Literary Analysis Packet

Reader's Response
How to Annotate (various genres)
How to analyze a speech

English 11 Honors
2015-16

Reading Strategies for English Students
English 11 Honors

1. Research – We saw how researching the historical period in which the work was written as well as the author's own background greatly illuminates our understanding and appreciation of the work. In a classroom, the teacher will usually provide this information, but if that does not happen, you will be well served to do this on your own.

2. If available, thoroughly review the cover of the novel. Look to title, critiques, summary, first publication date.

3. Preview the text – the length of the novel, the length of the chapters, the name of the chapters. This could be a defining element of rhetoric (think Elie Wiesel's *Night*).

4. Preview any exercises, questions, or assignments associated with the reading (homework packet, Reader's Response).

5. Annotate in pen – highlighters do not specifically address or remind you why you marked a specific area. Pen or pencil provides the details of your annotations.

6. Summarize the chapter as you complete it. Provide 3-5 sentences of what literally happened in this chapter so that you may better access the plot.

7. Question the title and names of characters as you read. How can you relate these names to themes?

8. Think of questions as you read, or note questions you have during the reading.

9. Underline the text as you read. Note in particular
   - The names of characters
   - Names or titles of characters
   - Descriptions – especially prolonged (think opening scene of *A Separate Peace* or the half frozen lake in *The Catcher in the Rye*)
   - Dates
   - Places/Landscapes
   - Weather
   - Motifs – (think of the preponderance of things old and decaying in "The Customs House")
   - Allusions (biblical and mythological)
   - Words you don't know
   - Author's choice of words
   - Author's arrangement of words
   - Pronoun choices
   - Punctuation choices
   - Connections you make
   - Questions in general
   - Predictions

10. Search for the main idea by sections (chapter).

11. Read through difficult sections – do not stop or become mired in the challenge of reading, rather mark it and come back to it.

12. Use graphics, maps or charts to make connection (e.g. chart Holden's journey, graph the family of Olympians, map the landscape of Gene and Finny's school)

13. Complete any exercises, questions, or assignments associated with the reading (homework packet, Reader's Response).

14. Notes on anything unclear

15. Monitor your understanding

16. Talk about literature with others as you read (even read together)

17. Read in chunks – and review.

18. REREAD

Annotation
What it is and Why We Do It

Denotation: Engaging with the text
  Connotation: Interacting with the text

Purpose:
Understanding the text
Track changes or progressions in a text
Identify areas of interest or concerns (what we don't know, what we want to know)

How to Annotate
  Good: Circle or Underline
- Main ideas
- Character/people's names
- Vocabulary words
- Important ideas or events

Annotating Informational Texts Handout

Common Core

Cite textual ev
As you read any informational text (newspaper article, textbook, magazine article, brochure, credible website, etc.), try using some of these strategies to help you find the meaning in the text.

As you read your text, look for one or more of these factors:

- ➢ Headings and subheadings
- ➢ Lists
- ➢ Diagrams and figures (these give you a brief overview of lots of information)
- ➢ Special features (you might be tempted to skip these, but they're often packed with interesting informational tid-bits)
- ➢ Dates or places (especially in your social studies reading)
- ➢ New vocabulary (you might find a lot of this in science or math, but also other subject areas)

You might find it helpful to color code your notes or text. For example, you might use a system something like this:

- ➢ Green: dates
- ➢ Yellow: places or people
- ➢ Orange: topic sentences or main ideas
- ➢ Pink: new vocabulary or other items you have more questions about
- ➢ Blue: diagrams or figures you find particularly helpful in understanding the information in the text

The following is a list of some techniques that you can use to annotate text:

- ➢ Underline important terms.
- ➢ Circle definitions and meanings.
- ➢ Write key words and definitions in the margin.
- ➢ Signal where important information can be found with key words or symbols in the margin.
- ➢ Write short summaries in the margin at the end of sub-units.
- ➢ Write the questions in the margin next to the section where the answer is found.
- ➢ Indicate steps in a process by using numbers in the margin.

Annotating and Analyzing Particular Genres
Annotating Informational Text
Explicating Poetry

Rhetoric

Basic Questions for Rhetorical Analysis

What is the rhetorical situation?
- What occasion gives rise to the need or opportunity for persuasion?
- What is the historical occasion that would give rise to the composition of this text?

Who is the author/speaker?
- How does he or she establish ethos (personal credibility)?
- Does he/she come across as knowledgeable? fair?
- Does the speaker's reputation convey a certain authority?

What is his/her intention in speaking?
- To attack or defend?
- To exhort or dissuade from certain action?
- To praise or blame?
- To teach, to delight, or to persuade?

Who make up the audience?
- Who is the intended audience?
- What values does the audience hold that the author or speaker appeals to?
- Who have been or might be secondary audiences?
- If this is a work of fiction, what is the nature of the audience within the fiction?

What is the content of the message?
- Can you summarize the main idea?
- What are the principal lines of reasoning or kinds of arguments used?
- What topics of invention are employed?
- How does the author or speaker appeal to reason? to emotion?

What is the form in which it is conveyed?
- What is the structure of the communication; how is it arranged?
- What oral or literary genre is it following?
- What figures of speech (schemes and tropes) are used?
- What kind of style and tone is used and for what purpose?

How do form and content correspond?
- Does the form complement the content?
- What effect could the form have, and does this aid or hinder the author's intention?

Does the message/speech/text succeed in fulfilling the author's or speaker's intentions?
- For whom?
- Does the author/speaker effectively fit his/her message to the circumstances, times, and audience?
- Can you identify the responses of historical or contemporary audiences?

What does the nature of the communication reveal about the culture that produced it?
- What kinds of values or customs would the people have that would produce this?
- How do the allusions, historical references, or kinds of words used place this in a certain time and location?

American Literary Movements

Native American – The dates for this period are very unclear because we have absolutely no idea when they started. Much of the literature of that period were myths, and, of course, the Native Americans still write today. Most of what our text calls Native American myths were written long before Europeans settled in North America.

Puritan – (1472-1750) – Most of this is histories, journals, personal poems, sermons, and diaries. Most of this literature is either utilitarian, very personal, or religious. We call it *Puritan* because the majority of the writers during this period were strongly influenced by Puritan ideals and values. Jonathan Edwards continues to be recognized from this period.

Enlightenment – (1750-1800) – Called the *Enlightenment* period due to the influence of science and logic, this period is marked in US literature by political writings. Genres included political documents, speeches, and letters. Benjamin Franklin is typical of this period. There is a lack of emphasis and dependence on the Bible and more use of common sense (logic) and science. There was not a divorce from the Bible but an adding to or expanding of the truths found there.

Romanticism – (1800-1840) - *Romanticism* was a literary and artistic movement of the nineteenth century that arose in reaction against eighteenth-century Neoclassicism and placed a premium on fancy, imagination, emotion, nature, individuality, and exotica. There's a movement here from personal and political documents to entertaining ones. Purely American topics were introduced such as frontier life. Romantic elements can be found in the works of American writers as diverse as Cooper, Poe, Thoreau, Emerson, Dickinson, Hawthorne, and Melville. Romanticism is particularly evident in the works of the New England Transcendentalists.

Transcendentalism – (1840-1855) -*Transcendentalism* was an American literary and philosophical movement of the nineteenth century. The Transcendentalists, who were based in New England, believed that intuition and the individual conscience "transcend" experience and thus are better guides to truth than are the senses and logical reason. Influenced by Romanticism, the Transcendentalists respected the individual spirit and the natural world, believing that divinity was present everywhere, in nature and in each person. The Transcendentalists included Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Bronson Alcott, W.H. Channing, Margaret Fuller, and Elizabeth Peabody. The anti-Transcendentalist (Hawthorne and Melville) rebelled against the philosophy that man is basically good. A third group, the Fireside poets, wrote about more practical aspects of life such as dying and patriotism.

Realism – (1865-1915) - *Realism* is the presentation in art of the details of actual life. Realism was also a literary movement that began during the nineteenth century and stressed the actual as opposed to the imagined or the fanciful. The Realists tried to write truthfully and objectively about ordinary characters in ordinary situations. They reacted against *Romanticism*, rejecting heroic, adventurous, unusual, or unfamiliar subjects. The Realists, in turn, were followed by the *Naturalists*, who traced the effects of heredity and environment on people helpless to change their situations. American realism grew from the work of local-color writers such as Bret Harte and Sarah Orne Jewett and is evident in the writings of major figures such as Mark Twain and Henry James.

Naturalism – An outgrowth of *Realism, Naturalism* was a literary movement among novelists at the end of the nineteenth century and during the early decades of the twentieth century. The Naturalists

tended to view people as hapless victims of immutable natural laws. Early exponents of Naturalism included Stephen Crane, Jack London, and Theodore Dreiser.

Regionalism – Another outgrowth of *Realism, Regionalism* in literature is the tendency among certain authors to write about specific geographical areas. Regional writers like Willa Cather and William Faulkner, present the distinct culture of an area, including its speech, customs, beliefs, and history. Local-color writing may be considered a type of Regionalism, but Regionalists, like the southern writers of the 1920's, usually go beyond mere presentation of cultural idiosyncrasies and attempt, instead, a sophisticated sociological or anthropological treatment of the culture of a region.

Imagism – *Imagism* was a literary movement that flourished between 1912 and 1927. Led by Ezra Pound and Amy Lowell, the Imagist poets rejected nineteenth-century poetic forms and language. Instead, they wrote short poems that used ordinary language and free verse to create sharp, exact, concentrated pictures.

Modern Age – (1915-1946) – An age of disillusionment and confusion—just look at what was happening in history in the US during these dates—this period brought us perhaps our best writers. The authors during this period raised all the great questions of life…but offered no answers. Faulkner, Steinbeck, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Frost are all examples.

Harlem Renaissance – Part of the Modern Age, The *Harlem Renaissance*, which occurred during the 1920's, was a time of African American artistic creativity centered in Harlem, in New York City. Writers of the Harlem Renaissance include Countee Cullen, Claude McKay, Jean Toomer, Langston Hughes, and Arna Bontemps.

Contemporary – (1946-present) – great stuff, but not a clear philosophy.

Classicism – *Classicism* is an approach to literature and the other arts that stresses reason, balance, clarity, ideal beauty, and orderly form in imitation of the arts of ancient Greece and Rome. Classicism is often contrasted with *Romanticism*, which stresses imagination, emotion, and individualism. Classicism also differs from *Realism*, which stresses the actual rather than the ideal.

Local Color – *Local Color* is the use in a literary work of characters and details unique to a particular geographic area. Local color can be created by the use of dialect and by descriptions of customs, clothing, manners, attitudes, scenery, and landscape. Local-color stories were especially popular after the Civil War, bringing readers the West of Bret harte, the Mississippi River of Mark Twain, and the New England of Sarah Orne Jewett.

Gothic – *Gothic* refers to the use of primitive medieval, wild, or mysterious elements in literature. Gothic elements offended eighteenth-century classical writers but appealed to the Romantic writers who followed them. Gothic novels feature places like mysterious and gloomy castles, where horrifying, supernatural events take place. Their influence on Edgar Allan Poe is evident in "The Fall of the House of Usher."

Grotesque – *Grotesque* refers to the use of bizarre, absurd, or fantastic elements in literature. The grotesque is generally characterized by distortions or striking incongruities. *Grotesque characters*, like those in Flannery O'Connor's "A Good Man is Hard to Find" are characters who have become ludicrous or bizarre through their obsession with an idea or value, or as a result of an emotional problem.

Author's Background – Questions to Consider

1. Where is the author from?

2. What was his or her social-economic status as a child -- rich, poor, educated, etc.?

3. What challenges did this person face while growing up? What privileges did this person enjoy while growing up? When did he or she begin writing?

4. Why did he or she begin writing?

5. What novels did this person write that invoked the American dream? Describe them: which characters worked toward the American dream, why, and how?

6. What was happening in the United States and in the world at the time the author wrote about the American dream?

7. Why do you think the author used the American dream idea in his or her writing?

8. How did using the idea of the American dream help create interesting or uninteresting characters?

9. Would you say that this author felt satisfied that he or she had personally achieved the American dream?

Notes on Explicating Poetry

Literary Terms for English 11 Honors

Abstract: Refers to an idea rather than a concrete object or thing.
Allegory: From the Greek *allos*, meaning "other." Allegory is an extended metaphor or comparison between two unlike or unlinked things. An allegory works on two levels: on a surface level to entertain, and on a deeper level to teach a lesson or moral. Allegories are intended to make big, complex, and abstract ideas simpler and more accessible. The comparison is not always obvious. *The Crucible* is an allegory of the McCarthyism while *Animal Farm* is an allegory for the Russian Revolution of 1917.
Alliteration: Repetition of consonant sounds.
Allusion: Reference in literature to a familiar person, place, thing, or event.
Anachronism: Use of historically inaccurate details in a text; for example, depicting a 19th-century character using a computer.
Analogy: Comparison of objects to suggest they are alike in certain respects
Anecdote: Short summary of a funny or humorous event.
Antagonist: Force in conflict with the protagonist.
Anthropomorphism: Showing or treating of animals, gods, and objects as if they are human in appearance, character, or behavior.
Antihero: Protagonist without traditional qualities of a hero.
Antithesis: Opposition, or contrast of ideas or words in a balanced or parallel construction (Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more).
Anaphora: Repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of clauses.
Aphorism: General truth or a moral principle (Waste not want not)
Apostrophe: Emotional address to a person or thing not literally listening.
Apotheosis: Elevation of a character (usually a hero) to the status of a god or deity.
Archaic: Words that are old-fashioned and no longer sound natural.
Archetype: Recognizable character or personality type found in every society.
Aside: Line spoken by an actor to the audience but not intended for others on stage.
Assonance: Repetition of a vowel sound in a line of poetry.

Backdrop Setting: Setting relatively unimportant to the plot.
Bias: Attitude or tendency to favor one thing over another.
Blank Verse: Unrhymed form of poetry.

Caesura: Pause or sudden break in a line of poetry.
Canon: List of literary works considered permanently established.
Catharsis: Purification or cleansing of the spirit through the emotions.
Cause and Effect: Events in a story are linked.
Character: Actors in a story or poem.
Character Foil: Character who serves to illuminate or reflect the characteristics of the protagonist (also called a foil).
Characterization: Method to describe characters and their various personalities.
Cliché: Word or phrase so overused that it is no longer effective.
Climax: High point or turning point in a work.
Colloquial: Ordinary language.
Comedy: Literature dealing with comic or serious subject matter in life in a light, humorous, or satiric manner.
Concrete: Describes a word that refers to an object that can be heard, seen, felt, tasted, or smelled. *Wall*, *desk*, *car*, and *cow* are examples of concrete objects.
Conflict: Struggle between the protagonist and an opposing force; the "problem" in a story that triggers the action. Conflict is divided by internal conflict and external conflict. There are five basic types of external conflict:
- *Man vs. Man*: One character in a story has a problem with one or more of the other characters.
- *Man vs. Society*: A character has a conflict or problem with some element of society—the school, the law, the accepted way of doing things, and so on.

- *Man vs. Himself*: A character has trouble deciding what to do in a particular situation.
- *Man vs. Nature*: A character has a problem with some natural happening: a snowstorm, an avalanche, the bitter cold, or any of the common elements of nature.
- *Man vs. Fate (God)*: A character has to battle what seems to be an uncontrollable problem. Whenever the problem seems to be a strange or unbelievable coincidence, fate can be considered as the cause of the conflict.

Connotation: Emotions or feelings a word can arouse.

Context: Environment of a word.

Convention: Customary feature of a literary work, such as the use of a chorus in Greek tragedy, the inclusion of an explicit moral in a fable, or the use of a couplet at the end of a sonnet.

Crisis: Moment when a character faces a harsh situation and must make a decision.

Denotation: Literal or dictionary meaning of a word.

Dialogue: Conversation by the characters.

Diction: Author's choice of words.

Direct Characterization: Author explicitly tells the reader about the character (She is dumb).

Doppelganger: Ghostly counterpart of a living person or an alter ego.

Drama: Plays

Dramatic Irony: A character speaks in ignorance of a situation or event known to the audience or to the other characters.

Dynamic Character: Character who is altered at the end of the story.

Elegy: Poem mourning the death of a person.

Epic: Long poem.

Epigraph: Short saying at the beginning of a book or chapter that suggests its theme.

Epiphany: Sudden or intuitive insight or perception into the reality or essential meaning of something usually brought on by a simple or common occurrence or experience.

Epistolary: Literature contained in or carried on by letters.

Epitaph: Writing that praises a deceased person.

Epithet: Adjective or descriptive phrase expressing a characteristic of the person or thing mentioned. (e.g., mother of dragons, king slayer, the imp)

Ethos: Greek root meaning *character*. It is usually an appeal to the credibility of the speaker or author. A work with ethos is convincing, the audience trusts, respects, and admires the speaker.

Eulogy: Oration in honor of a deceased person.

Euphemism: Substitution of an agreeable or at least non-offensive expression for a plainer possibly harsher or unpleasant meaning (pre-owned for used; temporary negative cash flow for broke, enhanced interrogation methods for torture).

Exposition: How things are before the action of a story starts.

External Conflict: Conflict that exists outside the character.

Falling Action: Action that occurs after the climax.

Fiction: Imagined story, whether in prose, poetry, or drama.

Figurative Language: Form of language use in which writers and speakers convey something other than the literal meaning of their words.

First Person: Point of view in a work that relies on first-person pronouns like I, me, we, etc.

Flashback: Interruption of a work's chronology to describe or present an incident that occurred prior to the main time frame of a work's action.

Flat Character: Character who is never fully developed or lacking a sense of depth.

Foreshadowing: Hints of what is to come in the action of a play or a story.

Frame Story: A story told within a story.

Free Verse: Poetry that does not have a regular meter or rhyme scheme.

Genre: Specific type or subtype of music, film, or writing. Your favorite literary genre might be science fiction, your favorite film genre might be horror, and you favorite music genre might be indie rock.

Gothic: Genre of fiction characterized by mystery and supernatural horror, often set in a dark castle or other medieval setting. Edgar Allan Poe is considered the master of the genre.

Hyperbole: Exaggerated statement or claim (big as a house, I could eat a horse).

Imagery: Use of expressive or evocative images in art, literature, or music.
In medias res: Type of narrative timeline that opens the work in the middle of the action
Indirect Characterization: Author suggests character qualities rather than directly stating them (She was fired from the M&M factory for throwing away all the W's = she's dumb).
Integral Setting: Setting that is essential to the plot.
Internal Conflict: Conflict a person experiences within himself or herself.
Internal Rhyme: Rhyming words appear within the same line of poetry.
Irony: Contrast or discrepancy between what is said and what is meant or between what happens and what is expected to happen in life and in literature. The opposite of what is expected.

Juxtaposition: Placing ideas, characters, settings, or objects side-by-side for emphasis

Literary Elements: The building blocks of story. These include plot, character, setting, point of view and theme.
Logos: Appeal to logic and reasoning. The speaker or writer intends to make the audience think clearly about the sensible and/or obvious answer to a problem.

Metaphor: Comparison of two unlike objects to show a likeness between them.
Motif: Any reoccurring character, incident, idea, or structure.
Mood: Overall feeling or emotional atmosphere of a story.
Myth: Any story that attempts to explain how the world was created or why the world is the way that it is.

Onomatopoeia: Word whose sound suggests its meaning, as in *clang*, *buzz*, and *twang*.
Oxymoron: Figure of speech that combines two contradictory elements, as in "jumbo shrimp" or "deafening silence."

Paradox: Statement that at first seems contradictory but turns out to have a profound meaning
Parallelism: Framing of words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs to give structural similarity.
Parody: Imitation with the aim of amusing the audience.
Pathos: Greek root meaning *suffering* or *passion*. It is usually an appeal to the emotions of the reader.
Persona: In literature, the persona is the narrator, or the storyteller, of a literary work created by the author. The persona is not the author, but the author's creation—the voice "through which the author speaks." It could be a character in the work, or a fabricated onlooker, relaying the sequence of events in a narrative.
Personification: Giving human attributes to a non-human creature or thing.
Plot: Action in a story. It is usually a series of related events that builds and grows as the story develops. Plot consists of exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution.
Point of View: Perspective from which a story is told. It consists of first person, second person, third person objective, third person limited, and third person omniscient.
Poetic Devices: Tools an author uses to create the images, meanings, sounds and feelings that move language beyond the literal. Poetic devices are often divided into cognitive devices (those that create meaning) and sound or auditory devices (those that create rhythm and sound).
Poetry: Language that reflects imagination, emotion, and thinking in verse form.
Prose: Ordinary form of written language without metrical structure.
Protagonist: Main character or lead figure in a novel, play, story, or poem.
Pun: Joke exploiting the different possible meanings of a word or the fact that there are words that sound alike but have different meanings.

Repetition: Repeating of a word or idea for emphasis.
Resolution: The way a story ends, with all the loose ends are tied up.

Rhetoric: Art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing.
Rhetorical Question: Question that has no expectation of a reply. *Who knew?*
Rising Action: Sequence of conflicts and crises that lead to a climax.
Round Character: Character who is fully developed and appears to have a variety of realistic character attributes.

Satire: Like parody, satire conveys humor but their goals are different. Parody aims to entertain while satire often results in political or social change. Parody leaves the observer amused, while satire may leave the observer with a variety of emotions such as scorn, indignation, and also amusement. Parody imitates its object, while satire derogates the object, making it appear ridiculous. Satire makes a serious point through humor, exposing the flaws, hypocrisy or fallacies of the object of ridicule. It uses humor as a weapon. *The Colbert Report* and *The Daily Show* are prime examples of satire.
Science Fiction: Futuristic technology or otherwise altered scientific principles contribute in a significant way to the adventures.
Second Person: Point of view that employs a conversational convention, often through the use of the pronoun "you."
Setting: Total environment for the action of a fictional work. Setting includes time period (such as the 1890's), the weather, the place (such as downtown Warsaw), the historical milieu (such as during the Crimean War), as well as the social, political, and perhaps even spiritual realities.
Simile: Comparison of two unlike objects using "like" or "as."
Situational Irony: Sometimes called *irony of events*, is most broadly defined as a situation where the outcome is incongruous with what was expected, but it is also more generally understood as a situation that includes contradictions or sharp contrasts. (A fireman's house catches on fire; a psychiatrist is crazy).
Soliloquy: Dramatic speech; character does not address any of the other characters.
Static Character: Character who does not change over the course of the story.
Style: Author's distinctive voice; the manner of expression of a particular writer, produced by choice of words, grammatical structures, use of literary devices, and all the possible parts of language use.
Subplot: Subordinate or minor collection of events in a novel or drama.
Syllogism: Form of reasoning in which a conclusion is drawn from two premises, each of which shares a term with the conclusion, and shares a common or middle term not present in the conclusion (e.g., *all dogs are animals; all animals have four legs; therefore all dogs have four legs*).
Symbol: Object that represents or stands for something else, especially a material object representing something abstract (a flag represents patriotism; a cross represents Christianity).
Synecdoche: Figure of speech in which a part is made to represent the whole For example, calling a car "wheels", calling food "bread", or referring to a ship as merely "sails".
Syntax: Way an author chooses to join words into phrases, clauses, and sentences. Syntax is similar to diction, but you can differentiate them by thinking of syntax as the groups of words, while diction refers to the individual words.

Theme: Message or reoccurring idea of a literary work; the universal truth of a story.
Third Person Limited: When the story is seen through the eyes of one particular character. The narrator reveals only one character's inner thoughts.
Third Person Objective: When the author uses "he" or "she" to refer to the character. The author states only what can be seen; not what's in characters' minds. Called the camera eye.
Third Person Omniscient: When the story is told through the point of view of an all-knowing (i.e., omniscient) narrator who supplies more information about all of the characters and events than any one character could know. The narrator knows the thoughts and feelings of all the characters.
Tone: Writer's attitude toward the work. A writer can be formal, informal, playful, ironic, and especially, optimistic or pessimistic.
Tragedy: Broadly defined, a literary and particularly a dramatic presentation of serious actions in which the chief character has a disastrous fate.
Tricolon: Series of three parallel words, phrases, or clauses. (Of the people, for the people, by the people).

Understatement: Ironic minimizing of fact, understatement presents something as less significant than it is. The effect can frequently be humorous and emphatic. Understatement is the opposite of hyperbole.
Unreliable Narrator: Narrator whose credibility has been seriously compromised. The reader must wade through evidence to form his/her own sense of reality or truth rather than believing a novel's narrator.

Verbal Irony: Characters say the opposite of what they mean.
Verisimilitude: Verisimilitude refers to the resemblance a work bears to reality. If a work of literature has verisimilitude, it has a certain likeness to actual life.

Identifying Elements of Rhetoric within a Work

Title: What does the title suggest to you? Does it evoke any specific imagery? Does it contain any symbols? Does it contain any ambiguities? Anything else?

Author: What do we learn about the author's experiences and the historical period in which he/she wrote they may influence the theme of the work?

Style: Style in writing is not *what* is said but *how* it is said.
- The author creates style deliberately to convey a specific mood or effect.
- Key aspects in styles of writing include:
    1. sentence length, structure, variation, and position
    2. the use of sensory details, figurative language, and other literary devices
    3. the use of sound devices--alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhythm, repetition
    4. the use of dialogue
    5. word choice
    6. tone
    7. the use of local color
    8. the use of irony

Sequencing: the order in which an author arranges the narrative line, and where the author choose to begin (exposition) the book, the chapters, even the sections can express thematic meaning. Such devices as en medias res puts the reader in the middle of the action, perhaps to jar the reader into the protagonists reality.

Plot Arc (exposition, rising action, including conflicts and crises, climax, falling action and denoument). How an author builds plot is significant. The building of conflict and tension conveys timeline. Where the plot turns, its highest level of tension, can also help a reader interpret say, the evolution of a dynamic character, a shift in tone and mood, etc.

Tone/attitude: (the written counterpart to tone of voice, how an author thinks and feels about the subject)—begin by choosing two contrasting tone words. The tone could be hurt, ironic, whimsical, desperate, apathetic, patronizing, tender and loving, light and humorous, etc.

Mood: the feeling or emotional atmosphere created by the author. Descriptive words, the setting, and figurative language contribute to the mood. Poe creates a mood of dread and horror in many of his short stories.

Diction: a writer's or speaker's choice of words and way of arranging the words in sentences. For example, a writer could use common, ordinary words arranged in an informal style, or could use rare words in an unusual order. The words could be colorful teen slang in incomplete sentences or formal, academic language expressed in complex sentences.

Detail/Imagery: (detail=literal or factual description; imagery="descriptive words and phrases that re-create sensory experiences for the reader").

Point of View: "Point of view refers to the method of narrating a short story, novel, narrative poem, or work of nonfiction. Point of view is usually either first person or third person. In **first-person** point of view, the narrator is a character in the story…In **third-person** point of view, the story is told

by a narrative voice outside the action, not by one of the characters. If a story is told from a **third-person omniscient**, or all-knowing point of view… the narrator sees into the minds of more than one character. If events are related from a **third-person limited** point of view, the narrator tells only what one character thinks, feels, and observes. Question why the author selected this point of view; what purpose does it serve? How does it support the thematic elements.

Narrator: "the character or voice from whose point of view events are told." Is the narrator a character in the story, or a presence outside the story? What is the narrator's attitude toward characters and events?

Setting/Time Frame: Setting can clarify conflict, illuminate character, affect the mood, and act as a symbol. The setting itself can be an antagonist in a person-against-nature conflict. Revisit all elements of setting: place, time, weather conditions, social conditions

Motif: stuff that's repeated again and again—it can be a symbol, a language pattern, an action.

Theme: "the main idea in a work of literature. It is a perception about life or human nature that the writer shares with the reader. In most cases, the theme is not stated directly but must be inferred. A statement of theme may, but does not usually, tell one how to live and should not be confused with a **moral**." What major themes are suggested on the first page?

Irony: "a special kind of contrast between appearance and reality—usually one in which reality is the opposite from what it seems."
- **Situational irony:** "the contrast between what a reader or character expects and what actually exists or happens"
- **Dramatic irony:** "where the reader or viewer knows something that a character does not know"
- **Verbal irony:** "occurs when someone knowingly exaggerates or says one thing and means another."

Character: What characters are introduced on the first page. How are they important in the novel? Consider all elements of the literary element: static or dynamic character, flat or round, what type of conflict is at work, where is the crisis?

Figurative Language: Consider the many ways an author chooses to state things beyond the literal. Beyond imagery, could there be another reason in comparative language?

Structure of the Novel: Consider the actual size of the novel, the way the author has divided the sections, or not divided the sections. In A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich, the author does not separate sections but simply skips lines to note shifts in time, noting the monotony and endless routine of a prisoner's life. Likewise, Elie Wiesel tells his readers at the beginning of Night that words cannot convey the horror of the Holocaust and so he employs very few words -- all spare and raw – to relate the nightmare of his experience.

Rhetoric Worksheet

Title: _____

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Author: _____

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Style: _____

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Sequencing: _____

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Plot Arc: _____

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Setting/Time Frame: _____

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Motif: _____

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Theme: _____

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Irony:

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Dramatic irony: _____

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Verbal irony: _____

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Character: _____

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Figurative Language: _____

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Structure of the Novel:

Archetypes and Symbols

1. **The Quest** – This motif describes the search for someone or some talisman which, when found and brought back, will restore fertility to a wasted land, the desolation of which is mirrored by a leader's illness and disability.

2. **The Task** – This refers to a possibly superhuman feat that must be accomplished to fulfill the ultimate goal.

3. **The Journey** – The journey sends the hero in search for some truth of information necessary to restore fertility, justice, and/or harmony to the kingdom.   The journey includes the series of trials and tribulations the hero faces along the way. Usually the hero descends into a real or psychological hell and is forced to discover the blackest truths, quite often concerning his faults. Once the hero is at this lowest level, he must accept personal responsibility to return to the world of the living.

4. **The Initiation** – This situation refers to a moment, usually psychological, in which an individual comes into maturity. He or she gains a new awareness into the nature of circumstances and problems and understands his or her responsibility for trying to resolve the dilemma. Typically, a hero receives a calling, a message or signal that he or she must make sacrifices and become responsible for getting involved in the problem. Often a hero will deny and question the calling and ultimately, in the initiation, will accept responsibility.

5. **The Ritual** – Not to be confused with the initiation, the ritual refers to an organized ceremony that involves honored members of a given community and an Initiate. This situation officially brings the young man or woman into the realm of the community's adult world.

6. **The Fall** – Not to be confused with the awareness in the initiation, this archetype describes a descent in action from a higher to a lower state of being, an experience which might involve defilement, moral imperfection, and/or loss of innocence. This fall is often accompanied by expulsion from a kind of paradise as penalty for disobedience and/or moral transgression.

7. **Death and Rebirth** – The most common of all situational archetypes, this motif grows out of the parallel between the cycle of nature and the cycle of life. It refers to those situations in which someone or something, concrete and/or metaphysical dies, yet is accompanied by some sign of birth or rebirth.

8. **Nature vs. Mechanistic World** – Expressed in its simplest form, this refers to situations which suggest that nature is good whereas the forces of technology are bad.

9. **Battle Between Good and Evil** – These situations pit obvious forces which represent good and evil against one another. Typically, good ultimately triumphs over evil despite great odds.

10. **The Unhealable Wound** – This wound, physical or psychological, cannot be healed fully. This would also indicate a loss of innocence or purity. Often the wounds' pain drives the sufferer to desperate measures of madness.

11. **The Magic Weapon** – Sometimes connected with the task, this refers to a skilled individual hero's ability to use a piece of technology in order to combat evil, continue a journey, or to prove his or her identity as a chosen individual.

12. **Father-Son Conflict** – Tension often results from separation during childhood or from an external source when the individuals meet as men and where the mentor often has a higher place in the affections of the hero than the natural parent. Sometimes the conflict is resolved in atonement.

13. **Innate Wisdom vs. Educated Stupidity** – Some characters exhibit wisdom and understanding intuitively as opposed to those supposedly in charge.

SYMBOLIC ARCHETYPES

1. **Light vs. Darkness** – Light usually suggests hope, renewal, OR intellectual illumination; darkness implies the unknown, ignorance, or despair. (this is, of course reversed in Romeo and Juliet)

2. **Water vs. Desert** – Because water is necessary to life and growth, it commonly appears as a birth or rebirth symbol. Water is used in baptism services, which solemnizes spiritual births. Similarly, the appearance of rain in a work of literature can suggest a character's spiritual birth.

3. **Heaven vs. Hell** – Humanity has traditionally associated parts of the universe not accessible to it with the dwelling places of the primordial forces that govern its world. The skies and mountaintops house its gods; the bowels of the earth contain the diabolic forces that inhabit its universe.

4. **Haven vs. Wilderness** – Places of safety contrast sharply against the dangerous wilderness. Heroes are often sheltered for a time to regain health and resources.

5. **Supernatural Intervention** – The gods intervene on the side of the hero or sometimes against him.

6. **Fire vs. Ice** – Fire represents knowledge, light, life, and rebirth while ice like desert represents ignorance, darkness, sterility, and death.

7. **Colors**
   A. **Black** (darkness) – chaos, mystery, the unknown, before existence, death, the unconscious, evil
   B. **Red** – blood, sacrifice; violent passion, disorder, sunrise, birth, fire, emotion, wounds, death, sentiment, mother, Mars, the note C, anger, excitement, heat, physical stimulation
   C. **Green** – hope, growth, envy, Earth, fertility, sensation, vegetation, death, water, nature, sympathy, adaptability, growth, Jupiter and Venus, the note G, envy
   D. **White** (light) – purity, peace, innocence, goodness, Spirit, morality, creative force, the direction East, spiritual thought
   E. **Orange** – fire, pride, ambition, egoism, Venus, the note D
   F. **Blue** – clear sky, the day, the sea, height, depth, heaven, religious feeling, devotion, innocence, truth, spirituality, Jupiter, the note F, physical soothing and cooling
   G. **Violet** – water, nostalgia, memory, advanced spirituality, Neptune, the note B
   H. **Gold** – Majesty, sun, wealth, corn (life dependency), truth
   I. **Silver** – Moon, wealth

8. **Numbers**:
   A. **Three** – the Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Ghost); Mind, Body, Spirit, Birth, Life, Death
   B. **Four** – Mankind (four limbs), four elements, four seasons
   C. **Six** – devil, evil
   D. **Seven** – Divinity (3) + **Mankind** (4) = relationship between man and God, seven deadly sins, seven days of week, seven days to create the world, seven stages of civilization, seven colors of the rainbow, seven gifts of Holy Spirit.

9. **Shapes**:
   A. **Oval** – woman, passivity
   B. **Triangle** – communication, between heaven and earth, fire, the number 3, trinity, aspiration, movement upward, return to origins, sight**,** light
   C. **Square** – pluralism, earth, firmness, stability, construction, material solidity, the number four

D. **Rectangle** – the most rational, most secure
E. **Cross** – the Tree of life, axis of the world, struggle, martyrdom, orientation in space
F. **Circle** – Heaven, intellect, thought, sun, the number two, unity, perfection, eternity, oneness, celestial realm, hearing, sound
G. **Spiral** – the evolution of the universe, orbit, growth, deepening, cosmic motion, relationship between unity and multiplicity, macrocosm, breath, spirit, water

10. **Nature**:
A. **Air** – activity, creativity, breath, light, freedom (liberty), movement
B. **Ascent** – height, transcendence, inward journey, increasing intensity
C. **Center** – thought, unity, timelessness, spacelessness, paradise, creator, infinity,
D. **Descent** – unconscious, potentialities of being, animal nature
E. **Duality** – Yin-Yang, opposites, complements, positive-negative, male-female, life-death
F. **Earth** – passive, feminine, receptive, solid
G. **Fire** – the ability to transform, love, life, health, control, sun, God, passion, spiritual energy, regeneration
H. **Lake** – mystery, depth, unconscious
I. **Crescent moon** – change, transition
J. **Mountain** – height, mass, loftiness, center of the world, ambition, goals
K. **Valley** – depression, low-points, evil, unknown
L. **Sun** – Hero, son of Heaven, knowledge, the Divine eye, fire, life force, creative-guiding force, brightness, splendor, active awakening, healing, resurrection, ultimate wholeness
M. **Water** – passive, feminine
N. **Rivers/Streams** – life force, life cycle
O. **Stars** – guidance
P. **Wind** – Holy Spirit, life, messenger
Q. **Ice/Snow** – coldness, barrenness
R. **Clouds/Mist** – mystery, sacred
S. **Rain** – life giver
T. **Steam** – transformation to the Holy Spirit
U. **Cave** – feminine
V. **Lightning** – intuition, inspiration
W. **Tree** – where we learn, tree of life, tree of knowledge
X. **Forest** – evil, lost, fear, chaos

11. **Objects**:
A. **Feathers** – lightness, speed
B. **Shadow** – our dark side, evil, devil
C. **Masks** – concealment
D. **Boats/Rafts** – safe passage
E. **Bridge** – change, transformation
F. **Right hand** – rectitude, correctness
G. **Left hand** – deviousness
H. **Feet** – stability, freedom
I. **Skeleton** – mortality
J. **Heart** – love, emotions
K. **Hourglass** – the passage of time

CHARACTER ARCHETYPES

1. **The Hero** – In its simplest form, this character is the one ultimately who may fulfill a necessary task and who will restore fertility, harmony, and/or justice to a community. The hero character is the one who typically experiences an initiation, who goes the community's ritual (s), et cetera. Often he or she will

embody characteristics of YOUNG PERSON FROM THE PROVINCES, INITIATE, INNATE WISDOM, PUPIL, and SON.

2. **Young Person from the Provinces** – This hero is taken away as an infant or youth and raised by strangers. He or she later returns home as a stranger and able to recognize new problems and new solutions. (Moses, Oedipus)

3. **The Initiates** – These are young heroes who, prior to the quest, must endure some training and ritual. They are usually innocent at this stage. (Neo)

4. **Mentors** – These individuals serve as teachers or counselors to the initiates. Sometimes they work as role models and often serve as father or mother figure. They teach by example the skills necessary to survive the journey and quest.

5. **Hunting Group of Companions** – These loyal companions are willing to face any number of perils to be together.

6. **Loyal Retainers** – These individuals are like the noble sidekicks to the hero. Their duty is to protect the hero. Often the retainer reflects the hero's nobility.

7. **Friendly Beast** –These animals assist the hero and reflect that nature is on the hero's side.

8.   **The Devil Figure** – This character represents evil incarnate. He or she may offer worldly goods, fame, or knowledge to the protagonist in exchange for possession of the soul or integrity. This figure's main aim is to oppose the hero in his or her quest.

9.   **The Evil Figure with the Ultimately Good Heart** – This redeemable devil figure (or servant to the devil figure) is saved by the hero's nobility or good heart.

10. **The Scapegoat** – An animal or more usually a human whose death, often in a public ceremony, excuses some taint or sin that has been visited upon the community. This death often makes theme more powerful force to the hero.

11. **The Outcast** – This figure is banished from a community for some crime (real or imagined). The outcast is usually destined to become a wanderer.

12. **The Earth Mother** – This character is symbolic of fulfillment, abundance, and fertility; offers spiritual and emotional nourishment to those who she contacts; often depicted in earth colors, with large breasts and hips.

13. **The Temptress** – Characterized by sensuous beauty, she is one whose physical attraction may bring about the hero's downfall.

14. **The Platonic Ideal** – This source of inspiration often is a physical and spiritual ideal for whom the hero has an intellectual rather than physical attraction.

15. **The Unfaithful Wife** – This woman, married to a man she sees as dull or distant, is attracted to a more virile or interesting man.

16. **The Damsel in Distress** – This vulnerable woman must be rescued by the hero. She also may be used as a trap, by an evil figure, to ensnare the hero.

17. **The Star-Crossed Lovers** – These two character are engaged in a love affair that is fated to end in tragedy for one or both due to the disapproval of society, friends, family, or the gods.

18. **The Creature of Nightmare** – This monster, physical or abstract, is summoned from the deepest, darkest parts of the human psyche to threaten the lives of the hero/heroine. Often it is a perversion or desecration of the human body.

RECOGNIZING PATTERNS

The following list of patterns comes from the book *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster who teaches at the University of Michigan.
- Trips tend to become quests to discover self.
- Meals together tend to be acts of communion/community or isolation.
- Ghosts, vampires, monsters, and nasty people and sometimes simply the antagonists are not about supernatural brew-ha-ha; they tend to depict some sort of exploitation.
- Look for allusions and archetypes.
- Weather matters.
- Violence can be both literal and figurative.
- Symbols can be objects, images, events, and actions.
- Sometimes a story is meant to change us, the readers, and through us change society.
- Keep an eye out for Christ-figures.
- Flying tends to represent freedom. What do you think falling represents?
- Getting dunked or just sprinkled in something wet tends to be a baptism.
- Geography tends to be a metaphor for the psyche.
- Seasons tend to be traditional symbols.
- Disabilities, scars, and deformities show character and theme.
- Heart disease tends to represent problems with character and society.
- So do illness and disease.
- Read with your imagination.
- Irony trumps everything!
- Remember the difference between public and private symbol

How to preview a novel
How to analyze a speech