**“Videotape” Reading Questions** (text pp. 1091-94) Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

AP English Literature and Composition

1. Think about the narrative voice in this short story:

a. Who is speaking?

b. Who is the “you” to whom the narrator speaks?

c. What is the effect of this direct address?

d. Why did Delillo write the story in this way?

2. Think about the relationship between the girl, the camera, and reality. How does the camera mediate (or change) her view of reality? Why do you think Delillo chose to have a 12- year old girl do the videotaping?

3. Describe the structure and style of the story. Why does the writer repeat the phrase “it shows…” at the beginning of so many paragraphs?

4. Man and Video. What insight, if any, does the man in the story come to while watching the video? How does he interpret the video and his reactions to it? (Does he learn from the videotape? Does it teach him?)

5. Camera and Reality. What does the story say about how cameras shape our ideas about what is “real” and what is “unreal”? What is the camera’s relationship to reality? What changes to reality with the invention and introduction of the camera?

6. Camera and Family. According to the story, what role does the camera (or television) play in American family? How has it changed the family? (Think of how technology changes the structure of the typical family – e.g., how did the car change the family, how did the camera change the family, how did the cell phone change the family, the answering machine, the computer, etc.?)

7. “Videotape” is considered a masterpiece of sudden fiction, a genre or subset of fiction characterized by immediacy. Somewhat like *in medias res* (in the middle of things), the reader is thrown into an event that began before he or she got there; the setting is underexplained, or not explained at all; and yet by thetime the story is finished, a strong sense of plot and setting remains. Why is this genre particularly apt for the story DeLillo tells in “Videotape”?