

## Writing

*Time: 1 hour 30 minutes*

### Task 1

Write a short **review** of the book by Steve Moss *The World's Shortest Stories of Love and Death* (1999) for a school English-language magazine.

- Use the beginning of the review that is given (these words will not be counted):

*The science fiction writer, Frederic Brown, is credited to write the shortest story in the world in 1948, which he called "Knock". The story was this: "The last man on Earth sat alone in a room. There was a knock on the door." The story paved the way to a new fashion of writing very short stories ... (continue your review on your answer sheet)*

- Use the information about the book from the fact file below.
- Compare the given samples in your review.
- Express your attitude to the book.
- Give recommendations to the readers.

**Write 250 – 300 words**

### Fact File

#### Information about the book:

- Steve Moss, an editor of the American magazine *New Times*, started a competition called *55 Fiction* (1987).
- The competition still runs annually in *New Times*.
- A literary work is considered *55 Fiction* if it has:
  1. Fifty-five or fewer words;
  2. A setting;
  3. One or more characters;
  4. Some conflict;
  5. A resolution.
- The collection of the best stories was published by Steve Moss in the book *The World's Shortest Stories of Love and Death* (1999).

**Samples from the book:**

**Gratitude** (*Andrew E. Hunt*)

The street lights were a warm welcome from the oncoming chill of darkness.  
The park bench's curvature felt familiar under his tired old spine.  
The wool blanket from the Salvation Army was comfortable around his shoulders and the pair of shoes he'd found in the dumpster today fit perfectly.  
God, he thought, isn't life grand.

**Higher Education** (*Ron Bast*)

"College was a breeze," Jennings said, washing his grimy hands. "With all those budget cuts, they couldn't teach much. They just gave us our grades and sent us on our way."  
"How did you learn?"  
"We didn't, but so what? Look at me now."  
A nurse opened the door.  
"Dr Jennings, you're wanted in surgery."

**In the Garden** (*Hope A. Torres*)

Standing there in the garden, she saw him running toward her.  
"Tina! My flower! The love of my life!"  
He'd said it at last.  
"Oh, Tom!"  
"Tina, my flower!"  
"Oh, Tom! I love you, too!"  
Tom reached her, knelt down, and quickly pushed her aside.  
"My flower! You were standing on my prize-winning rose!"

**The Search** (*Robert Tompkins*)

Finally, in this remote village, his quest ended.  
There, by the fire, sat Truth.  
Never had he seen an older, uglier woman.  
"Are you truth?"  
The wizened, wrinkled hag nodded.  
"What message can I take from you to the world?" he pleaded.  
She replied, spitting into the fire, "Tell them I am young and beautiful."

## **Task 2**

*Knock* inspired a response by Ron Smith, who gave his story a tongue-in-cheek title that was almost as long as the story itself. He called it *A Horror Story Shorter by One Letter than the Shortest Story Ever Told*. Fill in the gap with one word to finish Ron Smith's story.

*The last man on Earth sat alone in a room. There was a . . . on the door.*

**(Complete the story on your answer sheet)**