

Аналитическое чтение

ПРАКТИЧЕСКИЙ КУРС ПЕРВОГО ИНОСТРАННОГО ЯЗЫКА



Аналитическое чтение

– это вид критического чтения, предполагающий умение полно и точно понимать текст произведения, давать обоснованную оценку прочитанного путем соотнесения содержания текста с личной точкой зрения, знаниями и собственным жизненным опытом на основе уяснения замысла и позиции автора, композиции произведения, знания литературных приемов и особенностей авторского стиля.

Understanding English literature

“... you may read all the books in the British Museum (if you could live long enough), and remain an utterly “*illiterate*”, uneducated person; but ... if you read ten pages of a good book, letter by letter – that is to say, with real accuracy – you are for ever more in some measure an educated person. The entire difference between education and non-education (as regards the merely intellectual part of it) consists in this accuracy.”

(John Ruskin)

- ❑ A writer's language creates an enchanting world in which the reader participates in a unique relationship.
- ❑ Reading with full attention is the real difficulty with any work of literature. The more so when one reads in a foreign language.
- ❑ We have to learn how to read literature by concentrating on the words on the page. Unless we learn to read with accuracy, we won't know the real meaning of the writer's message.
- ❑ One of the main objectives of careful reading is to point out the significance of seemingly unimportant details. The colours of things, the location of the action, and even the weather are important in a way they are not in reality; since they all contribute to the unity of the work of literature.
- ❑ Ultimately it will be the reader's task to piece together the many aspects of the story and recreate in his/her mind a final version of his/her own.
- ❑ While reading slowly and accurately the reader develops his/her stimulated capacity of discussing the aspects and significances of artistic details of a particular story.
- ❑ There is no short cut to learning to read because writers have their individual voices. For each of them their artistic aim is to find a unique way of expression which excites our imagination and stretches our understanding, expands our cultural horizons and thrills our emotions.

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There are various means of interpretation that might help the reader to come to his own understanding of literary art, by pointing out some of the intricacies of the narrative structure, such as *chronology, juxtaposition and point of view*.

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The writers of post war and contemporary literature confidently express the spirit of the time.

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The period of the second half of the 20th century showed a dramatic change not only in the social, political or economic situation in the country, but also in the system of traditional human values epitomizing the vanishing England of the earlier times.

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Modern writing offers to the reader sensitive studies of male or female characters; it makes an ardent appeal to human intellect and emotions. The writers of today possess a keen insight into human motivation, they possess the power to grip an audience.

Understanding a short story

- ❑ The stories by contemporary English writers, many of whom are among the most respected authors of their generation, are well-written, set in the historical background of the second half of the 20th century and deal with situations which are familiar to British readers. Some of the stories are rather simple in language and style, others demand a more sophisticated knowledge of English.
- ❑ Every writer has a distinctive voice. And it is important for a non-native reader to be able to hear the individual voice of the writer, to interpret the message of the story and perceive the gentle reverberations of meaning, the ingenious symbols to be explored and decoded.
- ❑ It is difficult for a foreign reader to recognize all allusions and historic and cultural references familiar to the native user of English. We mustn't underestimate the value of cultural, historical and linguistic commentaries as helpful instruments of grasping the content and the message of a literary work.

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A *short story* is traditionally understood as a short narrative in prose.

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A popular form of story is one that tells events with a definite beginning, middle and end. But others may have very little plot and may never have moved to a completed action.

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A short story usually contains one event focusing on a single aspect of life. The number of characters is limited, the characters are rather revealed or developed. The story has depth and significance in its many aspects.

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The story may belong to a particular type: *social, psychological, historical, adventure, detective, science-fiction, documentary* or be *the mixture* of a number of the types.

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The basic problem presented in the story is its *theme*. It is the represented aspect of life
which the story illustrates.

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The theme can be understood from the *plot* – the plan of a literary composition comprising a series of incidents which are gradually unfolded and each of the incidents comes out of the preceding one and increases in intensity until the highest point is reached.

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The interrelation between different components of the plot is called **composition**. Through the plot the theme and the idea are revealed.

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The **idea** of a story is the underlying thought and emotional attitude transmitted to the reader by the whole poetic structure of the literary text.

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Events recounted in the stories are made up of **episodes**; episodes in their turn, of smaller **action details**.

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Each and every event that represents the essential conflict has a beginning, a development and an end. The plot accordingly consists of **exposition**, **body of the story**, **climax** and **denouement**.

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In the **exposition** the necessary preliminaries to the action are laid out, such as the time, the place and the subject of the action.

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Story (body of the story) is that part of the plot which represents the beginning of the collision and collision

itself.

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Climax is the highest point of an action in a story, the crucial moment of the narration; culmination preceding the denouement.

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Denouement is the unwinding of the action; the event(s) in a story immediately following the climax and bringing the action to an end. It signals the release of the conflict.

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The closing of the story is the *ending*. When it takes an unexpected turn it is called an *unexpected* or *surprise* ending.

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Plot structure is conditioned entirely by the *content*, merely the life process or some events of life reflected in a literary composition determining its theme.

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The content defines the choice of the plot, structure of a piece of writing and its language, i.e. *the form* of a literary work.

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The short story genre is often considered to be the highest form of narrative prose and as such it vividly illustrates the meaning of the unity of content and form.

The narration, whatever it is, rests on such forms of presentation and devices as:

Interior monologue – the narrator speaks to himself.

Dramatic monologue – the narrator or the character speaks alone but there are those he addresses himself to.

Dialogue – the speech of two or more characters addressed to each other.

Represented speech – is the shift from the author's narrative into the character's utterance.

Stream of consciousness – a form of narrative wherein the author attempts to record life by setting down everything that comes into the character's mind, without any reasonable selection.

Narration – the presentation of events in their development, it is usually dynamic.

Description – the presentation of the atmosphere, the scenery, and the like of the literary work.


Interpretation of the text usually involves *three stages*.

- ❑ ***Reconstruction*** (summary or paraphrase) of what happens, who are the characters, etc. A good summary (paraphrase) requires a close reading.
- ❑ ***Interpretation proper*** – we try to grasp the meaning of the text, to read between the lines. Here slow and careful reading is most desirable and beneficent.
- ❑ ***Evaluation*** – we give our own opinion of the author's aims and techniques.

Схема анализа прозаического произведения

1. Introduction
2. General character of style
3. Functional style
4. Genre
5. Form of the story
6. Type of narration
7. Setting
8. Plot pyramid
9. Characterization
10. Conflict
11. Theme and subject
12. Symbolism
13. Stylistic devices and expressive means
14. General atmosphere
15. Personal evaluation of the story under analysis

1) Introduction

- A) State the historical and cultural context of a period when the story was created.
 - B) State some important facts about the author's biography, creative activities and outlook.
 - C) Speak about the title of the story, whether it is clear or obscure, what feelings and expectations the title arise.
 - D) Predict the development of the plot.
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2) The general character of style

Decide whether the work is written in one of the following styles: elevated, high-flown, high-sounding, idealistic, noble-minded, neutral, objective, subjective, emphatic, informal, formal, etc.

3) The functional style

State the functional style. The English bookish literary language comprises the following functional styles:

- the scientific prose;
- the style of official documents;
- the journalistic/publicistic style;
- the newspaper style;
- fiction style;

NB! The number of functional styles in the English language cannot be regarded as an absolute thing.

4) The genre of the story

State the genre of the work. Remember that genre is a category of literary composition, characterized by a particular form, style or content.

5) The form of the story

Decide whether the story has one of the following forms: narration, description of a place or nature, etc.; an account of (historical) events; a humorous episode; character drawing, a monologue, a dialogue, inner represented speech, etc.

6) The type of narration

Say whether the text is the 1st or 3rd person narration. Decide who the narrator is. Identify whether the narrator is objective or subjective.

7) The setting of the story

State the setting of the story.

The setting includes the time, location, when and where the story takes place, and initiates the main backdrop and mood for a story. Elements of setting may include culture, historical period, and geography.

The setting can be obvious or hidden (many authors leave a lot of details up to the reader's imagination).

8) The plot

The plot is all the events in a story particularly rendered toward the achievement of some particular artistic or emotional effect or general theme.

The most common pattern is represented by the “**Plot Pyramid**”, which may be adapted to apply to most works of fiction.

9) Characterization

A) State the main and minor characters of the story. There are two broad categories of character development – *simple* and *complex*.

Simple (flat) characters have only one or two personality traits and are easily recognizable as stereotypes.

Complex (round) characters have multiple personality traits and therefore resemble real people. They are harder to understand and describe.

B) State how the characters are revealed. Authors reveal what characters are like in two general ways – *directly* and *indirectly*.

10) The conflict

State the conflict(s) of the story. There are two general categories of the conflict – *external* and *internal*. The plot of a story may be based upon several conflicts of different types; it may involve both an internal and an external conflict.

11) The theme and the subject

State the theme of the story. The *theme* of work is not the same as the *subject* of the work. The theme is the central idea in the work. The subject is what the work is about.

12) Symbolism

Find symbols in the story if there are any. Decide what the author wanted to say by using them.

13) Stylistic devices and expressive means

Find stylistic devices and expressive means that helped the author to create the story and make his/her style individual. Decide why they are used, what they show or hide.

- A) Phonetic devices;
- B) Lexical devices;
- C) Syntactical devices;
- D) Graphical devices.

14) General atmosphere

State the general atmosphere of the story. The general atmosphere may be dry, unemotional, emotional, vivid, bright, tense, dramatic, pathetic, tragic, humorous, ironical, satirical, sarcastic, etc. It may change throughout the text.

Give examples from the story to show how the author creates this or that kind of atmosphere, what words and stylistic devices help him/her to do it.

15) Personal evaluation

Express your attitude to the message of the story and other ideas conveyed by the author and state whether these ideas are important and urgent.

Say whether the story developed and ended according to your expectations.

1. What is the purpose of the story?
2. What is the moral of the story (if any)?
3. Can you imagine the story written in a different setting?

NB! There can be multiple interpretations for any story and remember that everyone's opinions differ!