

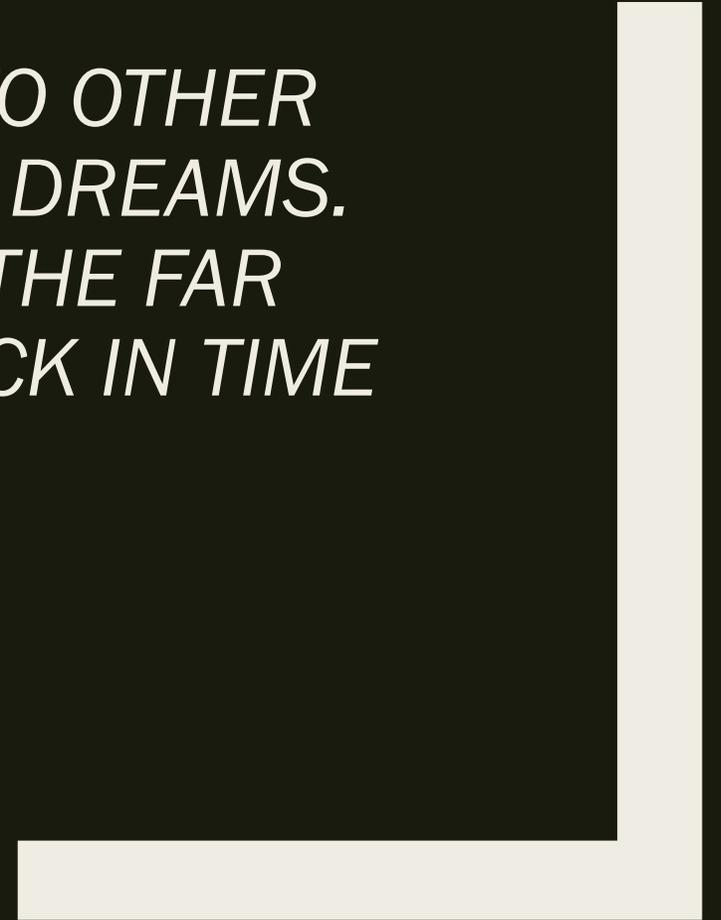


SHORT STORIES

The Importance of the Short Story
and Effective Reading Strategies



“SHORT STORIES ARE TINY WINDOWS INTO OTHER WORLDS AND OTHER MINDS AND OTHER DREAMS. THEY ARE JOURNEYS YOU CAN MAKE TO THE FAR SIDE OF THE UNIVERSE AND STILL BE BACK IN TIME FOR DINNER.” — NEIL GAIMAN



The Elements: Purpose and Central Idea

- Finding the purpose of the story can be done through questioning
 - *What is the story really about?*
 - *What is the problem?*
 - *How do the characters' desires clash with one another?*

- For example: Harry Potter is about a boy who goes to wizard school and has lots of adventures. But Harry Potter is also about the difference between good and evil.

The Elements: Point of View

- 1st Person
 - *Uses “I”, often personal*
 - *Limited perspective, prone to narrator bias*
- 3rd Person Limited (common)
 - *Uses he, she, they, etc.*
 - *Flips from character to character and allows for deeper understanding of each*
- 3rd Person Omniscient (uncommon)
 - *Uses he, she, they, etc.*
 - *Narrator knows all, struggles to hold suspense*

“A SHORT STORY IS A LOVE AFFAIR, A NOVEL IS A MARRIAGE. A SHORT STORY IS A PHOTOGRAPH; A NOVEL IS A FILM.”—LORRIE MOORE



The Elements: Setting

- Where and When!
- What does the setting tell you about the characters before reading the entire story?
- How would the characters act in a different setting?

The Elements: Character

- Not every protagonist is created with the hope that the reader sympathizes with their struggles
- Descriptions, actions, and dialogue are all vital to creating a well rounded character – pay attention to each of these
 - *What do the characters want? Do they realize this?*
- Pay attention to the language and vocabulary usage.
 - *The way characters are spoken of and ‘treated’ by the narrator completes a reader’s understanding*

“I LOVE SHORT STORIES BECAUSE I BELIEVE THEY ARE THE WAY WE LIVE. THEY ARE WHAT OUR FRIENDS TELL US, IN THEIR PAIN AND JOY, THEIR PASSION AND RAGE, THEIR YEARNING AND THEIR CRY AGAINST INJUSTICE.” – ANDRE DUBUS

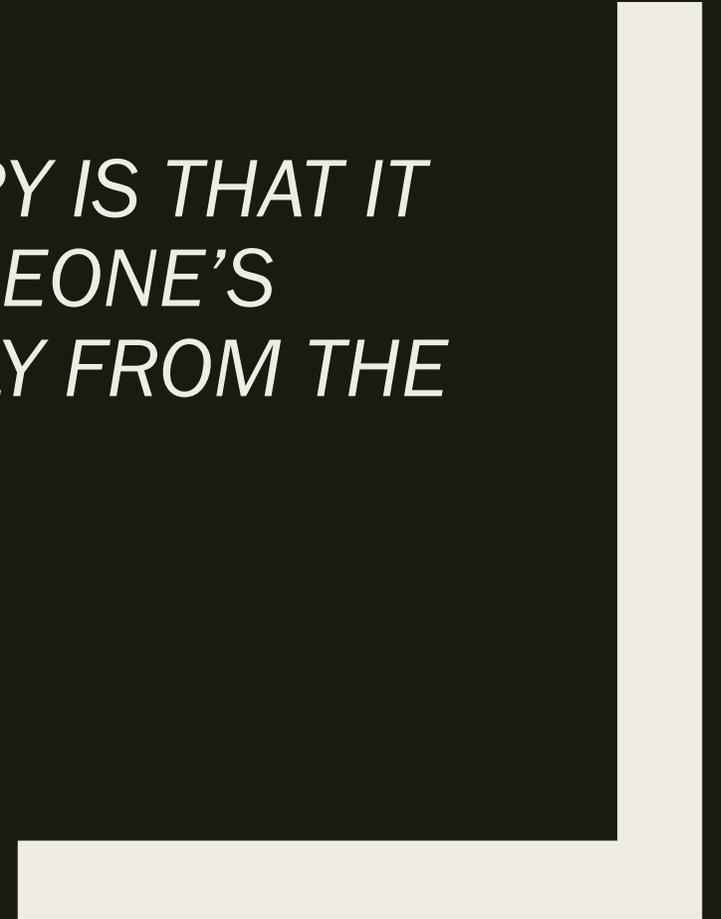
Effective Reading Strategies: Noting the Noteworthy

- Moments that relate to the major themes
- Major events in the storyline and/or for characters
- Character descriptions
- When a character changes their mood/acts in an unusual way
- Anything that would work well as a quote for an essay
 - *Remember: Quotes do not have to come from the dialogue within the text, they can be any text*

Noteworthy: Make Connections

- What connections do I make as I read?
- Take notice of pieces of text that relate to/remind you of:
 - *Your life, past experiences, and prior knowledge (Text to Self, T-S)*
 - *Other books, articles, movies, songs, or pieces of writing (Text to Text, T-T)*
 - *Events, people, or issues (Text to World, T-W)*
- Tips:
 - *That reminds me of...*
 - *This made me think of...*
 - *I read another book that...*
 - *This is different from...*
 - *I remember when...*

“THE GREAT THING ABOUT A SHORT STORY IS THAT IT DOESN'T HAVE TO TRAWL THROUGH SOMEONE'S WHOLE LIFE; IT CAN COME IN GLANCINGLY FROM THE SIDE.” – EMMA DONOGHUE



Noteworthy: Visualize (--oo--)

- While reading, note places where you get a clear picture in your mind that helps you understand the text
 - *I can picture...*
 - *I can see the...*
 - *I can visualize...*
 - *The movie in my head shows...*
- Use your senses to connect the characters, events, and ideas to clarify the picture in your head.
 - *I can taste/hear/smell the...*
 - *I can feel the...*

Noteworthy: Ask Questions (?)

- Ask questions of the author, yourself, and the text
 - *What is the author trying to say?*
 - *What is the message of this piece?*
 - *Do I know something about this topic?*
 - *What do I think I will learn from this text?*
 - *How could this be explained to someone else?*
 - *What predictions do I have about this reading?*

“SHORT STORIES CAN BE RATHER STARK AND BARE UNLESS YOU PUT IN THE RIGHT DETAILS. DETAILS MAKE STORIES HUMAN, AND THE MORE HUMAN A STORY CAN BE, THE BETTER.” – V. S. PRITCHETT

Noteworthy: Infer (Hmm...)

- Ask yourself:
 - *I wonder why...*
 - *I wonder how...*
 - *I wonder if...*
- Find information from the text that might be clues to the answers and use these with your background knowledge for possible answers.

Noteworthy: Wait, There's More

- Use different color highlighters for different reasons
 - *Yellow = themes*
 - *Orange = important events*
 - *Blue = use of conventions or elements*
- Take notes off to the side even if you highlighted the text
- DO NOT over highlight – too much lessens the effectiveness

“I DON’T THINK I WOULD EVER WANT TO BE A WRITER OF DETECTIVE STORIES – BUT I WOULD LIKE TO BE A DETECTIVE AND THERE IS A LARGE DEAL OF DETECTION IN THE SHORT STORY.” – MARY LAVIN

Short Stories: The Process

- Before each block:
 - *Read the assigned short story*
 - *Highlight and annotate the reading on the actual text*
 - *Complete the Effective Reading Cornell Notes*

- You will be completing work during class related to the reading
- You will also be turning in your annotated text and ERCN

- Vocabulary:
 - Complete 24 quality words of your choice from the stories assigned
 - Be sure to list the title of the story and page number for each word
 - *These will be due alongside your essay on November 20*