

Greetings future English IV students!

I'm excited that each of you have decided to take this class. I'm writing with instructions for your **Summer 2022 Reading Assignment**. I aim to make everything that we do in or around this class as purpose-filled as possible, so I hope that as you move through your summer reading and writing you can have the sense that you're doing important work that will serve you well throughout and lay a foundation for the year. Please email me or come see me with any questions that you may have about what I'm asking you to do.

I also want to go ahead and say that everything you'll need for these assignments can be accessed via this link to a google drive folder:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/14TKUGrN5nNZYst2yNoJ4a8zTIsDm5jR-?usp=sharing>

### **Assignment: Short Fiction Reading and Analysis Essay**

I'm asking you to read six short stories by various authors who detail all kinds of experiences and employ numerous stylistic choices and literary techniques. These short stories together create a true "survey" of short fiction. My goal is to show you some truly "good" and "interesting" stories that each have something quite different to say. My hope is that there will be at least one story that you resonate with among these six (though obviously my *greatest* hope is that you enjoy all of them to some extent). These six stories comprise our first unit of English IV, so we will study them in depth when we get back to school. You're just getting a head start on them this summer.

#### List of Stories

"Sonny's Blues" by James Baldwin

"To Build a Fire" by Jack London

"Tenth of December" by George Saunders

"A Worn Path" by Eudora Welty

"The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World" by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

"What We Talk About When We Talk About Love" by Raymond Carver

Though you are responsible for reading all six stories (and can expect a series of reading checks on each one at the beginning of the year as we get to it in class), I am asking you to choose **TWO** stories to write about. Again, among the six stories, **please choose just TWO of them, and write a standard five paragraph analytical essay in which you make a connection between them.**

I'm leaving this prompt quite broad for a reason—I want to see what kinds of connections you organically make between texts. It gives you a lot of agency to follow your instincts and allows me to see what YOU in particular noticed as you read.

Here are some examples of possible thesis statements for this prompt. I hope that these examples help to show you what sorts of things constitute a connection between two works of literature. (note: I have completely made these up, these thesis statements don't necessarily say true things about the stories that I'm writing about):

O'Connor's "Good Country People" and Baldwin's "Sonny's Blues" tell the stories of disenfranchised people who are down on their luck. The added component of race as a theme in Baldwin's story distinguishes it from O'Connor's, and adds a layer of complication. (It would be a good idea for me to go ahead and name what this layer of complication is...if this were a perfect thesis).

"The Conscience of the Court" and "The Story of an Hour" each portray very forward-thinking feminist figures. However, Chopin's heroine's narration is quiet and inward, while Hurston's is loud and fierce. Both figures successfully convey their desire to be heard though they express this desire in stylistically divergent ways.

Notice that in both hypothetical thesis statements I've drawn a connection between two stories (for instance, "both stories tell stories about people who are disenfranchised." But then I go on to **distinguish and specify the connection** a little bit by saying that one of the stories works the idea or manifestations of race into its story while the other doesn't, and I assert that this changes things in the story. My job in the essay, because of what my thesis is, is to both establish the ways in which both stories treat the disenfranchised, but also to explain that there is a clear difference in the two stories, and that that difference is caused by one of the writers' treatment of race).

There is a rubric in the google drive folder that you can refer to as you write!

This essay will be submitted to turnitin.com **during our first class** in August.

### **Google Drive Folder Link**

Once more, here is the link to the google drive folder where you can access everything you need that is related to the summer reading and summer assignments:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/14TKUGrN5nNZYst2yNoJ4a8zTIsDm5jR-?usp=sharing>