

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 how the narrator's P.O.V. affects the text.

DIALOGUE

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

TONE and MOOD

What is the tone or attitude of the author? What is the mood or emotional response of the reader? Is the author's tone sarcastic? Is the mood that is conjured melancholic? How do you know? What words or actions help to create the ambience, which in turn affects 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 grandiosity? 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

There are several definitions of the word "theme." One is the central idea of a text (the author's message); another is a recurring motif that affects the mood and adds layers of meaning. **What ideas** recur throughout? Is there a consistent allusion to, by way of connotations or imagery, a central theme? **What objects** recur throughout? Are there items that reappear and therefore reflect the tone of the author or the mood of the reader or that have symbolic significance?

ACTION/PLOT

Are there surprising **plot-twists** in the text? Is there **suspense**, which keeps the reader on the edge of his seat? Is there **foreshadowing** (dropping hints about what will happen later) and/or **flashbacks** (going back in time to show what happened earlier)? Is there **irony**? 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 the characters 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: "The tree boughs sighed"); **metaphor** (when things are said to be other things "School is prison"); or **simile** ("His hair was as brittle as straw...")? 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** (parallel story that is labyrinthine and contains many of the same themes) or a **parable** (parallel story that is short and consists of one overt and comparable theme)? 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 could be considered as symbols of freedom, restlessness or forward momentum. 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?**