

Your thesis statement is due : Friday, 5/31

Choose a genre (sci-fi, fantasy, detective stories, etc.) or a period/movement (Romanticism, Realism, Modernism, Harlem Renaissance, Southern Gothic, etc.) of short fiction, and develop a thesis statement about your subject, which focuses on a particular aspect or characteristic of that genre or period. For this paper, choose a minimum of two short stories to discuss, which exhibit the particular characteristic. You may in addition to the two short stories make reference to novels or poetry, if you wish. You will also have to draw upon published criticism (at least two sources) that supports your assertions.

Recommended length is five to seven pages (typed, double-spaced), structured as follows:

- Introduction which gives a brief overview of the period or genre to be discussed, introduces the one defining characteristic to be discussed, your thesis statement regarding that characteristic, and the titles of at least two works which support your thesis.
- Body paragraphs that:
 1. Probe the works cited in your introduction (don't just summarize the stories).
 2. Point out the characteristic discussed therein.
 3. Provide citations from published critical essays that support your assertions.
 4. Contains a clincher sentence that validates your thesis statement about the genre's or period's characteristic.
- A conclusion which recaps the highlights of your essay, reiterating your thesis statement.

Guidelines:

- Be sure to give correct names of characters, authors and titles.
- Organize your essay in a logical, coherent manner. (An introduction that clearly states the thesis of your essay, body paragraphs with topic sentences, and a conclusion)
- Give only factual information. If it didn't happen in the story, you'd better not bring it up in your essay!!!
- Avoid 1st and 2nd person references. (Don't address yourself by using "I", nor should you address the reader by using "you")
- Follow the conventions of standard written English. Correct spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar are important!
- All papers must be typed, double-spaced; MLA formatting is required!

The Short Story

(Details to follow.)

You are encouraged to explore the literature on your own to arrive at a thesis statement. However, if you are drawing a blank, you can always re-assert a thesis that has already been made by other literary critics, many of whose ideas we have covered over the course of the term.

- **Short fiction of the Romantic period seeks to illustrate the beauty of unspoiled nature.**
- **Poe's horror fiction avoids the exploration of complex themes and focuses entirely on what he called "the singular effect".**
- **Realist short story writers felt that literature should reflect life as it really is, with no romantic notions, but offering a true depiction of the horrors as well as the triumphs of individuals in adversity.**
- **Characters of the Naturalist offshoot of Realism often feel trapped and isolated and have no control over their situations.**
- **Modernist short story writers display an unconventional use of metaphor.**
- **One school of thought among Harlem Renaissance authors was that characters should be realistic representations, with all the faults and flaws of real people, rather than merely tools of propaganda for social change.**
- **Southern Gothic writers use supernatural, ironic, or unusual events to reveal the eccentricities and inequities of Southern society.**
- **A good ghost story should contain no ghost, only the implied or subtle presence of one.**
- **Even intricate detective mysteries involve crimes with very simple motives.**
- **Good Science Fiction not only provides a vision of an alternate or future world, but provides commentary about our own.**
- **Many Irish short stories take a realist approach that focus on a moment of crisis or life-altering change in the protagonist.**