

9th Honors English Summer Enrichment

Welcome to Honors Freshman English! We are excited to have you join us in the Fall. This is a literature course focused on developing critical thinking, reading, and writing skills within the context of an honors level course. We will read a variety of texts throughout the school year, which are previewed in this summer enrichment activity. This will not negatively impact your grade but will help prepare you for our robust curriculum in Honors!

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Your assignment: Read the following short stories and answer the accompanying questions. There are two stories to read and 8 questions to answer for each story. Please come to the first day of school with thorough responses, preferably typed and ready to submit to Teams.

Elements of Fiction:	Definition	Questions to Consider
1. Characterization	The methods a writer uses to develop characters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What adjectives would you use to describe the characters? What do we learn about them? • Do they change throughout the story or stay the same? Why might this be important?
2. Conflict	A struggle or problem in a story (ex. Person v person; person v self; person v society)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a key type of conflict in this story. What happens, why might it be important, and how is it resolved?
3. Imagery	The verbal expression of sensory experience; descriptive or figurative language used to create word pictures; imagery is created by details that appeal to one or more of the five senses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of imagery are used in this story? How do these choices make you connect to the characters or the scenes in general?
4. Point of View	The perspective from which a narrative is told, that is, first person, third person limited, or third-person omniscient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whose perspective do you get while reading the story? How does the perspective impact our reading of the story?
5. Plot	The sequence of related events that make up a story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are they key events of the story?
6. Setting	The time and place in which a story happens; the environment the story takes place in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where is the story set? • When is the story set? • What images tell us about the place?
7. Theme	A writer's central idea or main message	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the author want us to believe after we finish the story? How does the author show us that?
8. Tone	A writer's (or speaker's) attitude toward a subject, character, or audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the author feel about what they're writing about?

Directions: While reading the story, highlight or underline words that show us how Gersão feels about the woman or the red fox fur coat. (Tone and Imagery)

Red Fox Fur Coat by Teolinda Gersão

On her way home one day, a humble bank clerk happened to see a red fox fur coat in a furrier's shop window. She stopped outside and felt a shiver of pleasure and desire run through her. For this was the coat she had always wanted. There wasn't another one like it, she thought, running her eyes over the other coats hanging from the metal rack or delicately draped over a brocade sofa. It was rare, unique; she had never seen such a color, golden, with a coppery sheen, and so bright it looked as if it were on fire. The shop was closed at the time, as she discovered when, giving in to the impulse to enter, she pushed at the door. She would come back tomorrow, as early as possible, in her lunch break, or during the morning; yes, she would find a pretext to slip out during the morning. That night she slept little and awoke feeling troubled and slightly feverish. She counted the minutes until the shop would open; her eyes wandered from the clock on the wall to her wristwatch and back, while she dealt with various customers. As soon as she could, she found an excuse to pop out and run to the shop, trembling to think that the coat might have been sold. It had not, she learned, been sold; she felt her breath return, her heartbeat ease, felt the blood drain from her face and resume its measured flow.

“It could have been made for you,” said the saleswoman when the bank clerk put the coat on and looked at herself in the mirror. “It fits perfectly on the shoulders and at the waist, and the length is just right,” she said, “and it really suits your skin tone. Not that I'm trying to pressure you into buying it,” she added hurriedly, “obviously you're free to choose anything you like, but if you don't mind my saying so, the coat really does look as if it had been made for you. Just for you,” she said again, with the hint of a smile.

“How much is it?” the bank clerk asked, half turning round—thus setting the hem of the coat swinging—because she found it hard to take her eyes off her own image in the mirror.

She recoiled, stunned, when she heard the reply. It cost far more than she had thought, five times more than she could possibly afford.

“But we can spread out the payment if you like,” said the saleswoman kindly.

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She could always sacrifice her holidays, the bank clerk thought. Or divert some of the money intended for a car loan. She could use less heating, eat smaller meals. It would do her good, really, because she was beginning to put on a bit of weight.

“All right,” she said, doing rapid calculations in her head. “I’ll give you a deposit and start paying next week. But it’s definitely mine now, isn’t it?”

“Absolutely,” said the saleswoman, attaching a “Sold” label to the coat. “You can take it away with you when you’ve paid the third installment.”

She started visiting the shop at night, when it was closed and no one would see her, in order to gaze at the coat through the window, and each time it brought her more joy, each time it was brighter, more fiery, like red flames that did not burn, but were soft on her body, like a thick, ample, enfolding skin that moved when she moved ...

It would be admired, as would she, people would turn to stare after her, but it was not this that provoked a secret smile; rather, she realized, it was an inner satisfaction, an obscure certainty, a sense of being in harmony with herself, that spilled over in all kinds of small ways. It was as if the rhythm of her breathing had changed, had grown calmer and deeper. She realized too, perhaps because she no longer felt tired, that she moved more quickly, that she could walk effortlessly now, at twice her usual speed. Her legs were agile, her feet nimble. Everything about her was lighter, quicker; her back, shoulders, and limbs all moved more easily.

It must be all the keep-fit I’ve been doing, she thought, because for some reason she had started taking regular exercise. For a few months now she had been spending two hours a week running at the track. But what she liked most was to go running in the forest, on the outskirts of the city, feeling the sand crunch beneath her feet, learning to place her feet on the ground in a different way—in direct, perfect, intimate contact with the earth. She was intensely aware of her body; she was more alive now, more alert. All her senses were keener too, she could hear, even from some distance away, infinitesimal sounds which, before, would have gone unnoticed: a lizard scurrying through the leaves, an invisible mouse making a twig crack, an acorn falling, a bird landing on a bush; she could sense atmospheric changes long before they happened: the wind turning, a rise in humidity, an increase in air pressure that would culminate in rain. And another aspect of all the things to which she had now become sensitized was the discovery of smells, a whole world of smells; she could find paths and trails purely by smell; it was strange how she had never before noticed that everything has a smell: the earth, the bark of

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trees, plants, leaves, and that every animal can be distinguished by its own peculiar smell, a whole spectrum of smells that came to her on waves through the air, and which she could draw together or separate out, sniffing the wind, imperceptibly lifting her head. She suddenly became very interested in animals and found herself leafing through encyclopedias, looking at the pictures—the hedgehog's pale, soft, tender underbelly; the swift hare, of uncertain hue, leaping; she pored over the bodies of birds, fascinated, pondering the softness of the flesh behind their feathers; and a single word kept bobbing insistently about in her mind: predator.

She seemed to be hungrier too, she thought, as she put away her books and went into the kitchen, and this negative aspect to all the physical exercise displeased her greatly. She tried to find a way to avoid putting on weight and prowled, dissatisfied, past patisseries, never finding what she was looking for, because the smell of coffee was repellent to her and made her feel nauseous. No, she was hungry for other things, although she didn't quite know what, fruit perhaps; this might be an opportunity to lose a little weight. She bought a vast quantity of grapes and apples and ate them all in one day, but still she felt hungry, a hidden hunger that gnawed at her from inside and never stopped.

She was cheered by an unexpected invitation to a party, welcoming any diversion that would make her forget that absurd hunger. She reveled in getting dressed up and in painting her lips and nails scarlet. Her nails, she noticed, were very long, and even her hands seemed more sensitive, more elongated. Anyone she touched at the party that night would remain eternally in her power, she thought, smiling at herself in the mirror—a feline smile, it seemed to her. She narrowed her eyes and widened the smile, letting it spread over her face, which took on a pleasingly triangular shape that she further emphasized with make-up.

In the middle of the party, she noticed someone slicing up some meat, cooked very rare—roast beef, she thought, although these words had suddenly ceased to have any meaning. She reached out her hand and devoured a whole slice. Ah, she thought, the taste of almost raw meat, the action of sinking her teeth into it, of making the blood spurt, the taste of blood on her tongue, in her mouth, the innocence of devouring the whole slice, and she took another slice, already sensing that using her hand was now a pointless waste of time, that she should just pick it up directly with her mouth.

She burst out laughing and began to dance, waving her bloodstained hands in the air, feeling her own blood rise, as if some tempestuous inner force had been unleashed, a malign force that she could transmit to others, a plague or a curse, but this idea was nevertheless sweet, quiet, almost joyful, she felt, as she swayed, slightly drunk, listening to the echo of her own laughter.

She would spend the night obeying all these newly released forces and, in the morning, she would go and fetch the coat, because the day had come when it would be hers; it was part of her; she would know it even with her eyes closed, by touch alone, the soft, thick pelt burning her skin, cleaving to her, until she could no longer tell skin from skin ...

“It could have been made for you,” the saleswoman said again, as she removed it from the coat hanger.

The coat cleaving to her, until she could no longer tell skin from skin, as she could see in the mirror, as she turned the collar up around her head, her face disfigured, suddenly thinner, made up to look longer, her eyes narrow, restless, burning...

“Goodbye, then, and thanks,” she said, rushing out of the shop, afraid that time was getting short and that people would stop in alarm to stare at her, because suddenly the impulse to go down on all fours and simply run was too strong, reincarnating her body, rediscovering her animal body; and as she fled, as she left the city behind her and simply fled, it took an almost superhuman effort to get into her car and drive to the edge of the forest, keeping tight control of her body, keeping tight control of her tremulous body for just one more minute, before that slam of the door, that first genuine leap on feet free at last, shaking her back and her tail, sniffing the air, the ground, the wind, and, with a howl of pleasure and joy, plunging off into the depths of the forest.

Directions: After reading the story, answer the following questions in complete sentences. Cite text evidence when appropriate.

1. What adjectives would you use to describe the characters? What do we learn about them? Do they change throughout the story or stay the same? Why might this be important?
2. Identify a key type of conflict in this story. What happens, why might it be important, and how is it resolved?
3. What types of imagery are used in this story? How do these choices make you connect to the characters or the scenes in general?
4. Whose perspective do you get while reading the story? How does the perspective impact our reading of the story?
5. What are they key events of the story?

Directions: While reading the story, highlight or underline words that show us how Bradbury feels about the technology. (Conflict and Theme)

To enter out into that silence that was the city at eight o'clock of a misty evening in November, to put your feet upon that buckling concrete walk, to step over grassy seams and make your way, hands in pockets, through the silences, that was what Mr. Leonard Mead most dearly loved to do. He would stand upon the corner of an intersection and peer down long moonlit avenues of sidewalk in four directions, deciding which way to go, but it really made no difference; he was alone in this world of 2053 A.D., or as good as alone, and with a final decision made, a path selected, he would stride off, sending patterns of frosty air before him like the smoke of a cigar.

Sometimes he would walk for hours and miles and return only at midnight to his house. And on his way he would see the cottages and homes with their dark windows, and it was not unequal to walking through a graveyard where only the faintest glimmers of firefly light appeared in flickers behind the windows. Sudden gray phantoms seemed to manifest upon inner room walls where a curtain was still undrawn against the night, or there were whisperings and murmurs where a window in a tomb-like building was still open.

Mr. Leonard Mead would pause, cock his head, listen, look, and march on, his feet making no noise on the lumpy walk. For long ago he had wisely changed to sneakers when strolling at night, because the dogs in intermittent squads would parallel his journey with barkings if he wore hard heels, and lights might click on and faces appear and an entire street be startled by the passing of a lone figure, himself, in the early November evening.

On this particular evening he began his journey in a westerly direction, toward the hidden sea. There was a good crystal frost in the air; it cut the nose and made the lungs blaze like a Christmas tree inside; you could feel the cold light going on and off, all the branches filled with invisible snow. He listened to the faint push of his soft shoes through autumn leaves with satisfaction, and whistled a cold quiet whistle between his

teeth, occasionally picking up a leaf as he passed, examining its skeletal pattern in the infrequent lamplights as he went on, smelling its rusty smell.

'Hello, in there,' he whispered to every house on every side as he moved. 'What's up tonight on Channel 4, Channel 7, Channel 9? Where are the cowboys rushing, and do I see the United States Cavalry over the next hill to the rescue?'

The street was silent and long and empty, with only his shadow moving like the shadow of a hawk in mid-country. If he closed his eyes and stood very still, frozen, he could imagine himself upon the center of a plain, a wintry, windless Arizona desert with no house in a thousand miles, and only dry river beds, the street, for company.

'What is it now?' he asked the houses, noticing his wrist watch. Eight-thirty P.M.? Time for a dozen assorted murders? A quiz? A revue? A comedian falling off the stage?'

Was that a murmur of laughter from within a moon-white house? He hesitated, but went on when nothing more happened. He stumbled over a particularly uneven section of sidewalk. The cement was vanishing under flowers and grass. In ten years of walking by night or day, for thousands of miles, he had never met another person walking, not one in all that time.

He came to a cloverleaf intersection which stood silent where two main highways crossed the town. During the day it was a thunderous surge of cars, the gas stations open, a great insect rustling and a ceaseless jockeying for position as the scarab-beetles, a faint incense pattering from their exhausts, skimmed homeward to the far directions. But now these highways, too, were like streams in a dry season, all stone and bed and moon radiance.

He turned back on a side street, circling around toward his home. He was within a block of his destination when the lone car turned a corner quite suddenly and flashed a fierce white cone of light upon him. He stood entranced, not unlike a night moth, stunned by the illumination, and then drawn toward it.

A metallic voice called to him:

'Stand still. Stay where you are! Don't move!'

He halted.

'Put up your hands!'

'But-' he said.

'Your hands up! Or we'll shoot!'

The police, of course, but what a rare, incredible thing; in a city of three million, there was only one police car left, wasn't that correct? Ever since a year ago, 2052, the election year, the force had been cut down from three cars to one. Crime was ebbing; there was no need now for the police, save for this one lone car wandering and wandering the empty streets.

'Your name?' said the police car in a metallic whisper. He couldn't see the men in it for the bright light in his eyes.

'Leonard Mead,' he said.

'Speak up!'

'Leonard Mead!'

'Business or profession?'

'I guess you'd call me a writer.'

'No profession,' said the police car, as if talking to itself. The light held him fixed, like a museum specimen, needle thrust through chest.

'You might say that,' said Mr. Mead.

He hadn't written in years. Magazines and books didn't sell anymore. Everything went on in the tomb-like houses at night now, he thought, continuing his fancy. The tombs, ill-lit by television light, where the people sat like the dead, the gray or multi-colored lights touching their faces, but never really touching them.

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'No profession,' said the phonograph voice, hissing. 'What are you doing out?'

'Walking,' said Leonard Mead.

'Walking!'

'Just walking,' he said simply, but his face felt cold.

'Walking, just walking, walking?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Walking where? For what?'

'Walking for air. Walking to see.'

'Your address!'

'Eleven South Saint James Street.'

'And there is air in your house, you have an air conditioner, Mr. Mead?'

'Yes.'

'And you have a viewing screen in your house to see with?'

'No.'

'No?' There was a crackling quiet that in itself was an accusation.

'Are you married, Mr. Mead?'

'No.'

'Not married,' said the police voice behind the fiery beam. The moon was high and dear among the stars and the houses were gray and silent.

'Nobody wanted me,' said Leonard Mead with a smile.

'Don't speak unless you're spoken to!'

Leonard Mead waited in the cold night.

'Just walking; Mr. Mead?'

'Yes.'

'But you haven't explained for what purpose.'

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'I explained; for air, and to see, and just to walk.'

'Have you done this often?'

'Every night for years.'

The police car sat in the center of the street with its radio throat faintly humming.

'Well, Mr. Mead', it said.

'Is that all?' he asked politely.

'Yes,' said the voice. 'Here.' There was a sigh, a pop. The back door of the police car sprang wide. 'Get in.'

'Wait a minute, I haven't done anything!'

'Get in.'

'I protest!'

'Mr. Mead.'

He walked like a man suddenly drunk. As he passed the front window of the car he looked in. As he had expected, there was no one in the front seat, no one in the car at all.

'Get in.'

He put his hand to the door and peered into the back seat, which was a little cell, a little black jail with bars. It smelled of riveted steel. It smelled of harsh antiseptic; it smelled too clean and hard and metallic. There was nothing soft there.

'Now if you had a wife to give you an alibi,' said the iron voice. 'But-'

'Where are you taking me?'

The car hesitated, or rather gave a faint whirring click, as if information, somewhere, was dropping card by punch-slotted card under electric eyes. 'To the Psychiatric Center for Research on Regressive Tendencies.' He got in. The door shut with a soft thud. The police car rolled through the night avenues, flashing its dim lights ahead. They passed one house on one street a moment later, one house in an entire city of houses that were dark, but this one particular house had all of its electric lights brightly lit, every window a loud yellow illumination, square and warm in the cool darkness.

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'That's my house,' said Leonard Mead.

No one answered him.

The car moved down the empty riverbed streets and off away, leaving the empty streets with the empty sidewalks, and no sound and no motion all the rest of the chill November night.

Directions: After reading the story, answer the following questions in complete sentences. Cite text evidence when appropriate.

1. What adjectives would you use to describe the characters? What do we learn about them? Do they change throughout the story or stay the same? Why might this be important?
2. Identify a key type of conflict in this story. What happens, why might it be important, and how is it resolved?
3. What types of imagery are used in this story? How do these choices make you connect to the characters or the scenes in general?
4. Whose perspective do you get while reading the story? How does the perspective impact our reading of the story?

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5. What are the key events of the story?

6. Where is the story set? When is the story set? What images tell us about the place?

7. What does the author want us to believe after we finish the story? How does the author show us that?

8. How does the author feel about what they are writing about? What word choice(s) highlights that feeling?

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Directions: After reading both stories, choose a prompt from below and write a short reflection (minimum of 8-10 sentences) exploring how one of the prompts connect to your personal life or experiences.

Prompt Option 1) Like the theme explored in “Red Fox Fur Coat”, explore a time when you felt consumed by something. What was this thing (person, idea, hobby, etc.), and how did it control your sense of self? How is this similar to the way the woman felt in the story?

Prompt Option 2) Like the theme explored in “The Pedestrian”, explore a time where you felt you did not fit in and/or felt isolated from societal expectations. Explain the circumstance, how you felt, and how this is similar to the narrator’s feelings in the story.
