

Story Selection Worksheet

1. **Provide basic information about your selected short story.**
 - a. Title of the story:
 - b. Full name of the author:
 - c. Year of the author's birth and death:
 - d. Year(s) of the story's composition (approximate if necessary):
 - e. Year of the story's original publication:
 - f. Larger work in which the story was originally published (In addition to the title of this larger work, please clarify what type of work it is, such as a magazine, newspaper, or short story collection.):
 - g. Your initial thoughts/assumptions/expectations about the story:
 - h. Why you've chosen this story:

2. **Provide a full bibliographic citation (in MLA 8th edition format) for your selected short story.**

3. **Summarize your selected short story.**
 - a. Summarize it in five sentences:
 - b. Summarize it in three sentences:
 - c. Summarize it in a single sentence:

4. Complete this sentence with as few words as possible: **"This story is about ____."**
(Note: This question isn't about summarizing the text; this is about trying to identify and articulate the main idea/concept/theme you see apparent in this story. Try to use one or a few words.) **Then explain your answer in a few sentences.**

5. Choose **two passages** from your selected story that interest you or strike you as strange/confusing/worthy of interrogation. (In choosing your passages, go beyond the content like "This was a cool moment," or "This surprised me." Instead, look for passages in which the author's use of language interests you.) Copy and paste them here with page numbers (or paragraph numbers if your text is online). **For each passage, write a sentence or two about what interests you about each passage.**

6. **Choose one of the passages from Question 5 and dissect it.** Copy and paste it here with page numbers (or paragraph numbers if your text is online). Then dissect it. Look closely at every word, phrase, line, and punctuation mark. Your answer here doesn't need to be polished or even in complete sentences, but try to make it at least comprehensible to outside readers. (It can be a list of things you notice and brief comments or inferences such as "Lots of eye imagery [note the location of each with page or paragraph numbers] - eyesight or looking is important?") Work your way closely through all of the elements of the passage a few times. You will want to answer the following kinds of questions: What words strike you as intriguing or potentially important? Consider looking up their definition/etymology/history in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (<https://www-oed-com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/>; you might need to access this resource through the UNC Libraries and then log in using your ONYEN). What's going on with the syntax in this passage? What about the author's use of punctuation? What about particular imagery? How does this moment fit into the plot of the story? Into the theme of the story? **(Note: Question 6 isn't about making a coherent**

argument yet; it's about getting you to practice just dissecting a passage. It's okay if various elements you notice suggest contrasting issues. I want you to pull your passage apart and start guessing about individual elements. Scan the passage with a microscope, and note **EVERYTHING** that might be worth investigating. Remember to note page or paragraph numbers.)

7. **Look at your notes from Question 6.** Look for patterns that stand out to you. Are there a few elements you can tie together? **Citing some of these elements (include page or paragraph numbers), explain the significance of this passage in relation to the story as a whole in one or two solid paragraphs.** (A solid paragraph is at least five sentences.) Maybe it's the word choice (diction) or sentence structure (syntax). Maybe it's the author's use of metaphor. Maybe it's the presence of a recurring theme or motif. Can you relate these elements back to the rest of the text? For instance, perhaps the syntax caught your attention because it's the only instance in which the author breaks from their usual sentence structure. How does that connect to the way this passage functions in the story as a whole? Or maybe this is the turning point of the story, and the passage is filled with imagery of _____. How does that imagery relate back to the rest of the story? Basically, look at the stylistic/linguistic choices the author makes in your passage and ask why they made those choices. What is the author trying to do with this passage? (Hopefully, this will provide the groundwork for Feeder 3.2 and the rest of your unit project.)