

Rubric

ENGL 1102
Fiction Essay Rubric

Student _____

<p>*Any paper that does not meet the length requirement will have 10 point taken directly off the top. The length requirement for this paper is a minimum of 1300 words.</p>	<p>Range: Incoherent or not evident; poorly demonstrated 0-10 Needs Improvement 11-15 Good: Meets criteria 16-18 Exceeds criteria with originality and creativity 19-20</p>
<p>Purpose/Introduction/Conclusion (20 pts) __ Introduction is engaging with a strategy to grab the reader's attention __ Includes a title, not a label. __ Thesis is insightful and relies on analysis rather than casual observation. __ Thesis is clear and focused: may be explanatory, interpretative, or evaluative and establishes a connection between an important concept, theme, or idea and specific work by one of the authors found in your textbook OR an author previously approved by your instructor. __ Conclusion is thoughtful, engaging, and clear—does not just restate thesis—leaves the reader with something to think about.</p>	
<p>Development/Content/Organization (40 pts) __ Supports thesis with an analysis of the text. __ Support directly relates to thesis statement. __ May discuss any combination of literary elements: setting, plot, diction, syntax, imagery, figurative language, symbolism, tone, point of view, audience, purpose, characterization, and overall theme. __ Does not retell the story as support for the claim but rather analyzes literary techniques in order to reveal the relationship of the author's work to the chosen concept, theme, or idea. __ Uses a coherent organizing structure for paragraphs. Paragraphs contain only one main point, are well-developed, averaging two per page, and contain clear topic sentences with focused support.</p>	
<p>Format/Presentation/ Use of Resources (20 pts) __ Uses MLA format with in-text citations and works cited page. __ Avoids plagiarism. Cites all quotes, pulled text, and paraphrased information where necessary. __ Paper is neat, presentable, typed, doubled-spaced, 10-12 pt font. __ All quotes are introduced properly and discussed afterward. Paper contains no "free floating quotes". __ Quotes and in-text citations do not outweigh the student's writing.</p>	
<p>Structure/ Grammar/Word Choice/Punctuation/ Spelling (20 pts) __ Demonstrates evidence of editing and revision. __ Paper is relatively free of errors in usage and mechanics that interfere with coherence and fluency. Refers to text in present tense. __ Demonstrates awareness of mature use of language, sense of audience, and word choice. __ Uses a variety of sentence patterns and sound sentence structure.</p>	

Score: _____

No One's a Mystery by Elizabeth Tallent

For my eighteenth birthday Jack gave me a five-year diary with a latch and a little key, light as a dime. I was sitting beside him scratching at the lock, which didn't seem to want to work, when he thought he saw his wife's Cadillac in the distance, coming toward us. He pushed me down onto the dirty floor of the pickup and kept one hand on my head while I inhaled the musk of his cigarettes in the dashboard ashtray and sang along with Rosanne Cash on the tape deck. We'd been drinking tequila and the bottle was between his legs, resting up against his crotch, where the seam of his Levi's was bleached linen-white, though the Levi's were nearly new. I don't know why his Levi's always bleached like that, along the seams and at the knees. In a curve of cloth his zipper glinted, gold.

"It's her," he said. "She keeps the lights on in the daytime. I can't think of a single habit in a woman that irritates me more than that." When he saw that I was going to stay still he took his hand from my head and ran it through his own dark hair.

"Why does she?" I said.

"She thinks it's safer. Why does she need to be safer? She's driving exactly fifty-five miles an hour. She believes in those signs:

'Speed Monitored by Aircraft.' It doesn't matter that you can look up and see that the sky is empty."

"She'll see your lips move, Jack. She'll know you're talking to someone."

"She'll think I'm singing along with the radio."

He didn't lift his hand, just raised the fingers in salute while the pressure of his palm steadied the wheel, and I heard the Cadillac honk twice, musically; he was driving easily eighty miles an hour. I studied his boots. The elk heads stitched into the leather were bearded with frayed thread, the toes were scuffed, and there was a compact wedge of muddy manure between the heel and the sole—the same boots he'd been wearing for the two years I'd known him. On the tape deck Rosanne Cash sang, "Nobody's into me, no one's a mystery."

"Do you think she's getting famous because of who her daddy is or for herself?" Jack said.

"There are about a hundred pop tops on the floor, did you know that? Some little kid could cut a bare foot on one of these, Jack."

"No little kids get into this truck except for you."

"How come you let it get so dirty?"

"How come," he mocked. "You even sound like a kid. You can get back into the seat now, if you want. She's not going to look over her shoulder and see you."

"How do you know?"

"I just know," he said. "Like I know I'm going to get meat loaf for supper. It's in the air. Like I know what you'll be writing in that diary."

"What will I be writing?" I knelt on my side of the seat and craned around to look at the butterfly of dust printed on my jeans. Outside the window Wyoming was dazzling in the heat. The wheat was fawn and yellow and parted smoothly by the thin dirt road. I could smell the water in the irrigation ditches hidden in the wheat.

"Tonight you'll write, 'I love Jack. This is my birthday present from him. I can't imagine anybody loving anybody more than I love Jack.'"

"I can't."

"In a year you'll write, 'I wonder what I ever really saw in Jack. I wonder why I spent so many days just riding around in his pickup. It's true he taught me something about sex. It's true there wasn't ever much else to do in Cheyenne.'"

"I won't write that."

"In two years you'll write, 'I wonder what that old guy's name was, the one with the curly hair and the filthy dirty pickup truck and time on his hands.'"

"I won't write that."

"No?"

"Tonight I'll write, 'I love Jack. This is my birthday present from him. I can't imagine anybody loving anybody more than I love Jack.' "

"No, you can't," he said. "You can't imagine it."

"In a year I'll write, 'Jack should be home any minute now. The table's set—my grandmother's linen and her old silver and the yellow candles left over from the wedding—but I don't know if I can wait until after the trout a la Navarra to make love to him.' "

"It must have been a fast divorce."

"In two years I'll write, 'Jack should be home by now. Little Jack is hungry for his supper. He said his first word today besides "Mama" and "Papa." He said "kaka." ' "

Jack laughed. "He was probably trying to finger-paint with kaka on the bathroom wall when you heard him say it."

"In three years I'll write, 'My nipples are a little sore from nursing Eliza Rosamund.'

"Rosamund. Every little girl should have a middle name she hates."

" 'Her breath smells like vanilla and her eyes are just Jack's color of blue.' "

"That's nice." Jack said.

"So, which one do you like?"

"I like yours," he said. "But I believe mine."

"It doesn't matter. I believe mine."

"Not in your heart of hearts, you don't."

"You're wrong."

"I'm not wrong," he said. "And her breath would smell like your milk, and it's kind of a bittersweet smell, if you want to know the truth."

Story

Instruction

Consider Jack and the young female narrator, and their relationship, in Elizabeth Tallent's "No One's a Mystery." How would you characterize Jack in the beginning of the story? What about the narrator? What kind of relationship do they seem to have in the beginning? Does the reader's perception of the characters and their relationship evolve as the story progresses? If so, in what ways? If not, what evidence would you give to argue that the characters remain static? Be sure to formulate a clear thesis incorporating some or all of the ideas in this topic.