

## LITERARY ANALYSIS

### What is literary analysis?

- It's literary
- It's an analysis
- It's-- an argument!
- It may also involve research on and analysis of secondary sources

### How is it “literary”?

- Usually, a literary analysis will involve a discussion of a text as writing, thus the term literary, which means “having to do with letters.”
- This will involve the use of certain concepts that are very specifically associated with literature.

Important literary concepts include:

<i>The basics</i>	<i>Other key concepts</i>
Plot	Historical context
Setting	Social, political, economic contexts
Narration/point of view	Ideology
Characterization	Multiple voices
Symbol	Various critical orientations
Metaphor	Literary theory
Genre	
Irony/ambiguity	
Imagery	

### What is an analysis?

- An analysis of a literary work may discuss how the various components of an individual work relate to each other; how two separate literary works deal with similar concepts or forms; or how concepts and forms in literary works relate to larger aesthetic, political, social, economic, or religious contexts.
- Once you decide what work you will analyze, you will begin the analysis of the work and do any research required. As you think about your topic, be sure to construct a thesis that will guide your analysis as well as serve to focus and organize your essay. A good thesis is specific, limited in scope and offers a perspective or interpretation on a subject. A literary thesis should be clear and focused, setting up an argument that the essay will support with discussion and details from the work.

### How is a literary analysis an argument?

- When writing a literary analysis, you will focus on specific attribute(s) of the text(s).
- When discussing these attributes, you will want to make sure that you are making a specific, arguable point (thesis) about these attributes.
- You will defend this point with reasons and evidence drawn from the text. (Much like a lawyer!)

**How do I support a thesis statement?**

- Examples from the text: direct quotations, summaries of scenes, paraphrase
- Other critics' opinions
- Historical and social context
- Always remember to read carefully and highlight useful passages and quotes

**What is a primary source?**

- In literary analysis, the primary source is the text you are analyzing: poem, sonnet, novel, short story, movie, etc.

**What is a secondary source?**

- A book or article that discusses the primary source
- A book or article that discusses a theory related to the argument you are making
- A book or article that discusses the social and historical context of the text you are discuss

**How do I find secondary sources?**

- Library Databases
- MLA International Bibliography
- Dictionary of Literary Biography
- A bibliography that is part of your text
- Ask your school librarian

**Integrating secondary sources**

- When you use secondary sources, be sure to show how they relate to your thesis
- Don't overuse any one secondary source, or for that matter, secondary sources in general
- Remember this is your paper, your argument—the secondary sources are just helping you out.
- Never, never, never plagiarize!

**Overview of Literary Analysis**

- When writing a literary analysis, be familiar with literary terms
- Analyze specific items
- Make an a argument
- Make appropriate use of secondary sources
- Consult instructors and tutors for help when needed