

Dear 2018-19 AP Literature Student,

I am extremely excited to meet you and get to teach at Mead High School next year. I have a deep love for MHS and will share more about that when class gets started in the fall. Until then, here is the summer assignment to work on over the next 6-7 weeks. The text you will be reading is one of my all-time favorites and I think you will enjoy it too. The information below details the book, the assignment, and next steps. As I don't have a Mead School District email yet, you can reach me at Lochhead.Drew@gmail.com with any questions you might have.

Sincerely,
Mr. Lochhead

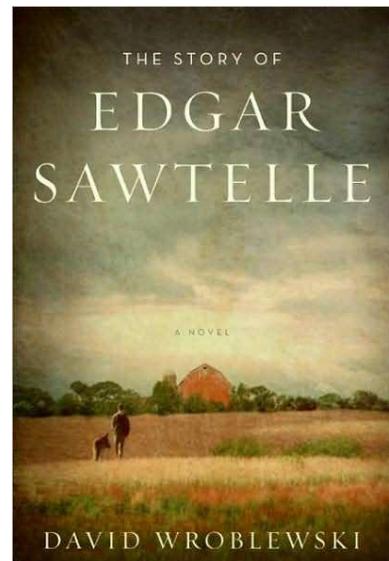
The Story of Edgar Sawtelle by David Wroblewski

"It is as true for the writer as for the reader that any novel worth its ink should be an experience first and foremost— not an essay, not a statement, not an orderly rollout of themes and propositions. All of which is to say: stories, too, are wild things."

— David Wroblewski, *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*

Context

The Story of Edgar Sawtelle is loosely based on the Shakespearean play Hamlet. Hamlet is the story of a Danish prince (Prince Hamlet) whose uncle (Claudius) kills his brother (King Hamlet). His uncle then becomes King Claudius and takes his sister-in-law, Queen Gertrude, as his wife. Prince Hamlet must avenge his father's murder. As you read, look for the similarities in names and plot line based on the above context. We will be reading Hamlet in class. This filter reading will benefit you when we read Hamlet in class.



Requirements:

1. **Acquire** a copy of *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*. (Amazon.com has them for about \$10 and you can often find copies at used book stores in town. Book Trader on Garland Ave. is my favorite used bookstore in Spokane.)
2. **Annotation** involves a careful, critical, active reading of the text. As you write in the margins and makes notes either on the pages themselves or on sticky notes, consider the following elements and how they shape the meaning of the text:
 - Setting: Consider the two major locations of the novel. How do these settings influence the characters, conflict, and plot?
 - Allusion: Consider how the allusion to Hamlet contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.

- Death Scenes: pay careful attention to the death scenes in the novel. How do these death scenes impact the plot and characters?
 - Motifs: a motif is the reoccurrence of an element in a text (symbol, idea, character, etc.) Look for repeating patterns or ideas in the novel (communication, heredity, companionship, fate, etc.)
3. **Choose one** of the following essay prompts and write a 500-600 word essay in MLA format. (see attached MLA format for any questions)
- a. Prompt #1 – Analyze the text and explain **how** David Wroblewski communicates his message about companionship and/or belonging through the different relationships in the text. (Be sure to explicitly state what his message is about companionship and/or belonging in your thesis.)
 - b. Prompt #2 - A bildungsroman, or coming-of-age novel, recounts the psychological or moral development of its protagonist from youth to maturity, when this character recognizes his or her place in the world. Select a single pivotal moment in Edgar’s psychological or moral development and write a well-organized essay that analyzes how that single moment shapes the meaning of the work as a whole
4. **DUE:** Your paper is due **Monday, July 30th, 2018**. Please email me your essay by sharing it with Lochhead.Drew@gmail.com - This will be your first grade in the gradebook to begin the year.

A few hints:

- The prologue is important – it would be easy to dismiss it, but those who carry it with them through the text will understand its meaning and significance by the end of the reading.
- As you read, consider the following question: Is revenge ever justified? This is a question we will ponder throughout multiple readings this upcoming year. It will also be the basis for our first class discussion.
- Here is a quick summary from Goodreads.com: Born mute, speaking only in sign, Edgar Sawtelle leads an idyllic life with his parents on their farm in remote northern Wisconsin. But his life is plunged into chaos as his uncle returns, his father suddenly dies, and he is forced to flee into the wilderness with only three yearling dogs for company.