

I.B. English Literature H.L.

Part 1 – Works in Translation

Selected Stories of Anton Chekhov

1. Read the introduction to *Selected Stories of Anton Chekhov* and answer the following questions:
 - a) The artistic term “impressionism” has been used to describe Chekhov’s writing. Define “impressionism” and indicate which aspects of Chekhov’s writing allow critics to apply this label to his particular style of writing.
 - b) Examine Chekhov’s “six principles that make for a good story” as they appear on page IX. Choose one of the seven short stories that we have read and explain how Chekhov has been successful in applying these principles in that particular story. Provide examples from the text to support your arguments.
 - c) Explain how Chekhov’s use of characters in his stories was seen as a departure from the traditional Russian approach of writers like Tolstoy and Dostoevsky.
 - d) Why was Chekhov’s work criticized and how was he seen to change the “image” of the writer in Russian society? How did Chekhov attempt to defend himself from critical attacks?
 - e) After reading the entire introduction, indicate how Chekhov’s writing may have been influenced by his life experiences.
2. Conduct research into the political and social reality of life in Russia in the mid to late 19th Century. Explain what life was like for the Russian peasant population at this time in history and contrast it with the reality of life for the members of the aristocracy. What major events and political decisions/changes in Russia directly affected the life, and ultimately the writing, of Anton Chekhov?