



APPLICATION

1. Choose an article from a newspaper or magazine and create several alternative titles for it.
2. Examine all the article titles in one publication. Note the effectiveness of those titles in attracting people who read only the titles.
3. Examine the “Readings” section of *Harper’s* magazine. Make a list of titles that caught your attention. For each, explain why it caught your attention.

Profiles

WHAT IS A PROFILE?

A profile is a nonfiction story that describes a person or, occasionally, an institution or company. Though a profile is less comprehensive than a biography, a profile usually reveals some aspect of the character of its subject and highlights his or her accomplishments.



THE WRITER’S WARM-UPS

1. To hone your skills of observation, try this exercise: With the sound muted, watch a TV show (preferably a reality TV show or a documentary so that you are not watching actors). In your notebook, carefully describe two or three people you see—their clothing, hairstyle, features, expressions, gestures, posture, gait. Alternatively, observe your own family members and write about them in a way that will enable someone who doesn’t know them to picture them.
2. Listen with your eyes: find a TV show that you have not seen before. It must include dialogue between two or more charac-

Story Writing

A wondrous dream, a fantasy incarnate, fiction completes us, mutilated beings burdened with the awful dichotomy of having only one life and the ability to desire a thousand.

Mario Vargas Llosa²

LEARNING GOALS

- ▶ analyze forms of stories and their elements and conventions
- ▶ analyze the purpose and audience of a variety of stories
- ▶ assess authors' choices of techniques, diction, voice, and style
- ▶ research and analyze selected works by authors from around the world to assess their practices and beliefs about writing
- ▶ write stories in various forms and for various purposes to practise and develop writing skills
- ▶ explain and assess—individually and in small groups—the creative choices made in producing one's own writing
- ▶ revise drafts to produce writing that is effective in content, techniques, diction, voice, and style

WHAT IS A STORY?

A story has a beginning, a middle, and an end. A story might be long (novel or novella length) or shorter (short-story length). For the purpose of this chapter, we will talk about stories in general, not a specific form.

Jack Hodgins in *A Passion for Narrative*³ says the following about the differences between novels and short stories:

The successful short story tends to be so finely tuned that every word, every nuance of every word, is contributing to a single final impression. To strike one sentence from a fine short story is to do as much damage as to toss away a line of a good poem. A short story's power lies in its density.

The novel may also build its final effect upon a single impression, but it will be an impression large enough to include within it the strands of more than one plot, perhaps, or several conflicting ways of looking at the single theme, or a complex multiplicity of symbols