



ELA Virtual Learning

**Composition and Reading 2:  
Choosing a Literary Analysis Topic  
(2 of 2)**

April 29, 2020



## Composition and Reading II

### Lesson: April 29, 2020

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

Students will choose a story to analyze and an approach to criticism to write a detailed literary analysis paper.

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Answer the following questions in your notebook.

Starting Question(s):

1. What did you decide yesterday was your favorite genre or author? Do you like it enough to analyze it extensively?
2. Is there merit in choosing a story to analyze because it is on a “Top 100 Short Stories of All Time” list?
3. How likely are you to choose a topic based upon the amount of secondary sources about it?



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### **Learn:**

Choosing a story to write about extensively can be difficult. There are so many short stories out there, where do you start? I would recommend starting with the genre you chose. Maybe a specific narrative convention that you like? Love to read about love? Always up for a good spooktacular romp? Start there. Start with what you know and like. It will definitely narrow down your options. Or go the other way! Read something that you don't have a lot of experience in. Try something new! Narrow the field first, then start your search.

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### Learn:

There are a few ways you can go about choosing a short story to analyze:

1. Genre: Start with what you know. Start with your preferred genre, or one that you are unfamiliar with. Choose a story within that genre.
2. Criticism: Do you know which approach comes most easily to you? Try to find a story that you think would lend itself to a reading focused on that specific mode of criticism?
3. Author: Is there a particular author that you enjoy? Have they written any short form fiction?



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### **Learn:**

There are a few ways you can go about choosing a short story to analyze:

4. Award Winners: Look at a list of famous short stories. Does anything stand out to you?
5. Recommendations: Ask someone close to you what their favorite short stories are. Why? Would reading something that they like help you develop a closer connection?



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### Practice:

It's time to choose a topic for your larger paper. I would recommend reading a few stories to determine what you really like. Don't just go with the first thing that you read. Here are some lists to help!:

[Medium](#)

[The Guardian](#)

[\(Also here is a list of my favorites if you're looking for a recommendation\)](#)

If you cannot find a PDF version of a story online (if it's a story from the *Medium* or *The Guardian* pieces), then I would recommend choosing a new story to write about.



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#### **Practice:**

On a separate sheet of paper, state the story and the approach to criticism that you want to write about, including a rationale for why the approach to criticism applies to the story. You will be focusing on one short story and one critical approach to apply to that short story.





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### Practice \*Example\*:

I am going to do a feminist reading of “Speech Sounds” by Octavia Butler. Even when an unspecified pandemic robs people of the ability to communicate, gender dynamics somehow remain the same, if not worsen. I would like to analyze the power structures that are formed on the basis of gender in this story, how the main character, Rye, circumvents these power struggles, and how she ultimately overcomes the gender barriers of the world before the pandemic.



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### **Wrap-Up:**

This topic that you choose will be your main focus for a long time. We're laying the groundwork down now, so that we can ultimately be successful as we move through the writing process!