

Gemini English 101 Short Story Term Paper assignment

Due date: see syllabus for first and final draft due dates

Choose one of the following stories to read:

“Dog” by Richard Russo (p 522)

“Two Kinds” by Amy Tan (p 527)

“The Birthmark” by Nathaniel Hawthorne (p 477)

“The Lesson” by Toni Cade Bambara (p 435)

For this term paper, you are going to **write a character analysis of a character from the story you chose**. A character analysis seeks to explain why a character behaves/thinks/acts in the manner he or she does. Use specific references from the text to support your thoughts and conclusions.

Determine your own thesis for this paper. Below I’ve listed a LOT of questions to consider both when creating your thesis and when writing your paper.

To consider:

Is the character central to the story’s plot or is she/he a minor character?

What is the character’s function in the story (if the protagonist, say so. If a foil, show how).

What conflicts does this character deal with and how are they resolved...are they resolved (be careful to avoid plot summary!). What qualities does he/she possess that helps him/her through the conflict?

What are the character’s strengths and weaknesses? Does the character overcome any of these weaknesses throughout the story?

What are the character’s motivations? What about education, occupation, environment, economic status, family background, age, race, gender? Do any of these affect the character? If so, how?

Is the character static or dynamic? If static, what is the reason the character remains the same? If dynamic, what causes the change? What is the result of the change? Remember to look at all changes: physical, emotional, and mental.

Consider the point of view from which the story is told. How does this point of view impact your impressions of the character? If a narrator is used, are the observations made objective, reliable and/or consistent?

Is the author using the character to reveal some greater truth or to illustrate some aspect of human life? If so, explain.

After considering all these points...go write your paper.
~ Mrs. D.