



# ☐active reading: literary works☐

Use a highlighter, pen/pencil and or post-it notes to track your reading. Make margin notes (or post-it note margin notes) on personal copies of texts to track your reading.

It is expected that every literary work you encounter from this point will be processed through the following steps.

- review questions if applicable.
- analyze graphics, illustrations and titles for meaning and pre-knowledge
- identify new and/or important vocabulary/terminology. Research the synonyms and definitions. Know how to use new vocabulary and terminology in your arsenal of writing tools
- identify main theme or themes in the text. Think about them.
- identify minor themes in the text. Think about them. Connect them to the major themes.
- identify colourful language (i.e. metaphor, juxtaposition). Think about the meaning.
- identify allusions within the text. If they are used, they usually have significance.
- identify symbols within the text and consider the significance of each.
- identify important, interesting and integral ideas/lines within the text. Anticipate how the ideas might be questioned/discussed/used in the future.
- identify plot elements (i.e atmosphere, mood, setting, characterization, conflicts, climax).
- identify tone and language that reflects/conveys the tone. For example: two titles with similar words, can convey/reflect completely different tones, such as *The Single Man* and *The Solitary Man*
- identify sub-plots.
- connect the text to other literary, media or non-fictional texts that you have encountered and think about why those connections came to mind.
- answer questions if applicable.
- connect the text - themes, ideas, message - to personal knowledge and experience. Think about what you think about the ideas/themes, what you know about the ideas/themes and what you want to know more about the ideas/themes. Think about the style of the writing and whether you like it or not. Think about how you envisioned (the images, characters, "film") the text.
- synthesize the process. For shorter texts - poems, short story handouts - this might be to simply review the highlights and margin notes, however, for longer texts - plays, novels - this might require extensive notes.

# ⌈active reading: non-fiction works⌋

Use a highlighter, pen/pencil and or post-it notes to track your reading. Make margin notes (or post-it note margin notes) on personal copies of texts to track your reading.

It is expected that every non-fiction (essay, article, review, memoir, journal) you encounter from this point will be processed through the following steps.

- review questions if applicable.
- analyze graphics, illustrations and titles for meaning and pre-knowledge
- identify new and/or important vocabulary/terminology. Research the synonyms and definitions. Know how to use new vocabulary and terminology in your arsenal of writing tools
- identify main arguments/ideas/thesis in the text. Think about them.
- identify arguments/ideas/thesis in the text. Think about them. Connect them to the major arguments/ideas/thesis.
- identify evidence that supports the arguments/ideas/thesis. This may include expert references, statistics, examples, anecdotes or allusions.
- identify colourful language (i.e. metaphor, juxtaposition). Think about the meaning.
- identify important, interesting and integral ideas/lines within the text. Anticipate how the ideas might be questioned/discussed/used in the future.
- identify tone and language that reflects/conveys the tone. For example: two titles with similar words, can convey/reflect completely different tones, such as *The Single Man* and *The Solitary Man*
- answer questions if applicable.
- connect the text - idea, arguments, thesis - to personal knowledge and experience. Think about what you think about the ideas, what you know about the ideas and what you want to know more about the ideas.
- think about the style of the writing and whether you like it or not. Think about how you envisioned (images that pop into your mind when reading; faces and places; photos) the text.
- synthesize the process. For shorter texts - poems, short story handouts - this might be to simply review the highlights and margin notes, however, for longer texts - plays, novels - this might require extensive notes.

## 【active listening】

When listening to an audio "soundtrack" of any kind - live in-person, radio, film, song - there are many variables that mesh together to create meaning. A lecturer may use only notes, voice and physicality to convey the intended message to varying degrees of effectiveness. Is the lecturer reading the notes, with sporadic eye contact, and minimal movement? Or is the lecturer referring to the notes and using grand gestures to engage the audience? The words may be the same, but the message will be interpreted/learned differently by the audience. A lecture, like a novel or essay, is a text. All audio soundtracks are texts. They contain content and style. And often style rules.

When you actively listen to a text, it is essential that you interact with it on a number of sensory levels. You need to understand what is being said, but also must determine how it is being said. As a listener, you engage with audio texts differently. You approach a text delivered by a teacher in a classroom differently than you would a text delivered through your earphones by a musician you are listening to. This may seem obvious, but an active listener of audio texts will be able to deconstruct the various elements - content, style - to determine the whole message being delivered.

### 【content】

Jot down the following:

- identify the major and minor messages being delivered.
- identify important words or terminology being used.
- note any visual aids being used to highlight key points or explanations.
- identify the intended purpose of the audio text.

### 【style】

Jot down the following:

- how are pauses in a lecture, discussion or speech being used?
- what is the tempo of the audio text? Fast? Clipped? Slow and thoughtful?
- what is the tone of the audio text? Humorous? Educational? Angry?
- what is the level of language being used? Is it easy? Sophisticated? Middle of the road?
- what words are stressed? Why do you think these words are being stressed?
- are any words or expressions being used in repetition? Why do you think they are being repeated?
- does the audio text use colourful language (i.e. metaphor) or is the language dry and academic?

- are visuals being used? Are they being used to compliment or juxtapose the message?
- are additional sound effects being used (background music, real-life recordings)? Are they being used to compliment or juxtapose the message?
- is physicality being used to heighten the delivery of the message? Is it effective?

The elements of style may have more of an impact on how the message resonates with the audience than the content itself. An effective audio text consciously understands the nature of the audience and will design/style an audio text that will likely engage the audience. Listening to political speeches is an excellent way to witness style over substance. A politician delivering a speech on the future of the economy will often revert to bulleted catch-phrases or slogans aimed at a mass audience, whereas a radio documentary on the same topic will likely use more in-depth language to analyze the subject. The audience will be more elite.

Being an active and aware listener will help you understand the depth of the content being delivered. It will also help you recall the information more easily.

# [Rhetorical devices]

The following are common literary terms and rhetorical devices used in literature, essays and the media for reasons of persuasion and style.

Future writing and reading tasks will require the identification and/or use of some of the following devices.

**allegory:** in literature, symbolic story that serves as a disguised representation for meanings other than those indicated on the surface. The characters in an allegory often have no individual personality, but are embodiments of moral qualities and other abstractions. The allegory is closely related to the parable, fable, and metaphor, differing from them largely in intricacy and length.

**alliteration:** the repetition of the same sounds at the beginning of words.

**allusion:** references made in literature and non-fiction writing to:

**personal connections:** these are intimate connections made BY the reader to the text. Sometimes the allusion is not purposefully used by the author, but the reader connects to the material from personal experience.

**history:** events, personalities, politics, wars

**religion:** Moses, Buddha, Mohammed

**literature:** famous characters, famous novels/poems/plays, famous quotes, famous authors

**pop culture:** famous movies, art, TV shows, actors, music, singers, musicians, architecture, songs, movie lines

Allusions are intended by the writer, artist, or film-maker to provide the reader/viewer with deeper connections and associations with the text.

**analogy:** a similarity between like features of two things, on which a comparison may be based: *the analogy between the heart and a pump.*

**anecdote:** a short, entertaining account about an amusing person or interesting event used to highlight and provide concrete examples for an idea that is trying to be explained.

**antagonist:** a character in a story or play who opposes the chief character (protagonist).

**antithesis:** a strong opposition or contrast to an idea (thesis) or character.

**atmosphere:** the mood of a literary work, established through setting and description. In film, atmosphere is established visually and aurally through music, lighting and costuming.

**bias:** being prejudicial or partial to one particular point of view, person or thing.

**caricature:** a likeness – usually famous or “important” - made humorous by exaggeration or distortion of particular characteristics and features (ie. nose, chin).

**cliché:** an expression or phrase that is so overused that it has become trite and meaningless.

**comparison:** examining the similarities and differences between two or more items.

**connotation:** when something – word, place, event, person - has an additional implication or meaning that is different from its original one (literal, dictionary definition).

**denotation:** the strict, literal dictionary-defined meaning of a word.

**diction:** the *choice* of words used in writing or speaking. See connotation and denotation.

**euphemism:** the substitution of a mild, indirect, or vague expression for one thought to be offensive, harsh, or blunt. The expression, “*To pass away*” is a euphemism for “*to die*.”

**hyperbole:** a figure of speech involving great exaggeration. The effect may be satiric, sentimental, or comic.

**idiom:** an expression whose meaning is not predictable from the usual meanings of its constituent elements, as *kick the bucket* or *hang one's head*, or from the general grammatical rules of a language, as *the table round* for *the round table*, and that is not a constituent of a larger expression of like characteristics.

**imagery:** words or phrases that appeal to our senses to provide a mental picture.

**irony:** figure of speech in which what is stated is not what is meant. The user of irony assumes that his reader or listener understands the concealed meaning of his statement. Perhaps the simplest form of irony is rhetorical irony, when, for effect, a speaker says the direct opposite of what she means. Thus, in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, when Mark Antony refers in his funeral oration to Brutus and his fellow assassins as “honorable men” he is really saying that they are totally dishonorable and not to be trusted. Dramatic irony occurs in a play when the audience knows facts of which the characters in the play are ignorant. The most sustained example of dramatic irony is undoubtedly Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, in which Oedipus searches to find the murderer of the former king of Thebes, only to discover that it is himself, a fact the audience has known all along.

**juxtaposition:** when two or more ideas or “things” – often unlike - are placed side by side for the purpose of comparison.

**metaphor:** an implied or direct comparison between two unlike ideas or things, not using LIKE or AS.

**modernism:** modernism is an early to mid 20th century philosophy born as a reaction and rejection of 19th century values and traditions. There is not consensus definition of modernism. Modernist art, literature or thinking tends to reject absolute dichotomies (right/wrong; us vs. them), nationalist sympathies and rigid theistic strictures. Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock, The Psychologists, T.S.Eliot, Virginia Woolf, Ernest Hemingway are considered modernist thinkers/artists. The lack of a rigid philosophical framework freed the artists/thinkers to alter the fabric of culture that still resonates today.

**mood:** the emotional attitude or feeling of the audience toward the subject (story, film).

**motif:** a recurring subject, theme, idea, etc., especially in a literary, artistic, or musical work. In literature, term that denotes the recurrent presence of certain character types, objects, settings, or situations in diverse genres and periods of folklore and literature. Examples of motifs include swords, money, food, jewels, forests, oceans, castles, dungeons, tests of skill or wisdom, journeys, separations and reunions, chaos brought to order. Motifs are not restricted to literature.

**oxymoron:** a figure of speech by which a locution produces an incongruous, seemingly self-contradictory effect, as in “cruel kindness” or “to make haste slowly.”

**parody:** the humorous imitation of something serious, for the sake of being funny. Parody is a literary, visual – see CARICATURE - or musical work in which the style of an author or work, or the characteristics of a ‘personality’ are closely imitated – mimicked, poked fun at, mocked - or over-exaggerated for comic/humorous effect or ridicule. The main intent of parody is to invoke laughter or snickering.

**paradox:** a seeming contradiction in ideas, events or thought, for example: the virgin birth.

**personification:** the representation of abstractions, ideas, animals, or inanimate objects as human beings by endowing them with human qualities.

**postmodernism:** term used to designate a multitude of trends—in the arts, philosophy, religion, technology, and many other areas—that come after and deviate from the many 20<sup>th</sup> C movements that constituted modernism. The term has become ubiquitous (ever-present, everywhere) in contemporary discourse and has been employed as a catchall for various aspects of society, theory, and art. Widely debated with regard to its meaning and implications, postmodernism has also been said to relate to the culture of capitalism as it has developed since the 1960s. In general, the postmodern view is cool, ironic, and accepting of the fragmentation of contemporary existence. It tends to concentrate on surfaces rather than depths, to blur the distinctions between high and low culture, and as a whole to challenge a wide variety of traditional cultural values.

**sarcasm:** a scornful or ironic remark; to tease in a malicious way.

**satire:** a literary, musical or visual work holding up human vice or follies to ridicule or scorn. Satire often targets political issues, social issues or legal issues in hopes of exposing flaws and inadequacies. Satire often uses 'dark humour' (trenchant/perceptive wit, irony, sarcasm) and an extreme and exaggerated 'message' to let the audience know that a dominant or accepted system of beliefs and behaviour is ridiculous and in need of change. Satire and parody often work in tandem.

**simile:** a figure of speech involving a comparison between unlike ideas or things using LIKE or AS.

**symbolism:** the use in literature of objects or events to represent something other than themselves.

**theme:** the main idea or underlying meaning of a literary work.

**tone:** the author's attitude toward his or her subject matter. The following is a list of tones found in various literary, non-fiction, oral and media texts:

- **acerbic:** harsh; severe; bitter
- **aggressive:** forceful; tending towards unprovoked offensiveness
- **angry/indignant**
- **apathetic:** motionless; not interested/ concerned; indifferent; unresponsive
- **apologetic:** expressing remorse, regret, sorrow for having failed, injured, insulted or wronged another
- **belligerent:** aggressively hostile; bellicose
- **biased:** favouring one thing/person/group over another for personal reasons.
- **caustic:** biting; acerbic
- **commiserating feeling:** expressing sorrow for; empathizing with; pity
- **condescending/patronizing:** showing/implying patronising descent from dignity/superiority
- **contemptuous:** expressing contempt/ disdain
- **cynical:** displaying a belief that people are always self-seeking and never altruistic in their actions
- **derisive:** unkind and displaying contempt
- **disparaging:** speak slightly; depreciating; belittling
- **dogmatic:** asserting opinions in an arrogant manner; imperious; dictatorial
- **emotional:** easily affected by feelings actuated by experiencing love, hate, fear and the like

- **ethical:** dealing with principles of morality; honest; righteous
- **euphemistic:** substitution of mild, indirect or vague expression for one thought to be offensive, harsh or blunt
- **grandiose:** more complicated/ elaborated than necessary; pompous
- **humanistic:** evincing keen interest in human affairs, nature, welfare, values
- **humourous:** funny and amusing
- **introspective:** consider one's own internal state of feelings
- **incendiary:** causing strong feelings
- **laudatory:** praising; extolling; applauding
- **motivating:** impelling; inciting
- **obsequious:** fawning; showing servile complaisance; flattering; deferent
- **pedestrian:** lacking vitality, imagination, distinction
- **populist/egalitarian:** pertaining to the characteristics of common people/ working class
- **provocative:** inciting; stimulating; irritating; vexing
- **romantic:** fanciful; impractical; unrealistic; extravagant; exaggerated
- **sarcastic:** harsh, bitter derision; taunting; sneering; cutting remarks
- **satirical/ironical:** taunting; human folly held up to scorn/ derision/ ridicule
- **speculative:** theoretical rather than practical; thoughtful; reflective; hypothetical
- **technical:** using terminology or treating subject matter in a manner peculiar to a particular field, as a writer or a book
- **vitriolic:** full of anger and hatred
- **vituperative:** cruel and angry criticism

**transition:** the process of moving from one idea to another

**understatement:** to deliberately downplay the importance of a fact, item or situation. Politicians use understatement quite a lot!

# [[syntax]]

## 1 [[the structure of a sentence]]

Remember that every clause is, in a sense, a miniature sentence. A simple sentence contains only a single clause, while a compound sentence, a complex sentence, or a compound-complex sentence contains at least two clauses.

The following reference material was used/adapted from the University of Ottawa Writing Centre: HyperGrammar  
<http://www.writingcentre.uottawa.ca/hypergrammar/sntstrct.html>

## 2 [[the basic sentence patterns: the SIMPLE sentence]]

The most basic type of sentence is the **simple sentence**, which contains only one clause. A simple sentence can be as short as one word:

Run!

Usually, however, the sentence has a **subject** as well as a **predicate** and both the subject and the predicate may have **modifiers**. All of the following are simple sentences, because each contains only one clause:

**Melt!**

Ice **melts**.

The ice **melts** quickly.

The ice on the river **melts** quickly under the warm March sun.

Lying exposed without its blanket of snow, the ice on the river **melts** quickly under the warm March sun.

As you can see, a simple sentence can be quite long -- it is a mistake to think that you can tell a simple sentence from a compound sentence or a complex sentence simply by its length.

The most natural sentence structure is the simple sentence: it is the first kind which children learn to speak, and it remains by far the most common sentence in the spoken language of people of all ages. In written work, simple sentences can be very effective for grabbing a reader's attention or for summing up an argument, but you have to use them with care: too many simple sentences can make your writing seem childish.

When you do use simple sentences, you should add **transitional phrases** to connect them to the surrounding sentences.

### 3 [the basic sentence patterns: the COMPOUND sentence]

A **compound sentence** consists of two or more **independent clauses** (or simple sentences) joined by **co-ordinating conjunctions** like "and," "but," and "or":

#### simple

Canada is a rich country.

#### simple

Still, it has many poor people.

#### compound

Canada is a rich country, **but** still it has many poor people.

Compound sentences are very natural for English speakers -- small children learn to use them early on to connect their ideas and to avoid pausing (and allowing an adult to interrupt):

Today at school Mr. Moore brought in his pet rabbit, and he showed it to the class, and I got to pet it, and Kate held it, and we coloured pictures of it, and it ate part of my carrot at lunch, and ...

Of course, this is an extreme example, but if you over-use compound sentences in written work, your writing might seem immature.

A compound sentence is most effective when you use it to create a sense of balance or contrast between two (or more) equally-important pieces of information:

**Montréal has better clubs, but Toronto has better cinemas.**

### [special cases of COMPOUND sentences]

There are two special types of compound sentences which you might want to note. First, rather than joining two simple sentences together, a co-ordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet) sometimes joins two complex sentences, or one simple sentence and one complex sentence. In this case, the sentence is called a **compound-complex sentence**

### 4 [the basic sentence patterns: the COMPOUND-COMPLEX sentence]

**The package arrived in the morning, but the courier left before I could check the contents.**

The second special case involves punctuation. It is possible to join two originally separate sentences into a compound sentence using a semicolon instead of a co-ordinating conjunction:

**Sir John A. Macdonald had a serious drinking problem; when sober, however, he could be a formidable foe in the House of Commons.**

Usually, a conjunctive adverb like "however" or "consequently" will appear near the beginning of the second part, but it is not required:

The sun rises in the east; it sets in the west.

## 5 [the basic sentence patterns: the COMPLEX sentence]

A **complex sentence** contains one independent clause and at least one dependent clause. Unlike a compound sentence, however, a complex sentence contains clauses which are *not* equal. Consider the following examples:

### simple

My friend invited me to a party. I do not want to go.

### compound

My friend invited me to a party, but I do not want to go.

### complex

Although my friend invited me to a party, I do not want to go.

In the first example, there are two separate simple sentences: "My friend invited me to a party" and "I do not want to go." The second example joins them together into a single sentence with the co-ordinating conjunction "but," but both parts could still stand as independent sentences -- they are entirely equal, and the reader cannot tell which is most important. In the third example, however, the sentence has changed quite a bit: the first clause, "Although my friend invited me to a party," has become incomplete, or a dependent clause.

A complex sentence is very different from a simple sentence or a compound sentence because it makes clear which ideas are most important. When you write:

My friend invited me to a party. I do not want to go.

or even

My friend invited me to a party, but I do not want to go.

The reader will have trouble knowing which piece of information is most important to you. When you write the subordinating conjunction "although" at the beginning of the first clause, however, you make it clear that the fact that your friend invited you is less important than, or **subordinate**, to the fact that you do not want to go.

## 6 [rhetorical sentence patterns]

Add style and depth to writing by using the following patterns/techniques for future writing tasks. Use variety of sentence length (i.e. simple, compound) and style (rhetoric, isocolon, antithesis) to have a more profound impact on the reader (i.e. influence the psychology of the reader's mind).

All future writing activities will require the use of rhetorical sentence patterns and sentence variety strategies to strengthen your writing.

The following reference material on rhetorical sentence patterns was used/adapted from the *University of Kentucky College of Arts and Sciences Modern and Classical Languages. Literatures and Cultures website at <http://mcl.as.uky.edu/glossary-rhetorical-terms>.*

**ANADIPLOSIS:** ("doubling back") the rhetorical repetition of one or several words; specifically, repetition of a word that ends one clause at the beginning of the next.

Men in great place are thrice servants: servants of the sovereign or state; servants of fame; and servants of business.

Francis Bacon

**ANAPHORA:** the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses or lines.

We shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills. We shall never surrender.

Churchill

**ANTISROPHE:** repetition of the same word or phrase at the end of successive clauses.

In 1931, ten years ago, Japan invaded Manchukuo -- without warning. In 1935, Italy invaded Ethiopia -- without warning. In 1938, Hitler occupied Austria -- without warning. In 1939, Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia -- without warning. Later in 1939, Hitler invaded Poland -- without warning. And now Japan has attacked Malaya and Thailand -- and the United States --without warning.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

**ANTITHESIS:** opposition, or contrast of ideas or words in a balanced or parallel construction.

Extremism in defense of liberty is no vice, moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue.

Barry Goldwater

**BALANCED / ANTITHESIS:** a balanced sentence is made up of two units (ideas, arguments, examples) that are similar in form. Use balance sentences when you want emphasize and parallel two or more ideas. Balance occurs when there is a comma, semi-colon, or “is” between two ideas.

To err is human; to forgive, divine.

Alexander Pope

Antithesis occurs when the balanced parts of a sentence contain ideas that are in contrast.

The more we love our friends, the less we flatter them.

Moliere

**ISOCOLON:** when two or more clauses of the same length are used to create parallelism, then it’s called isocolon. For example: Many enter; few win. A common kind of isocolon is tricolon, in which three equal parts are used for parallelism. The famous “I came; I saw; I conquered” is an isocolon and specifically a tricolon. The word isocolon comes from Greek isokolon meaning “equal member” or “same clause”.

First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.

Mahatma Gandhi

**CLIMACTIC / ANTI-CLIMACTIC:** in climactic order, a series of details are arranged in ascending order (from least important to most important) to establish/enhance atmospheric or emotional effect.

Quality, will power, geographical advantages, natural and financial resources, the command of the sea, and, above all, a cause which rouses the spontaneous surgings of the human spirit in millions of hearts-these have proved to be the decisive factors in the human story.

Winston Churchill

To make an anti-climax, arrange a series of details in descending order (from most important to the least important) within a sentence for humorous effect.

Men will confess to treason, murder, arson, false teeth, or a wig. How many of them will own up to a lack of humor?

Frank Moore Colby

**PARALLELISM:** parallel structure means using the same pattern of words to show that two or more ideas have the same level of importance. This can happen at the word, phrase, or clause level. The usual way to join parallel structures is with the use of coordinating conjunctions such as "and" or "or."

**Not Parallel:**

Mary likes hiking, swimming, and to ride a bicycle.

**Parallel:**

Mary likes hiking, swimming, and riding a bicycle.

**Example 2**

**Not Parallel:**

The production manager was asked to write his report quickly, accurately, and in a detailed manner.

**Parallel:**

The production manager was asked to write his report quickly, accurately, and thoroughly.

**Example 3**

**Not Parallel:**

The teacher said that he was a poor student because he waited until the last minute to study for the exam, completed his lab problems in a careless manner, and his motivation was low.

**Parallel:**

The teacher said that he was a poor student because he waited until the last minute to study for the exam, completed his lab problems in a careless manner, and lacked motivation.

# DIDLS PROSE ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE

Just as each of us has a particular, unique way of presenting ourselves, writers have unique ways of presenting themselves. Our personalities shine through the way we talk, the words we choose, the gestures we use, the clothes we wear. A writer has only language to express his/her personality. The qualities below are the basic elements of a writer's style. Pick them out and add them up to figure out theme and attitude.

## **D**iction – The author's choice of words and their connotations.

What words does the author choose? Consider his/her word choice compared to another. Why did the author choose that particular word? What are the connotations of that word choice? What effect do these words have on your mood as a reader? What do they seem to indicate about the author's tone?

E.g. Author 1: Bill was *unintelligent*. (relatively neutral, as far as lack of intelligence goes)

E.g. Author 2: Bill was a *zipperhead*. (less of a low IQ, more like someone who acts like an idiot)

**DICTION** Adjectives, nouns, verbs, adverbs, negative words, positive words, synonyms, contrast.  
Look at the words that jump out at you - Evaluate *only those words* to find tone

### **Also look at:**

**Colloquial** (Slang)

**Old-Fashioned**

**Informal** (Conversational)

**Formal** (Literary)

**Connotative** (Suggestive meaning) **Denotative** (Exact meaning)

**Concrete** (Specific)

**Abstract** (General or Conceptual)

**Euphonious** (Pleasant Sounding)

**Cacophonous** (Harsh sounding)

**Monosyllabic** (One syllable)

**Polysyllabic** (More than one syllable)

- Describe diction (choice of words) by considering the following:
  1. Words can be *monosyllabic* (one syllable in length) or *polysyllabic* (more than one syllable in length). The higher the ratio of polysyllabic words, the more difficult the content.
  2. Words can be mainly *colloquial* (slang), *informal* (conversational), *formal* (literary) or *old-fashioned*.
  3. Words can be mainly *denotative* (containing an exact meaning, e.g., dress) or *connotative* (containing suggested meaning, e.g., gown)
  4. Words can be *concrete* (specific) or *abstract* (general or conceptual).
  5. Words can be *euphonious* (pleasant sounding, e.g., languid, murmur) or *cacophonous* (harsh sound, e.g., raucous, croak).

**TONE** Use *diction* to find tone. Use *imagery, details, language* and *syntax* to support tone.  
Author's attitude toward the subject, toward himself, or toward the audience.

**SHIFTS IN TONE**     Attitude change about topic/subject

Key Words (but, nevertheless, however, although)  
Changes in the line length  
Paragraph Divisions

Punctuation (dashes, periods, colons)  
Sharp contrasts in diction

## **I** **Images – The use of descriptions that appeal to sensory experience.**

What images does the author use? What does he/she focus on in a sensory way? The kinds of images the author puts in or leaves out reflect his/her style. Are they vibrant? Prominent? Plain? What effect do these images have on your mood as a reader? What do they seem to indicate about the author's tone? NOTE: Images differ from details in the degree to which they appeal to the senses.

**IMAGERY**     Creates a vivid picture and appeals to the senses

<b>Alliteration</b>	repetition of consonant sounds at the start of a word	The giggling girl gave gum.
<b>Assonance</b>	repetition of vowel sounds in the middle of a word	Moths cough and drop wings
<b>Consonance</b>	repetition of consonant sounds in the middle of a word	The man has kin in Spain
<b>Onomatopoeia</b>	writing sounds as words	The clock went tick tock
<b>Simile</b>	a direct comparison of unlike things using like or as	Her hair is like a rat's nest
<b>Metaphor</b>	a direct comparison of unlike things	The man's suit is a rainbow
<b>Hyperbole</b>	a deliberate exaggeration for effect	I'd die for a piece of candy
<b>Understatement</b>	represents something as less than it is	A million dollars is okay
<b>Personification</b>	attributing human qualities to inhuman objects	The teapot cried for water
<b>Metonymy</b>	word exchanged for another closely associated with it	Uncle Sam wants you!
<b>Pun</b>	play on words – Uses words with multiple meanings	Shoes menders mend soles.
<b>Symbol</b>	something that represents/stands for something else	the American Flag
<b>Analogy</b>	comparing two things that have at least one thing in common	A similar thing happened...
<b>Oxymoron</b>	Use of words seemingly in contradiction to each other	bittersweet chocolate

## **D** **etails – Facts that are included or those that are omitted.**

What details does the author choose to include? What do they imply? What does the author choose to exclude? What are the connotations of their choice of details? What effect do these included and excluded details have on your mood as a reader? What do these included and excluded details seem to indicate about the author's tone? PLEASE NOTE: Details are facts or fact-lets. They differ from images in that they don't have a strong sensory appeal.

ex. - An author describing a battlefield might include details about the stench of rotting bodies or he might not – it depends on his purpose for writing about the battlefield.

# **L**anguage – Characteristics of the body of words used; terms like slang, formal, clinical, scholarly, and jargon denote language.

What is the overall impression of the language the author uses? Does it reflect education? A particular profession? Intelligence? Is it plain? Ornate? Simple? Clear? Figurative? Poetic? What effect does language have on your mood as a reader? What does language seem to indicate about the author’s tone?

ex. - This is the step I’m most apt to skip.

(SEE CHART ON NEXT PAGE FOR TERMINOLOGY)

## **LANGUAGE**

• Words that describe the entire body of words in a text – not isolated bits of diction

<b>Artificial</b>	false	<b>Literal</b>	apparent, word for word
<b>Bombastic</b>	pompous, ostentatious	<b>Moralistic</b>	puritanical, righteous
<b>Colloquial</b>	vernacular	<b>Obscure</b>	unclear
<b>Concrete</b>	actual, specific, particular	<b>Obtuse</b>	dull-witted, undiscerning
<b>Connotative</b>	alludes to; suggestive	<b>Ordinary</b>	everyday, common
<b>Cultured</b>	cultivated, refined, finished	<b>Pedantic</b>	didactic, scholastic, bookish
<b>Detached</b>	cut-off, removed, separated	<b>Plain</b>	clear, obvious
<b>Emotional</b>	expressive of emotions	<b>Poetic</b>	lyric, melodious, romantic
<b>Esoteric</b>	understood by a chosen few	<b>Precise</b>	exact, accurate, decisive
<b>Euphemistic</b>	insincere, affected	<b>Pretentious</b>	pompous, gaudy, inflated
<b>Exact</b>	verbatim, precise	<b>Provincial</b>	rural, rustic, unpolished
<b>Figurative</b>	-serving as illustration	<b>Scholarly</b>	intellectual, academic
<b>Formal</b>	academic, conventional	<b>Sensuous</b>	passionate, luscious
<b>Grotesque</b>	hideous, deformed	<b>Simple</b>	clear, intelligible
<b>Homespun</b>	folksy, homey, native, rustic	<b>Slang</b>	lingo, colloquialism
<b>Idiomatic</b>	Peculiar, vernacular	<b>Symbolic</b>	representative, metaphorical
<b>Inspid</b>	uninteresting, tame, dull	<b>Trite</b>	common, banal, stereotyped
<b>Jargon</b>	vocabulary for a profession	<b>Informal</b>	casual, relaxed, unofficial
<b>Learned</b>	educated, experienced	<b>Vulgar</b>	coarse, indecent, tasteless

**RHETORICAL DEVICES** – The use of language that creates a literary effect – enhance and support

<b>Rhetorical Question</b>	food for thought; create satire/sarcasm; pose dilemma
<b>Euphemism</b>	substituting a milder or less offensive sounding word(s)
<b>Aphorism</b>	universal commends, sayings, proverbs – convey major point
<b>Repetition</b>	also called refrain; repeated word, sentence or phrase
<b>Restatement</b>	main point said in another way
<b>Irony</b>	Either verbal or situational – good for revealing attitude
<b>Allusion</b>	refers to something universally known
<b>Paradox</b>	a statement that can be true and false at the same time

# Sentence Structure – The fashion in which the sentences are constructed.

What are the sentences like? Are they simple with one or two clauses? Do they have multiple phrases? Are they choppy? Flowing? Sinuous like a snake? Is there antithesis, parallel construction? What emotional impression do they leave? If we are talking about poetry, what is the meter? Is there a rhyme scheme? What effect do these structures have on your mood as a reader? What do these structures indicate about the author's tone? PLEASE NOTE: Short = emotional or assertive; longer = reasonable or scholarly.

## SYNTAX

### Consider the following patterns and structures:

- Does the sentence length fit the subject matter?
- Why is the sentence length effective?

**\*\* Sentence length:** Are the sentences *telegraphic* (shorter than 5 words in length),

*short*

(approximately 5 words in length), *medium* (approximately 18 words in length), or

*long and*

*involved* (30 or more words in length)? \*\*

- What variety of sentence lengths are present?
- Sentence beginnings – Variety or Pattern?
- Arrangement of ideas in sentences
- Arrangement of ideas in paragraph – Pattern?

### Construction of sentences to convey attitude

<b>Declarative</b>	assertive – A statement
<b>Imperative</b>	authoritative - Command
<b>Interrogative</b>	asks a question
<b>Simple Sentence</b>	one subject and one verb
<b>Loose Sentence</b>	details after the subject/verb – present event
<b>Periodic Sentence</b>	details before the subject/verb – past event
<b>Juxtaposition</b>	normally unassociated ideas placed next together
<b>Parallelism</b>	show equal ideas; for emphasis; for rhythm
<b>Repetition</b>	words, sounds, and ideas used more than once – rhythm/

emphasis

**Rhetorical Question** a question that expects no answer

### Punctuation is included in syntax

<b>Ellipses</b>	a trailing off; equally etc.; going off into a dreamlike state
<b>Dash</b>	interruption of a thought; an interjection of a thought into

another

<b>Semicolon</b>	parallel ideas; equal ideas; a piling up of detail
<b>Colon</b>	a list; a definition or explanation; a result
<b>Italics</b>	for emphasis
<b>Capitalization</b>	for emphasis
<b>Exclamation Point</b>	for emphasis; for emotion

The DIDLS reference material was used/adapted from R. Smith at Mill Creek High School

[http://www.millcreekhighschool.org/index.php?](http://www.millcreekhighschool.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=772&Itemid=1408)

[option=com\\_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=772&Itemid=1408](http://www.millcreekhighschool.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=772&Itemid=1408)