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Reading Comprehension
Check Your Understanding

A Choose the correct answer for the following questions.

1 We can infer from paragraphs 1–3 that the author is a ____.
   a teacher **b** poet **c** student **d** painter

2 Why does the author not consider the 50-word story in paragraph 8 a "short story"?
   a It is not really complete.
   b It is too easy to read.
   c It doesn't have a conclusion or point.
   d It doesn't lead to a life-changing experience.

3 Which does NOT matter when defining what a short story is?
   a the number of words
   b the number of characters
   c a consistent theme
   d its effect on the reader

4 Which statement is Isabelle Allende most likely to agree with?
   a Short stories need to be refined and perfected.
   b Short stories don't need to have details.
   c Novels are not as good as short stories.
   d Authors should try to write more short stories.

B Answer the following questions using information from the passage.

1 What does the title of the passage suggest about people's understanding of short stories?

_____

_____

2 How are poems and short stories similar? Give two examples.

_____

_____

3 How does the author feel about word forms like anecdotes and vignettes?

_____

_____

4 What does the author mean when he says *Great writers can do in 600 words what a solid writer might manage in 1,100* (lines 39–40)?

_____

_____

Critical Thinking

C Discuss the following questions with a partner.

1 Do you agree with Isabelle Allende that short stories are harder to write than novels? Why, or why not?

2 Do you believe that reading a good story can be a life-changing experience? Why, or why not?

Vocabulary Comprehension
Words in Context

A **Choose the best answer. The words in blue are from the passage.**

1 Which decision is more likely to be arbitrary?
   a choosing which car to buy **b** choosing which elevator to enter
2 Which has facets?
   a a bathroom **b** someone's personality
3 Which task requires precision?
   a making a sandwich **b** making a watch
4 Something exquisite is usually of ____ quality.
   a high **b** low
5 Someone whose hair is sparse is probably ____.
   a younger **b** older
6 People usually tell anecdotes about ____.
   a themselves **b** the news
7 When you presume something, it is ____.
   a proven **b** unproven
8 Someone with insight has more ____.
   a money **b** knowledge
9 How would you feel if you had a profound experience?
   a inspired **b** indifferent
10 To reinforce an idea, you ____.
   a repeat it several times **b** think of other alternatives

B **Complete the following sentences using the words in blue from A. You might have to change the form of the word.**

1 The soldiers put bags of sand behind the seawall in order to _____ it before the storm arrived.
2 My father likes to tell us funny _____ about his childhood.
3 Nelson Mandela, the former president of South Africa, said that his experience in prison had a(n) _____ effect on his life.
4 We need _____ sales figures for the meeting because they'll be included in an official report. Please don't pick some _____ numbers out of thin air.
5 Recent reports on melting glaciers in the Arctic have given us more _____ into how our actions can cause global warming.
6 It's important for entrepreneurs to be familiar with all _____ of a company.
7 The population of the town has grown _____ because many people are moving to the city.
8 She has _____ taste in clothes and is always very well-dressed.
9 In court, the person facing trial is always _____ innocent until proven guilty.

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