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978-0-521-65797-6 - The International Story: An Anthology with Guidelines for Reading and Writing about Fiction

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The International Story

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PREFACE

The *International Story: An Anthology with Guidelines for Reading and Writing about Fiction* features a generous selection of thought-provoking classic and contemporary short stories from many different countries. Unique to this text is the integration of literary works with detailed guidelines for reading and writing and for crafting an interpretive essay. With its exciting international scope, the text has considerable appeal to a diverse group of readers.

The International Story addresses the academic needs of students who can benefit linguistically, culturally, and intellectually from exposure to literature. Students can begin with personal responses to the readings, including their lack of understanding, and move toward reflection and analysis, using interpretive tools explained and demonstrated in the text. As they gain confidence in their powers of interpretation, students are challenged to think critically about what they read and to develop analytical and argumentative skills that enable them to present and support their ideas.

Bringing different histories, cultural backgrounds, beliefs, biases, and experiences to the stories, students can compare their responses and thereby widen their perspectives. A deeper understanding of the stories can be achieved in the classroom as ideas are shared and meanings are unraveled.

THE LEVEL

The International Story is designed for literature-based composition courses and for advanced ESL programs that focus on the connections between reading and writing. Supporting linguistic and cultural material makes it possible for students of any background to appreciate the international literary works.

THE STRUCTURE

The International Story has four major sections: Part One: Reading Fiction; Part Two: Anthology of Short Stories; Part Three: Writing an Essay; and Glossary.

Part One: Reading Fiction

Part One provides strategies for reading short fiction. Throughout Part One, the reading/writing strategies of several students at work are demonstrated; and students are given the opportunity to engage in similar processes.

Chapter 1 focuses on students' initial reactions to what they read. The chapter presents strategies such as previewing, using contextual clues to

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guess at meaning, annotating, keeping a reading log, making double-entry notes, keeping a literary journal, and participating in class discussions. Students are encouraged to explore their own reactions and to recognize that there are many possible responses to a given text.

Chapter 2 focuses on analysis and interpretation. The chapter includes clear, accessible explanations of literary terms. Critical strategies help students (1) analyze the elements of a story (plot, setting, character, point of view, imagery, symbolism, tone, irony, speech, structure) and (2) interpret a story's meanings or significance. Activities invite students both to create and to analyze scenes and characters. Through these activities, they can see how language can be used both to compose and to comprehend a story.

Part Two: Anthology of Short Stories

Part Two consists of two chapters: Chapter 3, The Stories, and Chapter 4, Discussion Activities. Because the stories and discussion activities are in separate chapters, students are able to come to the end of a story and examine their thoughts about it without having to attend to someone else's agenda.

Chapter 3 comprises twenty-two complete stories from seventeen countries. The stories offer a wide range of choices in terms of length, style, period, gender, culture, point of view, and theme, yet lend themselves well to comparison. Footnotes are kept to a minimum so that students can read fluently and interact freely with the stories.

The stories are presented chronologically, according to the dates they were written or originally published. Spanning over one hundred years (1884–1989), they provide a sense of social history as they move from the nineteenth through the twentieth century. (A separate table of contents presents an alternative arrangement by geographic area).

Several of the stories were published in the United States and reflect the diversity of American culture. The stories published in other countries reflect traditions and concerns of and within many cultures, although, of course, no one story can be representative of a whole culture. Taken together, the stories allow for a rich multicultural and cross-cultural experience in the classroom. Each of the stories has universal as well as cultural meanings. Story after story raises issues about choices and challenges that all readers grapple with and attempt to resolve.

Chapter 4 provides discussion activities designed to stimulate students' reactions to the stories without being overly directive. Suggestions lead readers to make their own discoveries and to ask their own questions. The activities include reflective, analytical, and creative writing. All of the activities foster an awareness of what is involved in the shaping of a text.

Part Three: Writing an Essay

Part Three prepares students to fulfill an essay assignment to analyze and interpret a work of fiction. The four chapters include succinct guidelines to show students what they can do to achieve their writing objectives.

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Each chapter tries to make students aware of what an academic audience might expect and how to go about fulfilling those expectations. Examples of student writers at work demonstrate some composing processes. At the same time, the text emphasizes flexibility: students are reminded again and again that different strategies work for different writers.

Chapter 5 provides guidelines for crafting an interpretive essay. To fulfill the essay assignment, students are guided to practice strategies such as defining the audience, taking notes, brainstorming, focusing, organizing, drafting, evaluating, revising, and completing an essay.

Chapter 6 provides guidelines for selecting evidence for critical analysis of a story. Students learn ways to analyze key words and phrases, ask questions about elements of fiction and abstract ideas in a story, and develop the vocabulary they need in their own writing. The chapter also includes suggestions for topics that students can focus on in their essays.

Chapter 7 provides guidelines for selecting, incorporating, and punctuating quotations and for citing and documenting sources.

Chapter 8 provides guidelines for proofreading and editing an essay, observing some unique conventions of writing about literature, and producing a final manuscript.

Glossary

The alphabetically arranged **Glossary** defines words and idioms taken from the stories. Multiple definitions allow for different interpretations of the passage in which the word occurs.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For a number of years, students in the courses I teach at Tufts University worked with a variety of drafts of *The International Story*, which they knew only as a work in progress. I learned much from their responses, which shaped my writing as well my perspectives on literature across cultures.

Several reviewers read and responded to my work with great care and insight. I am pleased to have the opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of Diana Berkowitz, Nassau Community College; David Eskey, University of Southern California; Virginia Heringer, Pasadena City College; Linda Wallace Jones, St. Louis University; John Mathenia, University of Tennessee, Martin; Melinda Reichelt, Purdue University; and Jonathan Seely, University of Arizona.

Over the years, I have exchanged ideas with many colleagues about teaching and learning, reading and writing, literature and composition. In particular, I would like to thank Lucy Ferris, Catherine Sadow, Roberta Steinberg, and Vivian Zamel for their encouragement and advice as I was preparing this book.

The staff at St. Martin's Press has always given me the support and

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respect that any author needs. To Naomi Silverman, editor; Denise Quirk, project manager; Emily Berleth, manager of publishing services; Sandy Cohen, permissions assistant; editorial assistants Sarah Crowley and Sarah Picchi: Thank you.

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She was one of those pretty and charming girls who are sometimes, as if by a mistake of destiny, born in a family of clerks.

“A Trifle from Real Life,” Anton Chekhov (Russia, 1888) 53

Nikolai Ilitch Belayeff was a young gentleman of St. Petersburg, aged thirty-two, rosy, well fed, and a patron of the race-tracks.

“Two Portraits,” Kate Chopin (United States, 1895) 58

Alberta having looked not very long into life, had not looked very far.

“The Americanization of Shadrach Cohen,” Bruno Lessing (United States, 1903) 62

There is no set rule for the turning of the worm; most worms, however, turn unexpectedly.

“Araby,” James Joyce (Ireland, 1914) 69

North Richmond Street, being blind, was a quiet street except at the hour when the Christian Brothers’ School set the boys free.

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- “The Egg,” Sherwood Anderson (United States, 1920) 78
My father was, I am sure, intended by nature to be a cheerful, kindly man.
- “Babylon Revisited,” F. Scott Fitzgerald (United States, 1931) 86
“And where’s Mr. Campbell?” Charlie asked.
- “The Man Who Was Almost a Man,” Richard Wright (United States, 1940) 103
Dave struck out across the fields, looking homeward through paling light.
- “Dead Men’s Path,” Chinua Achebe (Nigeria, 1953) 113
Michael Obi’s hopes were fulfilled much earlier than he had expected.
- “Six Feet of the Country,” Nadine Gordimer (South Africa, 1953) 116
My wife and I are not real farmers—not even Lericé, really.
- “Like a Bad Dream,” Heinrich Böll (Germany, 1966) 126
That evening we had invited the Zumpens over for dinner, nice people; it was through my father-in-law that we had got to know them: ever since we have been married he has helped me to meet people who can be useful to me in business, and Zumpen can be useful: he is chairman of a committee which places contracts for large housing projects, and I have married into the excavating business.
- “Swaddling Clothes,” Mishima Yukio (Japan, 1966) 132
He was always busy, Toshiko’s husband.
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I must have been very young at the time.
- “The Plane Reservation,” Massud Farzan (Iran, 1969) 141
We lived on 23 Sadness Street.
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He kills—he killed—he will kill—he has killed—he had killed—he will have killed—he would have killed—he is killing—he was killing—he has been killing—he would have been killing—he will have been killing—he will be killing—he would be killing—he may kill.
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