

Discussion Questions

Since Friday, 02.16.18, you should have read a major portion of section 1 from the novel *The Sound and the Fury* by William Faulkner. Answer **all** of the following discussion questions. If you want to use elbow partners that is fine. **For each question you should have 5 or more sentence response.**

- A. Let's start with the strategy of the novel's title. Faulkner was fond of leaving obscure references in most of his popular works. In this case, the title is based on a line from the Shakespearean play *The Tragedy of Macbeth*. The protagonist Macbeth speaks the following soliloquy after he hears of his wife's death by apparent suicide:

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more. **It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.** (Act 5, Scene 5, ll. 19-28)

What strategy is gained by using this particular passage as a basis of his novel?

Is Faulkner labelling Benjy's impressions as actually "nothing" of real importance?

Do you find Macbeth's pessimism an equally strong indicator of the novel's pessimistic message? Why or why not? Cite evidence from the novel.

- B. Consider what you learned about the character of Miss Emily and her story: "A Rose for Emily." Where in the short story did a rose appear? Why is the character addressed as "Emily" and not "Miss Emily"—since nowhere in the story does a character dare call her simply by her given first name.
- C. The entire novel uses a scrambled chronology with its four sections; likewise, the first section narrated by Benjy is a confusing mix of many different times in his life. What type of events does Benjy seem to be recalling? Although Benjy appears to be the "idiot" referenced in *Macbeth*, in what ways does he come across as a more sensitive and emotionally aware individual, rather than others in the Compson household? Cite evidence from the novel.

Due: Friday 02.23.18, end of class