

EXPLICATION DE TEXTE

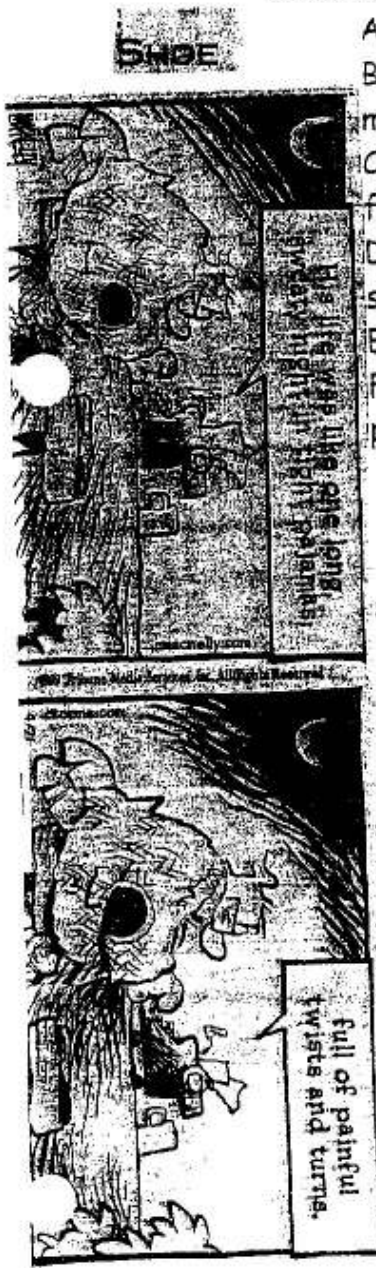
- I. **SUBJECT:** What is the author talking about? Begin with a general statement about the book and then go to the specifics of the book which illustrate the general statement. A short 2 or 3 paragraph statement which reveals the plot. **DO NOT RETELL THE ENTIRE STORY.**
- II. **THEME:** What judgment is the author making about the subject? Theme is usually expressed as a universal statement concerning all mankind. It often expresses a lesson or truism about life. IT IS NOT THE SAME AS THE SUBJECT!!!
Theme Thread: Plot examples, quoted statements, and character motivation which illustrates the theme.
1. Sometimes stated directly; often implied
 2. Must account for all major details of the story (how has the main character changed and how has the conflict been resolved?)
 3. Must rely on the facts of the story, not assumptions of the reader.
 4. Should be expressible in the form of a statement with a subject and verb. (Not "Love" for example). *
 5. Should be stated as a generalization about life.
 6. Should not include general terms such as "all", "every", etc.
- III. **DICTION:** How does the author use words? Connotative meaning gives richness—what one's senses, intellect or emotions conjure up.
Dialogue or Narrative? How does the plot move?
Vivid images? Uses examples.
Sentence style? Short simple sentences or long and involved?
Does sentence style contribute to the mood or is it related to a period of time?
Dialect? Foreign language? What does language tell you about the characters' education or social level, etc. Examples!
- * Does the diction uphold the subject and theme and why?
This should be your longest section.

- IV. **TONE (Mood):** What attitude does the author have toward his subject and theme? What feelings and emotions does he excite with respect to his subject and theme. A writer's choice of words and details (diction) helps to convey the tone. Setting conveys the tone. Usually one or two overriding moods and possibly a few minor ones. Tone should be stated using abstract words—ironic, mournful, despairing, hopeful, comic, etc.
- V. **SYMBOLISM:** How does the author use symbols—objects, character, circumstances which represent or stand for something else. Some symbols have universal acceptance—red light. Some symbols are almost universal—the dove stands for peace. Some symbols are symbolic only in terms of literature—you must explain why the symbol you have chosen is symbolic. That is what does it represent and WHY?
- VI. **SPEAKER:** Who is telling the story? The speaker may be NAMED and INVOLVED or UNNAMED and UNINVOLVED. Most works of fiction are written in 1st or 3rd person. Is the speaker OMNISCIENT?
- First Person: Author disappears into one of the characters who tells the story. Character telling the story uses "I" or "we".
- Third Person Omniscient: Story told by author using he or she. Knowledge of the author is unlimited; he/she can look into minds and hearts of characters and tell what they are thinking or feeling. Interprets behavior as well as shows it. All knowing.
- Third Person Limited Omniscient: Author tells story in third person but tells it from the viewpoint of one of the characters in the story. Author knows everything about the characters but shows no knowledge of what other characters are thinking or doing.
- Objective or Dramatic Point of View: Author disappears into kind of roving sound camera which can go anywhere but can record only what it sees or hears. Author makes no comment, interpretation, or exposition of characters' minds. Places reader in position of spectator at movie.

VII. **STRUCTURE:** How does the author use order?
Internal Structure: Chronological (order of time) or Logical?
 Flashbacks, journey motif, dreams, futuristic occurrences, letters, etc.
External Structure: How is the book physically constructed?
 Number of pages, chapters, any illustrations, author notes, preface, epilogue, sections, etc.

VIII. **IMAGERY:** How does the author use figurative language?

- A. Metaphor: comparison
- B. Simile: comparison using like or as (a specific type of metaphor)
- C. Conceit: elaborate and sophisticated metaphor usually only found in poetry. John Donne's "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning".
- D. Apostrophe: address directly or formally to something or someone not present. "Sweet Jesus"
- E. Synecdoche: the part for the total. "All hands on deck!"
- F. Metonymy: The naming of an object associated with a thing in place of the name of the thing itself.
 - Material for the object. Nylons
 - Author for the work. "Have you read Shakespeare?"
 - Instrument for the agent. "The pen is mightier than the sword."
 - Container for the contents. "Put the kettle on to boil."
- G. Antithesis: two items (opposites) in juxtaposition for effect. "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."
- H. Hyperbole: over-exaggeration for effect. "I'm so hungry I could eat a horse."
- I. Litotes: Understatement. A torrential downpour and someone says "It looks like we're having a shower."
- J. Personification: Giving human qualities to non human objects. "The sun smiled."
- K. Reification: Giving concrete qualities to abstractions. "Rumor swept the countryside."
- L. Verbal Irony: a writer or speaker says one thing but really means something completely different.



M. Dramatic Irony: The reader or audience knows something the character does not know, for knowledge is being withheld from the character.

N. Irony of Situation: What is expected to take place is the opposite of what actually happens.

O. Oxymoron: Two opposites equal a third new concept. "Beloved enemy" "almost exactly" "working vacation"

P. Onomatopoeia: the sound mimics the action. Boom, bash, crack, ah choo

Q. Alliteration: Repetition of the initial consonant sound. Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.

- IX. Genre: What genre (classification of literature) does the author use? What are the specific techniques of the chosen genre that the author followed? Consult *A Handbook to Literature* by William Harmon. Quote the definition of the genre from the handbook (don't forget to document) and then show how the book fits the definition. Be specific.

Explication de Texte

I. Subject

- A short summary of the plot of the story including the following:
 - Setting-the time and place of the action in a story
 - Time Period-the historical year or period in which the story takes place
 - Main Characters-the people or animals that take part in the action
 - Conflict-the problem in the story

II. Theme

- Major Theme-the central message or lesson expressed throughout the whole work
 - Theme Thread-quoted statements that illustrate the theme such as plot examples or character motivations
- Minor Theme-a central message or lesson found only in one or two areas of the work

III. Diction

- The way in which the author uses words
 - How the plot moves forward
 - Dialogue-conversation between the characters
 - Narrative-a story told through description rather than dialogue
 - Vivid Images-detailed descriptions of characters, places, and events
 - Precise Exact Meanings
 - Sentence Style
 - Short or long sentences
 - Can set the mood
 - Can be related to the time period

- Dialect-the form of language spoken by people in a certain place or group
- Idiolect-the language of a profession or age group
- Foreign Languages
- * Does the diction uphold the subject and theme? Why? *

THIS IS A REQUIREMENT!

IV. Tone

- Major Tone-the author's overall attitude toward his or her subject
- Minor Tone-the author's attitude found in only one or two areas of the work

V. Symbolism

- The use of a symbol to stand for or represent something else
 - Objects
 - Characters
 - Circumstances

VI. Speaker

- The person telling the story
 - First Person-story is told from the perspective of one of the characters INVOLVED in the story
 - Third Person-story is told from the perspective of an UNNAMED and UNINVOLVED narrator outside the story

VII. Structure

- Internal
 - Chronological Order-time order
 - Logical Order-includes flashbacks, dreams, letters, etc.
- External-how the book is physically constructed (number of pages and chapters, illustrations, author notes, preface, epilogue, etc.)

VIII. Imagery

- The use of figurative language
 - Simile-a comparison using “like” or “as”
 - Metaphor-a comparison NOT using “like” or “as”
 - Irony-the contrast between what is expected and what actually happens
 - Apostrophe-speaking to someone who is not present
 - Metonymy
 - Part for Total-all hands on deck
 - Material for Object-glasses
 - Author for Works-We are reading Shakespeare.
 - Instrument for Agent-The pen is mightier than the sword.
 - Container for Contents-kettle
 - Antithesis-two items that are direct opposites used in the same sentence for effect
 - Reification-giving concrete qualities to abstractions
 - Hyperbole-overexaggeration
 - Personification-giving human qualities to an inanimate object
 - Lytotes-understatement
 - Oxymoron-two opposite words linked to create a new concept
 - Onomatopoeia-sound that mimics an action

IX. Genre

- The category of literature that the writing falls into
 - * Definitions MUST be found and quoted from A Handbook to Literature. *