

General Short Story Analysis Questions, Elements of Fiction

Eng 253 / Ramsey

Directions: Use your Elements of Fiction notes to help you analyze the story. Write one paragraph of analysis for each of the five elements below, but you don't have to put your responses in essay-form; numbering your responses is fine. You don't have to answer all of the questions listed below—just use the questions to help you generate ideas for analysis.

YOU ARE NOT WRITING AN ESSAY. YOU ARE JUST WRITING FIVE SEPARATE PARAGRAPHS OF ANALYSIS.

Your five paragraphs of analysis should have a minimum of five sentences each. This means you will be turning in twenty-five sentences, minimum. Include strong topic sentences.

You are welcome to type or handwrite your analysis. 25 points possible.

Plot

What do we learn in the exposition of the story? Where is tension in the story? Is the tension inside the protagonist or outside, or both? What causes the tension? Where is the climax of the story? What in the story is resolved? What is not resolved? Is there lingering tension with some of the conflicts? How does the story's resolution tie to the exposition? Does the resolution answer some of the questions or address some of the issues brought up in the exposition?

Characterization

Who is protagonist? Who or what is antagonist? What conflicts does protagonist experience? Are these resolved, or not? How, or why not? What part of the protagonist is struggling, and with what, exactly? Which characters are static, and which are evolving? What motivates the protagonist? Does the protagonist evolve? If so, how



does s/he change? If the protagonist doesn't change, why not? Which characters are round, which are flat, which are somewhere in between? Is the protagonist purely good or a mixture of good and bad? Is the antagonist purely bad, or does s/he have some positive characteristics and qualities, too? How is the protagonist like the antagonist? How is s/he different?

Point of view

From whose perspective do we see this story unfold? Whose perspective is NOT represented, and why? What does this type of point of view allow us to understand, and what does it prevent us from understanding? Why do you think the author chose this type of point of view for this particular story? How would the story be different if the author had chosen a different type of point of view?

Setting

How does the physical setting contribute to the novel? In what way(s) is the setting similar to or different from the characters who live there? Does the physical setting change? From what to what? If the setting does change, what does this change suggest about a change in the protagonist? Why do you think the author chose this particular setting for the story? What does the setting reveal, and what does it conceal? How would the story be different if it were set in a different time and/or place?

Theme

What is the author trying to tell us about life, humanity, or ourselves through this novel? What does the protagonist "learn" through the

events and conflicts in this story? If the protagonist doesn't learn anything, what *should* s/he have learned? What are some feelings, conflicts, and/or universal human experiences we, the readers, share with the protagonist?