



ELA Virtual Learning

# Composition and Reading 2

April 23, 2020



## Composition and Reading II

### Lesson: April 23, 2020

#### **Objective/Learning Target:**

Students will apply psychoanalytic theory to a short story provide deeper meaning to it by way of analyzing relationships, neuroses, and archetypes present in the plot or the actions of the main characters.

## Composition and Reading II

### Lesson: April 23, 2020

**Answer the following questions in your notebook.**

**Starting Question(s):**

- 1. Do you know the definition of neurosis? What is it? If you do not know the definition, have you heard this term before? Where?**
- 2. Can the mental health of one character influence the actions of another? Can you think of an example?**
- 3. How much of a presence (influence on the world) can a person maintain even after they have passed away?**

## Composition and Reading II

### Lesson: April 23, 2020

#### **Remember from Previous Lessons:**

1. The Oedipal complex is an unconscious romantic desire for a parent of the opposite sex that we grow out of when we form the ego & superego.
2. Archetypes are recurrent character types that occur across cultures and languages. These archetypes can help us understand and predict a character's behavior.



## Composition and Reading II

### Lesson: April 23, 2020

### **Lesson/Activity:**

Since we're all experts on psychoanalytic criticism, let's apply it to a text! Please read the story "A Rose for Emily" by William Faulkner, to which we will apply psychoanalysis! As you are reading, think about the *motivations* of the characters in the story. Why are they driven to act the way that they do in the story?

["A Rose for Emily" by William Faulkner](#)

# Composition and Reading II

## Lesson: April 23, 2020

### Practice:

After you have read the story, please answer the following questions in your notebooks:

1. Are there any [Oedipal dynamics](#) - or any other family dynamics - at work in the story?
2. How do the characters in the text mirror [archetypal figures, situations, or symbols](#)?
3. Analyze the mental state of the main characters. Is there anything abnormal of note that may drive some of the action of the plot?

## Composition and Reading II

### Lesson: April 23, 2020

### Practice \*Example\*:

1. Emily's relationship with her father is one of the main motivators of the story. Her love for her father is so great that she refuses to give up his body after his death. Perhaps there was some aspect of Homer that reminded Emily of her father.
2. Emily is a mix of the archetypal figures "the outcast" and "the damsel in distress." She is viewed as an oddity by her community, and is eventually "saved" by both Homer and the butler Tobe.
3. There is something to be said about the nature of grief in this piece. The way that Emily reacts to the death of her father is both sympathetic and repulsive at the same time. This reaction to grief is what causes the townspeople to break into her home after her death. They want to decide definitively whether they should, postmortem, view Emily as a saint or pariah.



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## Lesson: April 23, 2020

### Wrap-Up:

Did analyzing the neuroses of Emily help you to sympathize with her? The application of psychoanalytic theory can be difficult, but it is useful for understanding the characters better. Through this understanding, it becomes easier to draw real world parallels. It is almost instinctual to compare the thinking of a character in a story to your own (“I would NEVER behave like that!”). It is through this relation between the self and these fictional characters that psychoanalytic criticism thrives. When applying the theory, really try to understand *why* these characters think so differently.