

Essay Writing Checklist: Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Divided Thesis statement:**

- Is it a clear sentence?
- Does it state exactly what you are going to argue?
- Does it answer the essay question? (9s: What makes a good short story? - or 10s: What is the difference between good and bad short stories?)

**2. Introduction:**

- Is it interesting?
- Does it begin broad and narrow down to the DTS
- Does it introduce your thesis statement?
- Does it explain how you are going to prove your thesis?

**3. Essay Body:**

**a. Organization/Development:**

- Is your essay organized in a logical manner?
- Are your arguments presented in the most effective, most logical sequence?
- Do you present your arguments in order, from weakest to strongest? Or in chronological order from beginning middle end?
- How did you decide on the order of your paragraphs (please attach a separate sheet of paper with your explanation).

**b. Paragraph Structure:**

- Does each paragraph have a topic sentence?
- Does each paragraph stick to the point(s) stated in your topic sentence?
- Does each paragraph have a concluding/transitory sentence?
- Are the transitions between paragraphs smooth?

**c. Quotations:**

- Does each quotation prove your point?
- Is each quotation integrated into your writing and discussed, explaining how it proves your point? SQC
- Are your quotations used in the context of the rest of the text? Or, are you misinterpreting quotations so that they help to prove your point?
- Does each quotation have a citation?

#### 4. Conclusion

- Does it summarize your argument?
- Does it restate your thesis in light of the arguments you have presented in your essay?
- Does your conclusion introduce new material? Does it include a quotation that you have not fully explained in the body of your essay? It shouldn't!
- Do answer the questions, "So what?" and "Who cares?"

#### 5. Writing Style

- Do not use vague references (i.e., he, she, it, this, they, etc.). When you use these words, ask yourself if it is clear as to what/whom you are referring.
- Avoid wordiness. Have you cut all of the "dead wood" from your sentences?
- Beware of generalizations. Do not use these unless absolutely necessary. If you must use a generalization, make sure that you have provided sufficient evidence.
- Have you used examples, specific details, concrete description(s), etc.?
- Avoid passive tense. Use active verbs wherever you can.
- Use the present tense when writing about events in the stories or when discussing the author's achievements or your ideas.
- Have you used the most precise word or term that you can? Are you sure that you understand it and are using it correctly?
- Avoid clichés and slang/colloquialisms. Is your language sufficiently academic for the topic at hand?
- Can you combine sentences to avoid repetition?

#### 6. Proofreading

- Eliminate contractions
- Watch for comma splices and misused semicolons.
- Make sure that your sentences are complete: no sentence fragments or run-on sentences.
- Beware of dangling/misplaced modifiers.
- Be sure that you have no subject-verb, pronoun-antecedent, and/or tense agreement problems.
- Watch verb tenses. Have you referred to the text in *present* tense?
- Is everything spelled correctly? Have you used each word correctly?
- Are your in-line citations properly formatted?
- Is your works cited page properly formatted?
- Do your online sources have working URLs and the date you accessed them?