



Advanced Placement Summer Institute

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FICTION BOOT CAMP: READING SCHEDULE

using Michael Meyer, *The Bedford Introduction to Literature*, 8th ed.

0. Reading Fiction

- Reading Fiction Responsively,
pp. 13-19
- Explorations and Formulas,
pp. 25-30
- A Comparison of Two Stories,
pp. 30-44

1. Plot

Introduction, p. 67-76 (Burroughs)

- Joyce Carol Oates, "Three Girls," p. 77
- Ha Jin, "Love in the Air," p. 84
- William Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily,"
p. 95

2. Character

Introduction, p. 123-128 (Dickens)

- May-Lee Chai, "Saving Sourdi," p. 130
- Herman Melville, "Bartleby, the
Scrivner," p. 144
- Susan Straight, "Mines," p. 173

3. Setting

Introduction, p. 182-84

- Ernest Hemingway, "Soldier's Home,"
p. 185
- Andrea Lee, "Anthropology," p. 192
- Fay Weldon, "IND AFF," p. 201
- Robert Olen Butler, "Christmas 1910,"
p. 210

4. Point of View

Introduction, pp. 218-223

- Achy Obejas, "We Came All the Way
from Cuba so You Could Dress Like
This?" p. 224
- Anton Chekhov, "The Lady with the Pet
Dog," p. 235
- Joyce Carol Oates, "The Lady with the
Pet Dog," p. 249
- Alice Walker, "Roselily," p. 266

5. Symbolism

Introduction, pp. 270-273

- Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, "Clothes,"
p. 273
- Colette, "The Hand," p. 282
- Ralph Ellison, "Battle Royal," 285
- Peter Meinke, "The Cranes," p. 301

6. Theme

Introduction, pp. 304-307

- Stephen Crane, "The Bride Comes to
Yellow Sky," p. 308
- Katherine Mansfield, "Miss Brill," p. 317
- Dagoberto Gilb, "Love in L.A.," p. 321
- Daly Walker, "I Am the Grass," 325

7. Style, Tone, and Irony

Instruction, pp. 339-343

- Raymond Carver, "Popular Mechanics,"
p. 343
- Susan Minot, "Lust," p. 349
- Lydia Davis, "Letter to a Funeral Parlor,"
p. 357
- Z. Z. Packer, "Brownies," p. 358



Michael Meyer: *The Bedford Introduction to Literature*, 8th ed.

Fiction: Reading and Study Guide

Lesson Five: Symbolism [Teaching Plan]

Introduction

Activity 1: Conventional symbols (*Team discussion*)

Generate a list of at least 20 common conventional symbols (from ‘our culture’) to add to those mentioned in the textbook.

Arrange the symbols you have identified into categories or groups.

[Construct a master list for the class]

Activity 2: Common symbols / cultural differences (*discussion*)

What traditional, conventional, or public meanings do you associate with:

Water: *origin of life, baptism rites, cleansing, destruction (floods)*

East vs. West: *Dragons, White*

Activity 3: Symbol in specific stories (*team analysis*)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Divakaruni (p. 281, questions 4 - 6) | 4. Meinke (p. 303, question 6) |
| 2. Colette (p. 284, question 9) | 5. Faulkner (p. 102, question 5, treating the items listed as symbols) |
| 3. Ellison (p. 294, questions 4 and 5) | |

Activity 4: Symbol in magical realism (*class analysis*)

García-Márquez (“The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World,” handout, questions 2, 5)



Michael Meyer: *The Bedford Introduction to Literature, 8th ed.*
Fiction: Reading and Study Guide
Part Five: Symbolism

Reading:

- o Chapter 7: "Symbolism," pp. 270-273

Stories included in the readings:

- o Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, "Clothes," p. 273
- o Colette, "The Hand," p. 282
- o Ralph Ellison, "Battle Royal," 285
- o Peter Meinke, "The Cranes," p. 301

Vocabulary for study:

(p. 270)	embedded		Petty
(p. 271)	evoke		subvert
	Provincial	(p. 272)	definitive

Literary Terms and Concepts to Know

(p. 270)	symbol	(p. 272)	allegory
(p. 271)	conventional symbol		
	literary symbol		

To sharpen your skills

1. Be certain you can explain the difference between symbolism and allegory, giving clear examples other than those in the textbook.
2. Keep a running list of familiar symbols from daily experience of other reading and viewing.
3. Keep track of the kinds of clues writers use, consciously or not, to guide a reader toward symbols.

Due Date:

SAMPLE IN-CLASS
WORKSHEETS

Michael Meyer: *The Bedford Introduction to Literature, 8th ed.*
Fiction: Reading and Study Guide

PRACTICE: Symbol

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni: “Clothes”

Discuss the significance of the following symbols. In your conversation, use the author’s name frequently.

the saris	
the 7-11	
alcoholic drinks	
the women’s lake	

Short Story Quiz 5

Alberto Alvaro Rios, A Secret Lion

1. Which of the following are not among the changes that the narrator experiences when he goes to junior high? [A] He has more teachers. [B] His relationship with girls changes. [C] He has to take the school bus. [D] He learns new, forbidden words.
2. What is "the one place [the narrator and his friend Sergio were] not supposed to go"? [A] The train station [B] The arroyo [C] Each other's houses [D] The highway
3. What happens when the narrator and Sergio go swimming in the stream? [A] Sergio almost drowns. [B] The narrator almost drowns. [C] They sometimes see some girls swimming upstream. [D] They are occasionally deluged with sewage.
4. When the narrator and Sergio walk into the hills, they discover a spot that they at first consider to be heaven. What does this place turn out to be? [A] The arroyo [B] A golf course [C] A private school [D] A waterfall
5. What is the secret lion? [A] A grinding ball [B] A kitten [C] Junior high school [D] A beautiful girl

Colette, The Hand

6. What color hair does the husband have? [A] Blond [B] Brown [C] Copper [D] Gray
7. Why can't the wife sleep at the beginning of the story? [A] She is too depressed to sleep. [B] She is too angry to sleep. [C] She is too happy to sleep. [D] She is too embarrassed to sleep.
8. How long has the couple been married? [A] Two weeks [B] One year [C] Ten years [D] Fifty years
9. After looking closely at her husband's hand, the wife finds it [A] erotic. [B] womanly. [C] spider-like. [D] horrible.
10. What does the wife do at the end of the story? [A] She asks for a divorce. [B] She tells the husband she is pregnant. [C] She tries to destroy the hand. [D] She kisses the hand.

Ralph Ellison, Battle Royal

11. What does the narrator do on his graduation day? [A] He kills a man. [B] He gives a speech. [C] He runs away. [D] He becomes invisible.

12. Who is the audience for the battle royal? [A] The narrator and his schoolmates [B] The town's leading white citizens [C] The town's leading black citizens [D] A racial mix of townspeople
13. To what does the narrator refer when he says, "Had the price of looking been blindness I would have looked"? [A] A boxing match between other black boys [B] A dangerous drug deal [C] A pornographic magazine [D] A naked white woman
14. When the boys dive onto the rug to grab for money, what do they discover? [A] The money is not real. [B] The rug is electrified. [C] There is not enough money for everyone. [D] The men don't intend to let them keep the money.
15. What does the narrator say during his talk that provokes a violent response from his audience? [A] "Cast down your bucket where you are." [B] "I have a dream!" [C] "Social equality." [D] "Friends always."

Gabriel Márquez, The Handsomest Drowned Man...

16. When the villagers laid the drowned man on the floor of the nearest house, what do they discover about him? [A] He is not really dead. [B] He is someone they know. [C] He is taller than any man they know. [D] He was a murderer during his lifetime.
17. Who is Esteban? [A] The name they give the drowned man [B] The boy who discovers the drowned man [C] The drowned man's father [D] The drowned man's best friend
18. Which of the following do the villagers NOT do for the drowned man? [A] They attempt to discover who he is. [B] They clean and dress his body. [C] They raise money for his family. [D] They give him an elaborate funeral.
19. How do the women of the village respond to the drowned man's body? [A] They think he is an evil spirit. [B] They are revolted by the decay. [C] They fall in love with him. [D] They are eager to return him to the sea.
20. In what way does the narrator predict the village will change as a result of the drowned man's appearance? [A] Men will avoid going to sea. [B] The villagers will plant flowers on the cliff sides in his memory. [C] Houses will be smaller from now on. [D] Their dreams will be narrower.

PRACTICE: Combining the Elements of Fiction

David Updike: "Summer"

Study "Summer" in light of your assigned element. Examine the way your element functions in the story. Use the following questions as a guide to generate discussion

Plot Does "Summer" have a clear beginning, middle, and end? Is the plot straightforward? Fragmentary? What is the conflict in the story?

Character How realistic are the story's characters? Which are dynamic, and which, static? With which character(s) do you identify most? Why? What information does Updike provide about the characters and what does he leave out? What effect do these choices have on the reader?

Setting Describe the setting. What details does Updike use to convey the tone of the setting? How important is the setting to the narrative as a whole?

Point of View How would we read this story if it were told from Sandra's point of view? What information would an omniscient third-person narrator reveal that we do not receive here? Would the story differ significantly if Homer were the actual narrator?

Symbolism Explain how Updike manipulates the story's major symbols: summer, heat, the characters' names, and Sherlock Holmes. What other symbols can you identify? How important are those symbols to your reading of the story?

Theme What is the story's theme? Is it stated explicitly or implicitly?

Style, Tone, Irony Identify the tone. Is it nostalgic? ironic? objective? A combination? Cite textual examples.

General Questions

1. What is gained by studying this story in light of more than one element?
2. How do the elements work together to create the total effect of the story (and what *is* that effect)?
3. It's unusual to have all the elements equally important in a story. Are they here?
4. If you were to include this story in one of the earlier chapters of the textbook, which one would you choose? Why?

Story Questions

5. Homer admits that "to touch her, or kiss her, seemed suddenly incongruous, absurd, contrary to something he could not put his finger on"; "he realized he had never been able to imagine the

moment he distantly longed for." What is Homer's motivation here? Why doesn't he kiss Sandra? Why doesn't he need to demonstrate his affection for her in some tangible way? What is there in the story that indicates that longing itself is enough?

6. What is the connection between his distanced affection for Sandra and his interest in the girl in the canoe who waves to them at the end of the summer?
7. He tells us, "there was something in the way that she raised her arm which, when added to the distant impression of her fullness, beauty, youth, filled him with longing as their boat moved inexorably past, slapping the waves, and she disappeared behind a crop of trees" (p. 15) Is this in some sense a metaphor for the ending of his pursuit of Sandra as the summer comes to a close?

Focus Questions for Short Short Stories

w r i t e r → _____

t i t l e → _____

PLOT PLOT is an author's selection and arrangement of incidents in a story to shape the action and give the story a particular focus. Discussions of plot include not just what happens, but also how and why things happen the way they do. [B]

Characterize the chronology of the plot. Where does it differ from the chronology of the story?

CHARACTER CHARACTER is established through (1) direct exposition (comment by the author directly to the reader, although this is nearly always filtered through a narrator or other character, whose reliability you must always question), (2) dialogue (what the character says or thinks), and (3) action (what the character actually does). [H]

SETTING SETTING is "the physical, and sometimes spiritual, background against which the action of a narrative (novel, drama, short story, poem) takes place." It includes (1) geography (country / city/region), (2) time (day/night, season, century/year/era, historical and social conditions and values), and (3) society (class, beliefs, values of the characters). [H]

POINT OF VIEW POINT OF VIEW refers to who tells us a story and how it is told. The two broad categories are (1) the third-person narrator who tells the story and does not participate in the action and (2) the first-person narrator who is a major or minor participant. [B]

Where are examples of Free Indirect Style in this story?

SYMBOL SYMBOL is 'something which is itself and yet stands for or suggests or means something else..., a figure of speech which combines a literal and sensuous quality with an abstract or suggestive aspect.' [H]

THEME THEME (sometimes called "thesis") is "an attitude or position taken by a writer with the purpose of proving or supporting it." The topic is the subject about which a writer writes; the theme is what the writer says about the topic. [H]

State the theme of this story in one sentence.

STYLE, TONE, and IMAGERY TONE is the author's implicit attitude toward the reader or the people, places, and events in a work as revealed by the elements of the author's style. STYLE is the distinctive and unique manner in which a writer arranges words to achieve particular effects. An IMAGE is a word, phrase, or figure of speech that addresses the senses, suggesting mental pictures of sights, sounds, smells tastes, feelings or actions.

Definitions are adapted from C. Hugh Holman, *A Handbook to Literature*, Indianapolis: The Odyssey Press, 1972, Print. [Those marked "H"] or from Michael Meyer, ed., *The Bedford Introduction to Literature, 8th Edition*, Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008. Print. [Those marked [B]

There Was Once

MARGARET ATWOOD

There was once a poor girl, as beautiful as she was good, who lived with her wicked stepmother in a house in the forest.

Forest? *Forest* is passé, I mean, I've had it with all this wilderness stuff. It's not a right image of our society, today. Let's have some *urban* for a change.

There was once a poor girl, as beautiful as she was good, who lived with her wicked stepmother in a house in the suburbs.

That's better. But I have to seriously query this word *poor*.

But she was poor!

Poor is relative. She lived in a house, didn't she?

Yes.

Then socio-economically speaking, she was not poor.

But none of the money was hers! The whole point of the story is that the wicked stepmother makes her wear old clothes and sleep in the fireplace

Aha! They had a *fireplace*! With poor, let me tell you, there's no fireplace. Come down to the park, come to the subway stations after dark, come down to where they sleep in cardboard boxes, and I'll show you *poor*!

There was once a middle-class girl, as beautiful as she was good

Stop right there. I think we can cut the *beautiful*, don't you? Women these days have to deal with too many intimidating physical role models as it is, what with those bimbos in the ads. Can't you make her, well, more average?

There was once a girl who was a little overweight and whose front teeth stuck out, who—

I don't think it's nice to make fun of people's appearances. Plus, you're encouraging anorexia.

I wasn't making fun! I was just describing—

Skip the description. Description oppresses. But you can say what colour she was.

What colour?

You know. Black, white, red, brown, yellow. Those are the choices. And I'm telling you right now, I've had enough of white.

Dominant culture thus, dominant culture that. I don't know what colour.

Well, it would probably be your colour, wouldn't it?

But this isn't about me! It's about this girl—

Everything is about you.

Sounds to me like you don't want to hear this story at all.

Oh well, go on. You could make her ethnic. That might help.

There was once a girl of indeterminate descent, as average looking as she was good, who lived with her wicked—

Another thing. *Good* and *wicked*. Don't you think you should transcend those puritanical judgemental moralistic epithets? I mean, so much of that is conditioning, isn't it?

There was once a girl, as average-looking as she was well-adjusted, who lived with her stepmother, who was not a very open and loving person because she herself had been abused in childhood.

Better. But I am so *tired* of negative female images! And stepmothers they always get it in the neck! Change it to *stepfather*, why don't you? That would make more sense anyway, considering the bad behaviour you're about to describe. And throw in some whips and chains. We all know what those twisted, repressed, middle-aged men are like—

Hey, just a minute! I'm a middle-aged—

Stuff it, Mister Nosy Parker. Nobody asked you to stick in your oar, or whatever you want to call that thing. This is between the two of us. Go on.

There was once a girl—

How old was she?

I don't know. She was young.

This ends with a marriage right?

Well, not to blow the-plot, but—yes.

Then you can scratch the condescending terminology. It's woman, pal. *Woman!*

There was once—

What's this was, once? Enough of-the dead past. Tell me about *now*.

There

So?

So, what?

So, why not here?

Girl

JAMAICA KINCAID

Wash the white clothes on Monday and put them on the stone heap; wash the color clothes on Tuesday and put them on the clothesline to dry; don't walk barehead in the hot sun; cook pumpkin fritters in very hot sweet oil; soak your little cloths right after you take them off; when buying cotton to make yourself a nice blouse, be sure that it doesn't have gum on it, because that way it won't hold up well after a wash; soak salt fish overnight before you cook it; is it true that you sing benna in Sunday school?; always eat your food in such a way that it won't turn someone else's stomach; on Sundays try to walk like a lady and not like the slut you are so bent on becoming; don't sing benna in Sunday school; you mustn't speak to wharf flies will follow you; but I don't sing benna on Sundays at all and never in Sunday school; this is how to sew on a button; this is how to make a button-hole for the button you have just sewed on; this is how to hem a dress when you see the hem coming down and so to prevent yourself from looking like the slut I know you are so bent on becoming; this is how you iron your father's khaki shirt so that it doesn't have a crease; this is how you iron your father's khaki pants so that they don't have a crease; this is how you grow okra far from the house, because okra tree harbors red ants; when you are growing dasheen, make sure it gets plenty of water or else it makes your throat itch when you are eating it; this is how you sweep a corner; this is how you sweep a whole house; this is how you sweep a yard; this is how you smile to someone you don't like too much; this is how you smile to someone you don't like at all; this is how you smile to someone you like completely; this is how you set a table for tea; this is how you set a table for dinner; this is how you set a table for dinner with an important guest; this is how you set a table for lunch; this is how you set a table for breakfast; this is how to behave in the presence of men who don't know you very well, and this way they won't recognize immediately the slut I have warned you against becoming; be sure to wash every day, even if it is with your own spit; don't squat down to play marbles you are not a boy, you know; don't pick people's flowers you might catch something; don't throw stones at blackbirds, because it might not be a blackbird at all; this is how to make a bread pudding; this is how to make doukona; this is how to make pepper pot; this is how to make a good medicine for a cold; this is how to make a good medicine to throw away a child before it even becomes a child; this is how to catch a fish; this is how to throw back a fish you don't like, and that way something bad won't fall on you; this is how to bully a man; this is how a man bullies you; this is how to love a man; and if this doesn't work there are other ways, and if they don't work don't feel too bad about giving up; this is how to spit up in the air if you feel like it, and this is how to move quick so that it doesn't fall on you; this is how to make ends meet; always squeeze bread to make sure it's fresh; but what if the baker won't let me feel the bread?; you mean to say that after all you are really going to be the kind of woman who the baker won't let near the bread?

Julio Cortázar (1914-1984)
Continuity of Parks

He had begun to read the novel a few days before. He had put it down because of some urgent business conferences, opened it again on his way back to the estate by train; he permitted himself a slowly growing interest in the plot, in the characterizations. That afternoon, after writing a letter giving his power of attorney and discussing a matter of joint ownership with the manager of his estate, he returned to the book in the tranquillity of his study which looked out upon the park with its oaks. Sprawled in his favorite armchair, its back toward the door—even the possibility of an intrusion would have irritated him, had he thought of it—he let his left hand caress repeatedly the green velvet upholstery and set to reading the final chapters. He remembered effortlessly the names and his mental image of the characters; the novel spread its glamor over him almost at once. He tasted the almost perverse pleasure of disengaging himself line by line from the things around him, and at the same time feeling his head rest comfortably on the green velvet of the chair with its high back, sensing that the cigarettes rested within reach of his hand, that beyond the great windows the air of afternoon danced under the oak trees in the park. Word by word, licked up by the sordid dilemma of the hero and heroine, letting himself be absorbed to the point where the images settled down and took on color and movement, he was witness to the final encounter in the mountain cabin. The woman arrived first, apprehensive; now the lover came in, his face cut by the backlash of a branch. Admirably, she stanching the blood with her kisses, but he rebuffed her caresses, he had not come to perform again the ceremonies of a secret passion, protected by a world of dry leaves and furtive paths through the forest. The dagger warmed itself against his chest, and underneath liberty pounded, hidden close. A lustful, panting dialogue raced down the pages like a rivulet of snakes, and one felt it had all been decided from eternity. Even to those caresses which writhed about the lover's body, as though wishing to keep him there, to dissuade him from it; they sketched abominably the frame of that other body it was necessary to destroy. Nothing had been forgotten: alibis, unforeseen hazards, possible mistakes. From this hour on, each instant had its use minutely assigned. The cold-blooded, twice-gone-over reexamination of the details was barely broken off so that a hand could caress a cheek. It was beginning to get dark.

Not looking at one another now, rigidly fixed upon the task which awaited them, they separated at the cabin door. She was to follow the trail that led north. On the path leading in the opposite direction, he turned for a moment to watch her running, her hair loosened and flying. He ran in turn, crouching among the trees and hedges until, in the yellowish fog of dusk, he could distinguish the avenue of trees which led up to the house. The dogs were not supposed to bark, they did not bark. The estate manager would not be there at this hour, and he was not there. He went up the three porch steps and entered. The woman's words reached him over the thudding of blood in his ears: first a blue chamber, then a hall, then a carpeted stairway. At the top, two doors. No one in the first room, no one in the second. The door of the salon, and then, the knife in hand, the light from the great windows, the high back of an armchair covered in green velvet, the head of the man in the chair reading a novel.

Questions

1. Did the ending of the story surprise you? Why did it surprise you (if it did)? Should you have been surprised by the ending?
2. You may have noticed that seemingly insignificant details in the early part of the story are essential for making sense of the ending. For example, the reference to the green velvet upholstery at the beginning of the story becomes a key to understanding the last sentence. What other details does Cortázar casually plant at the beginning of the story that become important at the end? What is the significance of these details? Are there any wasted details?
3. Does the novel that the man reads sound like a realistic story? Does "Continuity of Parks" strike you as a highly realistic story? What does this story illustrate about the relationship between life and fiction? What does the title mean?
4. Cortázar writes, "one felt it had all been decided from eternity." What does the "it" refer to? What does the line mean? Do such sentiments explain why the man reading the novel doesn't leave his chair?
5. Is the ending of the story a surprise to the man reading the novel? What is Cortázar's attitude toward surprises? Who could be the author of the novel read by the man in the story?