

ENTRY F – THE CREATIVE WRITING PROJECT

The Short Story

Since September of last year, you have studied and experimented with the figurative and rhetorical devices associated with persuasion, research and literary analysis. The final entry in your digital portfolio will center on a pursuit that is vastly different from these outcomes: based on your careful analysis of literature read during the third quarter, you will work to develop your own short story.

While students normally love the opportunity to express their creativity in such a medium, they often lack the discipline and meticulous planning that professional writers use to refine their work. This assignment will help you nourish and eventually organize ideas for your own unique work of fiction. It will help you realize that the use of literary elements is almost never coincidental—elements related to symbolism, setting, theme, plot, point of view and characterization require substantial consideration if they are to be used naturally—and that the figurative and rhetorical devices that you employ as the author will infuse your tale with a life and character all its own.

So get ready, people. Serious work on this project begins today. I am extremely proud of all that you have accomplished in class this year and look forward to reading your own fiction.

PART I – GENERATING IDEAS

Similar to the university research paper, the amount of thinking, investigation, and planning one invests in a short story prior to actually writing it represents the portion of the iceberg that lurks below the surface of the ocean. You will find that the greatest challenge in writing quality fiction is creating a world that is believable and brilliant. Prior to writing your story, you will limit your energy to the construction of a vivid setting, original plot, rich, believable characters, powerful symbols, and enriching themes. The manner in which you tell the story (i.e. via diction, figurative and rhetorical devices, etc.) will require careful consideration as well.

PART II – FASHIONING A LITERARY WEB

Once you have collected sufficient details regarding your story, you must then go about considering how the literary, rhetorical and figurative devices will interact in the development of your tale. During this phase of the assignment, you will learn how to weave various elements of fiction within your own narrative voice in the creation of a first-rate story. This process will culminate in the creation of an outline that will serve as your road map during the actual writing process.

PART III – WRITING & EDITING (& EDITING, & EDITING...) THE SHORT STORY

The final phase of this unit will afford you significant time to write the actual story. While the suggested length for the assignment (approximately 2000 – 4000 words) is considerable, you will also spend a great deal of your time rewording dialogue, seeking the perfect adjective, and massaging tone. You will share your written drafts with peers as a means of learning from their work while improving your own. When it is all said and done, you will have created a work of fiction you will be proud to call your own.

A FINAL REMINDER...

Because of the freedom and creativity associated with this project, students often attack it with great enthusiasm. As much as I hope that you are eager to author your very own work of fiction, I want to remind you that this challenge calls for a tremendous amount of planning, discipline and even strategy. Like the novels and short stories we have read in class, I expect you to create a multi-layered and sophisticated work. Do not underestimate the importance of preparation and careful deliberation in the creation of your short story.

Preview the sample short story and examine the instructional and diagnostic rubrics before you begin