If you have an excused absence for missing a reading quiz, please complete the corresponding alternative assignment, a 500-word essay on the given topic germane to the story. You have three days from the day of the assignment to complete it. You will upload it into Turnitin.com by the date. You will be evaluated using the Written Assignment Rubric.

*Year of Spaghetti*

* Other than the central metaphor of the spaghetti, what techniques does Murakami use to develop the theme of loneliness?

*A “Poor Aunt” Story*

* What is Murakami’s message about the subjectivity of art? What methods does he use to support it?

*Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman*

* Discuss the theme of regret in the text. What literary techniques does Murakami employ to further it?

*Town of Cats*

* Discuss the literal town of cats. Why does it exist in the text and what is its message?

*New York Mining Disaster*

* In different versions of the translation, Murakami opens with the miners. How does the inclusion in the beginning of the text change the story’s message?

*Kino*

* What does the cat symbolize? How does it support a message in the text?

*Man-Eating Cats*

* Atmosphere is vital to the text. How does Murakami create atmosphere and how does the atmosphere support meaning?

*Scheherazade*

* This story is dependent on allusion. Research the allusion and discuss the similarities between the two stories. Why would Murakami wish to draw this parallel?

*Birthday Girl*

* Discuss point-of-view in the text. Why does Murakami frame the story from a male’s point-of-view? How would it differ if the girl narrated?

*Dabchick/Kidney—Shaped Stone that Moves Every Day*

* What is the message of Dabchick? What literary techniques does Murakami use to further the message?