

# Writing Challenge 4.0: Short Short Fiction

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engl 281 / sec. D / autumn quarter 2009-10 / chang

According to Wikipedia, short short fiction contain “the classic story elements: protagonist, conflict, obstacles or complications, and resolution. However, unlike the case with a traditional short story, the limited word length often forces some of these elements to remain unwritten, that is, hinted at or implied in the written storyline. This principle, taken to the extreme, is illustrated in a possibly apocryphal story about a six-word flash allegedly penned by Ernest Hemingway: ‘For sale: baby shoes, never worn’” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flash\\_fiction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flash_fiction)). For this writing challenge, you will take Hemingway’s lead and find a recent classifieds ad (from a newspaper or Craigslist) and use that ad as inspiration for a short short story. Like poetry, short short fiction (sometimes called flash fiction) is all about compression of language, about telling details, and about careful decisions about what to show, to leave out, or leave inferred. You have up to 300 words (only) to develop setting, character, plot, and purpose. Choose your words wisely. You will attach the ad to the back of your paper; the text of the classified ad need not appear in your short short story.

## Guidelines and Due Dates

**Format:** 1-2 pages, up to 300 words, typed, double-spaced, no title page, proper heading  
Include a copy of the classified ad

**Due:** Tuesday, October 27, at the start of class

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