Short Story Study Guide

Multiple Choice
Identify the choice that best completes the statement or answers the question.

____ 1. A struggle or clash that drives the plot is known as —
   a. theme c. conflict
   b. point of view d. characterization

____ 2. What is chronological order?
   a. The order in which objects are arranged in space
   b. The logical order in which ideas are presented
   c. A sequence that goes from question to answer
   d. The time order in which things happen

____ 3. Foreshadowing is —
   a. giving away the ending of a story
   b. having a surprise twist at the end of a story
   c. scaring the reader in a way the reader enjoys
   d. hinting at what will happen later in a story

____ 4. Which of the following elements is not part of the setting of a story?
   a. A character’s nickname c. The time period
   b. The weather d. The location

____ 5. Which of the following images would create a scary mood?
   a. The opening of a creaky door
   b. A bird chirping in the early morning
   c. The smell of baking bread
   d. Two swans on a lake

____ 6. When you are doing research, newspapers can be useful sources because they —
   a. are always more accurate than encyclopedias
   b. provide up-to-date information
   c. contain specialized information not found in reference books
   d. never present people’s personal opinions

____ 7. If you wanted to use a search engine to learn about animals that may become extinct, which search term would be most useful?
   a. Animal behavior c. Veterinarians
   b. The National Zoo in Washington, D.C. d. Endangered species

____ 8. Adding a prefix to a word —
   a. changes the word’s meaning c. makes the word plural
   b. makes the word easier to pronounce d. changes the word’s part of speech

____ 9. Unlike its denotation, a word’s connotations are based on —
   a. facts c. experts’ research
   b. subjective feelings d. the root of the word

____ 10. Someone who is disobedient —
    a. fails to follow orders c. follows his own conscience
    b. pays strict attention to the rules d. respects the rights of others

____ 11. When you take possession of a place, you —
a. move away from it  c. take ownership of it
b. remove goblins from it  d. frighten the people who live in it

12. If you have resolved to do something, you have —
   a. solved a problem  c. voted for a resolution
   b. decided against something  d. reached a decision to act in a certain way

13. Describing a character’s fancy style of dress is an example of revealing character through —
   a. setting  c. speech
   b. appearance  d. contrast

14. What is the difference between facts and opinions?
   a. Facts are used in nonfiction, but opinions appear only in fiction.
   b. Facts are objective, but opinions are subjective.
   c. Opinions are less complex than facts.
   d. Opinions are inaccurate, while facts are accurate.

15. In a word analogy —
   a. a sentence contains clues to the meaning of a word
   b. several words have related meanings
   c. two words share the same origin
   d. the relationship between the words in one pair matches the relationship between the words in a second pair

16. An expedition is a(n) —
   a. wilderness or forest  c. promise or vow
   b. journey or excursion  d. attempt or effort

17. If you hesitate, you do not —
   a. delay  c. hold back
   b. pause  d. hurry

18. To tell a story from the point of view of one character, authors —
   a. limit the number of characters in the story
   b. do not provide information about other characters
   c. tell about the thoughts and feelings of all the characters
   d. use the first-person pronoun I to write the story

19. A narrator in a story —
   a. does not always tell the truth  c. is always the main character
   b. can be fully trusted by the reader  d. describes the past, present, and future

20. What is tone?
   a. An author’s choice of words
   b. An author’s characteristic writing style
   c. An author’s attitude toward a subject, character, or the audience
   d. The way one character interacts with other characters

21. What is a surprise ending?
   a. An unexpected but logical ending to a story
   b. An ending that is not related to the rest of the plot
   c. An ending that can be interpreted in several ways
   d. An ending that presents a solution to a mystery
22. To support a point, nonfiction writers often use —
   a. transitions  c. evidence
   b. chronological order  d. images

23. Which of the following sentences uses a definition as a context clue to hint at the meaning of the underlined word?
   a. The children who roamed the neighborhood and stole things were called marauders by the community.
   b. He had trouble climbing the precipitous slope.
   c. When she heard about the incident, she sent the family her condolences.
   d. At the end of the meeting, there was no sign of reconciliation between the two sides.

24. Something that is illegal is —
   a. against the law  c. free
   b. desirable  d. valuable

25. The theme of a literary work —
   a. is always unique
   b. may recur in literature from different cultures and historical periods
   c. is not subject to interpretation
   d. is usually stated in the opening of the work

26. What is a symbol?
   a. An object that is given human characteristics
   b. A person, an animal, or an object that has meaning in itself and stands for something beyond itself as well
   c. A reference to a person, a statement, or an event from literature, history, art, or mythology
   d. An example provided by a writer to make a point

27. A narrative poem —
   a. praises a person
   b. tells a story
   c. follows a set pattern of rhyme
   d. focuses on the speaker’s personal feelings

28. Which of the following elements would probably not be used as a symbol?
   a. Place  c. Idea
   b. Object  d. Person

29. Which statement about symbols is false?
   a. They appear in everyday life as well as in literature.
   b. They can be interpreted differently by readers.
   c. They may have multiple meanings.
   d. Their only purpose in a literary work is to stand for something else.

30. When readers interpret the meaning of a symbol, they most often —
   a. summarize a story
   b. analyze the author’s writing style
   c. examine the context in which the symbol appears
   d. compare and contrast characters

31. A word’s connotations are —
   a. the feelings associated with the word  c. other related words
b. the contexts that the word is used in   d. the definitions of the word

**Comprehension**
*The questions below refer to the selection “Helen on Eighty-sixth Street.”*

___ 32. Which is the best description of Vita’s mother?
   a. Grieving but trying to get on with her life  
   b. Merry and outgoing, always looking for fun  
   c. So bitter that she is unable to help her own daughter  
   d. Totally focused on her work and career

___ 33. What is Old Farfel’s relationship to Vita’s mother?
   a. She knows him because he is her daughter’s school principal.  
   b. He works with her and wants to become her boyfriend.  
   c. He has been pestering her despite her protests.  
   d. The poor man is trying to free himself from her clutches.

**Literary Focus**
*The questions below refer to the selection “Helen on Eighty-sixth Street.”*

___ 34. To best describe Vita’s traits, you might say that she —
   a. is athletic and musical  
   b. makes the best of every situation  
   c. is imaginative and emotional  
   d. is confident about her appearance

___ 35. Vita describes the letter she wants to write to her father. Then she describes the letter she actually does write. What inference can you make?
   a. The letter she writes is a lie, intended to make her look good.  
   b. The things she wants to say are too painful to actually write.  
   c. She is ashamed of her writing skills.  
   d. She wants to fool her mother.

**Comprehension**
*The questions below refer to the selection “The Cask of Amontillado.”*

___ 36. According to Montresor, he decides to seek revenge against Fortunato because Fortunato —
   a. attacked him with his fists  
   b. injured him more than a thousand times  
   c. insulted him  
   d. stole some valuable wine from him

___ 37. According to Montresor, revenge would not be successful if he were —
   a. punished for taking his revenge  
   b. not punished for taking his revenge  
   c. recognized by his victim  
   d. compelled to murder

**Literary Focus**
*The questions below refer to the selection “The Cask of Amontillado.”*

___ 38. An unreliable narrator may be described as one who —
   a. deliberately does not tell the whole truth  
   b. makes untrue statements but is always corrected by another character  
   c. lies throughout the story but admits the truth at the end  
   d. is unreliable until the story’s climax
39. One reason why we know that Montresor is an unreliable narrator is he —
a. is drunk  c. is wealthy and snobbish  
b. does not reveal anything about the past  d. is feverish and unable to think clearly

**Literary Focus**

_The questions below refer to the selection “The Most Dangerous Game.”_

40. Which of the following events occurs first?

41. **Foreshadowing** is a —
a. look back at what happened before the story began  
b. hint about what is to come in the plot  
c. scene that is out of chronological order  
d. struggle between inner and outer forces

42. Which of the following statements is the best example of foreshadowing in the story?
a. Whitney’s tales of Ship-Trap Island foreshadow danger.  
b. The fact that Rainsford smokes a pipe foreshadows his death.  
c. The fact that Ivan does not speak foreshadows the story of Ivan’s youth.  
d. Rainsford’s construction of traps foreshadows that he is an expert hunter.

**Comprehension**

_The questions below refer to the selection “The Scarlet Ibis.”_

43. What does William Armstrong do to earn his nickname?
a. He doodles and sketches.  
b. It takes him a long time to learn things.  
c. The way he says his name makes it sound like “Doodle.”  
d. He crawls backwards like a doodlebug.

44. The narrator pulls Doodle in a cart because —
a. he’s told to take Doodle wherever he goes  
b. he feels sorry for Doodle  
c. go-carts were popular in the South  
d. he is teaching him to be independent

45. When the narrator teaches Doodle to walk, the narrator believes that —
a. it will free him from Doodle  
b. he can teach Doodle to do other things, too  
c. his parents will appreciate him more  
d. Doodle will abandon him

46. One example of the narrator’s cruelty to his brother is when the narrator —
a. is ashamed of Doodle  
b. makes Doodle bury the ibis  
c. names Doodle after a bug  
d. pretends he doesn’t have a brother

47. From the way Doodle buries the ibis, you can infer that Doodle —
a. is just as cruel as his brother  
b. is obedient but strong-willed  
c. will do anything to get attention  
d. is afraid of the natural world
48. When the two brothers race home to beat the storm, Doodle —
   a. decides to take a different route   c. tries to keep up but falls behind
   b. outruns his brother               d. pretends to be lost

49. The action of this story takes place —
   a. in a green-draped parlor          c. in a rural Southern town
   b. at Old Woman Swamp               d. in a French town

50. The central conflict in “The Scarlet Ibis” comes from the narrator’s inability to accept his —
   a. brother’s limitations            c. family responsibilities
   b. parents’ values                  d. own weaknesses

Literary Focus
The questions below refer to the selection “The Scarlet Ibis.”

51. The terrible storm could be a symbol for —
   a. Doodle’s disability             c. Mama’s anxiety
   b. the scarlet ibis                d. the narrator’s inner conflict

52. What might the war symbolize in “The Scarlet Ibis”? —
   a. The narrator’s own struggle      c. The ibis’s fight for survival
   b. Life in the rural South          d. World War I

53. In fiction a symbol can be described as a(n) —
   a. mood or emotion a story evokes   b. an object that stands for something other than itself
   c. comparison between two unlike objects   d. story that can be understood on more than one level

54. Which of the following events best symbolizes Doodle’s fate?
   a. Doodle crawls backwards, not forwards.
   b. The scarlet ibis falls from the tree and dies.
   c. Doodle tells lies about people with wings.
   d. Doodle hears the rain frog.

Comprehension
The questions below refer to the selection “The Sniper.”

55. When the story opens, its mood is —
   a. neutral                         c. eerie
   b. tense                          d. tranquil

56. He puts out his cigarette because —
   a. he is hungry and wants to eat   c. it makes him a target
   b. it does not taste good          d. he wants to save it for later

57. When the sniper is shot in the arm, he —
   a. calmly examines the wound and tends to it
   b. lights another cigarette to calm himself
   c. panics and cries out
   d. moves to a less obvious roof

58. You can infer from his actions that the sniper —
a. is experienced in warfare  c. is older than he appears
b. has never seen action before  d. has never been injured before

59. The sniper drops his left hand over the roof and lets the rifle drop to the street in order to —
   a. give himself time to dress his wound
   b. trick the enemy into thinking he is dead
   c. reload his spare gun
   d. take a few minutes to think of his next step

60. How does the sniper feel when he first realizes that he has killed his enemy?
   a. remorseful
   b. joyful
   c. mildly pleased
   d. unconcerned

61. At the end of the story, the sniper has experienced all of the following conflicts except an —
   a. external conflict with his enemies
   b. external conflict with danger
   c. external conflict with the authorities
   d. internal conflict with his conscience

62. The surprise at the end of this story is that the —
   a. war ended the previous week
   b. sniper has killed his mother
   c. sniper dies from his own bullet
   d. sniper has killed his brother

63. The Republican sniper is best described as —
   a. immature and childish
   b. devoted to his cause
   c. terrified of death
   d. happy and lighthearted

64. The sniper’s job is to —
   a. protect local citizens
   b. guard his superior officers
   c. seize the armored car
   d. shoot the enemy

**Literary Focus**

The questions below refer to the selection “The Sniper.”

65. The sniper’s external conflict is resolved when the —
   a. sniper kills his brother
   b. sniper is killed by the enemy sniper
   c. war ends
   d. old lady turns the sniper in to the authorities

66. “The Sniper” is remarkable as a short story for its lack of —
   a. humor
   b. metaphor
   c. description
   d. dialogue

67. The topic of this story is —
   a. Ireland
   b. murder
   c. civil war
   d. danger

**Completion**

Complete each statement.

**Vocabulary Development**

On the line before each sentence, write the word from the list that has a meaning similar to the italicized word or phrase in the sentence.
imminent  infallibility  doggedness  reiterated  precariously

68. ___________________ The narrator’s stubbornness contributes to Doodle’s death.

69. ___________________ When the storm arrives, the reader knows that disaster is near.

70. ___________________ Doodle is perched unsteadily on the ladder leading to the barn loft.

71. ___________________ Doodle repeated that he did not want to be left.

72. ___________________ The narrator is so sure of his inability to make a mistake that he thinks he can teach Doodle anything.

Matching

Vocabulary Development
Match the definition with the Vocabulary word from the list below.

a. disarming
b. imprudent
c. impulse
d. receding
e. surmounted
f. invariably
g. protruding
h. diverting
i. unruffled
j. prolonged

____ 73. removing or lessening fears
____ 74. sticking out
____ 75. unwise
____ 76. sudden desire to do something
____ 77. overcame
____ 78. calm
____ 79. without changing
____ 80. entertaining
____ 81. extended
____ 82. becoming more distant

Vocabulary Development
Match each word with its definition from list below.

a. outlined
d. person with an excessive devotion to a
Short Story Exam
Answer Section

MULTIPLE CHOICE

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28. ANS: C  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.7.18 (symbolism)
29. ANS: D  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.7.18 (symbolism)
30. ANS: C  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.7.18 (symbolism)
31. ANS: A  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.3.4 (denotation and connotation)
32. ANS: A  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.4.1 (characterization)
33. ANS: B  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.4.2 (character interactions)
34. ANS: C  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.4.1 (characterization)
35. ANS: B  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.2.1.11 (making inferences)
36. ANS: C  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.1 (plot)
37. ANS: A  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.1 (plot)
38. ANS: A  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.5 (point of view)
39. ANS: B  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.5 (point of view)
40. ANS: D  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.2 (time and sequence)
41. ANS: B  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.2 (time and sequence)
42. ANS: A  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.2 (time and sequence)
43. ANS: D  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.1 (plot)
44. ANS: A  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.4.2 (character interactions)
45. ANS: B  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.4.2 (character interactions)
46. ANS: C  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.4.2 (character interactions)
47. ANS: B  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.2.1.11 (making inferences)
48. ANS: C  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.1 (plot)
49. ANS: C  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.3 (setting and mood/atmosphere)
50. ANS: A  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.4.2 (character interactions)
51. ANS: D  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.7.18 (symbolism)
52. ANS: A  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.7.18 (symbolism)
53. ANS: B  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.7.18 (symbolism)
54. ANS: B  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.7.18 (symbolism)
55. ANS: B  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.3 (setting and mood/atmosphere)
56. ANS: C  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.4.2 (character interactions)
57. ANS: A  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.1 (plot)
58. ANS: A  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.2.1.11 (making inferences)
59. ANS: B  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.1 (plot) | 9.1.4.2 (character interactions)
60. ANS: B  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.1 (plot)
61. ANS: C  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.1 (plot) | 9.1.4.2 (character interactions)
62. ANS: D  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.1 (plot)
63. ANS: B  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.4.1 (characterization)
64. ANS: D  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.2.1.13 (monitoring your reading or comprehension)
65. ANS: A  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.4.2 (character interactions)
66. ANS: D  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.7.16 (style)
67. ANS: C  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.1.6.1 (subject/topic)

COMPLETION

68. ANS: doggedness  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.3.14 (synonyms)
69. ANS: imminent
   PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.3.14 (synonyms)

70. ANS: precariously
   PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.3.14 (synonyms)

71. ANS: reiterated
   PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.3.14 (synonyms)

72. ANS: infallibility
   PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.3.14 (synonyms)

MATCHING

73. ANS: A  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.3.9 (literal meanings of words)
74. ANS: G  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.3.9 (literal meanings of words)
75. ANS: B  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.3.9 (literal meanings of words)
76. ANS: C  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.3.9 (literal meanings of words)
77. ANS: E  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.3.9 (literal meanings of words)
78. ANS: I  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.3.9 (literal meanings of words)
79. ANS: F  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.3.9 (literal meanings of words)
80. ANS: H  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.3.9 (literal meanings of words)
81. ANS: J  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.3.9 (literal meanings of words)
82. ANS: D  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.3.9 (literal meanings of words)
83. ANS: C  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.3.9 (literal meanings of words)
84. ANS: E  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.3.9 (literal meanings of words)
85. ANS: D  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.3.9 (literal meanings of words)
86. ANS: B  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.3.9 (literal meanings of words)
87. ANS: A  PTS: 1  OBJ: 9.3.9 (literal meanings of words)