

Core Analysis Frame: Fiction**D24**

These questions will help you understand any story you read. For more advanced, in-depth analysis of each element, use the following frames:

- Setting
- Plot
- Author's Craft
- Characters
- Theme

Examine Setting

- Where does the story take place? (country, place, specific location)
- When does it take place? (time of day, time of year, or time in history)
- What effect does the setting have on the characters, events, or mood of the story?

Analyze Characters

- Who are the main characters and the minor characters in this story?
- What do you learn about the characters through their physical appearance, thoughts, and speech? What do you learn from the comments of other characters, or from the narrator?
- In what ways does each character react to other people or events? What do these reactions reveal about him or her?
- What reasons might he or she have had for reacting that way?
- In what ways does each character change over the course of the story?

**Examine Plot**

- What happens in the story? Use a Story Map or Sequence Chain to record events.
- What conflicts develop? Which are internal, and which are external—between two people, between people and society, between people and nature?
- What is the main conflict?
- How is the main conflict resolved?

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Core Analysis Frame: Fiction (Part 2)**D25****(continued from page D24)****Analyze Theme**

- What happens to the main characters? What do they learn from their experiences?
- What hints does the title give you about the author's possible message?
- What does the story tell you about people, values, or society?
- What is the main message, or theme, in this story?

**Analyze Author's Craft**

- What point of view did the author choose for this story?
- How might this story change if it were told from a different point of view?
- What elements or techniques were used—foreshadowing, flashback, surprise ending?

Evaluate and Critique

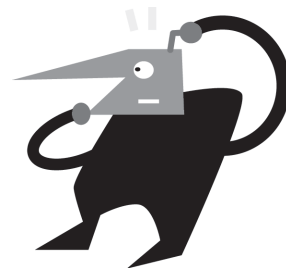
- How clearly was the setting developed? Could you picture it easily?
- How well were the characters developed or portrayed? Did you find them believable? Note specific details and examples.
- Did the plot proceed logically? Was the resolution believable and/or satisfying?
- What is your reaction to the theme? Do you feel the author communicated it well?

Basic Analysis

- What point of view did the author choose for this story?
- What elements or techniques were used—foreshadowing, flashback, surprise ending?
- What effect does the author's language have on the story?

In-Depth Analysis**Examine the Author's Choices**

- Analyze the author's use of dialogue in this story:
 - * What do you learn about the characters from their dialogue? For example, does the way they talk suggest anything about the characters' level of education or social class? Does what they say suggest anything about their relationships?
 - * What lines of dialogue advance the plot?
- Does this author use short, choppy sentences; long, free-flowing ones; or a combination of sentence lengths? Tell what effect sentence length has on the story. For example, short sentences may make it seem fast-paced.
- List examples of similes, metaphors, and personification in the work. What do these elements add to your experience of the story?
- How would you describe the author's tone? Support your answer with examples.



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Author's Craft (Part 2)

D27

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Compare and Connect

- Compare the style of this story to that of another selection by the same author. Based upon the similarities you find, describe this author's style.
- Compare the style of this story with that of a story by a different author. Which do you like better? Why? Support your answer with details from both stories.



Evaluate and Critique

- Does this author's style appeal to you? Note two or three ways in which the author's style affects your appreciation of the story.

Character**D28****Basic Analysis**

- Who are the main characters in this story? Who are the minor characters?
- What do you learn about the characters through their physical appearance, thoughts, speech, and actions?
- What do you learn about each character from the comments of other characters? From the narrator?
- In what ways does each character react to other people or events? What do these reactions reveal about him or her?
- What reasons might the characters have had for reacting as they do?

**In-Depth Analysis****Examine Characters**

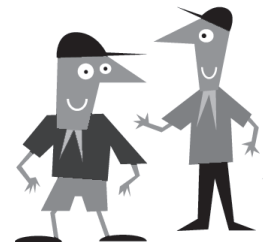
- **Dynamic** characters change or grow as a result of events in the story, while **static** characters change very little or not at all. Which characters in this story are dynamic and which are static? Support your answers with specific examples.
- What events or circumstances cause the characters to change?
- Who are the protagonist and the antagonist in the story? (The **protagonist** is the main character, often the hero. The **antagonist** is the character in conflict with the protagonist. Remember, the antagonist doesn't have to be a person, it can be an obstacle or a force of nature.) Describe the conflict between them.
- Across time and cultures, one can find certain character types reappearing in literature. Heroes, villains, and clowns are examples of **archetypal characters**. Does this story include archetypal characters? If so, list them and tell what archetype you think each represents. Include details to support your answer.
- Writers generally try to avoid creating **stereotypes** (such as the "dumb jock"), but they may use stereotypes in minor roles to provide comic relief or to shed light on a main character. Does this story include stereotypes, and if so, what do they do for the story?

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Character (Part 2)**D29****(continued from page D28)****Compare and Connect**

Compare the characters within this story to each other and with the characters in other stories, in movies, or in the larger world:

- Compare the way in which two characters in this story react to the conflict. What do you learn about these characters by making this comparison?
- Choose a character from another story or from a movie who was in a similar situation but responded quite differently. Compare the characters and explain what their responses tell you about each of them.
- Choose a character from another story by this author. In what ways is he or she similar to and different from the main character in this story?
- Choose a character you first encountered in literature and then saw in a movie version of the story. Does the movie character look the way you thought he or she would? Does the actor or actress capture the character's personality? Use specific movie scenes and book passages to support your opinion.

**Evaluate and Critique**

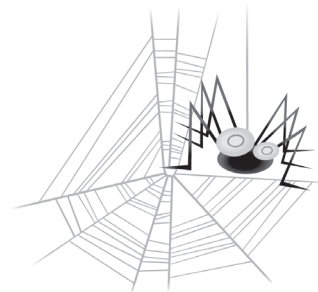
- Which character in the story do you most admire? Which do you least admire? Why?
- Do the characters seem like real people? Give details from the story to support your opinion.
- Evaluate the main character. Is he or she a good person? A smart person? Do you agree with his or her actions or opinions? Support your evaluation with evidence from the story.

Plot**D30****Basic Analysis**

- What happens in the story? Use a Story Map or Sequence Chain to record events.
- What conflicts develop? Which are internal, and which are external—between two people, people and society, or people and nature?
- What is the main conflict?
- How is the main conflict resolved?

In-Depth Analysis**Examine Plot**

- **Foreshadowing** is a writer's use of hints or clues to indicate events that will occur later in a story. What clues foreshadowed the ending or another important event in this story?
- Does this story include a **flashback**—an account of a conversation, an episode, or an event that happened before the beginning of the story, or at an earlier point? A flashback interrupts the chronological order of events. If the story includes a flashback, what new information does it give you about the characters, conflicts, or events?
- **Suspense** is the excitement or tension that readers feel as they become involved in a story and eagerly await the outcome. List details from this story that help to create suspense .
- What is the resolution of the conflict in this story? What would it have taken for the outcome to be different?
- Does the story have a surprise ending? If so, in what ways does your understanding of the characters or events change as a result of this unexpected ending?

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Plot (Part 2)**D31****(continued from page D30)**

- What larger ideas might the conflicts in this story represent—for example, power versus powerlessness, goodness versus evil, love versus hate, or rationality versus emotion?
- Does the plot of this story follow a traditional pattern, such as that of a folktale, detective story, or quest?

Compare and Connect

- Read another story by this same author. How does the plot compare to this one? Can you find any similarities between that story's plot and the events in this one?
- Compare the plot of this story with the plot in similar stories or movies. Which do you find to be most engaging? Give reasons for your answer.
- Compare the plot of this story with similar events in real life. What, if anything, does this comparison help you realize about the story?

Evaluate and Critique

- Is the plot logical and believable? Use evidence from the story to support your opinion.
- What aspects of the plot worked best? Did any aspects not make sense or feel forced or artificial? Explain.
- Were there any loose ends that you feel were not resolved? How would you resolve them?

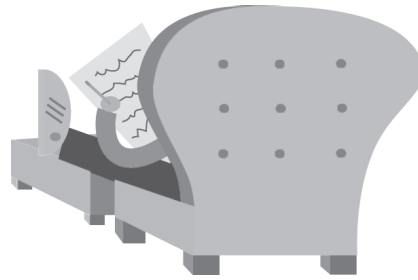


Setting

D32

Basic Analysis

- Where does the story take place? Name the country, place, or specific location.
- When does the story take place? List the time of day, time of year, or time in history.
- What impact does the setting have on the characters, events, or mood of the story?



In-Depth Analysis

Examine Setting

- What expectations does the setting create for how the story will progress or how characters will act? For example, a desert setting might lead you to expect a person versus nature type of conflict to arise.
- In what ways are the characters' life situations and experiences affected by the setting? In what ways, if any, does the setting affect the outcome of the story?
- If the story were placed in a different setting, in what ways might the characters, events, or mood be different?
- A setting can sometimes serve as a symbol for a larger idea. For example, a desert can symbolize an empty or harsh life, while a storm might symbolize a turbulent relationship. What, if anything, might the setting in this story represent?

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Setting (Part 2)**D33****(continued from page D32)****Compare and Connect**

Compare this setting with a setting in another story, in movie, or the larger world:

- What about the settings is similar or different? Consider the questions under “Basic Analysis” and “In-Depth Analysis” as you make your comparison.
- What are some of the ways in which the different settings affect the characters’ actions or attitudes? How might each set of characters react if put in the other setting?
- Consider several stories you have read recently. Which settings could be changed without affecting the plot or characters, and which could not?
- Compare the setting of a story that has appeared in literature and as a movie. Which did a better job of establishing the setting, the movie or the original story? If there were changes made in the movie version, why might the director have chosen to make them?
- Compare the setting of a story to a similar real-life setting. In your opinion, is the setting portrayed accurately in the literature? Why or why not?

**Evaluate and Critique**

- How well does the setting work to help you understand the characters, the plot, and its consequences? Provide specific examples to support your statements.
- In your opinion, did the author succeed in transporting you to the world being portrayed? Provide examples to support your opinion.

Theme**D34****Basic Analysis**

- What happens to the main characters? What do they learn from their experiences?
- What do you learn about people, values, or society from this story?
- What hints does the title give you about the author's possible message?
- What is the main message, or theme, of this story?

**In-Depth Analysis****Examine Theme**

- Is the theme ever stated directly by the narrator or a character? If not, what specific elements in the story might help you infer the theme? Consider the characters, plot, and setting.
- Writers often use symbols to help convey a theme. Identify a symbol used in this story and tell what it represents.
- Some themes (such as “Technology blunts creativity”) may make sense only in a particular culture or time period. Others (such as “Power corrupts”) are universal—meaning they can apply to any time and culture. What universal themes, if any, are in this story?

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Theme (Part 2)**D35****(continued from page D34)****Compare and Connect**

- What other stories have you read that have a similar theme? In your opinion, which of these stories does a better job of presenting this message? Explain.
- Compare the theme of this story with the theme in another selection or larger work by the same author. In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they different?

Evaluate and Critique

- Do you agree with the theme, or message, expressed by this story? Why or why not?
- Is the theme a realistic observation about human nature, or does it seem too optimistic, too negative, or too narrow-minded?
- Consider the symbolism, plot, and other literary techniques used by the writer to present the theme. Do you think the author effectively expresses his or her main message? Support your answer with details from the story.

