

Eng 9: Literary Analysis of a Short Story

Length: 1000-1500 words (write the word count at the end of your essay)

Paragraphs: 6 (introduction, 4 supporting paragraphs, conclusion)

Format: Typed, double-spaced, 12 pt. font, standard margins

Due: Friday, December 17th

Compose an analysis over one of the short stories listed below. While you can formulate your own thesis by using the strategies for formulating a *thematic* argument or a *definitional* argument, **I suggest that you begin by thinking of a causal argument: What is the most important change in the story? What causes it? Why?**

Your essay will follow the traditional format for a literary analysis—please use the essay on Slim’s influence in *Of Mice and Men* as a model.

Begin by writing an outline of your argument, just like we practiced in class:

Thesis (including reasoning) + 4 Topic Sentences

THESIS AND INTRODUCTION

- Try to begin with a “hook”
- Frame your argument if you can: set it up by emphasizing its “arguability”
- Express your thesis in *local* terms, by providing details from the story, but also in *global* terms, by addressing its larger significance
- Make sure your argument is clear: your readers should have no doubt as to what your argument is.
- Take a risk, even a little one!

SUPPORTING PARAGRAPHS

- Make sure your topic sentence is in local terms and that it avoids summary
- Always provide some context before the quote
- Your evidence should be rich enough to close read
- Using literary devices (contrast, imagery, irony, word choice, foils, symbols, metaphors, similes, etc) counts as close reading if you use them accurately!
- Aim to make a transition between each supporting paragraph, even if you only use of the transitional words (aka conjunctive adverbs!)
- Make sure that you provide an analysis of the final lines of the story in the body of your essay (probably in the 3rd or 4th supporting paragraph)

CONCLUSION

- Don’t repeat yourself!
- Offer a new perspective
- Explain how your argument changes how we read the story.
- Connect to something outside of the text (history, another literary text, current events)
- Offer a really creative translation of a small quote that works to support your argument

Choose from the following short stories: “The Loons” by Margaret Laurence or “A & P” by John Updike (You may also choose “Voke Tech” by Theodore Weesner or “Helen on Eighty-Sixth Street” by Wendi Kaufman).