

How To
Read Literature
Like A Professor
by Thomas C. Foster

Introduction: How'd He Do That?

In literature, teachers and professors analyze the story differently than students. Students tend to not process what the story is telling you, while teachers and professors read deeper into the story.

EXAMPLE: *The 3 Little Pigs*

In *The 3 Little Pigs* the pigs try and get away from the big bad wolf but the wolf could also be taken as a disease, a person, or anything you are trying to get away from.

50% of literature is pattern and the other 50% is symbol. If you can find the pattern and/or symbol the of the story you read it will help you to understand the meaning behind the story.

Chapter 1: *Every Trip Is A Quest (Except When It's Not)*

5 aspects to A QUEST:

1. a quester
2. a place to go
3. a stated reason to go there
4. challenges and trials along the way
5. a real reason to go there

EXAMPLE: WALL-E

1. Quest: WALL-E's quest is to try and bring human life back to earth.
2. A place to go: WALL-E follows the robot that landed on earth (EVE) back to the planet she came from.
3. A stated reason to go there: WALL-E follows EVE to find love and to try and find if humans exist.
4. Challenges and trials: When WALL-E gets to EVE's planet they think he is an intruder because he is a trash collector not a "real" robot like EVE.
5. The real reason to go: To try and save the EVE from the humans that created her and help earth become a living place again.

Chapter 2
Nice to Eat
with you:
Acts of
Communion
Matthez and Hunter

What this chapter basically talks about is how every meal in a book has a meaning. There wouldn't be a meal if there isn't any meaning or purpose of it.

For example, in the book *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, Charlie's family lives on bread, potatoes, and cabbage. When Grandpa Joe gives Charlie all the money he has (a dime), Charlie buys a chocolate bar hoping to find a golden ticket tucked inside. Charlie opens it in front of Grandpa Joe. When they find out that they didn't get one of the golden tickets, they make the best of the situation by agreeing that the ticket would have made the chocolate taste bad. The author adds this meal because they don't even eat the chocolate bar to show the readers how close Charlie and his Grandpa are.



Chapter 3
Nice to Eat
with you:
Acts of
Vampires
Matthew and Hunter

This chapter talks about how writers use ghosts, vampires, and other scary creatures to symbolize the antagonist, or bad person. The creature, or in some books an actual human, is always the selfish, greedy, rude character that tries to take down the other people in the book. This character uses other people to get what they want, and puts their own desires above the needs of someone else.

For example, in the book “*A Christmas Carol*”, Scrooge is the “vampire” of the story. He may not look like a vampire, but the qualities of a vampire are usually on the inside, not the outside. Scrooge is rude to his family, and also won’t let his workers take Christmas Eve or Day off because it doesn’t benefit him in any way. He puts his own desires before others and hurts a lot of people throughout the book while doing it.



Chapter 4- If It's Square, It's a Sonnet

A Shakespearean sonnet contains 3 quatrains (4 lines each) and 1 couplet (2 lines each). A Shakespearean sonnet has a rigid form with 10 syllables per line. In this type of sonnet, it has an alternating rhyme scheme. The author included this chapter so that we, as readers, are able to determine what is classified as a Shakespearean sonnet.

**Two gazed into a pool, he gazed and she,
Not hand in hand, yet heart and heart, i think,
Pale and reluctant on the water brink,
As on the brink of parting which must be.
Each eyed the others aspect, she and he,
Each felt one hungering heart leap up and sink,
Each tasted bitterness which both must drink,
There upon the brink of life's dividing sea.
Lilies upon the surface, deep below
Two wistful faces craving each for each,
Resolute and reluctant: --
A sudden ripple as the faces flow,
One moment joined, to vanish out of reach:
So those hearts joined, and ah were parted so.**

**Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.**

FOR EXAMPLE...



The mother in the Disney classic, *Snow White*, is comparable to the mother in *Tangled*. Both mothers did anything in their power to enable the young princesses. In both movies, the mothers were the antagonist.



In this example, both main characters in *Earl and The Dying Girl* and the well-known *The Fault in Our Stars* and battling cancer. Both stories also include a male protagonist in which they fear to leave as their illness becomes more severe



Chapter 5: Now, Where Have I Seen Him Before?

There's no such thing as a completely original piece of literature. All stories grow out of other stories and poems out of other poems. All stories somehow relate to each other, whether it is the bold protagonist or the climax of a plot you have heard it all somewhere

This example includes a more complicated love story. In both *Twilight* and Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, the plot is based on two lovers that were bound NOT to be together. The romance was unexpected and was forbidden. But, by destiny, the two end up together... dead or alive.

*Chapter 6-
When in
Doubt, It's
From
Shakespeare*

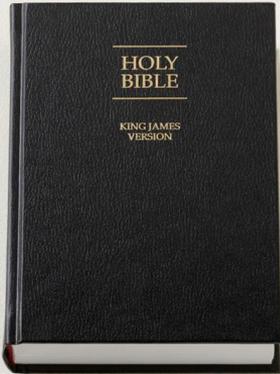
Many stories have borrowed ideas from Shakespeare in one way or another.

The book series *Twilight* reflects Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Just like Romeo and Juliet, *Twilight* has two characters that were originally together, were separated for a time, and then brought back together.

Christian Fuentes
Peter Behrig

Chapter 7: ... Or the Bible

Christian Fuentes
Peter Behrig



Many authors use biblical allusions in their stories, such as James Joyce who wrote “Araby”. An allusion is an expression designed to call something to mind without mentioning it.

There are many Biblical allusions in the short story “Araby” by James Joyce. For example, the young boy goes to a Christian school and his house was once owned by a priest. Also, there is a wild garden with an apple tree in the center, which conveys the idea of Adam and Eve. Finally, there is a bike pump that represents the child's innocence, but it starts to fade, which shows the allusion of the child losing his innocence.

The girl in the story is an allusion of how the boy lost his innocence to a girl who was flaunting her beauty, which conveys the idea of how Satan tricked Eve into eating forbidden fruit.

The end of the story talks about two men lying to a girl “two great jars”, and in the bible it talks about how lying is one of the worst sins. In this story James Joyce definitely used examples of Biblical allusions.

***Chapter 8:
Hansledee
and
Greteldum***
Kelly and Al

People like familiarity. It's just a fact. It's comforting, it's recognizable, and it reminds us of simpler times. Literature pulls from fairy tales to enhance the reader's experience- and that's exactly what they do when they include fairy tale references that give us that familiarity we so love. Seriously, what's more familiar than a fairy tale? We can see several references to Grimm's works spread throughout many, many novels. Take *Beastly* by Alex Finn, for example. The entire book is essentially a huge reference to *Beauty and The Beast*. This handsome, rich man is extremely rude to an old woman and is turned into a 'beast' of sorts. In order to be changed back to normal, he has to find someone who loves him for who he is. Sounds familiar, doesn't it? Long story short, author's love fairy tales and so do we!

Chapter 9: It's Greek to Me

Kelly and Al

We all know of Greek myths- it's probably one of the most well-known myths out there next to religion. You can find references to Greek mythology scattered throughout several literary works. Greek myths have stuck with us for thousands upon thousands of years- it's something we remember. So, naturally, authors like to include it in their stories so they'll stick with us!

Examples:

the entire *Percy Jackson* series

Harry Potter

The Song of Achilles

Lord of The Rings

Star Trek
(what? It's a book series, too!)

an original poem by al:

a boy alone,
 blinded
by rage alone,
vengeance
 in his veins,
their mistake is,
 his victory
as he stands
 with a
bloody sword,
 and satisfaction.

CHAPTER 10

In this chapter we talk about weather. Imagine in *Harry Potter Deathly Hallows part II* By: J.K. Rowling when the final fight begins. The weather isn't sunny and happy. It's dark and seems like a sad time that only the weather could set. Once this mood is set the battle commences and creates a feeling of intensity and it's almost an outrageous feeling.

Once the battle is over the sky starts to clear up and everything starts to get sunny again, therefore the mood of happiness sets in. At the end of the story, everything gets happy, therefore the sunny weather.

Weather's purpose in a Story

Kaden, Marcus, and Jacob



CHAPTER 11

Is That A Symbol?

Almost anything can be recognized as a symbol, but the problem is people only see symbols for objects and images.

Any action or event that happens in a novel can also be seen as symbol.

Symbols can be interpreted in many ways, but many people only chose one way to consider a symbol also.

When reading, we use our creativity that meets with the author's meaning, so each reader must decide for him/her what a symbol means.

When trying to figure out what a symbol means, ask yourself, “what does it mean, what does it stand for?”

An example of this could be Cinderella's shoe coming off on the steps for Prince Charming to find. This could be interpreted many different ways like it was destiny, true love, or it just happened to keep the story rolling and drawing your attention. —Marcus McTillmon, Kaden Buttner and Jacob Burrows

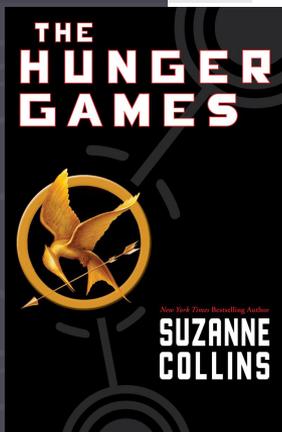


It's All Political Chapter 12

In chapter 12, it shows that in most stories, there are politics.

The book gave the example of *The Christmas Carol*. In the book it was aimed at the main political beliefs of Charles Dickens. For example, it showed that you should not help the poor because it would cause more people to become poor.

For our example, we chose *The Hunger Games*, to show that, “it’s all political.” In this book, the government uses propaganda as well as violence and separate the people into 13 different districts. This entire book is almost all about politics. For example, they bring in one boy and one girl representative from 12 different districts. These people, men and women, fight for their survival in a competition called the Hunger Games.



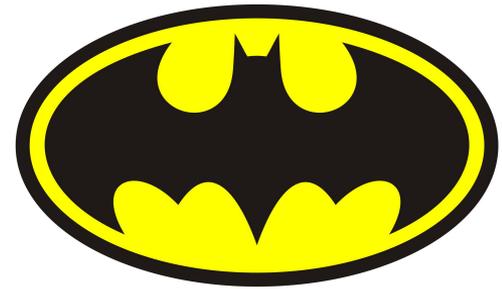
Chapter 13- Geography Matters

4 aspects:

1. Tells reader where character is going
 2. Tells reader where the story takes place
 3. Can tell reader theme, symbol, and plot
 4. Tells us what is going on inside a character especially when the geography changes
1. In the story of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn they are traveling on one specific river, the Mississippi, and that particular landscape and towns.
 2. This gives the reader an idea of what is happening like in the stories Little House on the Prairie and Little House in the Big Woods. This shows the particular place in which the story takes place.
 3. In The Fall of the House of Usher the author starts the book with a bleak description of the country setting which can help tell the theme, symbol, or plot.
 4. In The Secret Garden the main character Mary lives in India and is miserable until she moves to England and starts to have fun.

Interlude

The Interlude tells how a story is never new and that it repeats itself over the years as stories are made, and that a story, even though it repeats itself, doesn't grow old or repetitive and that the story gets better and more interesting. Not only does this happen with stories but it happens with characters like archetypes. They are always repeated, for example the hero/heroine, the villain, or the damsel in distress. They are always repeating even if we don't realize it.



Chapter 14 Marked for Greatness



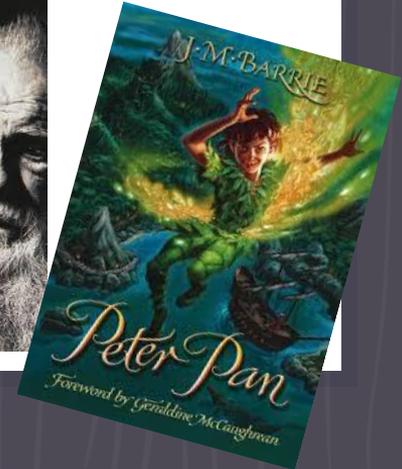
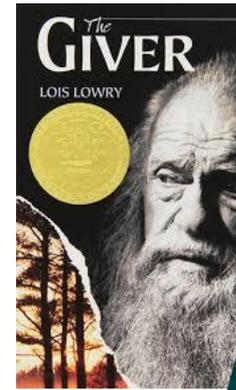
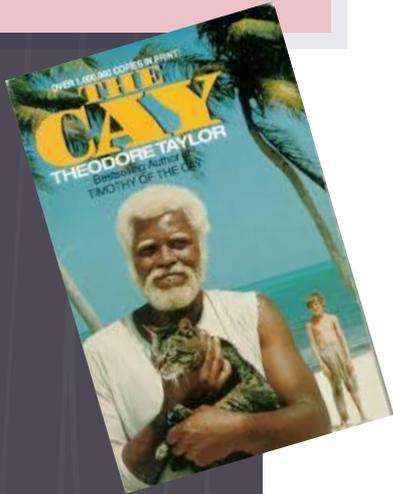
Chapter 14 is about what characteristics of a character could lead to later in the story. Characteristics describe their background/story and physical features/deformities. Like the Harry Potter and the lightning bolt scar on his forehead, it told everyone in Hogwarts that he was different/special and that he would save them in the future.

Jake Janik, Dylan Karlowsky, and Mason Broach

*Chapter 15:
He's Blind
for a
Reason,
You Know*

- ❖ A character doesn't have to be physically blind (it can be figuratively).
- ❖ When a character is blind, the focus is on what they're not paying attention to, a lack of awareness.
- ❖ "Open their eyes" means that the character sees what's happening/are now aware of something (it changes their point of view).

- ❖ *Examples:*
The Cay (1969)
Peter Pan
The Giver



*Chapter 16:
It's Never
Just Heart
Disease...And
Rarely Just
Illness*

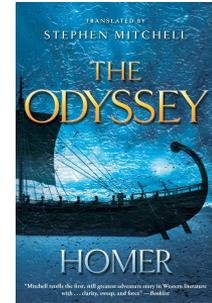
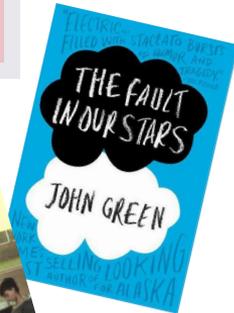
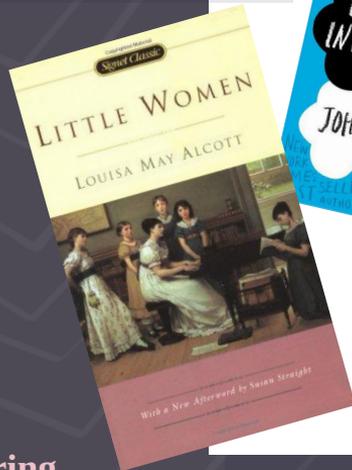
- ❖ Authors choose to write about diseases for a good reason: to show what the character is like on the inside.
- ❖ The heart is the center of emotions.
- ❖ If the character is “hard-hearted”, it means they have little emotion.
- ❖ A character can think he is sick, even if he isn't physically ill.

Examples:

The Fault in Our Stars

The Odyssey

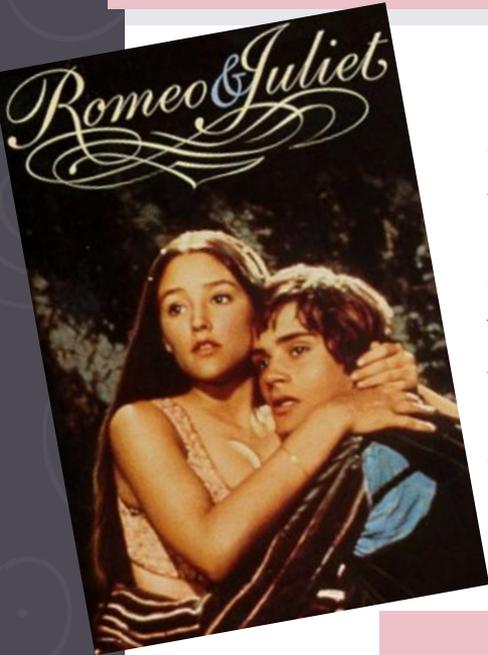
Little Women



What makes a prime literary disease?

- 1) It should be picturesque (strange beauty in illness).
- 2) It should be mysterious in origin.
- 3) It should have good possibilities for use as a symbol.

Chapter 17 : Don't Read With Your Eyes



Many of the times, books are set in different time periods. Many of the things the characters do could be seen as wrong from our perspective. You have to try to read through the eyes of someone in the time period the book is set in.

Examples from Romeo and Juliet :

- Juliet was 13 while Romeo was 17. Large age gaps aren't approved in the 21st century.
- After Romeo first met Juliet, he wanted to get married the next day. People don't get that serious at such a young age now.
- Romeo treated the servants poorly, as less than people. To us that seems wrong and that you should treat everyone equally, but back then it was okay to treat servants like that because they were 'below you'.

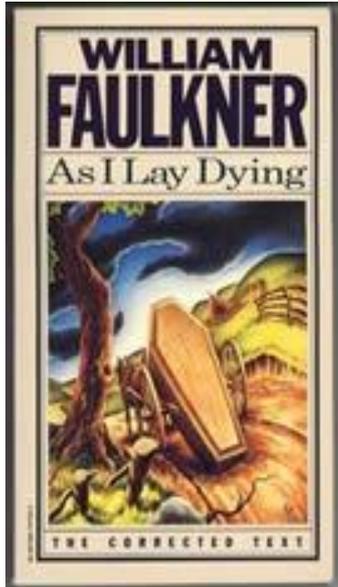
Romeo and Juliet

*Chapter 18 :
Is He
Serious? And
Other Ironies*

*As I Lay Dying - by William
Faulkner*

Irony is used throughout many types of literature.

We chose this book because the ironic twist is clear. A family decides to take a journey to Mississippi so they can bury their mother in her hometown. Even though the book tells you that the family is traveling for the burial of their mother, they all secretly have their own personal and greedy reasons for the trip. Towards the end of the book they didn't even emphasize the mom's burial, the "reason" that they took this long journey for, which was the ironic twist.



Madisen Bolton, Madison Mellan, Julia Levee

Chapter 19 : A Test Case

Here are the 5 pointers the author gave us:

1. Read Carefully.
2. Use any strategies you've picked up from this book or elsewhere to interpret the story.
3. But don't use any sources other than the story itself.
4. No peeking at the rest of this chapter.
5. Write down what you think of. Neatness doesn't count, nor does spelling. Just your observations. Give the story careful thought and write down what you come up with. Then come back and we'll compare notes.

Summary of "The Garden Party" and what it signifies and how

This is a story about a high society garden party set in the 1920s. The main character, Laura, is setting up the party with her mother and sisters. Laura was very excited about the party. Suddenly, she received news that a man had died in the poorer side of town. He left a widow and five children. Laura wanted to call off the party, but her mother said that it was not necessary because it happened on the poorer side of town. So, even though Laura was sad, they still had the party. After the party, Laura's mother suggested that she deliver the extra food to the widow. When Laura got to the poorer side of town to give out the food, she felt really out of place because she was an outsider and so dressed up. She was pushed into seeing the dead body and realized that he was at peace. In the end, Laura understood why her mother said to go ahead and have the party after all. They were from two different parts of the same world.

How did you do compared to 3 examples from college students?

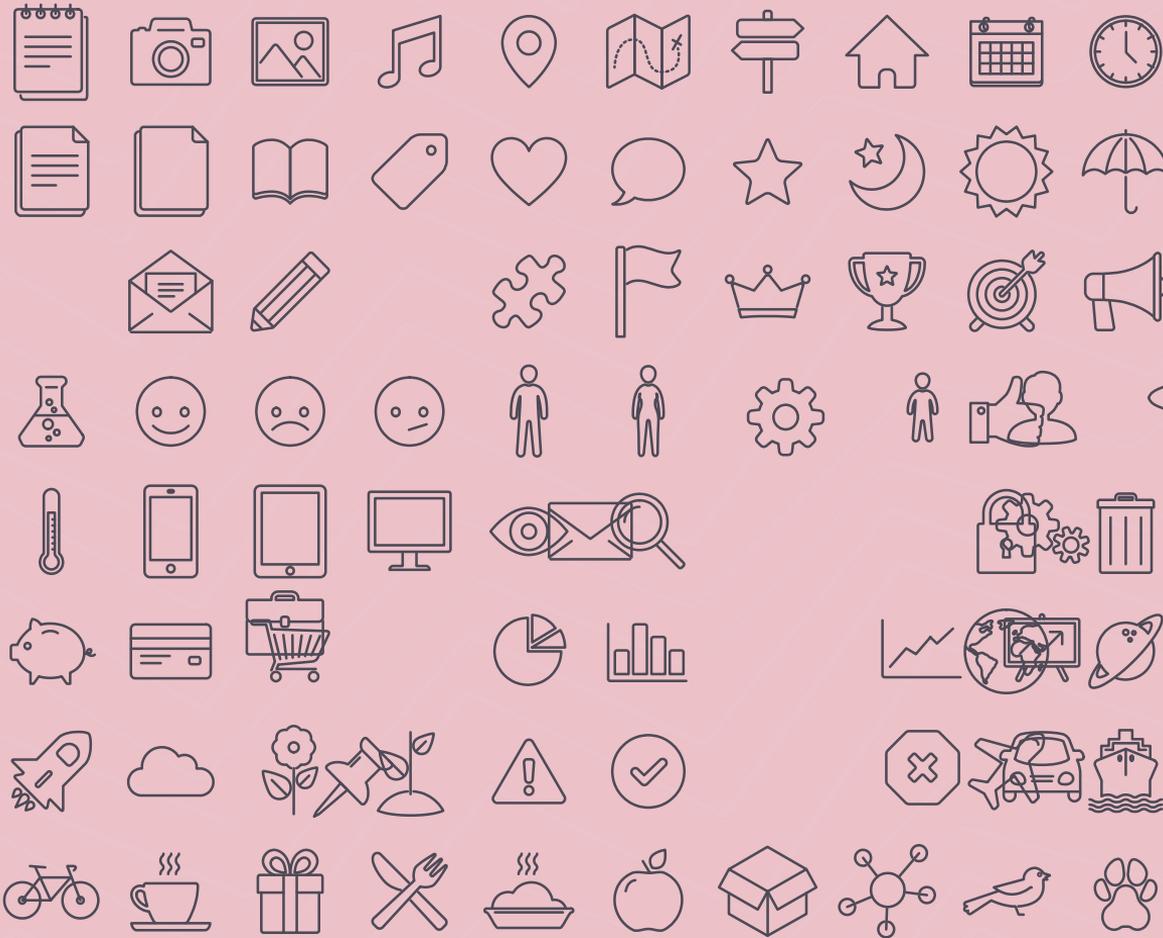
The author gave the reader three examples from college students and had the reader compare the examples to theirs.

Our summary was close to the first two examples (tensions between classes of society and having the party or not). The third one referenced "birds of flight" as metaphors of high society versus low society, and we did not see any of that.

What does the author's analysis essay add to your appreciation of the story?

The last essay ties the whole story to mythology. High society being Mount Olympus and low society being Hades. That seems a bit of a stretch and brings the story to a whole other level of complicated. You would really need to know the story of Persephone to interpret it that way.

- An envoi is an old tradition in poetry to add a stanza the end of a long poem or book of poems.
- It comes from a French word envoyer which means to let go or to embark on a mission.
- The main idea is that the author didn't include everything in the book to challenge the reader to use the techniques in the book on other literature they will read. The horse referenced in the book can mean anything like social class, transportation, and a fire can represent power and light.



SlidesCarnival icons are editable shapes.

This means that you can:

- Resize them without losing quality.
- Change line color, width and style.

Isn't that nice? :)

Examples:

