

AP-Lit Fiction Bootcamp

Unit Objective: Through the close reading of selected texts, students will deepen their understanding of the ways writers use language to provide both meaning and pleasure for their readers. As they read, students consider a work's **structure, style** and **themes**, as well as such smaller-scale elements as the use of **figurative language, imagery, symbolism** and **tone**. (Adapted from College Board AP Central Course Description)

Instructions: You will be working in teams and on your own to read, interpret, and analyze these works of literature. Typically we will focus on one story per day. Your work will be assessed based on the depth of your analysis, your attention to detail, and the insights you reveal in your writing. All texts are to be read as homework, with class time allotted for teams to collaboratively respond to certain texts. Textual evidence is important in your responses. Even if a question does not specifically state that you need to include a quotation, you will almost always find that your answers are more specific and vivid if you do include a pertinent quote or two in your analysis.

Introduction/Model Discussion:

Reading Due: ___9/

D.H. Lawrence: "The Rockinghorse Winner" (Diyanni 96): Whole Class/Team Analysis to preview upcoming discussions, including analyzing character, setting, tone, POV, Theme, etc.

Readings and Essay Practice for Plot: Essay (Diyanni 43-45)

Reading Due: ___9/

I. Frank O'Connor: "Guests of the Nation" (Diyanni 46)

1. "Guests of the Nation" is constructed in four parts. Think of a word or a phrase that typifies each of the parts and write it down. For each of those words or phrases write a statement that explains why they are the most appropriate conclusions to draw from the parts.
2. The **theme** of the story is revealed in the climax and resolution of the story. Following the formulas for thesis and ToGo, write a precise thesis, topic sentence and body paragraph which provides insight into this theme.

II. Luigi Pirandello: "War" (Diyanni 439)

1. Explain the means by which Pirandello develops the **narrative structure** of the story. To answer this question, consider the fact that much of the story is written in conversation and ask yourself how the story might have been changed if it had been written exclusively through description. When you are done pondering, write an analytical paragraph that explores your thinking. Make sure to go from L1 to L3.
2. Describe **the thoughts about death** expressed by the "fat, red-faced man with blood-shot eyes." Following the formulas for thesis and ToGo, write a precise thesis, topic sentence and body paragraph. **You may consider:** how does this man seem to be defending the need for battlefield deaths? How do his true thoughts emerge in the story? How does he seem to be contradictory?
3. Consider this, why does Pirandello choose the man who seems least appealing as the one to whom the ultimate sacrifice has happened? Juxtapose the looks of the man against the sacrifice of his son and come to an insightful conclusion.

Readings and Essay Practice for Character: Essay (Diyanni 54-56)

Reading Due: _____

I. Kay Boyle: "Astronomer's Wife" (Diyanni 56)

1. Analyze the **details** in the first two paragraphs of the story in terms of what they reveal about Ames' attitude about women and men, and about her relationship with her husband.
2. Think about men in the text and determine their degree of difference, or similarities, are present in the work and then craft a thesis, topic sentence, and body paragraph, which make your juxtaposition of the men clear.
3. Analyze this quotation: "Her husband was the mind, this other man the meat, of all mankind" (59). What is the **context** for this quote and what does the author's **diction** specifically reveal? Use complete sentences!

II. Raymond Carver: "Cathedral" (Diyanni 506)

1. On your own piece of paper, write the following question again, briefly answer each one, find at least one quote that supports your answer, and tell me how or why the specific words of the quote are important
 - a. Who is the **speaker/narrator** of "Cathedral"? How much do we learn about his character? What kind of person is he? Would you describe the home life of the speaker and his wife as interesting or dull, and why? What is his attitude toward his wife's former employer, Robert, who is visiting his home?
 - b. For each quote that you use to support your answer, create a L1 - L2 - L3 chart. There will be five!
2. This story contains an eating scene. Think of Foster's "Nice to Eat with You" chapter. How does this eating scene (and the scene afterward) function as an "Act of Communion"?

Readings and Essay Practice for Setting: Essay (Diyanni 60-61)

Reading Due: _____

I. James Joyce: "Araby" (Diyanni 81)

1. Discuss the **setting** and the way it is described in the opening paragraphs. What specific words are related to the boy's state of mind at the beginning of the story? Juxtapose the relationship between the boy's pain at the end of the story, through Joyce's word choice, and the tone given by the author in the first paragraph?
2. How might the bazaar in "Araby," be considered **symbolically** in the story? Craft a thesis sentence and write an analytical paragraph that supports your thesis. Consider:

To what extent does this symbol embody the story's central idea? Think about how the bazaar is described in the story: How is it different from the reader's and the boy's expectations?
3. Why does the boy decide not to buy anything for Mangan's sister? Where in the text would you locate the moment of "**epiphany**"? How might the reader interpret this as a "Loss of Innocence"? (You may want to review Foster pp. 49-50 for some of his ideas on this topic.)

II. Ernest Hemingway: "Soldier's Home" (Diyanni 350)

1. The title, "Soldier's Home," focuses on the **setting**. Do you have a clear picture of Krebs's home? Describe it, filling in missing details from your connotation of home, Krebs's routine, or anything else you can use.
2. Compare Krebs's home with Germany and France and write an effective thesis sentence followed by an analytical paragraph that shows the shift between the different settings.

Readings and Essay Practice for Point of View: Essay (Diyanni 71-73) Reading Due: _____

I. William Faulkner: "A Rose for Emily" (Diyanni 73)

1. "A Rose for Emily" is narrated in **first-person plural**. Why do you think Faulkner chose "we" rather than "I" as the voice for this story? How might this **narrative strategy** be related to the description of Emily as "a tradition, a duty, and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town" (para. 3)?
2. Describe Emily's relationship with her father. What specific **details** in the story support your conclusion? How does this relationship influence the development of events in the story? To answer this question, consider the cause and effect relationship between them and then write an effective thesis that supports your conclusion, and follow that up with an analytical body paragraph.

II. Katherine Anne Porter: "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall" (Diyanni 443)

1. Aristotle explained that looking at differences is an amazing way to compare details that are put forward. Look at the two contraries present in this the text, Granny's memories vs. her present situation, compose an effective thesis that supports your conclusion, and follow that up with an analytical body paragraph.
2. This story is told in a variant of the third-person limited point of view, called **stream of consciousness**, which presents apparently random thoughts going through a character's head within a certain period of time, mingling memory and present experiences. Why is stream of consciousness appropriate in this story? What characteristics of Ellen Weatherall's condition does this narrative technique represent? How effectively does it reveal the elements of the past? How clearly does it reflect the present? **What is gained by the lack of clarity?**

Readings and Essay Practice for Language & Style: Essay (Diyanni 80-81) Reading Due: _____

I. John Updike: "A & P" (Diyanni 26)

1. From Sammy's language, what do readers learn about his view of himself? About his educational and class level? The first sentence, for example, is grammatically incorrect in Standard English but not uncommon in colloquial English. What **insights** can we infer about Sammy's life based on his language? Write your answer in a body paragraph.
2. Why does Sammy say, "I quit" so abruptly? What does he mean when he says that the world is going to be hard to him after his experiences at the A&P? What **inferences** can you draw about his past, present, and future? As you answer this, consider the cause and effect that occurs in the text and then write a thesis that supports your conclusion, and follow that up with an analytical body paragraph.

II. Zora Neale Hurston: "Spunk" (Diyanni 356)

1. The story is told in four parts: What is the **pivotal event in each of the four sections**? How does this four-part structure affect **our response** to the story? In other words, how would our understanding of the text be different if it was told any other way?
2. Although the character of Lena plays a pivotal role in this story, Lena herself **does not speak** (she has no voice in the story). Discuss how Hurston portrays Lena through the language of the narrator and of other characters– pay special note to the end of Section I and the end of Section IV. Create an analytical thesis that supports your conclusion, and follow that up with an analytical body paragraph. Be sure to reference specific words in your evidence to support your conclusion.
3. How does Hurston's use of **dialect** affect your reading and understanding of the story? Would the story be improved, or more credible, if she used Standard English instead? What parallels do you see between the characters and dialect in this story, and in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*?

Readings and Essay Practice for Theme: Essay (Diyanni 85-86)

Reading Due: _____

I. Eudora Welty: "A Worn Path" (Diyanni 86)

1. Write a precise, well-developed sentence that states as fully as possible the **theme** of the story. Remember to avoid clichés or oversimplification. Once this is done, craft an analytical thesis that supports your theme that you created in question one and follow that up with an analytical body paragraph.
2. Discuss the way the **characterization** of Phoenix **contributes to the theme**.
3. This story, like many classic works of literature, features **a journey and a quest**. Analyze this quest using the five factors Foster details on page 3 of HTRL. How does this quest relate to the theme of the story?

Readings and Essay Practice for Irony & Symbolism: Essay (Diyanni 92-95)

Reading Due: _____

I. Nathaniel Hawthorne: "Young Goodman Brown" (Diyanni 341)

1. Near the end of the story the narrator asks the following: "Had Goodman Brown fallen asleep in the forest, and only dreamed a wild dream of a witch-meeting?" What is the answer? If Goodman Brown's visions come out of his own dreams (mind, subconscious), what do they tell us about him?
2. Is Goodman Brown a **round** or **flat character**? To what extent is he a **symbolic** "everyman" or representative of humankind?
3. Discuss Hawthorne's use of **symbolism**, such as sunset and night, the walking sticks, the witches' Sabbath, the marriage to Faith, and the vague shadows amid darkness. As Foster says, "Associate freely, brainstorm, take notes...organize your thoughts...Ask questions of the text" (Foster 106). How do these symbols seem to function in the story? Are there any other possible symbols? Remember, "Pay attention to what you feel about the text. It probably means something" (Foster 107). You may wish to use a **T-Chart** to present your response.

II. Gabriel Garcia Marquez: "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" (Diyanni 324)

1. Discuss the **symbolism** of the story. For example, how might the appearance of the bedraggled angel be understood as a symbol? What might be considered symbolic of the attitudes of the local people? How should the delays of the Pope and the Vatican be considered symbolic, and what might the flight symbolize?
2. Connect the speaker's diction of the angel to its symbolic significance. Like all writing, this was done on purpose; so, using your choice of Aristotle methods, craft an analytical thesis that supports your conclusion, and follow that up with an analytical body paragraph.
3. What does Foster say about Marquez's angel? (See the chapter "Flights of Fancy.") What is your opinion on Foster's view?

III. Kate Chopin: "The Story of an Hour" (Diyanni 32)

1. In HTRL, Foster tells us, "**Irony trumps everything**" (235). Irony primarily involves a disparity between our expectations and the reality that is presented in the story. This story contains examples of both situational and verbal irony – note some instances of each and discuss what makes them ironic.
2. How do the **attitudes** of Louise's sister and Richards **contribute to the irony** of the story?
3. What is the apparent **attitude** of the **narrator** toward the institution of marriage, and what elements of tone make this apparent?
4. What events are contrasted or reversed in the story? Make a T Chart and list them out, and then ask yourself the question: Why? What Was Chopin's purpose for the text? Write a thesis and body paragraph to support your opinion.

Extension Activities: The Evaluation of Fiction

- I. William Carlos Williams: "Use of Force" (Diyanni 2068)
- II. John Steinbeck: "The Chrysanthemums" (handout)
- III. Ernest Hemingway: "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" (handout)
- IV. T.C. Boyle: "Greasy Lake" (handout)
- V. Shirley Jackson: "The Lottery" (handout)
- VI. Susan Glaspell's "Trifles" (DiYanni 1616) – short, highly ironic play