

The Carver Essay



For our final essay on the writings of Raymond Carver, I'll be asking you to do two things. First, You'll be asked to provide analysis of **at least three of his stories** to help support your thesis. Second, I'll be asking you to **respond to some of Carver's claims** about his own writing.

Please choose one of the four prompts below.

1. Carver, one of America's greatest short story writers, once said that "[i]t's strange. You never start out life with the intention of becoming a bankrupt or an alcoholic or a cheat and a thief. Or a liar." However, in each of his stories we seem to find ourselves running into these characters. Discuss the effects that characters of this nature have on the emotional landscape of his short stories.
2. "Almost all the characters in my stories come to the point where they realize that compromise, giving in, plays a major role in their lives," Carver said. "Then one single moment of revelation disrupts the pattern of their daily lives. It's a fleeting moment during which they don't want to compromise anymore. And afterwards they realize that nothing ever really changes." Discuss the ways in which Carver's characters are forced to change, and provide an analysis of the affects these changes have on the characters.
3. When discussing his characters, Carver once claimed that "I do know something about the life of the underclass and what it feels like, by virtue of having lived it myself for so long," he said in a 1986 interview. "Half my family is still living like this. They still don't know how they're going to make it through the next month or two." Discuss how Carver describes what it means to live as a member of the "underclass" and how that affects his characters.
4. Research what Carver has had to say about his stories, his writing, or his life. Provide an analysis of how you believe Carver's stories fit (or don't fit) with his statements.

My thesis is:

Teacher Signature

Student Signature

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The Basic Requirements:

Each of the essays written will include the following:

- A **thesis** that isn't already obvious and allows the writer to clearly demonstrate his or her opinion.
- A **discussion of at least three stories** which includes analysis of the specific language Carver uses as it relates to the thesis.
- A clear discussion of **theme**.
- Inclusion of at least one passage from Woods' analyses.

The Rubric:

	1	2	3	4
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title/Thesis Missing • Focus not on thesis • No quotations/citations • Does not demonstrate understanding of the subject. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title shows little thought • Thesis too broad or vague. • Focus strays from thesis. • Quotations/Citations provide limited connection to thesis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title appropriate and reflects content. • Thesis clear and limited. • Quotations/Citations provide clear connection to thesis. • Understand of texts clearly evident. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title appropriate and interesting. • Focus remains on thesis. • Writing shows in-depth interpretation of resources. • Quotations/Citations clearly connect with thesis and help develop meaning.
Conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Errors are significant and detract from understanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Errors are frequent, but do not significantly detract from understanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper is virtually error free (3-5 minor errors). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One to two minor errors present.
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only 1 or 2 paragraphs in length. • No transitions • Paragraphs have no internal organization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-paragraph paper, but leaves out information. • Thesis improperly placed. • Internal organization confusing. • Transitions repetitive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-paragraph paper. • Thesis placed properly. • Internal organization faulty. • Transitions connect main ideas and paragraphs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-paragraph paper. • Logically organized. • Body paragraphs use topic sentences. • Transitions vary and guide the reader.
Story Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides no analysis of particular stories or of Carver's language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides only fleeting analysis of Carver's language and stories. Analysis does not support thesis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides detailed analysis of stories and language to support thesis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of stories and language enhances and supports thesis.