

## Modernism Constructed Response

### 30 Points

Directions: For the following, write a constructed response in which you address the prompt. Be sure your responses 1) are as complete and focused as possible, 2) are well thought out and go beyond simply a list of the questions, and 3) **are supported with specific text from the stories**. You may also find it helpful to think past the questions I've given or think about them in a novel way.

The themes of the stories we have read have all dealt with the “modern” period in America. This is a time where the world was changing dramatically and the culture and society of America was shifting in the many ways:

- traditions (family, home, marriage, the role of women)
- faith (religion, God viewed as a protector)
- social institutions (governments, economics, culture, women’s rights)
- beliefs (i.e. patriotism, courage, adulthood).

Due to these changes, the “people” (characters) in these stories and in the world have been forced to adapt to survive in the modern world. The writers have constructed their stories to examine this idea of change, either in their characters or in the worlds their characters exist.

**Choose one character from a story discussed and analyze how the character represents a change that occurs in the modern world. Understand that if the character is unable or unwilling to change, you may address this as well.**

The following may help in understanding the character and theme of each of the stories and though you may choose one of these to write about, you are not limited to these:

1. “Sophistication”: What changes in America are illustrated by the change in the seasons, the setting of the story, and how Helen and George react to their traditional hometown, families, and growing up? Why do Helen and George need “understanding” to live in the modern world? What understanding do they need?
2. “Winter Dreams”: Why does Dexter idealize wealth and how does this relate to the change in the American Dream? Why does Fitzgerald connect wealth and happiness in Dexter’s dream? Where does hard work fit into it? Why does Fitzgerald create Judy as an empty, careless, emotionless, “unhappy” character who has everything? What is he saying about wealth and privilege? What does this say about the changes in women in the modern age (Judy is a flapper; a strong, independent woman)?
3. “A Rose for Emily”: What does Miss Emily represent in the culture of the American South and how does this change as time changes? Why is Emily revered by the people of the town while at the same time rejected by them? Why is it important that she doesn’t change a bit through the story and what is Faulkner saying about Southern culture—and American culture—as we move into the modern age?

4. "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall": Why does Porter create a situation in which Granny is left at the altar and her husband, John? What role does Granny play in her life and how does this illustrate the changes that occur in modern American women? Why does Granny never forget her jilting and how does this influence her life? How does Granny survive the modern world?
5. "In Another Country": What does the Major's advice tell us about life in the modern world? What does the narrator's injury tell us? What comment about war—and life—is Hemmingway making? What role does the "nada concept" play in the story and in the modern world?
6. "Soldier's Home": How is Krebs affected by the war and treated by the people in his "home"? What comment is Hemmingway making about war's effect on soldiers? How does this tie into how people are affected by the modern world? Why, at the end, does Krebs not have a traditional home and what is this saying about the modern world?
7. "Field Trip": Why does the narrator go back to Vietnam? What did it "take" from him? How is he affected by the war? By modern life? What does modern life take from him? From everyone? How does he compare to other characters you've read about?

Understand that these are suggestions only. You are under no obligation to address these topics specifically, but you do need to argue the significance of the selections in some way. **BE SURE** you have a **specific, defensible argument** (thesis) and that you **use and explain specific support** from the stories.