

Sherwood Anderson's *Death in the Woods*

Day 3 (*Time required: 45-55 mins.*)

Preparing to Write

Tell students that they will spend time today and during the next class period writing the story that they have come to class prepared to write.

Revisit the concept of voice.

This is a term writers use to make characters or people sound different from one another. No two characters speak exactly the same, just as no two people speak exactly the same. Some examples of voice are expressions that one character may use frequently, the degree of formality a character uses when speaking, and regionalisms (terms understood by all people in a particular place, but not in use everywhere). For example, Grandpa uses the word “gymnasium” though Jamie is more likely to call the same place the “gym.” Regionalisms include “pop” versus “soda”; it is the same product, but where we live often determines which word we use.

Our time period also shapes voice. For example, a young person in the 1960s or 1970s might have described something they liked as “groovy.” In the 1980s, it might have been “gnarly” or “rad.” A young person in the 1990s might have called it “sweet.”

Visualizing and Hearing Characters

Tell students that they will now prepare to write the stories they told someone else for homework. However, instead of writing from their own point of view, ask them to assume the point of view of another person who was part of the event. In their writing, students will let this other person do the talking from a first-person point of view. Since their stories will be written in the voice of another person, have students spend time doing one or both of the following activities to prepare to write:

- Draw a picture of the person who will be the story's narrator. Be as detailed as possible. Encourage students to bring in photographs of the narrator, if possible, to help them capture details about that person in their drawing.
- Make a list of expressions and regionalisms that are used frequently by the person who will be the narrator of the story. Encourage students to “hear” the person's voice in their minds as they gather their thoughts and begin writing.