Short Fiction

Overview

This year we will be applying the SIFT method of analyzing literature:

**S**ymbol: examine the title and text for symbolism

**I**mages: identify images and sensory details

**F**igures of speech: analyze figurative language and other devices

**T**one, **T**itle, and **T**heme: discuss how all devices reveal tone and theme; of what significance is the title of this story?

Use this method as you read each of the pieces in this packet, particularly the short fiction and poetry.

For “Ordeal by Cheque” you will be tempted to Google an explanation of the story. Resist this temptation. There is no correct “answer”, no one correct interpretation. I look forward to a lively discussion in the first weeks of school as we discuss your varied opinions of this very interesting tale.

Keep track of characters, setting, plot…all the basics; however, also delve deeper. If you notice a particularly wonderful simile, mark it; a passage looks like it may have deeper meaning? Make note of it. Even if you don’t know why it’s important, make note that it seems like it is meaningful or significant.

Look for literary elements as well as figurative devices…and think about how the author uses these devices to convey his story.

Do not look on-line for other people’s summaries or analyses. That will not help you build your skills…and, if I find out, will hurt your grade. Be confident in your own abilities; do not use grade savers.

Some of the stories, particularly “The Necklace” and “Cask of Amontillado”, have very challenging vocabulary. Try to build your skills by first determining a possible meaning based on context clues and then by comparing your definition to one in a dictionary. You may wish to put the definition in the margin or keep separate notes.

Speaking of notes, feel free to take notes any way you like. Post its? Fine. A notebook? Great! Make it something that works for you.