

Our Mother of Consolation

E.L.A. Summer Reading Assignment: Incoming seventh graders

Due: Friday, September 8, 2023

Dear Parent of Incoming Seventh Grade Student:

I hope you all are well, and I am looking forward to working with your children in English-Language Arts in the upcoming year. This summer's reading assignment consists of writing four essays (each a minimum of 300 words and a maximum of 600 words) analyzing any four short stories written by four different authors from the following list:

Edgar Allan Poe

Rudyard Kipling

O. Henry

Shirley Jackson

Toni Cade Bambara

Ray Bradbury

Sandra Cisneros

Judith Ortiz Cofer

Langston Hughes

Brothers Grimm

Ralph Ellison

Isaac Asimov

James Joyce

Gish Jen

When writing a critical analysis of a short story, remember to steer clear of focusing primarily on plot—the least interesting story element to me because it's the easiest to describe. Instead, in your own words, describe the *setting*; *characterization* (the process the author uses to make his/her characters believable); *theme* (the major point or lesson of the story); *conflict*; *climax*; *mood* (how did the story make you feel at different points); *tone* (the author's attitude toward any of the issues he/she writes about); *point of view* (first, second, or third person storytelling); *foreshadowing* (hints of later incidents in the story); *flashback*.

In order to write a better analysis, find out what you can about *irony* and *symbolism* and how they are used in stories; see if you can find examples of either of these devices in the stories you've chosen. Write about any other literary devices you know of that appear in the story (*metaphor*, *simile*, *onomatopoeia*, *hyperbole*, *personification*, etc.) Discuss only as much plot as you need to help describe all these other parts of the story.

Other suggestions to avoid simply restating the plot: Use the monitoring strategy of *connecting* to explain what parts of the stories you could best relate to; *predicting* to examine which parts of the story you expected to happen (and which parts you didn't); *evaluating* to state which parts of the story you did or did not like.

I wish you a safe and fun-filled summer.

My best, Richard Leonard