Short Story Journal Entry Guidelines

You will be required to write literary journals in response to your recent reading assignments. Although it is up to you to choose which of the recently assigned stories you will write about, your journal entries should focus on your thoughts and ideas about that chosen story. Your journals will be a major component of your grade. Since your journals are rather informal types of writing, you need not worry too much about being graded on mechanics and grammar (unless such errors cause your ideas to be incomprehensible and difficult to read). Completed reading journals can be used as a spring-board for class discussions and/or formal essays. The journals you hand in will be graded depending on the quality and thoughtfulness of your ideas. Each journal is worth up to 10 points and should be kept in clamp-style folder (no pocket-style folders or binders).

Journals will be collected according to the due dates on the class schedule. Late journals will receive a 2-point deduction for each day late; untyped journals will lose 1-point. Below you will find some information on how to format these journals; also, there are some ideas for journal topics. Follow the directions carefully.

Journal Entry Format

ALWAYS include the following information at the top of each journal entry.

Your name __________________________ Course & Section # ______________________ Date ______________________
Title of story/book/chapter __________________________ Page #s ______________________
Author’s Name __________________________

Ideas for Journal Entries

These are just a few ideas to consider for your journals. Feel free to try out several types of entries over the weeks, create your own journal options, or play it safe by using the same option every time. Each journal must be at least 1 full typed page, double-spaced (unless otherwise indicated).

1. Choose at least 3 quotes from the story and comment in depth about each quote’s meaning, significance, and/or impact on you as a reader. Be sure to correctly cite the author and page number of the quotes.

2. Summarize the story in no more than 4 sentences and then react thoughtfully to what you have just read.

3. Discuss one or more of the characters that you’ve encountered in the reading. For example: What do you think of them? How do they change/grow/develop? Why are they significant? What do they teach us about human nature?

4. Pinpoint significant issues/themes that have surfaced in the story and discuss them in depth.

5. Discuss/comment on ideas, characters, or events in the story that particularly caused you to reflect on your own life and experiences. Be sure to clarify the connection you see between the story and your own life/experiences.

6. Write about what the story has revealed or taught you about the human experience. How does the story provide an image of what it means to be human?

7. Write a letter to one of the characters about an issue, problem, etc. that has surfaced within the story. Discuss that issue at length with that character, imagining that he/she really exists and is reading your letter.

8. Pretend that you are one of the characters within the story, and write a "Dear Diary" entry related to an occurrence, issue, etc. within the scope of the story. Be sure that the entry represents the character’s "voice," language, attitudes, tone, and way of thinking.

9. On a blank sheet of unlined paper (8 ½ x 11), sketch/draw a concept, character, or scene from your reading. Then, include a typed ½ page typed explanation of how that sketch/drawing represents your understanding of the reading. Be sure your sketch accurately represents symbolic and significant details from the story.

10. Create a song, a poem, a collage, or other artistic representation that reflects your interpretation of a theme, character, event, or scene in the story. This alternative artistic representation must be accompanied by a ½ page typed explanation of your interpretation.

11. Create your own journal entry. See me first for approval.