

The structure of the text analysis



1. About the author

- Short information about the author of the text (if known)

2. Plot

- Short summary of the text (abstract) 3-5 sentences max
- Settings, time
- Type of narration
- Plot elements (exposition, complication, climax, resolution)

3. Characters

- Major and minor characters (round / flat; static / dynamic)
- Ways of characterization (direct / indirect)
- Appearances, dialogues, clothing, actions

4. Stylistic devices

- 5 – 8 devices
- WHY were they used?
- Linguistic peculiarities

5. Tone, theme, message

- The main area of interest treated in the story.
- The atmosphere of the text, the manner in which an author expresses his/her attitude to the characters and events in the story
- What problems does the author raise in the text?
- What does the author want to tell his readers?

6. Your thoughts, opinion about the text

About the author



- **Biography.**
 - Most important events.
 - Social and economical background.
- Literary trend he belongs to, e.g. Romanticism, Realism etc.
- Most prominent literary pieces.

About the author



- Charles Dickens is a prominent English writer and social critic. His works, such as “Bleak House”, “The Pickwick Papers”, “Great Expectations” and others are considered to be the greatest novels of the world, gaining unprecedented popularity during his lifetime. By 20th century Charles Dickens was recognized as a literary genius.

About the author



- Somerset Maugham, British playwright, novelist and short story writer, was born in UK Embassy in Paris, lost both his parents at the age of 10. He spent his youth studying medicine and was a qualified physician, which deeply influenced him. He served with the Red Cross during the First World War, and, being recruited into the British Secret Intelligence Service, travelled all around the world. His first novel “Liza of Lambeth” sold out rapidly which nudged him to become a full-time writer. By 1914 Maugham was a famous writer. Among his most prominent works are “Theatre”, “The Moon and Sixpence” etc.

About the author



- George Orwell, whose real name was Eric Arthur Blair, was a well-known English novelist, essayist and critic. His works are famous for awareness of social injustice and opposition to totalitarianism. Considered having advanced communist views, Orwell always fought against Stalinism, supporting Trotsky and social democracy. In his most prominent works, “Animal Farm”, “1984” he makes allusions towards Soviet Union, October Revolution and Stalinism.

About the author



- William Thackeray is best known for his satirical works, especially “Vanity Fair”, which can be named one of the best portraits of English society. During his own era Thackeray was named *the second Dickens*, however nowadays he is much less widely read and is known almost only by the “Vanity Fair”. Thackeray considered himself to be a realistic writer to satire Victorian values.

Plot



- Short summary of the text (abstract) 3-5 sentences max
- Settings, time
 - Setting is the location of a story's actions, along with the time in which it occurs, usually established in the initial paragraphs of the story.
 - Setting provides the historical and cultural backgrounds for the events and contributes to the understanding the characters.
- Type of narration
 - Viewpoint (point of view) is the perspective from which the story is narrated.
 - ▢ Third Person Point of View (Omniscient & Limited Omniscient)
 - ▢ First Person Point of View
- Plot elements
 - Exposition – information needed to understand a story.
 - Complication – catalyst that begins the major conflict.
 - Climax – the turning point in the story. Occurs when the characters try to solve the conflict.
 - Resolution (Denouement) – the close of the story.

Short summary of the text



- The extract under the analysis is about a boy of 9 years old called Oliver Twist, an orphan, forced to live in a poor-house, where he was regularly beaten and underfed. The female who is supposed to take care after Oliver and other orphans, instead steals money which are given for orphans' food.

Charles Dickens
"Oliver Twist"

- The given extract depicts a part of the story about a girl who is being closely watched by the narrator. The narrator carefully describes her and her family, he even writes down everything he sees about her into his secret diary.

John Fowles
"The Collector"

Settings



- Setting is the location of a story's actions, along with the time in which it occurs, usually established in the initial paragraphs of the story.
- Setting is always an illusion, even if the story takes place in an actual place: in this case the author takes only those elements that are relevant for the fiction.
- Setting provides the historical and cultural backgrounds for the events and contributes to the understanding the characters.

Settings



- The events in the abstract take place in London, somewhere around 1960s. The authors draw the setting carefully, mentioning Town Hall Annex, Crossfield Street, public library, etc., helping to build an image of real London, ordinary and even trivial.
- The settings of the given extract tell us that the story takes place on the Spanish ship called Cinco Liagas. The text is threaded with naval terminology, describing the sailing ship, its course, the position of the sun. Careful description of the details, both of the vessel and the wardrobe, let us assume that the story takes place in 17th century.

John Fowles
“The Collector”

Rafael Sabatini
“Captain Blood”

Type of narration

Third Person Point of view



- Third person objective

The door of Henry's lunchroom opened and two men came in. They sat down at the counter.

"What's yours?" George asked them.

"I don't know," one of the men said. "What do you want to eat, Al?"

"I don't know," said Al. "I don't know what I want to eat."

Outside it was getting dark. The street-light came on outside the window. The two men at the counter read the menu. From the other end of the counter Nick Adams watched them. He had been talking to George when they came in.

"I'll have a roast pork tenderloin with apple sauce and mashed potatoes," the first man said.

Ernest Hemingway
"The Killers"

Type of narration

Third Person Point of view



● Omniscient point of view

- For some time Frodo and Sam managed to keep up with the others; but Aragorn was leading them at a great pace, and after a while they lagged behind. They had eaten nothing since the early morning. Sam's cut was burning like fire, and his head felt light. He shivered. Frodo felt every step more painful and he gasped for breath.
- They would have been willing to follow a leader over the River and into the shadow of Mordor; but Frodo spoke no word, and Aragorn was still divided in his mind. His own plan, while Gandalf remained with them, had been to go with Boromir, and with his sword help to deliver Gondor. For he believed that the message of the dreams was a summons, and that the hour had come at last when the heir of Elendil should come forth and strive with Sauron for the mastery.

JRR Tolkien
“Lord of the Ring”

Type of narration

Third Person Point of view



- Limited omniscient point of view

Harry's heart gave a horrible jolt. A test? In front of the whole school? But he didn't know any magic yet—what on earth would he have to do? He hadn't expected something like this the moment they arrived. He looked around anxiously and saw that everyone else looked terrified, too. No one was talking much except Hermione Granger, who was whispering very fast about all the spells she'd learned and wondering which one she'd need. Harry tried hard not to listen to her. He'd never been more nervous, never, not even when he'd had to take a school report home to the Dursleys saying that he'd somehow turned his teachers wig blue. He kept his eyes fixed on the door. Any second now, Professor McGonagall would come back and lead him to his doom.

J. K. Rowling
"Harry Potter"

Type of narration

Third Person Point of view



- Omniscient and omnipresent point of view

- No more firing was heard at Brussels – the pursuit rolled miles away. Darkness came down on the field and city; and Amelia was praying for George, who was lying on his face, dead, with a bullet through his heart.

William Thackeray
“Vanity Fair”

- But no one, except Florence, knows the measure of the white-haired gentleman’s affection for the girl. That story never goes about. The child herself almost wonders at a certain secrecy he keeps in it. He hoards her in his heart. He cannot bear to see a cloud upon her face. He cannot bear to see her sit apart. He fancies that she feels a slight, when there is none. He steals away to look at her, in her sleep. It pleases him to have her come, and wake him in the morning. He is fondest of her and most loving to her, when there is no creature by.

Charles Dickens
“Dombey and Son”

Type of narration

First Person Point of view



When I had a free moment from the files and ledgers I stood by the window and used to look down over the road over the frosting and sometimes I'd see her. In the evening I marked it in my observations diary, at first with X, and then when I knew her name with M. I saw her several times outside too. I stood right behind her once in a queue at the public library down Crossfield Street. She didn't look once at me, but I watched the back of her head and her hair in a long pigtail. It was very pale, silky, like Burnet cocoons.

John Fowles
"The Collector"

Plot elements



- **Exposition** – information needed to understand a story.
 - ▢ *Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas. Only \$1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him.*
- **Complication** – catalyst that begins the major conflict.
 - ▢ *Jim stepped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.*
- **Climax** – the turning point in the story. Occurs when the characters try to solve the conflict.
 - ▢ *For there lay The Combs - the set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshipped for long in a Broadway window. Beautiful combs, pure tortoise-shell, with jewelled rims - just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair.*
 - ▢ *"Dell," said he, "let's put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em a while. They're too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs "*
- **Resolution (Denouement)** – the close of the story.
 - ▢ *But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi.*

Characters



- You can learn about the characters in following ways:
 - Physical appearance
 - Dialogue
 - Actions
 - Dress
 - Thoughts and opinions
 - Point of view

Characters



- Is the character static or dynamic? What makes you think so?
- What type of person is the character?
- In what ways the society or environment created the character?
- How does the character appear to other characters?
- What is your impression of the character? What makes you like/dislike the character?
- How self-aware is the character?
- How does the character view his/her own world? Is this view realistic?
- How does the author feel about the character?
- Is the character created explicitly or implicitly?

Stylistic devices



- *Metaphor* – is a figure of speech that directly refers to one thing by mentioning another for rhetorical effect
 - **Allegory** – an extended metaphor wherein a story illustrates an important attribute of the subject.
 - George Orwell – Animal Farm: The pigs stand for political figures of the Russian Revolution.
 - C.S. Lewis – The Chronicles of Narnia: cosmogonic allegory on Heaven
 - The story of the apple falling onto Isaac Newton's head
 - **Antithesis** – rhetorical contrast of ideas by means of parallel arrangements of words, clauses, or sentences.
 - Ask not what **your country** can do for **you** – ask what **you** can do for **your country**. – Inauguration of John F. Kennedy, 1961
 - It was the **best** of times, it was the **worst** of times, it was the age of **wisdom**, it was the age of **foolishness**, it was the epoch of **belief**, it was the epoch of **incredulity**, it was the season of **Light**, it was the season of **Darkness**, it was the spring of **hope**, it was the winter of **despair**, we had **everything** before us, we had **nothing** before us, we were all going direct to **Heaven**, we were all going direct the other way... (Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities)
 - **Hyperbole** – excessive exaggeration to illustrate a point.
 - I'll love you, dear, I'll love you
Till China and Africa meet,
And the river jumps over the mountain
And the salmon sing in the street. (W.H. Auden)

Stylistic devices



- **Litotes** – a figure of speech that uses understatement to emphasize a point by stating a negative to further affirm a positive, often incorporating double negatives for effect.
 - Not bad = Good
 - He was not unfamiliar with the works of Dickens = He was acquainted with the works of Dickens
- **Metonymy** – using the name of one thing in reference to a different thing to which the first is associated.
 - "the Pentagon" – the U.S. military leadership

Stylistic devices



- **Irony** - a literary or rhetorical device in which there is a contrast between what a speaker or a writer says, and what is understood.
 - **Verbal irony** – when the author says one thing while meaning something totally different.

Person 1: I wasn't going to eat the cake, you know.
Person 2: Interesting, that's what it looked like you were doing, but I just must have been mistaken.
 - **Situational irony** – when the results of a situation are far different from what was expected.
 - *Gift of the Magi*: The man sells his favourite pocket watch to buy his wife a set of combs, while the wife has her hair cut to buy him a watch-chain.
 - *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*: Dorothy travels to a wizard and fulfills his challenging demands in order to go home, before discovering she'd had the ability to go back home all along.
 - **Tragic irony (dramatic irony)** – when the reader knows something that a character in the story doesn't know.
 - *Romeo and Juliet*: Romeo finds Juliet in a drugged deathlike sleep, he assumes her to be dead and kills himself. Upon awakening to find her dead lover beside her, Juliet stabs herself with a dagger thus killing herself.
 - In *Star Wars*, Luke does not know Darth Vader is his father until Episode V, but the audience knows sooner.
 - **Cosmic irony (irony of fate)** – some unknown force brings about dreadful events.
 - *Harry Potter*: Lord Voldemort, having decided that Harry is his enemy from the prophecy, goes to the Potters' house, thus marking the boy to be his enemy and setting on the prophecy.

Stylistic devices



- **Anaphora** – a rhetorical device that consists of repeating a sequence of words at the beginnings of neighboring clauses, thereby lending them emphasis.
 - **It was** the best of times, **it was** the worst of times, **it was** the age of wisdom, **it was** the age of foolishness, **it was** the epoch of belief, **it was** the epoch of incredulity, **it was** the season of Light, **it was** the season of Darkness, **it was** the spring of hope, **it was** the winter of despair, **we had** everything before us, **we had** nothing before us, **we were all going direct** to Heaven, **we were all going direct** the other way. – *Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities*
- **Oxymoron** – a rhetorical device that uses self-contradiction to illustrate a rhetorical point or to reveal a paradox.
 - "I must be cruel only to be kind" (*Hamlet*)
 - "O brawling love! O loving hate!" (*Romeo and Juliet*)
- **Zeugma** – a figure of speech in which one single phrase or word joins different parts of a sentence.
 - "They covered themselves with dust and glory." (*Mark Twain*)
 - "Miss Bolo [...] went straight home, in a flood of tears and a sedan-chair." (*Charles Dickens, "The Pickwick Papers"*)

Stylistic devices



- Oran was covered with plague – that was what the author wrote, and he made it vividly true, because the city was, indeed, drowning in it. The plague, for Camus, was not some estranged illness, it was alive and it was suppressing everyone who has become her slave. *“This empty town, white with dust, saturated with sea smells, loud with the howl of the wind, would groan at such times like an island of the damned”*, the author writes, graphically emphasizing the state of the city with parallel constructions and polysyndeton. The city is alive, it groans, being metaphorically the city of damned – doomed.
- The author goes on, his metaphor grows, personifying the plague as a bloodthirsty and yet dead-hearted creature: *“The plague had claimed many more victims in the outlying districts”*.
- However, not only the plague kills the city, but its citizens too: they find some alleviation in the fact that there are people who suffer more, they still tried to gain something material, while there was a pandemics, vandalizing. And, as the idiom in the texts says – *a drop in the ocean* if they are shot while stealing and marauding.

Albert Camus
“The Plague”

Stylistic devices



- The narration centres around Coalhouse. The author describes in detail and with much precision his visits to the family, the attitude of the family members towards him, his playing the piano, the music he played, and its impact on the listeners. The author uses few epithets and metaphors to describe Coalhouse's appearance and conduct. But he underlines time and again Coalhouse's reserve, calm and politeness, employing adjectives "*respectful*", "*courteous*", "*correct*", "*solemn*" and "*stiff*". Despite his outer calm Coalhouse was very nervous and tense, but he managed to restrain himself. The simile (*he had*) "*large dark eyes, so intense as to suggest they were about to cross*" reveals Coalhouse's real state of mind: he was suffering a great nervous anxiety.
- In this way the author creates an atmosphere of suspense, and the reader is intrigued as to the possible reasons for this nervousness. The mood of the following narration becomes tense, the psychological strain keeps growing, the impression being augmented by the entire structure of the excerpt.
- The lines describing Sarah are in the same strained key. One gains this impression from such epithets as: (*standing*) "*rigidly*", (*said*) "*softly*", "*mute and unforgiving*". On the whole, the main characters act and speak little: "*The girl said nothing.*"; "*The girl shook her head.*"; "*The pianist responded with a tense shake of the head.*". It is not their actions and words that matter but their inner feelings, sufferings and anguish. They seem to be conducting a silent dialogue. Coalhouse is pleading with Sarah to forgive him, and she is making a great effort to refuse him.

E. L. Doctorow
"Ragtime"

Tone, Theme, Message



- **Tone.**

- How did the text make you feel?

- **Theme.**

- What is the main problem in the text?

- **Message.**

- What did the author imply?

Useful phrases



● The Summary

- At the beginning of the story (in the beginning) the author describes (depicts, dwells on, touches upon, explains, introduces, mentions, recalls, characterizes, analyzes, comments, enumerates, points out, generalizes, reveals, exposes)...
- The story (the author) begins with the description of (the introduction of, the mention of, the analysis of, the comment on, a review of, an account of, the summary of, the characterization of)...
- The story opens with...
- The opening scene shows (reveals)...

● The analysis

- the plot is centered / centers on (upon, round, around smb, smth)
- the main stages in the development of the idea
- to evoke an emotional response
- to disclose the author's attitude towards smb (his world outlook, his evaluation of smth)
- to give an insight into smb's personality
- the emotional colouring is made definite by words naming (expressing) emotions
- to create an atmosphere of...
- to focus (fix) the reader's attention on...
- a vivid (striking, dead) metaphor, a revived metaphor
- to be enforced by the imagery
- to sharpen the conflict

Story of an hour



- Kate Chopin was an American author of short stories and novels based in Louisiana. She is considered by some scholars to have been a forerunner of American 20th-century feminist authors.
- Her stories aroused controversy because of her subjects and her approach; they were condemned as immoral by some critics.

Story of an hour



- The story is centered around Louise Mallard, who suddenly receives news about her husband's death. She has a fragile health, so the news is delivered with a great delicacy by her friends and family. Everyone believes, that she is grieving, as she sobs and leaves to her room, wanting to be alone, but the more we read the more we understand her true feelings.

Story of an hour



- She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.
- Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will--as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been. When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under the breath: "free, free, free!" The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

Story of an hour



- The author doesn't tell us the true inner state of the main characters at once, but she guides us to it, using the vivid descriptions of what Louise sees from the window: *open square, new spring life, blue sky* showing here and there through the clouds etc. She sees freedom and the beginning of something new, which she herself doesn't even recognize at first. The author shows us her sudden astonishment with her newfound freedom. (She said it over and over under the breath: "free, free, free!") The use of the repetition draws our attention and emphasizes its importance to the character and to us.

Story of an hour



- Then follows short, implicit description of the deceased: “She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead”
- She recalls her husband seemingly warm, but still she admits to herself, that she didn’t love him – at least, not always, not even too often. And the warm description turns into suffocating memories for her. Their relationships are not depicted too explicitly, but from Louise’s words we can see, that she was unhappy in her marriage.

Story of an hour



- After realizing that she is eventually free from her husband, she begins to realize, that there is a whole life ahead of her: “It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long”
- Her feelings are shown vividly, with the help of wide range of stylistic devices, they are too strong for her to hide them: the *monstrous* joy that she feels makes her look “like a goddess of Victory”. Author describes it very colorfully, using antithesis, similes and metaphors. She personifies the feelings of the character: she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Story of an hour



- The ending of the story is short and sudden, shown to us in the very one ironic sentence: When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease – of the joy that kills. The tragic irony is clear to the readers, but for all the others in the story it is just a very tragic turn of events.
- The main idea of the story is...