Grade 9 Short Stories Unit

Journal Response Questions/Activities

Lesson 1: Elements of Fiction Overview

**(“The Taste of Melon”)**

**7 Elements**

1. Identify the 7 elements of fiction present within “The Taste of Melon” and provide specific examples of each. Note: for plot, try to sum it up in 1-2 sentences. You will write a larger summary later on.
2. Identify a possible alternative ending point in the story (Hint: there are two climaxes within this story). How would the story be different if the author had chosen to end it earlier? Which ending point do you like better and why?
3. When a concrete object is used to represent an abstract concept such as a thought, feeling, idea, or event, this is called “Symbolism.” The melon represents many different things to different characters within the story. Choose one of the characters from the story and discuss what the melon means to him/her.
4. **A summary is a brief statement about the main, and supporting details of a text. Using point-form (bullets), identify the main idea and supporting details in A Taste of Melon. In the form of a paragraph (between 5-10 sentences in length), fill in the blanks between these details to write a summary of the story. /5**

**Connections: Text-Self**

1. Can you make a text-self connection with any parts of this story? Explain.

Lesson 2: Conflict

**(“On the Sidewalk Bleeding”)**

**Conflict**

1. What is it that Andy ultimately wants? Does he get what he wants: why/why not?
2. Is there more than one conflict in the story? If so, which would you say is the most important?
3. Is the major conflict within the story internal, external, or both? Explain.

**Style - Symbolism**

1. Why is the jacket such an important factor in the story? How does the symbol of the jacket represent the story’s conflict?

**Style – Sensory Details**

1. In what ways does the author connect with the reader’s senses? Is he successful in connecting the reader with the story in this way?

**Connections – Audience & Text-Text**

1. Describe who you think the author’s target audience is. How do you know?

Lesson 3: Plot

**(“CSI”)**

**Conflict**

1. What type of conflict is occurring within this episode of “CSI”?

**Style – Sentence Structure**

1. The dialogue within CSI is short and pointed. Is this well-suited to the plot?

**Plotline**

1. **Download the plotline graph from the class website and fill in the text boxes to graph the plot (introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution) of “CSI,” including details to ensure that I know which scene/event you are making reference to. /5**

Lesson 4: Setting

**(“The Sniper”)**

**Style – Mood, Imagery/Sensory Details & Situational Irony**

1. Identify and explain the significance of “mood” in O’Flaherty’s story (“The Sniper”). How does the mood help us to understand the characters and events within the story?
2. List 3 examples of “imagery”/”sensory details” within *The Sniper*. Explain how each adds to the mood of the story.
3. Explain what “situational irony” is, and provide an example from the story.

**Setting**

1. Identify the following types of setting present in The Sniper. Refer back to your notes if you forget what one of these types is.
   1. Physical
   2. Geographical
   3. Temporal
   4. Historical
   5. Social
   6. Political
2. By telling this story, what point is O’Flaherty trying to make?
3. Would O’Flaherty have been able to effectively convey his point without creating his war-time setting? Why of why not?
4. **Think about a memory of your choosing, and write a paragraph describing the setting (Where are you? What is the season? Time? Place? What do you see? Taste? Smell? Hear? Feel?). /5**

Lesson 5: Character

**(“Finding My Voice”)**

**Form – Visual vs. Written Texts**

1. Is it easier to read a graphic story than a written one? Why/why not?

**Elements of Fiction – Class Trivia Activity**

1. Rather than respond to questions for this story, we will play a trivia game.

**Character**

1. **Download the “Character Map” from the class website. Choose one character from “Finding My Voice” and create a character map for that character. Why (or why not) do these traits make the character effective for the story’s plot? /5**

Lesson 6: Point-of-View

**(“Lamb to Slaughter”)**

**Style – Double Entendre & Dramatic Irony**

1. The title of “Lamb to Slaughter” has a double meaning. Can you take a guess as to what this double meaning is?
2. “Lamb to Slaughter” uses irony as a source of dark humor throughout, especially at the end. Explain why the ending of the story is an example of “dramatic irony.”

**Point of View**

1. What narrative point-of-view is being used to tell the story: first-person participant, third-person omniscient, or third-person limited omniscient?
2. If the story was told through the point-of-view of Patrick Maloney:
   1. Who would the antagonist be?
   2. Would the reader feel more sympathetic towards Patrick or Mary?
   3. How would the plot be different? The conflict?
3. **Select an item found in your house (food, furniture, pet, appliance), and tell the story of “a day in the life of a common household item.” Your story must be told from the POV of this item. Consider your item’s: experiences, relationships, opinions, thoughts, and feelings. Add an image to spruce it up! /5**

Lesson 7: Theme

**Unit-Wide Theme Study:**

1. Think about which aspects make a good story. Which, in your opinion, was the best story we read in this unit? Why?
2. **Download the “Found Poem” instructions and template from the class website. Choose one of the stories studied in this unit (not including “A Taste of Melon”) and create a 5-line found poem. For each line of your poem, identify which element of fiction is being used to convey the theme. /5**