

English

Grade 10

Analysing a short story

Look closely at plot, character, setting and theme.



I can analyse the elements of a short story using evidence.



1 The key



Every evening, old Mrs Varga locked the garden gate with a rusty iron key and hung it on a nail by the door. The neighbourhood children said she was hiding treasure.

One winter night, a boy named Tomas saw the gate standing open. Heart pounding, he stepped inside. There was no treasure, only rows of tiny wooden bird houses, each with a name painted on it: the names of every child on the street, including his own.

The next morning the gate was locked again. But on Tomas's doorstep lay the rusty key.

2 Match up

Draw a line to match each pair.

☐ Setting •

☐ Protagonist •

☐ Turning point •

☐ Symbol •

• A. Tomas finds the bird houses

• B. a quiet street on a winter night

• C. the key

• D. Tomas

3 Pick the answer

Circle the right answer.

1. What does the key most likely symbolise?

A trust being passed on

B a hidden treasure

C fear of neighbours

2. How does the story challenge the rumour?

A She really hid gold.

B The "treasure" is her care for the children.

C The gate was never locked.

4 Check the details

Read the story again. Circle true or false.

1. Mrs Varga hung the key on a nail by the door.

True

False

2. The children had seen the treasure with their own eyes.

True

False

3. Tomas found the gate open on a summer night.

True

False

4. Each bird house had a name painted on it.

True

False

5. Tomas's own name was on one of the bird houses.

True

False

6. At the end, the key lies on Mrs Varga's doorstep.

True

False

5**Plot order**

Write 1 to 5 in the boxes to put the events in order.

☐

Tomas finds the rusty key on his doorstep.

☐

The children say that Mrs Varga hides treasure.

☐

Tomas sees the bird houses with the children's names.

☐

One winter night, Tomas notices the gate is open.

☐

The next morning, the gate is locked again.

6**Tools of analysis**

Use each word once: third, past, suspense, rumour, open.

1. The narrator is not a character, so the story is told in the _____ person.
2. The verbs "locked" and "hung" are in the simple _____ tense.
3. The phrase "heart pounding" builds _____.
4. The children's belief that Mrs Varga hides treasure is a _____.
5. The ending is _____ : the reader must work out why Tomas gets the key.

7

**Fact or interpretation?**

Write each sentence in the right column.

The key is rusty and made of iron.

Mrs Varga cares about the children on the street.

The gate stood open one winter night.

The key shows that she trusts Tomas.

The bird houses are made of wood.

Mrs Varga is less strange than the children think.

Stated in the text**Interpretation**

8

**The writer's choices**

Circle the best answer.

1. Why does the writer mention the treasure rumour at the start?

A To build an expectation that the ending overturns

B To describe the weather

C To introduce a second narrator

2. How do we get to know Mrs Varga?

A Through her thoughts and feelings

B Only through her actions and what she leaves behind

C She tells the story herself

3. Which word best describes the mood at the end?

A frightening

B warm and hopeful

C angry

4. The gate goes from locked to open to locked again. What does this show?

A A secret is shared for a short moment

B The weather gets colder

C Mrs Varga has moved away

9



Think and write

What do you think the theme of the story is? Support your answer with two quotations.

How did it go?



Made with 

English

Grade 10

Answer key

Analysing a short story

Look closely at plot, character, setting and theme.



I can analyse the elements of a short story using evidence.



1



The key



Every evening, old Mrs Varga locked the garden gate with a rusty iron key and hung it on a nail by the door. The neighbourhood children said she was hiding treasure.

One winter night, a boy named Tomas saw the gate standing open. Heart pounding, he stepped inside. There was no treasure, only rows of tiny wooden bird houses, each with a name painted on it: the names of every child on the street, including his own.

The next morning the gate was locked again. But on Tomas's doorstep lay the rusty key.

2 Match up

Draw a line to match each pair.

B Setting ●

D Protagonist ●

A Turning point ●

C Symbol ●

● **A.** Tomas finds the bird houses

● **B.** a quiet street on a winter night

● **C.** the key

● **D.** Tomas

3 Pick the answer

Circle the right answer.

1. What does the key most likely symbolise?

A trust being passed on

B a hidden treasure

C fear of neighbours

2. How does the story challenge the rumour?

A She really hid gold.

B The "treasure" is her care for the children.

C The gate was never locked.

4 Check the details

Read the story again. Circle true or false.

1. Mrs Varga hung the key on a nail by the door.

True

False

2. The children had seen the treasure with their own eyes.

True

False

3. Tomas found the gate open on a summer night.

True

False

4. Each bird house had a name painted on it.

True

False

5. Tomas's own name was on one of the bird houses.

True

False

6. At the end, the key lies on Mrs Varga's doorstep.

True

False

5**Plot order**

Write 1 to 5 in the boxes to put the events in order.

5

Tomas finds the rusty key on his doorstep.

1

The children say that Mrs Varga hides treasure.

3

Tomas sees the bird houses with the children's names.

2

One winter night, Tomas notices the gate is open.

4

The next morning, the gate is locked again.

6**Tools of analysis**

Use each word once: third, past, suspense, rumour, open.

1. The narrator is not a character, so the story is told in the third person.
2. The verbs "locked" and "hung" are in the simple past tense.
3. The phrase "heart pounding" builds suspense.
4. The children's belief that Mrs Varga hides treasure is a rumour.
5. The ending is open: the reader must work out why Tomas gets the key.

7 Fact or interpretation?

Write each sentence in the right column.

The key is rusty and made of iron.

Mrs Varga cares about the children on the street.

The gate stood open one winter night.

The key shows that she trusts Tomas.

The bird houses are made of wood.

Mrs Varga is less strange than the children think.

Stated in the text

The key is rusty and made of iron., The gate stood open one winter night., The bird houses are made of wood.

Interpretation

Mrs Varga cares about the children on the street., The key shows that she trusts Tomas., Mrs Varga is less strange than the children think.

8 The writer's choices

Circle the best answer.

1. Why does the writer mention the treasure rumour at the start?

A To build an expectation that the ending overturns

B To describe the weather

C To introduce a second narrator

2. How do we get to know Mrs Varga?

A Through her thoughts and feelings

B Only through her actions and what she leaves behind

C She tells the story herself

3. Which word best describes the mood at the end?

A frightening

B warm and hopeful

C angry

4. The gate goes from locked to open to locked again. What does this show?

A A secret is shared for a short moment

B The weather gets colder

C Mrs Varga has moved away

9



Think and write

What do you think the theme of the story is? Support your answer with two quotations.

How did it go?



Made with 