Independent Reading Guide: The Short Story

Name ____________________________ Date ____________

Directions to the Student: Use the questions below to clarify your understanding of and response to a short story. Reflect on each question before answering. If you are keeping a Reader’s Response Journal or wish to start one, use one of the suggested activities to make an entry.

Story Title _______________________ Author ______________________

This story was (circle one) assigned a personal selection.

This story was found in the (circle one) textbook library other ____________.

Elements of the Short Story

1. Who is the protagonist—the main character—in the story?

2. What challenge or conflict does the protagonist encounter?

3. How is the conflict resolved?

4. What other important characters are involved in the conflict?

5. What kind of person is the protagonist?

6. What evidence in the story leads me to this opinion of the protagonist?

7. Where does this story take place?

8. How would I describe the mood? How does the author establish this mood?

9. Summarize the theme or central idea of this short story.

10. Is there a sentence or short passage that states or strongly implies the theme? If so, what is it?
Response to the Short Story

Rate this short story by circling the appropriate word.

11. The characters and dialogue are believable, and the plot engages my interest. weak fair strong

12. This story is written in a style that is clear and interesting. weak fair strong

13. This story helps me understand people and events. weak fair strong

14. The details in this story could be easily visualized as I read. weak fair strong

15. Overall, I rate this story as weak fair strong

Reasons for my rating: ________________________________

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16. What predictions and questions occurred to me as I read this story? Were my predictions accurate? Were my questions answered?

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Reader’s Response Journal

- Was there one passage or event you found puzzling in this short story? If so, write one or more questions you would like to ask the author to explain.

- In a short paragraph, describe an element of the short story that reminds you of something in your own life.

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