

# The Short Story

A Literary Form

# Qualifications

- Able to be read in one sitting (Poe's "Philosophy of Composition" 1862)
- Length definitions are arbitrary... though general rule is <20,000 words (novella) and >1000 (flash fiction)
- Less complex than novels; typically one character's conflict with one theme

# Origins

- Oral tradition
- Fables/folktales
- Anecdotes (Roman parables)
- Frame story (*Canterbury Tales*)
- Fairy tales (Perrault 1690s, Grimms 1820s)
- French nouvelle
- *1001 Nights* (*Arabian Nights*)
- Nikolai Gogol's *Evenings on a Farm*

# American Origins

- 1780s- Rise of American Magazines
- 1815- Irving's *Sketchbook of Irving Canyon*
- 1821- *Saturday Evening Post* established
- 1824- Irving's *Tales of a Traveller* publishd.
- 1830s- early works of Nathaniel Hawthorne and Edgar Allen Poe published in various magazines

Traditional novel or full-length play plot outline

## Short Story differences

- Exposition ← Short stories often begin en media res
- Complication or Catalyst ← Typically only one
- Rising action ← Short stories contain fewer of these events
- Crisis or Climax ← Typically only one
- Resolution ← In short stories is often abrupt, or missing entirely (Poe)