

MENU OF LITERARY ELEMENTS AND DEVICES

In a Literary Response and Analysis essay, for **each** of your body paragraphs, you may want to focus on **one** separate literary element. Choose those that pertain to the text and that support your thesis. Here are a few possibilities:

POINT OF VIEW

Is the narrator speaking from the **first** or **third person point of view** and how does that choice affect the text? If it's written from the first person, does that make the reader relate even more to the main character(s)? If it's third person, which third person is it? *Objective? Limited? Omniscient?* Explain the narrator's effect on the text.

DIALOGUE

What do the characters say and what does this tell us about their personalities and their relationships?

MOOD/TONE

What is the overall feel of the text? Is it light and happy or dark and scary? How do you know? What words or actions help to create the mood? How does the mood enhance the author's message?

DICTION (WORD CHOICE)

What words does the author choose and how do they affect the text? Is there **alliteration** (Peter Piper Picked a Peck of Pickled Peppers)? Is there **hyperbole** (I told you a MILLION times)? [Hyperbole may also be discussed under "figurative language."] Is there rhyming? Do any of the words have double meanings? What are the **connotations** of certain words? How do the particular words chosen affect the text and hence the author's message?

RHYTHM, PATTERNS AND/OR REPETITION

What is the **rhythm** or **meter** of the text, and how does that enhance the message? Are there **patterns** or **repetition**?

SETTING

How does the **setting** (time/place) of the text affect the characters, action or mood and in turn the author's message?

RECURRING THEMES OR MOTIFS

What **ideas** recur throughout? Is there a consistent allusion to the central theme, which might pertain to *friendship, love, generosity, honesty* or *bravery*? Is there one primary theme and then also additional secondary themes?

What **objects** or **symbols** recur throughout? Are there boats, bodies of water, trees or birds that recur throughout the text and therefore either enhance the mood or have symbolic significance?

ACTION/PLOT

Are there surprising **plot-twists** in the text? Is there **suspense**, which keeps you on the edge of your seat? Is there **foreshadowing** (dropping hints about what will happen later) and/or **flashbacks** (going back in time to show what happened earlier)? How does the author's crafting of the plot enhance the author's message?

CHARACTERS

Who is the **protagonist** or **hero**, and who is the **antagonist** or **villain**? What is the hero's main **struggle**? Is it **internal** or **external**? What are his/her **traits**? Do any of the characters **change** during the text? When, why and how do they change, and how does that enhance the author's message?

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE (PERSONIFICATION, METAPHOR, SIMILE)

Does the author use **personification** (when things act like people), **metaphor** (when things are said to be other things "I know why the caged bird sings" implies that the main character IS a caged bird) or **simile** ("Her hair is as smooth as silk...")? How does the author's use of figurative language enhance the author's message?

STORY WITHIN A STORY

Is there a smaller story within the main story that works as an **allegory**? Sometimes that smaller story gives us clues about the larger, main story.

SYMBOLISM

Does one of the characters love birds or planes or trains? Any of those – a bird, a plane or a train – could be a symbol for freedom. Or are there other symbols that represent **other ideas**?

IMAGERY

What **pictures** do you see **in your mind** when reading the text? What did the author do to conjure those images?