Conventions of Literary Analysis



* Underline the titles of novels, plays and films

In **Dark Knight**, the Joker is depicted as…

* Use inverted commas for the titles of short stories, poems and articles

**‘Kenneth’s Friend’** portrays the humiliation of a boy who…

* Once you have introduced the full name of the author in the introduction, you only need to use the author’s surname throughout the body of your essay.

In this scene, **Shakespeare** uses dramatic irony to convey…

* Write in present tense when describing the author’s use of language

Owen Marshall **uses** symbolism to communicate the destruction of individuality.

* Avoid using contractions. Literary analysis requires a formal register.

The metaphor highlights how we **do not** show appropriate regard for…

* Avoid using first person. Instead aim to sound more authoritative.

Instead of **I can understand** the issue social injustice in terms of how we treat individuals who do not conform to the social norm…

Try something like **It is evident that** there is social injustice in terms of how we treat individuals who do not conform to the social norm…

* Avoid using second person to address the audience or discuss the impact of the author’s language upon the audience. Use third person.

Instead of Haddon uses the narrator’s perspective to position **you** to feel…

Use Haddon uses the narrator’s perspective to position **the reader** to feel…

* Use ellipsis if you want to cut out sections of the quote.

‘Is this a dagger which I see before me… I have thee not yet I see thee still’

* Integrate quotes into your writing by writing them into a sentence

The story opens **with, ‘The** newspaper said his name was Frank Reprieve Wilcox…’

Toolbox of terms to use for literary analysis

**Verbs to show what the author is doing**

accentuates accepts achieves adopts

advocates affects allows alludes

analyzes approaches argues ascertains

assesses attacks attempts attributes

bases challenges characterizes chooses

chronicles claims comments compares

compels concludes confronts considers

contends contests contrasts conveys

convinces defines defies demonstrates

depicts describes delineates details

determines develops deviates differentiates

directs discusses displays disputes

disrupts distinguishes distorts downplays

dramatizes elevates elicits emphasizes

enhances enriches evokes expands

explains expresses extends focuses

forces foreshadows generalizes guides

heightens highlights identifies illustrates

illuminates impels implies includes

indicates inspires intends inundates

justifies juxtaposes laments lists

maintains makes manages manipulates

minimizes moralizes muses notes

observes opposes organizes overstates

outlines permits personifies persuades

ponders portrays positions prepares

presents promotes proposes provides

qualifies questions reasons recalls

recites recollects records recounts

reflects refers regards rejects

represents reveals ridicules satirizes selects speculates states strives

suggests summarizes supports suppresses

symbolizes sympathizes values

**Language features for**

**Literary Analysis**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Acronym | A word that combines the first letter of several words. *Eg*. *WHO - World Health Organisation.* |
| Allegory | Story in which ideas such as truth and patience are symbolised by characters in the story, e.g. *Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress has characters called Hopeful and Mr. Talkative.* |
| Alliteration | The recurrence of the same letter, usually a consonant, in a line, e.g. *The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew…* Used to create rhythm and/or memorability |
| Allusion | An indirect reference to a person, legend or character, e.g. *classical Greek and Roman references in much of Shakespeare’s work.* |
| Ambiguity | A statement that can be taken two ways, e.g. *He’s a* ***special*** *student.* Usually a product of careful word choice and tone. |
| Analogy | A comparison of two things, alike in certain respects, but often dissimilar in essence, and used to provide insight into the nature of one or both. *Eg. Customers swarming at a sale and bees around a hive.* |
| Anaphora | Use of the same word or phrase to begin a sentence. Designed to create emphasis and memorability. *Eg. Martin Luther King’s ‘I have a dream’ speech.* |
| Anecdote | A short personal narrative from an individual’s experience. |
| Anti-climax | Also called bathos. Going from the most impressive to the least impressive. *Eg. ‘He was brilliant, famous, wealthy and fat.’*e waHH |
| Antagonist | Character who conflicts with the protagonist. |
| Anti-hero | A protagonist who lacks the traditional heroic qualities such as physical prowess, high-minded devotion to duty or to God. |
| Antithesis | Words or ideas balanced against each other giving contrast. *Eg. ‘Give me liberty or give me death.’* |
| Antonym | A word that is contrary in meaning to another. *Eg. ferocious is an antonym for mild.* |
| Apostrophe | Technique of directly addressing an absent person, an abstract concept or quality, or an inanimate object. *Eg. ‘O Rose, thou art sick’.* |
| Archaism | A word spelling construction that has become old-fashioned, *Eg. thou for you.* |
| Archetype | An image, story-pattern, or character type which recurs frequently evokes strong, often unconscious associations in the reader. |
| Aside | A brief, scripted comment made by an actor to the audience. It is not intended for other characters to hear. |
| Assonance | When the vowel sounds of two syllables match but the consonants don’t, e.g. drown/clown; clean/dream; a stitch in time saves nine. Used to create rhyme or create associations between words/ideas. |
| Blank verse | Unrhymed verse with a regular metre. Applies particularly to unrhymed iambic pentameter. |
| Caesura | A pause or break in the metrical progress of a line of poetry. |
| Catastrophe | The final stage of a tragedy when the falling action of the play leads to the winding up of the plot in the actions that have resulted from the climax. |
| Classical | Of ancient Greece or Rome |
| Cliché | Expressions that are overused e.g. it’s not you, it’s me… |
| Climax | High point of a narrative. |
| Colloquialism | Informal idiom of speech. *Eg. ‘Give us a hand.’* |
| Connotation | The emotions, values and images associated with a word. This can vary from one person to another. *Eg. The word ‘freedom’ could invoke feelings of joy or fear.* |
| Contracted verbs / Contraction | *Eg. you’d = you would; we’ve = we have.* |
| Consonance | Repetition of a consonant sound (irrespective of the letters used to create the sound). *Eg. gh and f.* |
| Corruptions | *Eg. yeah = yes; cos = because.* |
| Denotation | The literal meaning of a word. |
| Denouement | The final unravelling of the plot. |
| Dialogue | Direct speech |
| Didactic | Instructive transactional writing. |
| Drama | * Exposition – introduction, gives background. * Complication – interest is quickened, suspense. * Climax – point of greatest expectancy. * Resolution – conclusion is worked out. |
| Dramatic Irony | When the audience has knowledge of a character’s fate that the character does not. *Eg. Macbeth’s attempts to retain the throne but with each effort, he secures his own downfall, we are aware that he will fail.* |
| Dramatic monologue | A onse-sided conversation where a speaker addresses him or herself to one or more poersons who are present but do not reply. It represents a dramatic moment in the life of the speaker and reveals character. |
| Elevated language or style | Formal, dignified language; it often uses more elaborate figures of speech. Can be used to give dignity to a hero, to indicate the improtance of an event, or to reveal a pretentious or self-important character. |
| Ellipsis | Leaving out words that can be easily inserted by the reader. *Eg. Jack fell down and [Jack] broke his crown.* Created also by use of … to create pause or show a disconnection or fragmentation of thought. |
| Emotive writing | Aims to evoke reader emotion through word choice. Its intention is often to bring about a change or to reinforce attitudes, opinions or behaviour. |
| Enjambement | (Run on) Running on of sense from one line to another, common in poetry. Creates continuity of ideas. |
| Epic | A long narrative poem, originally handed down in the oral tradition. Written in an elevated style, it presents characters of high position engaged in great adventures or battles.  *Eg. Homer’s Odyssey.* |
| Euphemism | Substitution of a more pleasant expression for a more accurate but offensive term. *Eg. ‘The powder room’ for the women’s toilet.* |
| Fable | A story, often with animal characters, that illustrates a moral or lesson. It is commonly used to expose human behaviours that are selfish or weak. |
| Fillers | Feature of verbal language. *Eg. ‘er’ or ‘um’* |
| Foreshadowing | Clues or hints in a text to indicate the outcome. Often used by Shakespeeare, it creates dramatic irony. |
| Free verse | Poetry that does not contain any set or regular rhyme scheme or metrical pattern. |
| Half rhyme | Refers to words with similar but not identical sounds eg. notion, nation. (Also known as weak rhyme, slant, oblique) |
| Hero | The central character in a fictional work. Can be interchanged with protagonist. This character may not possess heroic characteristics. |
| Homonyms | Separate words that are spelt the same but have different meanings. *Eg. host = large number of people/ host = entertainer of guests.* |
| Homophones | Words that are spelt differently but sound the same. *Eg. reign/ rain*. |
| Hubris | Overweening pride which result in the misfortune of the protagonist in a tragedy. *Eg. Macbeth’s ‘vaulting ambition’ leads to his downfall*. |
| Hyperbole | An exaggeration for effect. *Eg. I’ve told you a thousand times.* |
| Idiom | Saying that is peculiar to English. *Eg. It’s raining cats and dogs.* |
| Imagery | An umbrella term encompassing all types of figurative language, (metaphors, similes, personficiation) |
| Imperative | A command/instruction where the verb is placed at the start of the sentence. |
| Imprecise language | Vague expressions. *Eg. I’ll see you later.* |
| Interior monologue | Written in the first person, it is used to express a character’s inner thoughts. May use stream of consciousness. It is the equivalent in prose of soliloquy in drama. |
| Internal rhyme | Rhyme that occurs within a line*. Eg. ‘in mist or* ***cloud****, on mast or* ***shroud****.’* |
| Intertextuality | The idead that any one text is always read, or created, in relation to other texts. |
| Irony | The discrepancy between what is said and what is meant, what is said and what is done, what is expected or intended and what happens or what is meant or said and what is understood. *Eg. a lifeguard who drowns.* |
| Jargon | Specialised vocabulary, familiar to one group of people. *Eg. surfer language.* |
| Juxtaposition | Placing together, or side by side, events, characters or objects to emphasise a particular aspect. Often it is used to show contradiction or contrast. |
| Literary convention | A practice or device that is accepted as necessary, useful or a given feature of a genre, eg. use of solioquy in drama to reveal a character’s thoughts. |
| Metaphor | Says one thing is another to create a direct comparison*. Eg. the camel is the ship of the desert.* |
| Meter | A rhythm of accented and unaccented syllables which are organised into patterns, called feet. Iambic pentameter is regularly used in English – each foot consists of one accented and one unaccented syllable. |
| Metonymy | Name of an attribute is used to reflect the thing itself. *Eg. The Crown = the Queen, city = its people.* |
| Mock Heroic | Trivial incident is given heroic proportions. |
| Mood | The emotional mood or atmosphere that is evoked by the author. |
| Motif | A repeted element or pattern such as recurring imager. |
| Narrative | Any form of text that tells a story. Can be used to refer also to the structure of the story. |
| Neologism | Newly coined words or phrases. |
| Omniscient | Narrative perspective in which the inner thoughts of all characters is evident to the reader. Sometimes referred to as ‘eye of God’ narrative perspective. |
| Onomatopoeia | The sense of the word is suggested by its sound. *Eg. pop, fizz, bang.* |
| Oratory | Language of public speaking. |
| Oxymoron | Two words of opposite meanings set together for effect. *Eg. he has no tie except what was provided by a* ***carefully careless*** *scarf.* |
| Parable | A short story which illustrates a moral or lesson. *Eg. The New Testament is filled parables attributed to Jesus.* |
| Paradox | A statement of contradiction that is still true, e.g. the person who does not follow the fashion is really a slave himself to fashion. |
| Parallel construction | A ‘balanced’ sentence that has the same structure before and after the conjunction or puncutation. *Eg. It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.* |
| Parenthesis | An aside or extra in written language, may be shown by commas, brackets or dash. *Eg. His fit of anger [which was the cause of our quarrel] was soon over.* |
| Personification | Attributes of a person are transformed to a lifeless thing. *Eg. The buildings were silently rejoicing in their freedom.* |
| Phatic communication | Language that is social, to be polite rather than inform,. *Eg. small talk at a party.* |
| Poetic licence | Freedom from ordinary rules in poetry. |
| Portmanteau word | An invented word where two words combined and meanings blended. *Eg. lithe and slimy = slithy.* |
| Post-modern | Literary (also artistic and historic) age. Used to describe works after 1945 that challenge modern (Late C.19th – 1945) conventions) |
| Prologue | The preface or introduction to a text. It provides the neceesary information that an audience needs for understanding the text. |
| Prose | Written language that is not poetry. It is meant to be read. |
| Protagonist | Main character in a story. Can also be referred to as hero. All action is initiated by this character. |
| Pun | Humour involving a play on words, one word used in two or more different senses. *Eg. This vacuum really sucks.* |
| Register | Formality of language to suit audience. |
| Rhetorical questions | A question that needs no answering as the answer is obvious. *Eg. Are you stupid or what?* Can be used to draw readers to continue reading to find an answer. *Eg. ‘Is ugliness a disease?’* |
| Rhyme | Correspondence in sound of two or more final syllables. *Eg. Keep cool/ ‘til after school.* |
| Rhythm | A pattern created by regular recurrence of stresses of long and short sounds. |
| Sarcasm | Bitter remarks intended to hurt. |
| Satire | A style that holds people up to ridicule. Frequently uses humour to expose issues or practices that are not funny. Irony is usually a feature of satire. |
| Simile | A comparison of two things using ‘like’ or ‘as’. *Eg. The sea was like a wild dog.* |
| Slang | Substitution of a very informal word for a formal one. *Eg. chick for girl.* |
| Soliloquy | When a character speaks while alone on stage. While not addresing the audience, it is intended for them to reveal his character or innermost thoughts. |
| Stanza | Verse of poem. |
| Stereotypes | Fixed, conventional types of representation of characters in fiction, that may refer to a commonly held prejudice about a group of people. |
| STOCK CHARACTER | Character types of a genre. *Eg. the cruel stepmother and charming prince of fairy tales.* |
| Syllogism | A formal system of drawing a conclusion from 2 given premises. *Eg. all men are mortal/ Socrates is a man/ therefore Socrates is mortal.* |
| Synecdoche | A part is used for the whole or the whole is used for the part. Eg.  *‘bread’ for food, ‘brains’ for brainy people.* |
| Synonym | Words with similar meaning. *Eg. futile is a synonym for meaningless.* |
| Synopsis | Summary of main events in a text. |
| Syntax | Relationship between words in sentences and paragraphs. |
| Tone | Attitude of person writing the extract, usually communicated through word choices. *Eg. sympathetic, critical.* |
| tragedy | A literary and particularly dramatic presentation of serious actions in which the protagonist has a disastrous fate. In Shakespearean tragedy, this fate is inevitable. |
| Vernacular | The daily speech of a people or geographical area. *Eg. Discovery Bay – the marina, the club, DC, the focum, the Greens.* |

. – used in but not necessarily limited to drama