
- 3 Ana will have an accident.
- 4 Ana will go to the hospital.
- 5 Ana will lose a leg.

STORY 1

Running for her Life

Ana wakes up. Fidel Castro was by her bedside. "I will run again," she told him. Then her eyes closed.

Ana Fidela Quirot was born in a small town in the east of Cuba. She was a happy child and from an early age she loved running. Sports were important to her family and they were important to Cubans too. The Cuban government wanted to produce the best doctors, the smartest teachers, and the strongest sports players in the world. There were special government schools for intelligent young scientists and for children who were good at sports.

By the time she was ten years old Ana could run very fast. Soon she was winning races—often without doing! She wanted someone from a government sports school to see her. Ana knew that only Cuba's best students were chosen. So she practiced hard every day. At last she heard the news that she was waiting for. At thirteen she had a place at a government sports school. "If I work hard," she thought, "I can be the fastest girl in Cuba."

The other children at Ana's new school were tall and strong. But Ana's body was changing. She stopped growing taller and started growing fatter. She felt heavier too, so she practiced less often. Ana's future did not seem bright and exciting to her now.

But when Ana's school asked her to leave, she thought very carefully. She realized that she loved her school and her life there. It was her dream and she did not want to lose it. Luckily, Blas Beato, one of Cuba's most famous running teachers, knew about Ana. She was heavy, but she was strong and fast. Beato could see that. "Try this 100-meter race," he said. "I think you can be the best."

It was not easy, but with Beato's help, Ana quickly became thinner. She pushed her body hard, and began winning races at school again. Soon she was the fastest girl in Cuba at 400 and 800 meters. Her mind became stronger too. She learned to fight against pain and to believe in her dreams.

Ana finished school and practiced harder and longer every day. In 1987 she won two gold medals at the Pan American Games in Indianapolis, in the US, and in 1989 she won all of her 800-meter races. Ana was very proud to run for her country. Now her name was famous around the world.

\* Pan American (Pan Am) Games, the biggest and most important sports games for North, South, and Central American countries. They happen every four years.  
medal (plural) a flat piece of metal, used as a prize



Four years after her double gold medal success in Indianapolis, Ana was ready to run again in the Pan Am Games. These races were very important to Ana because the Pan Am Games were coming to Cuba. She was Cuba's most famous runner—and her country was watching her.

Ana's races were fast and exciting. She ran faster than the other runners in the 400- and 800-meter races—two more gold medals! Ana looked up at the crowd. Thousands of happy Cubans were calling her name and smiling. Ana turned and walked slowly toward her country's president, Fidel Castro. Then she took one of her medals and placed it around Castro's neck. It was her way of saying "thank you" to Cuba, her country. She felt proud of the past and excited about the future. But early the next year, Ana's dreams were destroyed before they started.

On January 23, 1993, Ana was washing some clothes. She was washing in the Cuban way, in a large bowl on top of a stove. She carefully added a little alcohol to the washing to make the clothes fresh and bright. But some alcohol fell onto the stove. In seconds, fire covered Ana's body. She moved away from the stove and tried to pull her sweater off, but the fire quickly reached her skin. Ana's body burned with heat and pain. She fell heavily to the floor.

Alcohol is also used as a part of drinks like beer that many people drink, strong alcohol is also used for cleaning.



The doctors at Havana's Hermanos Amiguetes Hospital worked hard to save their famous patient. People all over Cuba listened carefully to the radio news. Ana's friends and family hurried to her bedside. Bad burns covered 38% of Ana's body and she was close to death.

A few days later, Ana woke up. Fidel Castro was by her bedside. "I will run again," she told him. Then her eyes closed.

Ana spent five long months in the hospital. Slowly she became stronger. First she began walking around her room. Sometimes she cried with pain and sadness. "You must rest," her friends told her. But Ana did not listen. Every day she walked a little farther. She refused to stop fighting.

Only a month after her accident, Ana began walking around inside the hospital. After two months she was running up and down the hospital stairs—fifteen floors. Next, she asked for an exercise bike in her hospital room. The



doctors could not believe their eyes. Ana Quiros was winning again—winning against pain. "If I don't run again," she said, "I will die."

The skin on Ana's hands, arms, and stomach was very badly burned. She could not move the top part of her body freely. It was very difficult for her to walk without pain. It was almost impossible to run well. But Cuba's best doctors carefully repaired her body. It was hard, slow work.

Ana went home and started running outside, but the sun's heat was too strong for her. Her skin was weak and it burned very easily. She could only practice very early in the morning and late at night. This problem did not stop her.

Ana worked hard that year. She wanted to run for her country again. But she was in her thirties now—too old for an international runner, people said. Ana did not agree. In 1993, the same year as her terrible accident, she ran at the Central American and Caribbean Games in Puerto Rico. Ana was in a race to move her arms or head easily at this time, but she surprised everyone. She ran well, and won a silver medal in the 800-meter race. The crowd loved it. "She won the silver medal in the race," Castro said, "but she won a great gold medal for courage."

By 1995 Ana was running internationally. That summer she won the gold medal for 800 meters in the World Games in Stockholm, Sweden. She was one of the fastest women in the world—again. "In my most difficult times," she said, "I didn't think that I could come back so strongly."

Ana raced many strong, young runners in 1996. At thirty-three years old she was often the oldest woman in her race. But now it was almost time to rest her body and mind. There was one more important race to run. "If I can run in the Olympic Games again, I will be happy," she said.

The 1996 Olympic Games were in Atlanta, US. Some of the fastest women of all time were there: Maria Mutola of Mozambique, the American Meseret Bekele, and Svetlana Masterkova of Russia. The early races were very hard for Ana, but she ran fast and well. Now, in the finals, she could race against the world's best runners at the Olympics one more time. In her mind, this was her last big race. The other women were younger and stronger. Ana was happy to be with them. "I will run as fast as possible," she thought. It was a difficult race, but Ana won the silver medal—she was less than a second behind Meseret Bekele!

Ana walked off the airplane at Havana into the warm Cuban air. It was good to be home. She was Cuba's most famous, and favorite, runner. "Running, and my country, saved my life," she explained. "When I started running again, that gave me life." Ana Quiros's fight against pain and illness is an example of courage for us all.

### Were you right?

Look back at your answers to Activity 1.2 on page iv. Then add the correct information below.

When?

What happened?

She had a terrible accident. She was badly burned.

She was paid for the good services in Stockholm.

### What more did you learn?

How did Ana solve her problems? Match each problem (1-5) with its answer (A-E).

- 1 Ana's sister asked her to leave, so ...
  - 2 Ana was badly burned in the accident, so ...
  - 3 After her accident, Ana wanted to run again, so ...
  - 4 Ana wanted to exercise in her hospital room, so ...
  - 5 Ana's sun burned easily in the Cuban sun, so ...
- A she asked for an exercise bike.
  - B she became thinner.
  - C she practiced in the early morning and late at night.
  - D she started walking around her hospital room.
  - E she was thanked after by Cuba's best doctors.

### Language in use

1 Look at the sentence in the box. Then answer these questions.

- a How did Ana's body feel?
- b How did Ana feel?

2 Now complete the second sentence in each pair so it has a similar meaning to the first.

- a She laughed happily.  
She laughed with *happiness*.
- b She dreamed about winning.  
Winning was her *dream*.
- c She felt very excited.  
She felt great *excitement*.
- d She was careless with the alcohol.  
She didn't take *care* with the alcohol.
- e Her work on the exercise bike was successful.  
Her work on the exercise bike was a *success*.
- f The sun was too hot for her skin.  
The sun's *heat* was too strong for her skin.

### What's next?

Look at the pictures in Story 2. The story is about a brave African man called Matthew. Discuss these questions and make notes below.

- 1 What kind of dangers will Matthew face, do you think?
- 2 How will he escape from these dangers?

Notes

Sometimes she cried with pain and sadness.

Stories of Courage

**Appendix B: test one**

Name: Hecine G. H. VAFRIA ..... Group: 02.....

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Read the short story and answer the following questions:

**Activity 1:** Who is Chico Mendez? What was the struggle about?

Chico Mendez is famous Brazilian forest fighter who was born in near the Amazon towns of Xapuri, Brazil in 1944. The struggle was about preserving the rain forest from the absolute destruction that these greedy business wanted to do to -

**Activity 2:** Finish these sentences according to the text:

1. The Amazon rain forest is probably the most important area in the world for man's future ✓
2. Big business was important to the Brazilian government ✓
3. As Chico's ideas became more popular, he made more and more dangerous enemies ✓
4. In 1988, some of Chico's ideas became part of Brazilian law ✓
5. Many people believed that they knew Chico's murder. But it was impossible to prove that ✓

**Activity 3:** Not all of people's actions are bad for the rain forest. Complete the table below with information from Chico's story. Add your own information.

<u>Bad for the rain forest</u>	<u>Not bad for the rain forest</u>
Burning trees for new farm land	taking rubber from trees ✓
clearing more trees for field ✓	- using forest plants as medicines and for food ✓
Burning the Amazon to build roads and electricity stations ✓	storing culling or burning the forest ✓
Cutting down thousand of trees ✓	protecting large areas of the Amazon rain forest ✓
- Destroying thousands of square kilometres of the Amazon rain forest every year ✓	collecting fruit, medicinal plants and rubber ✓

**Activity 4:** Paraphrase the following passage in your own words:

"Chico Mendez's intelligent message was not only about money, it was the world's future. It was the message that people needed to hear"

1/2

Chico Mendez is a ~~great~~ genius and thoughtful man whose messages were very great and visionary; i.e., he was thinking about man's future. What would he without the efficiency of the rainforest. Not about material things that greedy <sup>businesses</sup> are still fighting to possess it. This international beneficial message surprised <sup>he well-known</sup> the people and it is a surprise to him that they heard it.

Activity 5: Who do you think killed Chico Mendez? Why? Who thought he was dangerous?

I believe that the greedy <sup>businesses</sup> politicians and the Brazilian government itself were the responsible of the ~~ass~~ assassination of this courageous person because he <sup>was</sup> hated by them, and wanted to see him dead since he transmitted many ~~of his~~ ideas that did not interest them. (01)

Activity 6: What is the overall theme (s) of this short story?

\* The overall theme is about courage and recklessness, and fighting till the end in order to achieve man's dreams. (01)

Activity 7: Briefly summarize the story.

The Amazon rainforest is considered one of the most fascinating and <sup>fabulous</sup> place on the surface because it is the centre heart of the world surrounding by plants, water and air. Unfortunately, it is in danger. However, a very audacious and a brave man struggled and devoted his life to save it, but he found many antagonists especially greedy businesses and powerful politicians who tried to destroy and clear these important areas. Now, he started to guess about beneficial way to get rid of the devilish ideas of them. For the sake of the Amazon, he ~~succeeded~~ succeeded to spread his <sup>popular</sup> ideas. But <sup>more</sup> really influenced many people around the world. ~~But, the~~ But these powerful politicians were angry and ~~told~~ <sup>told</sup> him, they ~~de~~ killed him. (31)

## Appendix C: Fighting for the Forest

STORY

### Fighting for the Forest

*Like forest people for thousands of years before him, Chico understood that man must use the rain forest carefully and thoughtfully.*

The Amazon rain forest is one of the most wonderful places on Earth—the biggest, oldest, and richest forest in the world. It covers an area that is almost as big as Australia. It is home to millions of different kinds of animals, plants, and birds. Most of the world's fresh water is here, and the forest plants clean the Earth's air every day. It is very hot, wet, and dark. For man's future, the rain forest is probably the most important area in the world.

Chico Mender was born near the Amazon town of Xapuri, Brazil, in 1944. There were no schools in the rain forest, and Chico started working at the age of nine. Like the rest of his family, the young boy earned money by taking small amounts of rubber from the forest's trees. The rubber was then sold to local factories. This is an old style of farming. The trees are not hurt when you take rubber from them. In this way, the forest and its people lived together comfortably.

As a young boy, Chico did not think about the world outside of his town, his family, and his work. But as he grew, he learned more and more about the rain forest. He learned how to use forest plants as medicines and for food. Like forest people for thousands of years before him, he understood that man must use the rain forest carefully and thoughtfully.

But people are often too selfish to think about the future. While Chico



grew up, large areas of the rain forest were destroyed by greedy businesses. Near Xapuri, thousands of trees were burned to make new fields for modern farms. But without the forest, the land soon became dry and poor. Food and grass for the animals stopped growing in the new fields after only a few years. So the farmers cleared more trees for fields, and the problem became more serious.

rain forest /'reɪn fɔːrɪst/, fɔːrɪst/ (n) a large area of tall trees in a warm area where there is a lot

Story 4 – Fighting for the Forest



In other parts of the Amazon, the forest was burned to build roads and electricity stations. Many businesses cut down thousands of trees and sold the wood cheaply for furniture and paper. The rain forest is more than 180 million years old. When it is cut down, it will not simply grow back. It is gone for ever.

Chico felt very angry toward the businessmen and farmers near Xapuri. The rain forest was important and he wanted to save it. But Chico was just a poor rubber farmer. When he spoke to the businessmen, they did not listen. Money was too important to them. So Chico spoke to local politicians. But they were only interested in power. Chico was not important. He wanted people to listen, so he had to think of another way.

Chico started talking to ordinary people about the rain forest. He discovered that hundreds of people agreed with his ideas. His hope grew. "Many voices are more powerful than one," he thought. But the rich businessmen still did not listen. These powerful people, and greedy politicians, did everything possible to stop Chico's fight. Chico made many enemies in Xapuri at this time, and his life became more dangerous. But, like great men before him, Chico wanted to fight peacefully—with words, not with guns or knives. He knew that he had to change people's ideas.

Chico spoke to more and more people in the Xapuri area. He asked them about their work, and about the farms and businesses in their towns. Soon Chico knew about business and farming plans before they happened. So when big farmers or businessmen wanted to clear a new area of forest, Chico organized group meetings on that land. Soon hundreds of people came together in this way and stopped the work of the forest clearers. Large areas of the forest were saved.

But Chico's work meant that poor people—factory workers, truck drivers, and farm workers—were losing their jobs. Chico knew that he needed to find new jobs for these people. They needed jobs that did not destroy the rain forest. Then he had an idea that worked: People must stop cutting or burning the forest, but they could take forest fruit, plants for medicines, and rubber. People will look after the forest if they earn money from it. And they need a healthy forest to earn money now and for the future.

peace /miː/ (n) a time when there is no war or fighting

In the 1980s these were dangerous ideas. Business was very important to the Brazilian government. Brazil was not a rich country, but it wanted to help its people. Big companies brought in new money for better roads, houses, schools, and hospitals. So the government gave money to new farms. It paid people to burn the forest and to start new businesses. Most people agreed that this was good for Brazil. Chico was the first Brazilian man to speak out against new businesses. His ideas were very new and very strange.

It was almost impossible to change people's ideas. But, in Xapuri, parts of the forest were saved. This gave Chico hope. He knew that more people needed to understand his message. He also understood that money was very important. So he traveled around the country and explained the problem in a new way. When the forest is destroyed, two things happen: First, there is new land for new business or farming. This makes money quickly for Brazil and it is a good thing. But second, thousands of animals, plants, and trees are destroyed. Over time, these will give Brazil *more* money than factories or farms. Not everyone believed Chico's words. But scientists agreed that they were true. At last, people could begin to see a better future for the forest and for Brazil.

In 1985 Chico started a national group of forest workers. People across Brazil now knew about Chico's ideas, and most big Brazilian businesses knew about Chico's success in Xapuri. They started to worry. As Chico became more popular, he also made more and more dangerous enemies. Powerful politicians and businessmen were very angry about his work. Businessmen gave politicians large amounts of money and asked for help, and the politicians used their power against Chico. They made his life and work as difficult as possible. They even sent him to prison. But Chico did not stop fighting for the forest. He knew that his life was in danger. Many people wanted to see Chico dead. But Chico did not listen; he had other plans.

International companies owned many of the biggest farms and factories in the Amazon rain forest. Maybe personal conversations with the companies' presidents were the best way to save the rain forest for the world's future. It was difficult work for one man. But Chico knew that he was the best man for the job.

Later in 1985 Chico traveled to the United States and talked to many international companies. Some of the companies listened, and people around the US soon became very interested in this brave man from Brazil. The 1980s were big years for business and money in all of the world's richer countries. International business got stronger and many rich people became richer. But by 1985 there were people who wanted to believe in something more important. They wanted a safe and comfortable world for their children. Chico Mendez's

intelligent message was not only about money; it was about the world's future. It was the message that people needed to hear.

In the next few years Chico's name became famous across the US and around the world. Newspaper reporters interviewed him, television producers made programs about him, and famous people wanted to meet him. More and more people sent money to protect areas of the forest. But across most of the Amazon area, big farmers and businessmen were still clearing the rain forests to make quick, easy money.

At last, some Brazilian politicians understood that Chico's ideas were important, too. The government started making plans to protect large areas of the Amazon rain forest.

In November 1988 Chico's ideas became part of Brazilian law. In some areas, people had to stop clearing the forest. But they could collect fruit, medicinal plants, and rubber in these areas. Chico worked hard to make more and more of these special areas. But as his dreams started coming true, someone stopped him in the only possible way.

Chico Mendez, the famous forest fighter, was murdered outside his home on December 22, 1988. Many people believed that they knew the killer—an important man in Brazilian government and business. But that was difficult to prove.

Chico's life was cut short, but his brave new ideas continued in other people. After his death, people around the world sent money to help Chico's work. More of the rain forest was protected, and big business lost some of its power. But people did not stop clearing the forest completely.

Today, man is still destroying thousands of square kilometers of the Amazon rain forest every year; hundreds of different animals and plants are lost every day. More than 20% of the forest is already lost for ever. It took millions of years to grow, but at this speed it will disappear completely in only fifty years.

We must not forget the work of Chico and people like him. One man changed the world's ideas. We have to think carefully about the things that we buy today. Our actions can save the rain forest. Chico's brave fight must continue.



Appendix D: Test Two

Name: Hocine GHAFFRI A Group: 1<sup>st</sup> year, 02 10,25  
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Read the short story carefully and answer the following Questions:

**Comprehension:**

1) What is the short story about? Does the title throw any light on the story? <sup>(1)</sup>  
The short story is about two soldiers who had faced very hard unforgettable conditions in a desert that was full of loneliness, fear and lack of friendship. There, that they were suffering from painfully. It's, it throws by the name.

2) Who are the protagonists (the main characters) of this short story?  
Bill and Jack are the main characters. (1)

3) What is the theme of the story? Express it in a single declarative sentence.  
The theme is about the unfriendliness and hostility. (10)

4) What pattern of organization predominates in this story? Explain. (1)  
It is Time Order because the events and the setting is shown in a chronological order and appearance.

5) Explain in your own words the following passage:  
"They had survived the night. They ate the last of the provisions and sipped the remaining water in discreet silence but their eyes revealed the unsaid. The moving desert and the cold desert wind had been witnesses but they vowed not divulge the two men's intimacy."  
They had overcome that painful night hard, they were indeed astonished because they found themselves speechless to describe that hostility and loneliness in the core of the desert. Then, they promised not to tell this unforgettable secret whatever the conditions were. (1)

6) Give another title for the story? The real hostility and unfriendliness of the desert - 0,25

Page 1

### 3. The story Exploration:

1) Find in the story words or phrases closest in meaning to: (2)

- a. Increase (§1): burst ✓  
b. Reaching out (§4): arriving at ✓  
c. Sand (§8): Dunes ✓  
d. Drink (§10): sipped (To sip) ✓

2) According to their occurrences in the text give the opposites of the following verbs (§2)

- 1) Lowered: raised ✓ (1)  
2) Supported: Discouraged ✓  
3) Departed: Came in ✓

4) What do the underline words refer to in the text? (1)

- a. His (§1): Jack ✓  
b. Whom (§2): Daughter and Son ✓  
c. It (§5): the second attack set the vehicle in flames ✓  
d. They (§6): the driver Bill and his co-driver Jack ✓

5) In your opinion, what is the significance of the excessive use of the past simple? (2)

The excessive use of the past simple is very important mainly in stories to tell the events in its right time order, and to put the reader in those situations that happened already.

**Prediction:** At the end of the story, Bill and his co-driver Jack returned home. Predict a different/another end

to this story

\* In the fearsome night, they were in extreme sadness and fear, they were counting their last minutes to welcome the absolute death, they thought that they shouted in vain, and started to their luck was awfully bad especially by the return of the Australian contingent of allied forces that they planned an extermination to them. Unfortunately, the men were executed badly in that horrifying night and we could know about them because it was done in mysterious circumstances.  
*All the best. Thanks for your help and support.*

(1)

## Résumé

Le présent document vise à prouver que l'utilisation de courtes histoires pour développer les compétences complètes est l'une des tâches importantes que les apprenants de l'EFL doivent développer en lecture. Des histoires courtes ont donc été sélectionnées pour améliorer la compétence de lecture des apprenants algériens de l'anglais comme langue étrangère précisément de deuxième année à l'université de Mohamed L'amine Dabaghine. Deux tests ont été réalisés sur une lecture en présentant des histoires de remorquage intitulées «Fighting for The Forest and Running for her Life From A Livre Stories of Courage by Glare Gray». Le test est un ensemble de questions complètes. Les deux tests sont adressés à une sample de 25 étudiants en 2<sup>ème</sup> année universitaire. Les données ont été recueillies en lisant des questions complètes avant la lecture, en lecture, après lecture. Les données ont ensuite été analysées au moyen d'analyses quantitatives et qualitatives descriptives. Les conclusions révélées, l'utilisation de courtes histoires a aidé les élèves à améliorer leurs compétences de lecture. Le résultat de l'essai implique que l'emploi des stratégies de lecture a influencé l'amélioration de la compréhension de la lecture des élèves.

**Mots clés:** compréhension de la lecture, étudiants de l'EFL, courts récits, acquisition de langues étrangères, amélioration de la lecture, amélioration, développement, lecture préalable, pendant la lecture, après la lecture