

A Sense of Style Terminology for Discussing Style **Style Tool Box**

Building Blocks Stylistic Elements Resources of Language Linguistic Devices

What is style? Style is an immutable quality reflecting the total characteristics of a work or author. When you analyze and write about style, have style. When asked to analyze the style of a piece of literature, reach into your style tool box for the following key terms:

1. Diction: word choice -- Is the diction vivid or turgid, vigorous or dull, denotative or connotative, conversational or formal, ornate, Latinate? Is it abstract or concrete, general or specific, modern or archaic, regional or jargon, elevated/lofty, learned, technical, simple, euphemistic, polysyllabic or monosyllabic?

2. Syntax: structure and pattern of sentences -- Are the sentences periodic, loose, simple, complex, parallel, short, long, questions, exclamations, imperative, declarative, rhetorical, fragmented, inverted --

-Anastrophe: "Blessed are the meek."

-Anaphora: repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of two or more successive clauses, verses, or sentences:

"First in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen"

-Loose sentence (non-periodic): begins with main idea and ends with subordinate details

-Periodic sentence: withholds its main idea until the end

3. Detail and Imagery: choice of parts and word pictures that make up larger picture

4. Tone: narrator's manner or emotion in expressing his or her attitude toward the subject and implied audience based on syntax, diction, and/or details. (tone: emotional judgment ---- attitude: intellectual judgment)

Perhaps start with but go beyond positive and/or negative.

ironic

comic/humorous

objective

cynical

sentimental

rational

pessimistic

tragic

tragic

satirical

optimistic

realistic

solemn

self-assured

sympathetic

bitter

5. Point of View and Narrative Techniques: vantage point

6. Irony: discrepancy between intent and actual meaning: verbal, situational, dramatic

7. Organization: structure of materials within a work; relationship of the parts

8. Figurative Language - Figures of Speech: metaphorical turn.
- metaphor, simile, conceit, personification, hyperbole, metonymy, synecdoche, litotes

9. Rhetorical Devices and Techniques: arrangement of words for effect-
- apostrophe, rhetorical question, anaphora, antithesis, allusion, paradox

Literary Criticism: the analysis or interpretation of one or more literary works in order to enlarge a reader's appreciation or comprehension of the work or works; analysis, interpretation, evaluation of the nature and quality of an attitude, opinion, theory, work of art or literature, or social, political, or historical situation or behavior. Critics may reveal hidden meaning, seek the logic of arguments, compare works and provide measured and intelligent judgments on quality and truth.

Literary Device One-page Essay Project

Teacher: Create a glossary of 20 Literary Devices that you will encounter in the course reading this year.
Students: Select a device. Write a one-page essay for the literary device that provides the following:

1. **Literary Device:** What is the device that you are addressing?

2. **Example:** The quotation or sentence or passage, cite lines

3. **Function:** Describe the effect with the three Cs.

Context: Briefly introduce the general circumstances for your example

Concept: What is the device that you are addressing? Use it in the present tense.

Connection: Discuss in clear and specific terms how the literary device contributes to the passage/poem/novel as a whole. How does this literary device reinforce what is occurring in the larger context?

Example:

1. **Device:** Irony: a contrast or discrepancy between what is said and what is meant, or between what happens and what is expected to happen.

2. **Example:** "Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit..." (2.2.97)

3. **Function:**

Context: Polonius, who believes that he has discovered the cause of Hamlet's madness, approaches the king and queen with his news. He promises he will be brief in his exploration of Hamlet's mental state. However, in his desire to impress the royal couple, he uses an arsenal of words and takes several lines to get to the point of Hamlet's madness. He takes so long to get to his point that the queen implores him to use "less art" and get to the point.

Concept: The irony is found in the fact that although he proclaims "brevity" to be the very "soul of wit" he is anything but brief.

Connection: This irony serves a number of purposes. First, it shows that Polonius is perhaps not as clever as he or the king thinks he is; a fact that is borne out later in the play when one of Polonius's clever ideas ends up getting him killed. The irony also serves to reveal Polonius' loyalty to the king and queen; he may wish to make his statement brief in compliance with the queen's wishes, but he must be certain to give every piece of information that he has even if it may not be directly relevant. Finally, it reveals the weakness of Claudius by showing his own lack of judgment. Polonius is too foolish to see that he does not even follow his own dictums, and Claudius has chosen this fool as his top advisor.

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