

Ideas for Student's Consideration

Thomas Wolfe took the real experiences of his life and turned them into exciting works of fiction. He invented a character named Eugene Gant based upon himself. Do the same in your story. Write about visiting another place. Use descriptive words to help the audience imagine the scene. Base your story on your own experience, but add elements that may or may not have occurred.

The story "The Sun and the Rain" was printed in Scribner's Magazine in May 1934. When Thomas Wolfe completed his second novel *Of Time and the River*, he titled Book VI "Antaeus: Earth Again" and included this story. In Greek mythology, you will find the tale of the twelve labors of Hercules and his wrestling match with Antaeus. Learn more about this story and how it might connect to Thomas Wolfe's writing.

As you read, think about some of the following idea that might help you in writing your own story:

In the story "The Sun and the Rain," Eugene Gant is on a train to Orleans from Chartres, France. Find these places on a map. How far is it from Chartres to Orleans in France?

Having spent much of his time in the city, Eugene is leaving the city for the countryside, where he rediscovers his respect for nature. Think about how you find value in discovering things in nature. Consider how nature might bring different people together.

Think about a time you left a busy place for a simpler location. Where was it? How did it make you feel to leave the busy location? Describe the "simpler" location.

Think about a time you went to a different place or experienced a different culture. What lesson did you learn about the place you call home? What lesson did you learn a lesson about yourself?

Has there ever been a time when you were unable to communicate with someone due to a language barrier, an accent or difference in pronunciation? In "The Sun and the Rain" despite their differences two people achieve a level of understanding beyond the meaning of the words they speak. How did the Frenchman's daughter react to the exchange? Was her approach to the situation different or similar to your own situation?

The story has been described as a "here-and-gone moment." Read and think about the various definitions of these words. "Here" can be a place or time in the present. "Gone" can mean being away from a place; or having departed. A "moment" can be a very short or brief period of time; but one of value and significance. Think about an important short event

and/or encounter in your life that left a lasting impression and taught you a lesson. How did nature, or the earth's elements or terrain, factor into this "moment?"