

Introduction to Modern Literature:

“The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber” by Ernest Hemingway

“The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber” by Ernest Hemingway was first published in *Cosmopolitan* in 1936 and is a great representation of the literature that we will be reading this school year. It is set during a big-game safari in Africa, and the main characters are Francis Macomber, his wife Margaret (Margot), and the professional hunter, Robert Wilson, who guides their safari. Hemingway is the quintessential Modern writer—a member of the Lost Generation and expatriate who captures the disillusionment of his time and country perfectly.

Objective

Students will read and analyze a Modern text for the purposes of determining literary devices and thematic elements. Students will also write an essay, citing strong contextual evidence to support their analysis.

Assignment

Read and annotate “The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber” by Ernest Hemingway.

- Vocabulary you may need as you read:
 - The ‘boys’ are the servants, and the ‘gun bearers’ literally carry the guns and work with the professional hunter. Both groups are African natives.
 - Four-letter man – refers to a college athlete; Macomber ‘lettered’ in several sports
 - Memsahib – rich, white lady; respectful term used by the natives
 - Cuckold – husband of an adulterous wife

In groups, you will discuss and analyze the following topics. Take special note of these topics as you read:

- Characterization: compare Francis Macomber and Robert Wilson; describe Margaret Macomber and her role in the story
- Literary Devices: foreshadowing, symbolism, irony; also pay attention to shifts in point of view
- Masculinity and Femininity
- Treatment of servants by the upper class
- Animal rights/treatment

Groups will work together to formulate an analysis and create a visual representation of their assigned topic.

Independently, write a well-developed essay, citing strong contextual evidence to support your arguable thesis. Use *one* of the following essay prompts:

- This story is largely about power. Who has the power in this story? Who has the least power? Support your argument with evidence from the text.
- Sexism is an issue in this story. In what ways do you see it towards women? Towards men? What is Hemingway’s message about the roles of men and women in society? Support your argument with evidence from the text.
- Was Macomber’s death intentional or accidental? State a firm claim and support your argument with evidence from the text.

Due Dates

Aug. 15 – Reading check quiz

Aug. 16-18 – Work in groups; detailed assignment and rubric will be provided

Aug. 19 – Write essay in class; detailed rubric will be provided; final draft due Aug. 22

