

16 Criteria for an Effective Short Story  
(<http://www.BorneoExpatWriter.com>)

1. Beginning: effective hook, or slow to get going?
2. Ending: satisfying, natural culmination of events, or preposterous or predictable?
3. Setting: clear sense of place or vague and could be set anywhere?
4. Narrative voice/viewpoint: consistent, focused, or shifting and all over the place?
5. Story: original, unusual, demands to be read, or clichéd and forgettable
6. Characters: memorable or forgettable? Do characters develop and change by the end of the story, or are they static?
7. Motivation: clear, logical, or farfetched and lacking?
8. Dialogue: realistic, character or plot driven, or doesn't seem natural or telling the reader what they already know.
9. Conflicts: one or several, working on one level or different levels?
10. Tension/anxiety: does it pull the reader through the story, or is it too heavy-handed or comical?
11. Writing style: use of language and metaphors appropriate, or clumsy?
12. Descriptions: does it ring true, or seem shallow or even false?
13. Mood/ambiance: enhance the story/setting, or does it sabotage it?
14. Symbols/irony: deftly handled or sledgehammer?
15. Telling versus showing: does the reader have to take your word for it, or can they see it for themselves?
16. Direct action: has the action already happened off-stage, or is the reader experiencing it as it happens?