

**Topic for Paper 1:** How is a theme represented in a short story through the use of a dominant literary element or literary elements?

**Examples of literary elements:** characterization which emphasizes character arc (how a protagonist changes by the end of the story; what plot events propel him/her to an epiphany), author's use of selected point of view/narration, setting (this can include historical context), conflict, tone, plot structure (please note that this structure contains exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution), figurative language which can include symbolism, simile, metaphor, irony; diction, repetition, motifs, etc.

**\*\*You may also refer to Table of Contents/Course Resources to access link for the Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms.**

You will develop a paper that answers this question and demonstrates the following competencies for writing and literature:

### **Competencies**

- I can read literature for a purpose.
- I can annotate digital or print materials to demonstrate reading and summary skills.
- I can identify a theme in a short story.
- I can identify one to three examples in the story that support the theme.
- I can write a thesis statement that clearly identifies the title of a story, its author, the theme, and what my paper will discuss about the story and the theme.
- I can write clear topic sentences for my paragraphs that let the reader know what the paragraph will discuss.
- I can write paragraphs that explain how the examples from the story support the theme.
- I can organize a paper by presenting paragraphs in a logical and interesting fashion.
- I can write sentences in standard American English that clearly express my ideas.
- I can document my use of the material from the story within the paper and on a Work Cited page in the style of MLA formatting.
- I can explain what I have learned about my writing process in a clear and logical fashion.

**Short story list:** Choose **one** of the following stories accessed under **Week 1, Section 4:** **Choose Your Short Story. Pick a story from a theme that interests you such as "Courage" or "The Meaning of Life."**

### **Overview of the Workshop Format for Paper 1**

Writing this paper will be done in a process that allows you to practice and develop your writing skills in the discussions. During Weeks 1 through 4, you will work on your paper in the classroom, receive feedback from your instructor, and build your paper, part-by-part, into your final version. It will allow you time over this period to get to know and develop your writing process through a workshop format as you will be able to revise and edit the different sections as you go along, thereby demonstrating the competency of that particular section.

To be successful in this process, you must be active and engaged in the weekly discussions and post in a timely fashion. That way, you can successfully demonstrate the weekly competency and be building your paper.

**Week 1: Critical Reading Strategies and Selection of Topic.** During Week 1, you will cover strategies to help you with critical reading, including techniques for reading and annotating digital materials. To prepare you for working with your topic for the paper, you will work on these strategies in Week 1 (and throughout the course). During Week 1, you will study the concept of theme and the genre of the short story. You will choose your short story and theme from the list provided by your instructor.

**Week 2: Thesis.** Your thesis statement should include the story, the literary element or elements that help to elicit theme. You will workshop the thesis of your paper during Week 2 in the discussions. Outlining and organizational strategies will also be covered.

**Week 3: Development.** The development or body of the paper will focus on finding examples (i.e. direct quotations) in the story that support the theme and then explaining in your paper how they do so. During Week 3, you will workshop strategies for developing body paragraphs in the discussion. Except for the stories themselves, **you will be developing this material through your own observations; you are not to use outside sources for this material. Any papers that demonstrate evidence of plagiarism will receive a zero.**

**Week 4: Sentence Level and MLA.** Your writing should be carefully proofed for sentence-level concerns. It should be formatted and documented according to MLA documentation in the form of parenthetical citations and a Works Cited page. For the Works Cited page, please refer to Week 4 content reading concerning MLA paying particular attention to the Purdue Owl link that demonstrates how to create a Work Cited entry for an electronic resource. During Week 4, you will workshop these areas in the discussion. You will submit the final paper at the end of Week 4.

**Hints:** Remember that your reader has read the story and is familiar with it. You do not have to spend much time on summary. Instead, your development should explain and analyze how the theme is demonstrated in your story.

**Special Hint about Plot:** Be aware that a paper about a piece of literature is NOT a plot summary. Your plot summary, if you must have one, should provide only the details necessary to highlight the parts of the story which help to develop your paper, such as a short paragraph of five to six sentences. If you choose plot structure, however, as a dominant element that helps to elicit theme, then you would address the components of that plot structure.

So, when synthesizing all the weekly work done during the discussion forums, your essay should contain:

- An engaging, relevant **opening paragraph** which leads to your thesis statement. Your introduction should contain author's full name and title of story. Titles of short stories are placed in quotation marks. Once you introduce author by full name, subsequent references to author in the body of the essay, can be by last name only. Do not use the author's first name.
- Do not use first person (i.e. I believe that...) in the paper.

- **Thesis statement**, ideally should occur at the end of the introductory paragraph and should indicate, either explicitly or implicitly the elements of fiction to be analyzed. Avoid the use of first person and what is known as the "announcement" tone---In this essay, I will.... Thesis statements can be up to three sentences in length.
- Your **tone** and **language** for the essay should be suitable for your audience of college-educated adults (so the use of slang, informal language, and the use of first person should be avoided).
- **Organization**: Your essay's organization will be dictated by the elements that you choose to select. Each body paragraph's topic sentence should indicate the element to be discussed. You do not need to provide definitions for these terms. The paragraph's content will then support the topic sentence, thereby providing paragraph unity.
- **Citations & Works Cited**: Please include "direct quotes" and paraphrases from the story to support your assertions. Do not, however, "over-quote." Be selective and choose direct quotes that you feel best support your points. Introduce your direct quotes with clear signal phrases and/or full signal sentences. Document all direct quotes and paraphrases using MLA citation--i.e. parenthetical citation containing either page number--i.e. (73). or paragraph number--i.e. (par. 3). Choose one style, either page or paragraph number and keep consistent throughout essay. Format your Work Cited entry correctly and include this at the end of the essay. **Do not use any outside sources other than the short story.** Plagiarized papers or papers that do not contain parenthetical documentation and a Works Cited page will not be accepted.
- **Conclusion**: Your concluding paragraph should re-emphasize thesis (however, do not retype thesis exactly as you presented it in your intro; attempt to use different diction), perhaps highlight a few key points from your analysis, and discuss the theme/messages of the story and whether these themes are universal in nature.
- **Reflection on your Writing Process**: After your Works Cited, provide an overview of your writing process for this essay and what you have learned about your writing process by developing your paper. Also note two areas which you would like feedback on, such as thesis statement and topic sentences. This can be a short paragraph.

When complete, upload your work to the Assignment Folder within the link "Paper 1" by the deadline.

**Word Count:** 500-750 words (you may go over the 750 word maximum if you feel it enriches your analysis. Most students will find that this may be necessary). Please note that the word count does not include the Works Cited page.