

Joyce's purpose in Dubliners was to write stories about everyday life in Dublin in which one character had an epiphany, a sudden realization or a moment of illumination, about his/her own condition and in some sense about the condition of the society in which he/she lived. However, Joyce expected his readers to work: he does not announce these epiphanies with trumpets. You need to read carefully and make inferences **based upon the evidence he gives you**. The Sisters and An Encounter are the first two stories in this book and thus introduce some of its main themes.

Write an essay of at least four paragraphs **explaining the narrator's epiphany in both stories**: what sudden realization(s) did he have, and what were its consequences? **Can you find a common theme or feeling in these two stories? Please don't research this: you will learn more by "being wrong" and trying than "being right" with someone else's answer.** Taking this chance of being "wrong" about these stories will vastly improve your reading skills as it did mine when I was your age.

\* In the **first paragraph**, introduce the stories, particularly the setting, and the topic of the essay. This might also be a good place to introduce the overall mood of the characters and stories. How does Joyce feel about his world? Go into detail in answering this question. Be sure it concludes with a **THESIS STATEMENT**.

\* In the **second paragraph**, discuss The Sisters, focusing on the realization you think the narrator has come to by the end of the story. Be aware that Joyce does not underline or shout these epiphanies. He expects you to sense and discover them through careful reading. **Feel free to take chances here, but back up your opinions with evidence from the story.** Use parenthetical notes to show the source of your evidence and quotations. Be sure to sum up your paragraph at the end.

\* In the **third paragraph**, discuss An Encounter, focusing on the realization you think the narrator has come to by the end of the story. Be sure to back up your statements with evidence from the story. Use parenthetical notes to show the source of your evidence and quotations. Be sure to sum up your paragraph at the end.

\* In the **final paragraph**, summarize your conclusions about these characters' epiphanies, and try to find connections between them. **What do these stories indicate about Joyce's view of childhood and his overall view of life?**

**We will discuss these stories in class soon. If you don't have the essay completed adequately, you're not invited to the discussion. This will set you back significantly in understanding the entire book. I would be glad to discuss your ideas with you outside of class once you have read the stories, but that means reading them before the last minute.**

**DON'T USE OUTSIDE MATERIALS other than a dictionary. I'm more interested in pushing your reading ability than in your coming up with any "right" answer. Be aware that every word is carefully chosen. You can't afford to skim, and multiple readings would be smart.**

**Due: Thursday, March 30.** If you're absent, be sure the essay gets in to [caryh@school-one.org](mailto:caryh@school-one.org) on time!  
**Revision must be thoroughly done and handed in by Monday, April 10 at the latest.**