

**AP English 12**  
**Romantic Short Story Assignment**

In their 1802 preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth and Coleridge explain the goal of Romantic poetry:

*The principal object, then, proposed in these Poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life...*

*[In that poetry] the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature.*

*Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity.*

**Other themes frequently included in Romantic literature:** anti-industrialism, celebration of the pastoral, a movement away from rules and order, sublime description, focus on political and social unrest, and the degradation of human life within cities.

**Assignment:** Write a piece of micro-fiction that draws on **at least two** of the themes found in Romantic or Neo-Romantic literature (see more on following page).

Length: 2-3 pages

Format: Typed, 12-point font, double-spaced

| Monday                                                                       | Tuesday                                       | Wednesday                 | Thursday                                                                                                      | Friday                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NO SCHOOL                                                                    | Feb. 2                                        | Feb. 3                    | Feb. 4<br>Andy Goldsworthy<br><br>Discuss "In Iowa"<br>and "A Summer's<br>Day"<br><br>Short Story<br>Assigned | Feb. 5<br>Pick up <i>Wuthering<br/>Heights</i><br><br>Walk in the woods<br>(bring a coat!)<br><br><b>HW: begin drafting<br/>story, WH chapters<br/>1-5</b> |
| Feb. 8<br>Discuss WH<br><br><b>HW: WH chapters<br/>6-8 due<br/>Wednesday</b> | Feb. 9<br><br><i>Short Story Work<br/>Day</i> | Feb. 10<br><br>Discuss WH | Feb. 11<br><br><i>Short Story Work<br/>Day</i>                                                                | Feb. 12<br><br><i>Story Work Day</i><br><br><b>Perfectured draft due<br/>to Mrs. K by email<br/>at end of class</b>                                        |

**During Break:** Finish *Wuthering Heights* for Monday, February 22

**Assignment Details**

Micro writing, by nature, is defiant. It defies length, boundaries, and expectations. But tight, provocative writing requires careful thought and editing. Taking an idea and distilling it into a "micro"-cosm of its original self is challenging. It is often easy to go on and on when telling a story, but it takes courage and careful editing to create a piece micro-fiction. Below are the guidelines you'll need to follow in writing and editing your piece.

1. **Length and form:** Micro-fiction should be brief and vivid. Keep your piece between **two and three pages** (12 point font, Times New Roman, double spaced, standard margins). You must go beyond a description of nature--this must tell a story!

2. **Consider characters and setting:** Where does your story take place? Who are your characters? These people, their surroundings and their struggles should be carefully considered and fully described.

3. **Tell a story:** Like all good stories, there should be rising action, a climactic moment, and falling action. Your characters should do something!

4. **Be willing to edit and re-edit right from the start:** In order to keep your piece brief and focused be willing to cut out filler, swap in the best sounding words possible, and cut, cut, cut until you get a piece that says a lot in a short space.

5. **Pay attention to language:** Choose your words carefully because you're using so few. Each word should have weight and merit in your piece. Try to use as few filler words as possible to make it tight and focused. Dialogue should only develop characters, and descriptions should be vivid.

## Brainstorming

This is a Romantic piece, and as such, should incorporate vivid descriptions of the natural world. Take a walk in nature. Sit quietly. What do you hear, smell and feel? How can you describe these things? How could your characters interact with nature or experience it in your story?

Some ideas:

- Characters are trapped in a desolate and lonely city. They long for the freedom and beauty of nature.
- Characters are out in nature but encounter trash, debris, maybe even dead animals. They are shocked by the pillage of their world.

Consider the relationships between your characters. Are they lovers, friends, enemies? Play with time periods. It could be set today, in the 80's, in the 19th Century, or any time!