**APSU Writing Center**

Literary Analysis

## What is a Literary Analysis?

- A literary analysis is an essay that examines, interprets, and evaluates a work of literature. Rather than summarizing, it focuses on analyzing specific elements to uncover deeper meanings, themes, and insights.

| Summary: | Analysis: |
|---|---|
| Presents the main points and content without personal opinions or arguments. Discusses the core ideas, main points, and essential details of the original content. | Builds an argument by examining and interpreting specific elements. Discusses causes and effects, as well as strengths and weaknesses. |

## How to write an Analysis

## Chooose a Topic

- Choose a theme (a message, claim, or life lesson) that you want to discuss. Answer these questions:
  - What main idea does the author want you to take away?
  - What idea is most relevant to you?
- **Example:** In *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare, a main theme is forbidden love.

## Analyze Key Elements

- Support your main idea by providing evidence from the plot, setting, characters, point of view, figurative language, and style.
- **Plot**
  - Identify the main conflict and key events. How are they ordered, and how do they drive the narrative?
- **Setting**
  - Does the time or location hold significance to the story?
- **Characters**
  - Is there a protagonist and an antagonist? What motivates each character, and how do they evolve?
- **Point of View**
  - What is the point of view? Why does this perspective add/take away from the story?
- **Style**
  - How does the format and word choice (simple, plain, detailed, elevated) impact the overall story?
- **Figurative Language**
  - How are metaphors, similes, imagery, irony, etc., used, and what purposes do they serve?

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**Other Elements**

- **Theme**
    - What are the central ideas explored in the text?
- **Symbolism**
    - Are there symbols that add depth or meaning to the story?
- **Tone and Mood**
    - What is the author's attitude, and how does it shape the reader's experience?

**Connect Ideas**

- Now that you've analyzed the key elements, show how they tie back to the author's main theme or purpose.

**Outline Example:**

- Introduction
    - Thesis Statement
- Plot Analysis
    - Main Theme
    - Key Events
- Setting Analysis
    - Time and Place
    - Significance
- Character Analysis
    - Protagonist and Antagonist
    - Characther Motivation
    - Character Developtment
- Point of View
    - First-Person/Third-Person
    - Impact on the Story
- Style and Language
    - Word Choice
    - Impact on Tone and Meaning
- Figurative Language
    - Metaphors, Similes, Imagery
    - Purpose and Effect
- Theme and Symbolism
- Tone and Mood
- Conclusion

**Introduction**

**Thesis Statement:** *(Introduce the main theme of the work and the focus of your analysis.)*

**Body: (Paragraph 1)**

**Brief Plot Summary:** *(Summarize the turning point that directly ties into your analysis.)*

**Plot Analysis:** *(Analyze how the main theme is conveyed through key events in the story.)*

**Body: (Paragraph 2)**

**Character Analysis** *(Focus on how the characters evolve through the story.)*

**Body: (Paragraph 3)**

**Point of View** *(Identify the narrative perspective and analyze how it impacts the reader.)*

**Body: (Paragraph 4)**

**Figurative Language** *(Analyze metaphors, imagery, etc., and discuss their purpose and effect.)*

**Conclusion**

**Provide a short summary:** *(Summarize the main argument in a new way.)*

# APSU Writing Center
References

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