

# Reading and Writing

## The Short Story

Department: English (Senior Elective) Length: 1 Year

This course: 1) emphasizes the crucial relationship between reading and writing short stories and 2) encourages the influence of renowned writers upon student writers. Concentrating on a different genre each quarter, students initially study stories by the masters and then create their own. The major goal of the course is to convince students that successful writers are necessarily lifelong readers.

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### First Quarter – The Memoir

– You will get a reader

#### Weeks 1-4

Students learn the differences and similarities between memoir and autobiography on one hand and between memoir and fiction on the other hand. Readings include excerpts from: Toni Morrison, Russell Baker, Amy Tan, Tobias Wolff, Wendy Lesser, Henry Louis Gates Jr., Annie Dillard, Jill Ker Conway among others.

- Writing Assignment: A 750-1000 word essay comparing and contrasting the shape and purpose of two memoirs by different authors.

#### Weeks 5-7

Students write their own memoir, shaping a significant past event or time honestly and accurately into a work of art. Meeting in workshops, students critique each other's drafts.

- Writing Assignment: A 1500-2000 word memoir.

#### Week 8

In the lab, students word process their completed memoirs in a standardized format to create an online anthology.

#### Week 9

Students read their memoirs aloud to classmates.

## **Second Quarter – The Conventional Story**

### **Weeks 10-13**

After reading and studying representative stories by the craft's founders, Chekhov and Poe, students progress to other masters such as: Irving, Hawthorne, Twain, Wharton, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Porter, Baldwin, O'Connor, Carver, Tan, Updike, and Allende. We pay particular attention to the use of the following elements in creating a conventional story: character, point of view, plot, conflict, climax, denouement, figurative language, dramatic irony, and theme.

- **Writing Assignment:** A 750-1000 word essay comparing and contrasting the structures of two stories by different authors.

### **Weeks 14-16**

Students write their own conventional short story. Meeting in workshops, students critique each other's drafts.

- **Writing Assignment:** A 1500-2000 word conventional short story.

### **Week 17**

In the lab, students word process their completed stories in a standardized format to create an online anthology.

### **Week 18**

Students read their stories aloud to classmates.



## **Third Quarter – The Mystery Story**

### **Weeks 19-21**

Students read and study stories in The Best Mystery Stories of the Year. We pay close attention to strategies different mystery writers employ to achieve desired effects.

- **Writing Assignment:** A 750-1000 essay comparing and contrasting the creation of suspense in two different stories by different authors.

### **Weeks 22-23**

Students write their own mystery story. Each story must incorporate a fairly well-known Berkeley setting in the plot. Meeting in workshops, students critique each other's drafts.

- **Writing Assignment:** A 1500-2000 word mystery story.

### **Week 24:**

In the lab, students word process their completed stories in a standardized format to create an online anthology.

Students read their stories aloud to classmates.



## **Third/Fourth Quarters – Humor**

### **Weeks 25-27**

Students read and study humorous pieces by comedic writers such as Mark Twain, Erma Bombeck, Woody Allen, Molly Ivins, S.J. Perelman, Dorothy Parker, David Sedaris, and Sarah Vowell. We discover strategies to make material funny.

- **Writing Assignment:** A 750-1000 word essay praising and critiquing an author's comedic techniques in two different pieces.

### **Weeks 28-29**

Students write their own humorous narrative. Each piece must use a number of strategies to make the writing funny/ironic. Meeting in workshops, students critique each other's drafts.

- **Writing Assignment:** A 1500-2000 humorous piece or parody.

### **Week 30**

In the lab, students word process their completed humorous pieces in a standardized format to create an online anthology.

Students read their humorous pieces aloud to classmates.



## **Fourth Quarter – The Children’s Story**

### **Weeks 31-33**

Students study children’s stories by renowned authors such as Carroll, Sendak, and Seuss. We will read portions of Bettelheim’s The Uses of Enchantment to understand the inner workings of fairy tales. Each student will bring in his/her favorite story from childhood to present to the class.

- **Writing Assignment:** A 750-1000 word essay comparing and contrasting the moral themes/lessons of two children’s stories by different authors.

### **Weeks 34-35**

Students write and illustrate (or find someone to illustrate) their own children’s story. Meeting in workshops, students critique each other’s drafts.

- **Writing Assignment:** A 750-1000 word children’s story.

### **Week 36**

In the lab, students word process their complete stories in a standardized format to create an online anthology.

Students read their children’s stories aloud to classmates.

Students go to Washington Elementary School to read their stories to youngsters.

## California State Standards Addressed

<u>#</u>	<u>Standard</u>	<u>Classroom Activity</u>
<b>READING</b>		
3.2	Analyze the way in which the theme or meaning of a selection represents a view or comment on life, using textual evidence to support the claim.	Classroom discussions and analytical essays on all four kinds of short stories.  Workshops in which students critique each other's stories.
3.3	Analyze the ways in which irony, tone, mood, the author's style, and the sound of language achieve specific rhetorical or aesthetic purposes or both.	Classroom discussions and analytical essays on all four kinds of short stories.  Workshops in which students critique each other's stories.
3.6	Analyze the way in which authors through the centuries have used archetypes drawn from myth...	Discussion of Bettelheim's <u>The Uses of Enchantment</u> to understand children's literature.
3.7	Analyze recognized works of world literature from a variety of authors.	Classroom discussions and analytical essays on all four kinds of short stories by recognized masters of the craft .
3.9	Analyze the philosophical arguments presented in literary works to determine whether the authors' positions have contributed to the quality of each work and the credibility of the characters.	Classroom discussions and analytical essays on all four kinds of short stories.  Workshops in which students critique each other's authorial positions and credibility of characters.
<b>WRITING</b>		
1.2	Use point of view, characterization, style (e.g. use of irony), and related elements for specific rhetorical and aesthetic purposes.	Writing four different kinds of short stories during the year.  Workshops in which students critique each other's stories.
1.5	Use language in natural, fresh, and vivid ways to establish a specific tone.	Writing four different kinds of short stories during the year.  Workshops in which students critique each other's stories.
1.7	Use systematic strategies to organize and record information.	In the computer lab, word processing stories in a standardized format to assemble an online anthology.
1.9	Revise text to highlight the individual voice, improve sentence variety and style, and enhance subtlety of meaning	Writing four different kinds of short stories during the year.

	and tone in ways that are consistent with the purpose, audience, and genre.	Workshops in which students critique each other's stories.
2.1	Write fictional, autobiographical, or biographical narratives.	Analytical essays on and creation of four different kinds of short stories.
2.2	Write responses to literature.	Analytical essays on four different kinds of short stories.  Workshops in which students critique each other's stories.
<b>WRITTEN AND ORAL ENGLISH -- LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS</b>		
1.1	Demonstrate control of grammar, diction, and paragraph and sentence structure and an understanding of English usage.	Analytical essays on and creation of four different kinds of short stories.  Workshops in which students critique each other's stories.
1.2	Produce legible work that shows accurate spelling and correct punctuation and capitalization.	Analytical essays on and creation of four different kinds of short stories.  In the computer lab, word processing stories in a standardized format to assemble an online anthology.
<b>LISTENING AND SPEAKING</b>		
1.7	Use appropriate rehearsal strategies to pay attention to performance details, achieve command of the text, and create skillful artistic staging.	Reading short stories to the class.  Reading children's stories and showing accompanying illustrations to students at Washington Elementary School.
2.5	Recite [stories]...with attention to performance details to achieve clarity, force, and aesthetic effect and to demonstrate an understanding of the meaning.	Reading short stories to the class.  Reading children's stories and showing accompanying illustrations to students at Washington Elementary School.

## **Reading and Writing the Short Story**

<b><u>MONDAY</u></b>	<b><u>TUESDAY</u></b>	<b><u>WEDNESDAY</u></b>	<b><u>THURSDAY</u></b>	<b><u>FRIDAY</u></b>
Sustained Silent Reading and Log Writing (55 min)	In-Class Paragraph or Instruction  (20 min)	Small Group Discussions  (40 min)	In-Class Paragraph or Instruction  (20 min)	Speaker or In-Class Writing Exercise (30 min)
	Class Discussion  (35 min)	Report Results To Class  (15 min)	Class Discussion  (35 min)	Speaker or Student Readings (20 min)

**Website for classroom activities, homework, and handouts:**

**[www.mrbye.com](http://www.mrbye.com)**

**Mr. Bye's email:**

**[MrDSBye@aol.com](mailto:MrDSBye@aol.com)**

**Website for student writing:**

**[www.bhsenglish.com](http://www.bhsenglish.com)**

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Counselor: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Schedule:

Period	Course	Teacher	Room
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

4. Relevant Telephone Numbers

Parent or Guardian	Telephone #	E-mail	Times Available

5. What are your strengths in English?

6. What are the skill areas in which you want to improve this semester?

7. Is there any special information I should know about you?

# The Standard of Excellence

Your participation grade will be based on the following criteria:

- 1. Punctuality** You must be at your desk on time ready to learn. A pattern of being late indicates less than serious commitment to the course and causes unnecessary disruptions for the rest of us. When you are late, sign the red tardy book at the entrance.
- 2. Preparedness** Always come to class with paper, a writing implement, and whatever literature/book we are discussing. I should not have to tell you to have these items ready for the start of class.
- 3. Contributions** You should always come to class with something worthwhile to say about the material. I expect you to contribute at least one thoughtful comment to our discussion each day.
- 4. Listening** When you are not speaking, you should be listening carefully to your classmates or to me. Side-conversations, even if relevant to the academic topic, are not acceptable.
- 5. Submitting Work on Time** I do not accept late work unless you have been ill. A xerox or the original of your official admit slip confirming your illness must be stapled to late work before I will grade it. Your work should demonstrate academic pride. Sloppy work deserves a sloppy grade.
- 6. Attendance** You must attend class every day to succeed. Unexcused absences will adversely affect your performance in class. 10+ unexcused absences or 20+ absences of any kind during the semester will result in no credit for the course. To avoid unexcused absences, clear every illness by showing me the official admit slip after class.
- 7. Attitude** The most important part of your participation grade is your attitude as reflected in all of the above categories. Do you come to class each day with a positive attitude, willing and ready to learn as much as possible about speaking, writing, and understanding the English language?--is this really YOUR ONLY AGENDA? Are you contributing as much to the class as you are taking away from it? Do you consistently uphold a standard of excellence characteristic of devoted students? The answer to all of these questions must be YES for you to get an A.

# Photograph/Motto Assignment

By Friday, September 3, bring to class a photograph of you at your best-looking age. I, for example, peaked when I was a kindergartener, partially because I had more hair. The accompanying motto, written on an index card, can be philosophical or humorous, but it cannot be obscene. At any rate, your words should inspire creative thought by virtue of their direct or cryptic bearing on the photograph.

Take this assignment seriously. You will receive a grade for punctuality or lack thereof.



**"There's a vacancy at the lodge."**

# **Story Interview**

## **Reading and Writing the Short Story**

### **First Assignment—Mr. Bye**

This initial assignment will give you practice in the two major skills you will develop this semester:

- **Telling a true, revealing story about yourself.**
- **Making up a believable, realistic story about someone else.**

***This evening***, you will write down two true stories about yourself both of which reveal your important qualities and contain the following elements: 1) a setting, 2) a conflict, 3) an antagonist, 4) many showing details, 5) rising action, 6) a climax and, 7) a resolution.

***Tomorrow in class***, you will choose a partner and listen to each other's stories. Take careful notes about each story, one of which you will tell the class on Friday. Make sure that you have recorded the details of your partner's story accurately.

***Tomorrow evening***, you will practice telling your partner's story (perhaps to your family at dinner). Then, you will make up a believable, realistic story about your partner that contains completely fabricated details. Practice telling this story too (perhaps to your pet or to a sibling who listens to you).

***Friday in class***, you will tell a true story and a fictitious story (1-2 minutes each) about your partner to the class. Your goal is to trick the class into believing that the fictitious story is the true one and vice-versa.

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**Put the outlines of the two true stories about yourself and of the fictitious story about your partner in your folder.**

The true stories you construct about yourself will prepare you for writing: 1) a memoir and 2) a college application essay. The fictitious story you construct about your partner will prepare you for writing a conventional short story.





