Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Period:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Ask Questions to Understand Stories

**Directions:** As you read the short story, answer the following questions as they apply to what you are reading. You do not need to answer in complete sentences.

1. Who is telling the story?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the narrator’s point of view, i.e. is the story being told as it happens? recalled from past events? as an internal monologue? dramatic monologue?

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3. To what extent can you trust the narrator?

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4. What do you know about the characters?

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5. What do these things tell you about the characters?

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6. What is the relationship between the setting and the characters and the story?

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7. What are people in the story NOT talking about?

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8. If there is more than one narrator, what is the relationship between them and what purpose do these multiple narrators serve?

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9. What shape or diagram best describes the action and/or structure of the story?

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10. How would it change the story if…e.g., the narrator changed from first to third person? the point of view changed from one character to another? the narrative started before/after the crucial event? a different narrative structure (e.g. journal format, internal monologue) was used? the narrator changed from man to woman (or vise versa)?

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11. How would you describe the voice and how it influences the tone of the story: e.g. formal or informal?

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12. What does the narrator want to tell this story?

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13. What is the narrator’s attitude toward their subject/character/story?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

14. What, if anything, is influencing the shape and function of the text/story? (e.g. cultural tradition such as the Native American story circle? different genres such as Sandra Cisneros’s allusions in *The House on Mango Street* to folk and fairy tales?)

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15. Why does the author\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? (e.g., shift time frames, change narrators, incorporate different types of texts – poems, letters, diaries – within their story)

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16. How does the character change in response to their experiences in this story?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

17. What are the sources of conflict or tension in the narrative?

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18. How do your perceptions of the character(s) change as the story progresses?

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19. Does your answer to the question “What is this story?” remain the same throughout your reading? If not, at what point does it change?

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20. What factors most influence your response to an interpretation of this story? (e.g., past experiences you’ve had? cultural bias? gender? socioeconomic status? other?)

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21. How does the historical setting/context affect this story’s outcome/meaning/style?

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22. What must you know in order to understand this story?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

23. What is the relationship between this and other works by this author – or other writers/words in this genre?

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24. Which character do you must identify with and why?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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25. What would \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_be saying/thinking in their head as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ talks about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

26. Why did the author tell the story as they did? (e.g., in first person, from the character’s point of view, from present looking back? What was their “authorial intent”?)

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27. If a character has some condition – physical, psychological, emotional – what effect does that have on the story and our perception of the character?