Directions: Complete the Reading Guide in its entirety before Personal Question(s) day. As you read each question, be sure to respond to exactly what the question is asking you! This guide is intended to help channel your thinking in the direction the author intended for his/her work to be understood/taken. Throughout, I will offer you assertions to help you grasp a full meaning of the text. Likewise, with the various assertions, I will offer Connections to somewhat help you “connect” with what the author is talking about at that moment. You should connect as much as possible! Be sure to note these assertions as they will possibly be included on in-class essays as they relate to the short stories, poems, or plays assigned.

“A Visit to Grandmother” by: William Melvin Kelley

1. **Suspense** is a sense of uncertainty or nervousness about the outcome of events in a story.
2. Why do you feel the author uses suspense at the beginning of the short story? Cite textual evidence to defend or assure that you know how suspense is being created.
3. Paragraph 2, on page 75 does not clearly tell the reader what’s going on, but clearly Chig’s father has conflicting problems with this person. Predict, from your reading thus far, what you think creates feelings of “fear, uncertainty, sadness, and perhaps even hatred.”
4. What makes G.L. so interesting to you as a reader; if he does at all? Elaborate on the element of suspense as we find out more and more about Chig’s family.
5. **Characterization** is the method used by a writer to develop a character. The method includes (1) showing the character’s appearance, (2) displaying the character’s actions, (3) revealing the character’s thoughts, (4) letting the character speak, and (5) getting the reactions of others.
6. How does the author use characterization to help establish his characters? Cite textual evidence to defend your answer.
7. Connection: “She turned away, and reached for a handkerchief in the pocket of her clean, ironed, flowered housecoat, and wiped her eyes.”

I can make a connection with this detail. Ever since I was a little boy, I can always remember my grandmother getting on to me about my wrinkled clothes. Even if I was just going outside to play, etc., she always made sure all of my clothes were “pressed,” even though my mom could care less (especially play clothes). Now that I’m older, she still buys a can of liquid starch to be sure that even her “housecoat” is “ironed.” She would often say to me, “with nice, pressed, and ironed clothes (if your britches), you look and feel like a million dollars!”

8. Locate a simile used within the story and analyze its meaning as it relates to the story.
9. What do Grandmother’s statements about not wanting help reveal about her character?
10. Dr. Dunford’s withdrawn behavior as he sits there with his mother is suspenseful in what ways?
11. Why do you feel that very little is said about Hiram and Mae, but an immense amount of information is revealed about Dr. Dunsford, G.L., and Grandmother, if they’re all a family? Expound/Reflect on the idea of “family” when answering this question.
12. “Mae and Chig asked questions...” Why is Mae asking questions?
13. “Now, I reckon you can expect one swindler to be in every town, but you don’t rightly think there’ll be two...” Do you feel that grandmother’s attitude toward G.L. will ever change? Justify your answer.
14. After seeing the house, why was Mama concerned?
15. Snippets of the setting are revealed to the reader slowly. In a single paragraph, describe the setting in detail from the information you’ve gathered so far. Cite textual evidence to defend heighten your paragraph.

16. Explain the simile “sweet as an apple.” What do you infer the man who sold G.L. this horse said to him?

17. The author’s use of characterization when describing Dr. Dunsford’s action at the table affects the reader in what ways?

18. **Connection**: “G.L. was light-skinned and had good hair and looked almost white and you loved him for that.”

   Growing up, I had two aunts who remind me of this situation. Both of my aunts would always gladly embrace the birth of new nieces and nephews; however, they would prefer those grandchildren who were light-skinned babies. They would somewhat show more favoritism to them. For instance, they would buy them more Christmas presents, birthday presents, etc. all because of their skin color.

19. **Juxtaposition** is the act of two things being seen or placed close together with contrasting effect.

20. After an abrupt dismissal from the table, Dr. Dunsford storms up to his room. Just at that time, G.L. enters the house with a “friendly smile, the innocent smile of a five-year-old.” Describe the juxtaposition in which the author strategically sets up for the reader.

21. A character that undergoes a major change within a story is known as a **dynamic character**. A character that stays the same throughout a story is called a **static character**.

   At the opening of “A Visit to Grandmother,” we learn that Chig “had always known his father to be the warmest of men.” What change occurs during the course of the story? Do you feel understand the reason for the change? Explain.

22. In what way is G.L. a static character. Reread the concluding paragraphs of the story and cite evidence to support your answer.

**Personal Questions**

*Remember, Personal Questions are to be Level II questions. Reflect on the story, and determine at least 2 or 3 questions that you might feel led to ask about the story. Also remember: If you don’t ask questions, I will; but, ON THE TEST!! Write your questions below in the empty space.*