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?

1. **Essay Body:**
   1. **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).
  1. **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?
  1. **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?

1. **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?”

1. **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?

1. **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?