



Here's what we did on

# November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019:



1. If you were absent today, you do not need to make up today's warm up, as it was a jumping-off point for us to begin a discussion. Here was the prompt, though, in case you're interested: Personal Quickwrite: So, do you like scary stories? What about horror films? Write one or two sentences telling Mrs. Day your thoughts on scary tales, and which ones are your favorites.
2. Next, we read some "Two-Sentence Horror Stories" and had the opportunity to write them with our teams! This was *supposed* to be yesterday's Halloween activity, but it ended up working well for a short Work Zone/Fun Zone Friday. Again, you do not have to make up this activity, but I'm sorry you missed it!

# November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019:

1. Warm Up - Can you separate art from the artist? For example, should we still listen to R. Kelly, knowing about the sexual assault charges against him? What about Michael Jackson? Should we still watch movies like *Paddington*, *Leap*, or *Django Unchained*, knowing they were produced by Harvey Weinstein's company? Before we start today – what do you think: should we separate the art from the artist?

2. After writing their own opinions, students did a “turn-and-talk” with their team about their answers, and we shared some with the class.

3. Once we'd “smart started” our brains, I got down to today's main topic:

A few weeks ago, when I mentioned that we'd be reading some H.P. Lovecraft in class, one of my students said, “Hey, Mrs. Day, you know Lovecraft was super racist, right?” I responded that I didn't know that, but after a quick Google search, I found she was quite right! I was left with a moral quandary: should I teach Lovecraft, knowing what I now know about him? I spoke with teachers and friends whose opinions I trust, but ultimately decided that my students' opinions were the ones I needed most. \*I also realized it could give me a chance to circle back to argumentative writing for a minute. 😊 SO – students read “HP Lovecraft Remembered” (which you can find on the next pages), and answered the prompt at the end. Trigger Warning: The article includes a highly offensive, racist epithet. Make sure you look at the grading rubric so you know this assessment's requirements. Complete the argumentative paragraph on a large index card.

## HP Lovecraft remembered:

### Plumbing the darkness surrounding the horror visionary, reactionary and racist

HP Lovecraft wrote his first story a hundred years ago, leaving a legacy of horror writing that has seeped into popular culture and profoundly influenced cinema and literature to this day. He was also an out-and-out racist. David Barnett peers into the darkness

\*Mrs. Day has edited the original document for reasons of length and clarity.

A century ago, a gaunt<sup>1</sup>, sickly young man of 26 years sat down to write what would become the first piece of a body of work which would far outlive him. Draw closed the curtains, stoke the fire, and gather around, for I have a dark tale to tell, one that details the pursuit of immortality, of sorts, but which brings with it a great price... and something of a conundrum for the modern world.

That young man was Howard Phillips Lovecraft, who more often is recognized by his literary moniker, HP Lovecraft.

Lovecraft's father, a travelling salesman, was committed to an asylum, the Butler Hospital, with “nervous exhaustion” when the boy was just three, and remained there until he died in 1898, leaving the youngster in the care of his mother. A nervous, sickly child, he suffered from sleep paralysis and was withdrawn from school at the age of eight, concentrating his efforts on the study of science and especially astronomy.

It was perhaps this interest in the great unknowns of the universe coupled with the fact that mental health issues were all around him – in 1919, Lovecraft’s mother, suffering hysteria and depression, was committed to the same hospital where her husband had died – that fed into Lovecraft’s literary career. His first short story, “*The Tomb*,” addressed both of those obsessions and paved the way for HP Lovecraft to become renowned as the West’s premiere exponent of weird fiction.

But it was perhaps the second story that Lovecraft wrote, in July 1917, that laid the foundations for his lasting fame. “*Dagon*” introduced themes that would become synonymous with Lovecraft’s work, those of ancient, unknowable deities lurking beneath the sea, waiting to rise up and destroy the civilization that humanity is so arrogantly confident will last for an eternity.

As Lovecraft attacked his writing with a ferocity that belied his sickly frame, he conjured up a whole pantheon of gods - actually cosmic alien entities of vast size and power – who wished to regain control of the Earth they once ruled before the rise of man. And the greatest of these was *Cthulhu*.

*This water-bound* entity didn’t appear until 1928’s *The Call of Cthulhu*, which is regarded as a classic of literature of any genre now, and Lovecraft described him thus: “... a monster of vaguely anthropoid<sup>2</sup> outline, but with an octopus-like head whose face was a mass of feelers”.

His stories were a strange combination of threats so large and so apocalyptic that mankind might as well simply throw in the towel; and up-close, personal horror. The entities of the Cthulhu Mythos (as these stories became known) cannot simply rise up and destroy us; they have to inveigle<sup>3</sup> their way into our lives, exert their subtle influence on cultists and the insane, gain ground in their relentless campaign inch by sinister inch.

1. gaunt – extremely thin and bony

2. anthropoid – resembling humans

3. inveigle – to tempt, lure, or trap by the use of flattery or artful talk

Lovecraft died in 1937, and his stories might have died with him – he never earned a great deal from his writing while alive – but his exposure in the pulp magazines seemed to give him something of an enduring appeal. Stephen King declares Lovecraft the “greatest practitioner of the classic horror tale,” and even Joyce Carol Oates says his influence on writers of all genres who followed is “an incalculable” one, it seems that beneath his often lumpy prose, Lovecraft’s ideas were ones that were digging their claws into humanity’s souls, much like the monsters he created.

Lovecraft’s short stories and novels are constantly in print, and his characters and themes are always being taken on by other writers.

However, here comes the conundrum, the dichotomy<sup>4</sup> of Lovecraft’s appeal. Because while his influence on the modern horror genre is undeniable, neither is the fact that he was an out-and-out racist.

Lovecraft’s biographer, the novelist Michel Houellebecq, said that “Lovecraft’s character is fascinating in part because his values were so entirely opposite to ours. He was fundamentally racist, openly reactionary, he glorified puritanical inhibitions.”

Making no efforts to conceal his bigoted theories, Lovecraft took to pen and publication with the most grotesque appraisals of those he deemed inferior. His letters overflow with anti-Semitic conspiracy theories of an underground Jewry pitting the economic, social, and literary worlds of New York City against “the Aryan race.” His contempt for blacks ran even deeper.

Two years ago, the organizers of the World Fantasy Award dropped their traditional prize of a bust<sup>5</sup> of Lovecraft for the winner, after a campaign by authors. One of them was writer Nnedi Okorafor, who was awarded the prize in 2011 for her novel *Who Fears Death*. Trigger warning for racist language ahead; [Okorafor’s] delight was tempered with the discovery of a poem Lovecraft had written in 1912 titled “On the Creation of Niggers,” which includes the lines, “A beast they wrought, in semi-human figure/ Filled it with vice<sup>6</sup>, and called the thing a Nigger.”

Which is pretty foul stuff wherever you stand. The question that fans of the horror genre wrestle with today is how Lovecraft can be celebrated when his views were so execrable<sup>7</sup>. You’ll often hear the “man of his time” argument, yet even for the early 20th century these were extreme views.

The other often-used argument is that we should be able to separate the man from the work. Is it OK to appreciate Lovecraft’s stories and the impact he has had on this particular branch of literature while at the same time pushing his own views to one side?

It’s a puzzle that’s perhaps as unsolvable as any conflict in Lovecraft’s own fiction. Only one thing is certain; HP Lovecraft, and the body of work he embarked upon exactly a century ago when he wrote “The Tomb,” seemingly endure, though the ghost of the writer’s racism will always lurk in the background like one of the loathsome creatures of his imagination.

4. dichotomy – division into two opposed or contradictory groups

5. bust – a portrait, usually a sculpture, showing only the head and shoulders of the subject

6. vice – immoral or evil habits

7. execrable – utterly detestable; abhorrent; abominable

Prompt:

So, what do you think? Should Mrs. Day teach any H.P. Lovecraft stories in her class, knowing what she now knows about him, personally?


Respond in a well-organized argumentative paragraph.

<b>Required Element</b>	<b>Points Available</b>	<b>Points Earned</b>
This paragraph states a clear claim, responding to the prompt in its entirety.	1	
This paragraph offers a reason or reasons to support the stated claim.	1	
This paragraph gives evidence to prove the stated reason or reasons.	1	
This paragraph includes elaboration on the evidence, which explains why the evidence matters and ties it back to the reason or claim.	1	
This paragraph is organized, with an introduction, body, and conclusion.	1	
This paragraph is generally free of grammar or spelling errors, demonstrating a working knowledge of Academic English.	1	

# November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019:

Warm Up 11/5/19

1. Think about things people wish for and wish on (stars, clovers, 11:11). If you got the chance to make three wishes, what would you wish for?



Focus on one of your wishes and, underneath what you've already written, list some possible ways the granting of that wish could go wrong.

1.

If you were absent, you do not have to make up this warm up. Please write the title in your CB, and write, "I was absent" under that title.

2. Vocabulary in Context - Start reading "The Monkey's Paw" (p.105), looking for unknown words. Find three words whose definitions you're not sure of and make a guess about what they mean, using the surrounding words to understand. Explain your guess in complete sentences. You will not be graded on whether or not you guessed correctly, only whether or not your guess makes sense and is well explained.

Mrs. Day's Example: Example: Without (p. 105) – I would guess that "without" means "outside", because the text says it's "cold and wet" there, *and* because it's contrasted with the parlor, "but in the small parlor the...fire burned brightly".

3. Finally, we began reading "The Monkey's Paw". To catch up with the class, read pp. 105-106 of this text, along with the "Background" about the author, W.W. Jacobs.

# November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019:

1. We did a creative “quickwrite” as our warm up, but you don’t have to make this up. In your CB, please write “ABSENT” under the title Warm Up for today.

2. After our “Brain Smart Start” we read all of “Part I” of “The Monkey’s Paw.” Read through p. 110 to catch up with the class. If you wish, you can listen to a recorded performance of this text here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NmYDQcaB2c8>

As we read, we discussed several notable things about the relationships in this story. The White Family seems to be really sweet toward each other; they lightheartedly tease each other on several occasions. Also, it’s clear at several points that they are NOT taking Sargent-Major Morris’ threats about the monkey’s paw seriously. They keep laughing and joking when it’s clear he’s grave and serious.

3. Finally, I gave back several recent assignments, showed some stellar student examples, and gave instructions on how to make corrections/additions to those assignments. If you were absent, make sure you get your “The Outsider” packet (with tasks 6, 8, 10, and 12 completed), your “Literary Analysis,” and any other work from your class’ return bin.

# November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019:

1. Warm Up – Vocab. In Context II - Get your Vocabulary in Context assignment from Tuesday. Use a dictionary (paper or digital) to look up the actual definitions for the three words you chose, and write them underneath your guesses. Then, reflect on your context-based guess. Were there enough context clues, and you made a correct guess? Was there enough context, but you made a wrong guess? Were there *not* enough clue words in the surrounding sentences for you to have guessed at a word's meaning correctly? At the very bottom of the assignment, write a Reflection: How did using context clues work for you here? Respond in one-two sentence at the very bottom of this assignment. If you don't know a word, remember your tools:
  - 1) Look it up (if you can)
  - 2) Make a guess using context
  - 3) Skip it!
2. We read Parts I and II of "The Monkey's Paw" with this audio: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NmYDQcaB2c8>. Finish this story to catch up with the class.
3. Exit Ticket – We didn't have time for our exit ticket today, so we'll do it as our Warm Up tomorrow.



# November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019:

1. Warm Up - Opinion: Do you think Sergeant Major Morris was responsible for what happened to the White Family? Explain your answer using evidence from the text.

We held a brief “moving” debate on this question. Obviously, if you were absent, you cannot make that up, but DO answer the question in your composition book.

2. After our “Brain Smart Start,” we had a nice quiet work day in Mrs. Day’s classroom. Students worked on these Wrap Questions:

## Wrap Questions

11/8/19

To answer these questions, you’ll have to add some words to your Vocabulary Notebook. When you get to the highlighted words, add them and discuss what they mean with your team to solidify your understanding.

1. What words & phrases establish the setting at the beginning of the story? How does that setting help to set the **mood** of the text?
2. In lines 110-119, Mrs. White makes an **allusion** to *The Arabian Nights*. What does this allusion suggest about Mrs. White’s thoughts on the paw?
3. Create a chart like the one below, and fill it in with at least two quotations from the text. Then, explain how the men’s different attitudes toward the paw build suspense.

Quotations about the paw from Sergeant-Major Morris:	Quotations about the paw from Mr. White:

Complete these questions on your own. You can check out a book from Mrs. Day. Remember that you have two days (for each day you’re absent) to make up the work you missed.

Here's what we did on

November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019:



# November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019:

1. Instead of a regular warm up, students worked to complete their Wrap Questions from Friday. Here they are again:

**Wrap Questions** 11/8/19

To answer these questions, you'll have to add some words to your Vocabulary Notebook. When you get to the highlighted words, add them and discuss what they mean with your team to solidify your understanding.

1. What words & phrases establish the setting at the beginning of the story? How does that setting help to set the **mood** of the text?
2. In lines 110-119, Mrs. White makes an **allusion** to *The Arabian Nights*. What does this allusion suggest about Mrs. White's thoughts on the paw?
3. Create a chart like the one below, and fill it in with at least two quotations from the text. Then, explain how the men's different attitudes toward the paw build suspense.  
(for each character)

Quotations about the paw from Sergeant-Major Morris:	Quotations about the paw from Mr. White:

2. After our “Brain Smart Start” I talked about “mood” and “tone.” Make sure you have both (and the added part) in your Vocabulary Notebook.

**Mood** – The feeling or atmosphere a writer creates for the reader; **how the author wants you (the reader) to feel**

**Tone** – *The writer's attitude toward the subject of a text*; **how the author/narrator feels**

Watch this quick video about mood: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQq7XZ\\_1m34](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQq7XZ_1m34)

3. Next, we talked about the tools filmmakers use to establish mood in a film. They're a little bit different from the ones writers use.

**Continued on the next page/back of this page**

4. We watched the final minutes of *The Monkey's Paw* film! You can watch it on YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ugjegclLNhM&t=1311s>. Only watch from 21:54 to the end. Then, you can complete the next assignment, Analyze Media.

**Analyze Media** 11/12/19

**Setting**  
**Music**  
**Special Effects**  
**Dialogue**  
**Color Palette**

- 2. Compare** Has the director remained faithful to the written story? Name **one way** that the story you read and the film clip are the same. Then name **one way** they are different.
- 3. Evaluate** Complete a chart like the one shown to identify three of the techniques the director used. Then explain which one you found most effective and why.
- 4. Analyze** Consider the ways the director uses lighting in the film. What is the effect of the lighting in the scene where Herbert returns to the house?
- 5. Analyze** How do the camera angles and camera filters that the director uses affect the mood of the film? How do they affect the impact of the final scenes at the cemetery?

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Use these questions to cement your understanding of the tools filmmakers use to communicate mood!

5. Finally, I told my students that they'll be taking a CommonLit quiz tomorrow – a “cold read” that is similar to the short stories we've been studying (“The Tell-Tale Heart,” “The Outsider,” and “The Monkey's Paw”).

Here's what we did on

November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019:

Today, we took a cold-read quiz on the short story “Was It A Dream”. If you were absent today, please schedule a time to come in and make up this quiz. It took most of my students the majority of the period to finish, so please make time before or after school!

Students who finished early worked on their Wrap Questions (from Friday) and their Analyze Media (from yesterday). Make sure these two assignments are complete in your composition book, as I'll start checking them over the next couple of days.

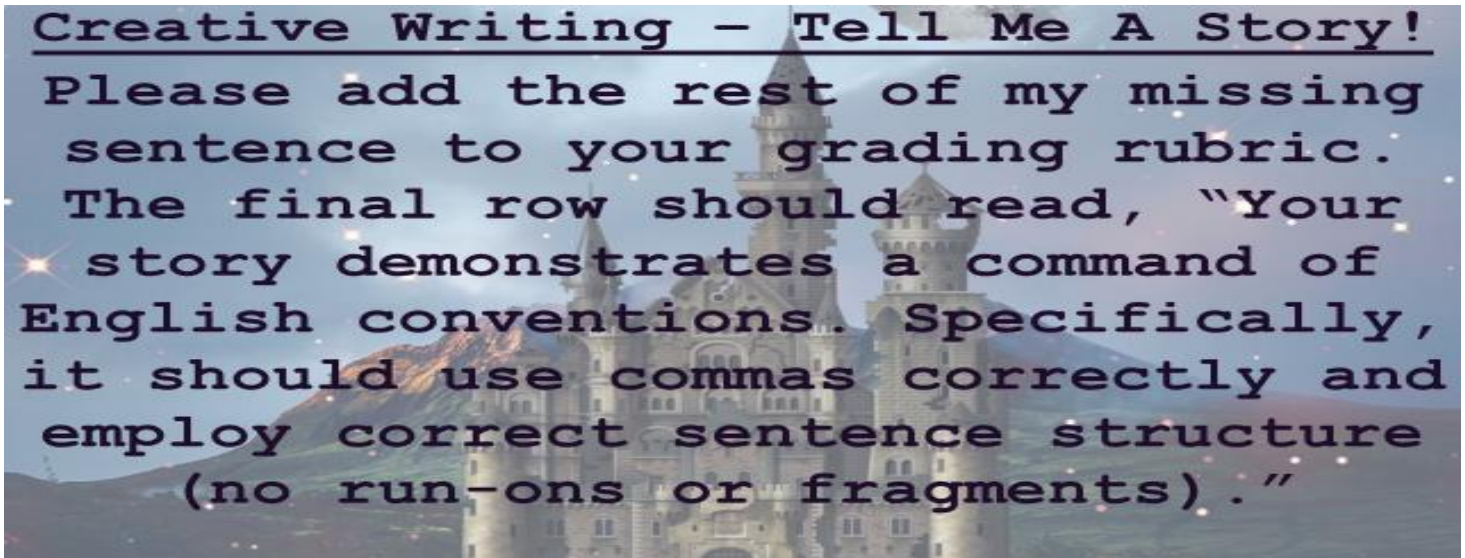
## November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019:

1. Warm Up - What is your favorite genre of fiction (books, movies, or TV)? Do you prefer comedy? Do you like crime, fantasy, romance, mystery, or maybe horror? Write what your favorite genre is, and say why you like it so much.
2. I announced that all old work (from the beginning of the 9-weeks to this Tuesday) is due BY MONDAY! I will not take it after that. Simply, if my job is to deliver instruction and then measure your understanding. I cannot do that accurately if I'm receiving assignments weeks after I delivered the instructions. SO, all assignments from 10/11/19-11/16/19 will be locked on Monday.
3. After our Brain Smart Start, I introduced our next mini-project – “Tell Me A Story!” If you were absent, get a packet from Mrs. Day as soon as you return to class. We went through the steps together, and then had time to brainstorm and begin working.

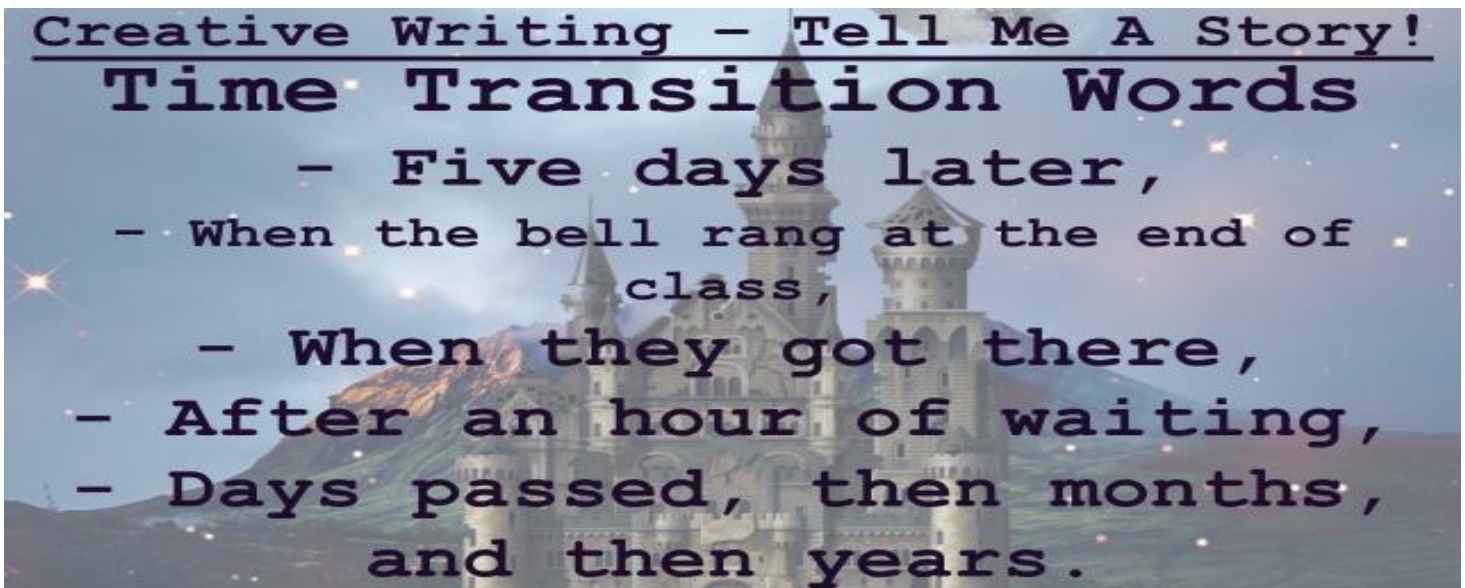
Here's what we did on

# November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019:

After our Brain Smart Start, I went through two things having to do with our Tell Me A Story assignment. Here are those slides:



Next, I went over the importance of pacing in 8<sup>th</sup> grade narratives, and the use of what I'm calling "time transitions". These are important because they allow your reader to follow your story, and understand the order in which things happen. Here are some examples:



The rest of the class period today was used working on our stories! We'll continue that work on Monday.