

Département Arabe

Niveau : L3 littérature (groupes : 5, 6, 7, 8)

Module : Anglais

HOW TO UNDERSTAND LITERATURE

- Do small research about the writer
- Biography
- Literary orientation
- Major theme

How to Analyze a Novel:

1. Setting:

Setting: is a description of where and when the story takes place.

- What aspects make up the setting?
 - Geography, weather, time of day, social condition?
- What role does setting play in the story? Is it an important part of the plot or theme? Or just a backdrop against which the action takes place?
- Study the time period which is also the part of the setting.
- When was the story written?
 - Does it take place in the present, past, or in the future?

2. Characterization:

Characterization deals with how the characters are described?

- Through dialogue.
- The way they speak?
- Physical appearance? Thoughts and feelings? Interaction, the way they act towards other characters
- What type of characters are they?
- What qualities stand out?
- Are they stereotypes?

3. Plot and structure:

The plot is the main sequence of events that make up the story.

- What are the most important events?
- How is the plot structured? Is it linear, chronological or does it move back and forth?

- Is the plot believable?

4. Narrator and point of view:

The narrator is the person telling the story.

Point of view: whose eyes the story is being told through.

- Who is the narrator or speaker in the story?
- Is the narrator the main character?
- Does the author speak through one of the characters?
- Is the story written in the first person “I” point of view?
- Is the story written in a detached third person He/ She point of view?
- Is the story written in an “all knowing “3rd person who can reveal what all the characters are thinking and doing at all time and in all places?

5. Conflict:

Conflict or tension is usually the heart of the novel and is related to the main character

- How would you describe the main conflicts?
 - Is it internal where the character suffers inwardly?
 - Is it external caused by the surroundings or environment the main character finds herself in?

6. Theme:

Is the main idea, lesson or message in the novel, it is usually an abstract universal idea about the human condition, society or life.

- How does the theme shine through in the story?

7. Style:

The author’s style has to do with author’s vocabulary, use of imagery or feeling of the story, it has to do with his attitude towards the subject.

In some novels the tone can be ironic, humorous, cold or dramatic.

- Is the text full of figurative language?

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- Does the author use a lot of symbolism? Metaphors, similes? An example of metaphor is when someone says: “*my love, you are a rose*”. An example of simile is: “*my darling, you are like a rose*”.
- What images are used?