

# How to analyses a novel and short story

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**Abstract** : This article discusses analysing a novel , short stories including characters, events, interaction, setting, time, organization, writing style, symbolism and theme which are more important to know to enhance your analysing skills.

**Key words** : analyse, context, setting, time, symbolism, interaction, events.

Analysing your favourite book is a great place to start if you want to improve your analysing a novel. However, don't stop there. Literary analysis takes time to learn, so review as many books as you can. Start in the short stories or topic you want to discuss and move out from there. Try reading from different genres for variety and to learn what sort of techniques are universal. You can learn a lot from bad books too.

When analyzing a novel or short story, you'll need to consider elements such as the context, setting, characters, plot, literary devices, and themes. Remember that a literary analysis isn't merely a summary or review, but rather an interpretation of the work and an argument about it based on the text.

Reading literature (novels and plays, for example) requires a different approach than reading a textbook. In literature, the meaning isn't often stated directly, but is implied. You have to get a sense on your own of what the work means, instead of having the author explicitly saying, "This is idea 1, and this is idea 2."

Good writers do create stories that are organized and comprehensible. For example, a story usually follows some organization, whether it's told chronologically, in flashbacks, from different perspectives, and so on. Also, writers provide many clues to the meaning or main ideas they want you to get from the work.

In particular, the following points are important to consider when reading and analyzing literature:  
Characters: Who are the main characters in the piece? What are the names and roles of the main characters? Who is the narrator, the person telling the story? Does this person have a bias? That is, can you trust what he or she is saying?

Events and interaction: What happens in the story? How do the characters interact? How are they related or connected? Why do the characters act or behave the way they do? Why do the events play out as they do?

Setting: Where does the piece take place? Is the setting critical to the story? Does the setting provide background? Does the setting give historical, physical, or other information that is key to the story?

Time: When does the story take place? Is it timeless, or is it grounded in a particular place and time?

Organization: How is the story organized? Most commonly, stories are told chronologically, but in some works, you may find that the author moves back and forth (in time as well as place).

Writing style: What does the writing style tell you about the story? Is the writing richly detailed? Is it sparse? How does the writing style affect the meaning? Do you have to make assumptions or guesses because there are gaps?

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**Symbolism:** Symbolism can be tricky because, sometimes, as the saying goes: "A cigar is just a cigar." Other time, a journey represents something beyond the trip itself. For example, Huck Finn's trip was more about his development as a person than his trip down the river. In addition, "A black spot" in Treasure Island is the example of a symbolism.

**Theme:** What are the themes of the story? What elements or ideas are repeated or emphasized? Think about this throughout your reading, not just at the end. Notice what people, places, and events pop up over and over again.

**Retelling of a story:** Many stories are in some way or form a retelling of a previous story. If you think about Huckleberry Finn's trip, you can find other trips from Greek mythology (Homer's Odyssey) to the Bible (the trip of the Magi) with similarities.

Your literary analysis of a novel will often be in the form of an essay or book report where you will be asked to give your opinions of the novel at the end. To conclude, choose the elements that made the greatest impression on you. Point out which characters you liked best or least and always support your arguments. Try to view the novel as a whole and try to give a balanced analysis.

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