

LITERARY ANALYSIS

Literary analysis is the process of examining elements of a piece of literary writing (stories, poems, novels, etc.) to understand how the author conveys a certain meaning or create an effect. The elements examined in literary analysis depend on the genre and the piece being analyzed. Often, these elements, or devices, are characters, setting, plot, tone of voice, and other devices that authors may use to convey meaning.

Some examples of questions you may ask in a literary analysis are: How does the plot or a character enhance the theme? What are the protagonist's motivations or their flaws? How does the setting affect the plot or the characters? What symbols or themes recur through the book?

LITERARY DEVICES

Here is a list with a few examples of literary devices that you may consider when writing a literary analysis:

Prose

- Characters
- Settings
- Plot
- Themes
- Metaphors and Similes
- Tone of Voice
- Juxtaposition
- Symbolism
- Irony
- Allusion
- Personification

Poetry

- Alliteration
- Meter
- Parallelism
- Rhyme

Rhetorical Devices

- Logos
- Ethos
- Pathos

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS AND LITERARY CRITIQUE

You may be familiar with rhetorical analysis, which is similar to literary analysis in the elements it analyzes. Both types of analysis examine rhetorical appeals. However, literary analysis and rhetorical analysis have differing goals: Literary analysis examines ideas and themes in a text while rhetorical analysis examines how the author constructs text to meet a certain rhetorical goal—to motivate people into action, create fear, inspire change, or something else.

Literary analysis is also different from literary critique. Literary critique focuses on evaluating the quality of the text, which is defined by how well the text presents its ideas to the reader. Literary critique will use analysis to support the position being made, but literary analysis does not require critique.

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