

LRJ

Your **Literary Response Journal** should convince me that you have read and thought carefully about each assigned short story. If your understanding of The story is “wrong,” yet your journal clearly proves that you read (*or misread*) The story, you may well receive full credit. Your grade is based on content –

what you have to say, how well you say it, your thoughts and feelings about the story, and your explanation of the logic that led to your interpretation.

Your grade is also based on following directions. I will not penalize you for grammar and usage errors -- but to receive credit, you **MUST** include the following in every **LRJ**:

- ✓ the short story’s title in quotation marks
- ✓ the author’s name
- ✓ a quotation from the story--integrated with your own sentence, properly punctuated, and commented upon as necessary to show why you cited that particular passage. **No Quote Lumps!**
- ✓ specific references to the short story
- ✓ careful thought

After you’ve included the five **MUSTS** above, you may choose any of these **MAYBEs** to guide your response. You may even choose the same one every time. Consider the possibilities:

- [1] an analysis of a major character -- flat/round, static/dynamic, internal / external conflicts, dominant traits, significant actions, personal relationships...
- [2] a comparison / contrast of related characters -- protagonist / antagonist, foils, doubles, stereotypes, stock characters...
- [3] a discussion of the role(s) played by minor character(s)
- [4] an analysis of elements of plot (exposition, narrative hook, rising action, climax / turning point, falling action, resolution) or plot patterns
- [5] an analysis of the effect of the author’s chosen point of view
- [6] an analysis of the effect of setting -- time, place, circumstances
- [7] an explanation of symbolism in the story
- [8] a discussion of the validity and development of the theme(s)
- [9] a discussion of the title’s significance
- [10] a detailed response to a specific word, phrase, sentence, passage, or scene
- [11] a very limited or general comparison to another story, song, poem, movie...
- [12] a close analysis of the author’s style -- vocabulary, figurative language, imagery, sentence structure, dialogue / narration...
- [13] a re-telling of the story, adding an additional scene, or changing an element such as the ending, setting, point of view, tone...
- [14] a transformation of the story to another form, such as a poem, a letter, a play, a news story, a commercial, a cartoon, a soap opera, a fable...
- [15] an original poem developing in some way from the assigned story
- [16] a statement relating the story to your experience or ideas
- [17] an explanation of problems you had in understanding the story
- [18] your opinion of the story, good or bad, supported by specific references from the story

Length: Approximately 1/2 to 1 page long for each **LRJ**

Format: Blue or black ink, front side of the paper only

Due: Beginning of the hour in the blue wire basket on my desk.

Quoting from a Short Story

When you write about a short story or refer to a short story in a literary response journal or an essay, you will frequently need to quote from it. Below are some rules to follow when you refer to the title of a story or quote words from it. All the examples given in the rules are taken from the short story “Test” by Theodore Thomas.

RULE 1: *Whenever you mention the title of a short story, put quotation marks around it.*

Robert Proctor, the protagonist in “Test,” by Theodore Thomas, fails his driving test because he doesn’t understand the rules.

RULE 2: *Whenever you quote an uncommon word or a longer phrase that appears in the story, put quotation marks around it and INTEGRATE the quoted material within your own sentence.*

Robert’s compassionate nature is revealed in his concern for what might have happened to the sleeping girl. He knows that, had the accident been real, she would have passed unknowingly “into the dark, heavy sleep of death.”

RULE 3: *Whenever you quote a phrase that uses only part of a longer sentence, indicate where words have been omitted by using AN ELLIPSIS.*

One of the most startling images in the story occurs in the last paragraph when the two men drag “Robert Proctor out the door...his rubber heels sliding along the two grooves worn into the floor.”

RULE 4: *Whenever you quote two or more whole lines from the story, do not use quotation marks unless they enclose dialogue. Instead, write the lines from the story on separate, indented lines within your paragraph. When several lines are cited, they should be especially significant.*

You should “set up” the quote by introducing it and justify such a long quote by explaining its importance afterwards “saying goodbye”).

The theme of the story is revealed in the final interchange between Robert and the uniformed man. Robert says,

“You can’t really mean this, I’m still dreaming aren’t I? This is still part of the test isn’t it?”

The uniformed man said, “How do any of us know?”

The author is saying that we never know when a seemingly simple action, like driving down a freeway, will have serious consequences. Our ability to make wise decisions may be tested at any time.

ACTIVITIES: Use the assigned story. Answer on a separate page

1. Write a sentence that explains what this story is about. Use the title of the short story and the author in your sentence.
2. In another sentence, discuss the main character and point out how some specific words or phrases from the story help reveal the way the personality of the character.
3. In another sentence, point out a striking image in the story. Quote a phrase that uses only part of a longer sentence and indicate where words have been omitted by using an ellipsis correctly.
4. In a sentence that comments on your opinion about the theme of the story, quote a passage that is longer than two lines. Be sure to “set up” the quote and to “say goodbye” by explaining it afterwards.

QUOTING APPROPRIATELY: “Shaving” by Leslie Norris

Directions: Complete each of the following writing assignments by incorporating quotes from the story into your own sentences. Quote only PHRASES from the story. Do not quote an entire sentence. Each quote you use must fit into an original sentence of your own. If necessary to make your point clear, write sentences explaining the significance of the phrases you have quoted.

For example:

By the story’s end, we see Barry looking out a window that is full of the “dying sunlight.” Barry stands there, “knowing it would soon be gone.” At one level, Barry recognizes that his father is dying, in the same way that the sun is fading. At another level, Barry also realizes that his own youth and strength will fade in the future.

1. The two main characters in this story are at different stages of life. Examine the ways Barry is contrasted with his father. Write a paragraph contrasting the two, including appropriate quotes.
2. The act of shaving is important because it is the act by which Barry comes of age. In a sense, Barry undergoes a rite of passage and takes up his father’s authority. Write a paragraph explaining how Barry grows up during the story.
3. The act of shaving is also presented as a kind of ceremony. Write a paragraph proving that shaving is symbolic in this story.
4. What details in the last two paragraphs indicate that Barry accepts the fact that some day his own youth will be gone? Explain in a short paragraph.

CITATION NOTES

Each group will be assigned a thesis sentence and will take **citation notes** to support that thesis -- very specific evidence from the story -- a quotation, an action or event, a detail or description or example -- not your opinion!

1. Before you begin making any citation notes, discuss the thesis sentence and re-state it in your own words.
2. Then decide how many component parts (or body paragraphs) are promised in the thesis sentence. Divide a piece of paper into columns for each component, and label each column with your **key words**.
3. As a group, go through the story and cite evidence to support each component. In the appropriate column, list your evidence for that paragraph-- examples, events, details, quotes, and so on. (page # needed for quotations)
4. When your group finishes, you should have many, many more citation notes than you would ever be able to use in a five-paragraph essay. Later, each group member will select the best evidence to use in an individual essay.

Example: The story told in “Chee’s Daughter” bears striking similarities to the Greek myth of Demeter and her child Persephone.