Close Reading: Analyzing Poetry and Passages of Fiction

The Keys to Understanding Literature
Close Reading

a. small details suggest larger ideas

b. HOW does the meaning of a piece come about
Close Reading

Follow Guidelines for Annotations

1. **QCC**: Write questions, comments, and connections in the margins.
2. **Triangle** characters’ names so they are easy to locate on each page.
3. **Box** each word you do not know. Write brief definitions beside them if you do not figure them out from context clues.
4. **Circle and label** literary elements and devices. (Here are some of the literary elements that you may find: allusion, ambiguity, analogy, apostrophe, archetype, cliché, colloquialism, conceit, ethos, flashback, foreshadowing, hyperbole, irony, logos, litotes, idiom, metaphor, metonymy, motif, paradox, parallelism, pathos, personification, satire, simile, symbol, synecdoche, theme, etc. You do not have to find all of them; you may find some that are not listed. If you need definitions for any of the literary terms, use the following link: [http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/litgloss/](http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/litgloss/)
5. **Put wavy lines** under patterns or repetitions. If the patterns or repetitions are literary elements or devices, label them with alliteration, anaphora, assonance, chiasmus, catalog, epanalepsis, epistrophe, motif, sibilance, parallelism, theme, etc.
6. **Lightning bolt** shifts or turns in the text resulting from an epiphany, realization, insight, style choice, etc.
7. **Highlight** key phrases or sentences that give insight into a character, relate to the theme, indicate the tone, indicate setting or effect of setting, effective or unusual diction, critical events, etc. Highlighting stands out from the page and allows you to scan a page quickly for information. Be careful not to mark too much. If you feel that several lines are important, bracket them. See step eight.
8. **Bracket** important ideas or passages that are several lines in length. Place a bracket around the entire passage and only highlight key phrases within the bracket.
Close Reading

1. First Impressions: QCCs (Questions, Comments, Connections)
2. Stylistic Elements: Diction, Figurative Language, Imagery, Syntax, Tone and Mood
Diction

author’s word choice

LEAD
L=level of diction-formal, neutral or informal
E=description of level i.e. elevated, colloquial, slang, jargon, dialect, etc.
A=abstract or concrete words
D=denotations and connotations
Figurative Language

- simile, metaphor, personification, analogy, conceit (extended metaphor), hyperbole (overstatement), paradox, irony
- allegory, apostrophe, cliche, idiom, metonymy, synecdoche, pun
Imagery

appeals to the five senses

synesthesia
Syntax

arrangement of words, phrases, clauses, sentences

long or short sentences (telegraphic, short, medium, long)

simple, complex, compound, compound-complex

interrogative, declarative, imperative, exclamatory, rhetorical question, rhetorical fragment

cumulative, periodic, balanced, asyndeton, polysyndeton

natural s-v-o, inverted

parallelism, chiasmus/antimetabole, zeugma (patterns, repetitions)
Tone and Mood

Tone: speaker’s attitude or author’s attitude toward subject of work  DIDS: D=diction, I=imagery, D=details, S=syntax

Mood: feeling readers get because of the tone
Close Reading: Poetry

More to consider when actively reading and analyzing poetry

Rhyme, Meter, Form, Poetic Syntax, Sound
Rhyme

- free verse or rhyming
- types of rhyme: internal, end, near, eye, slant, feminine, masculine,
- rhyme scheme
Meter

- pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables (feet)
- iambic, trochaic, spondaic, pyrrhic, anapestic, dactylic
- monometer, dimeter, trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter, hexameter, heptameter, octometer
- blank verse
Form

HOW does structure reinforce meaning?

narrative (epic, ballad)

lyric (elegy, ode, idyll, sonnet, villanelle)

song (dirge, ballad, hymn, rap, blues)

light (limerick, epigram)

cause-effect, patterns, chronological, question and answer, dramatic monologue

open (free verse, projective verse) or closed (blank verse, couplet, tercet, quatrain, cinquain, sestet, septet, octet or octave)
Poetic Syntax

end-stopped, enjambment, caesura, long/short lines, projective verse
Sound

- musical quality
- rhyme, enjambment, caesura, cadence, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia

In text citations for poetry spanning two lines “word / word”

Use I. for one line and II. for more than one line in parenthetical citations
Tools for Close Reading

Follow Guidelines for Annotations

1. Find devices

2. Analyze their effect

(Don’t forget to consider titles)