

# A QUICK GUIDE TO STYLISTIC ANALYSIS

## DICTION

- Is the language concrete or abstract? General or specific?
- Are the words monosyllabic or polysyllabic?
- Do the words have interesting connotations?
- Is the diction formal or informal? Colloquial? Slang? Jargon?
- Is there any change in the level of diction in the passage?
- What can the reader infer about the speaker or speaker's attitude from the word choice? (See tone)

## SYNTAX

- Are the sentences simple and direct or complex and convoluted?
- How do dependent clauses relate to main clauses?
- Does the author use repetition, parallel structure, or juxtaposition for emphasis?
- Does the author write periodic or cumulative sentences?
- Are there instances of balanced sentences or antithesis?
- Are there rhetorical questions in the passage?
- Is there a wide variety of sentence patterns in the passage?
- Are there dramatic shifts in sentence patterns?
- What can the reader infer about the speaker or speaker's attitude from the syntax?

## TOPE

- What seems to be the speaker's attitude in the passage?
- Is more than one attitude or point of view expressed?
- Does the passage have a noticeable emotional mood or atmosphere?
- Can anything in the passage be described as irony?
- What effect does tone have on the reader?

## FIGURES OF SPEECH

- Are there interesting images or patterns of imagery in the passage?
- Does the author create analogies, like similes and metaphors or broader descriptive comparisons?
- Does the author make use of personification or apostrophe?
- Is there deliberate hyperbole or understatement in the passage?
- Does the author use paradox or oxymoron to add complexity?
- What part do rhythm and sound devices play in the passage?
- How do the figures of speech effect the reader?

## ORGANIZATION

- What organizational pattern(s) does the author use? (general to specific, specific to general, chronological, narrative, spatial, comparison and contrast, definition, question and answer, cause and effect)
- Are there repeated structural elements?
- How are the paragraphs related to each other?
- How are the paragraphs related to the work as a whole?
- If the passage is titled, what is the significance of its reflection on the passage as a whole?
- How does the organization of the passage help achieve the author's purpose?

**NOTE: NEVER substitute terminology for analysis. ALWAYS connect the literary term (and example) directly to the effect it creates in the passage or the effect it has on the reader.**