



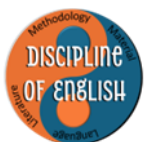
Discipline of Literature

1XX Facts Associated with Literature:

10X The defining characteristics

Student Name:

The book of our studies:



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L101 What Are We Actually Doing When We Write About Literature?



Learning Objectives:

Today we are learning what literary writing is actually for.

- Good literary writing combines what the text says with how literature works
- Analysis is not just describing the text, but using ideas about literature to explain meaning

Core Knowledge:

You need *two things* to analyse literature. A literary text is **material**, not the discipline itself. Literary analysis happens when we apply **Methodologies** to the text. Analysis happens when understanding changes.

Vocabulary

- **Material** – the text itself (story, characters, events, language)
 - **Literature** - a text worthy of study
 - **Form** - the type of text (novel, poem, play etc)
 - **Author** - the writer
 - **Audience** - the recipient
- **Synthesis** – using methodological knowledge to think differently about material
- **Analysis** - when knowledge of the methodologies changes what we know about the material (or when knowledge of the material changes the methods)
- **Methodological** – a way of thinking used across many texts
 - **Factual** knowledge - the defining characteristics of literature
 - **Conceptual** knowledge - theories about literature
 - **Procedural** knowledge - what steps we should take when reading literature
 - **Metacognitive** knowledge - ways of thinking / conceiving of literature

Sentence Stems

- "Literature often uses _____ to..."
- "Writers position readers to..."
- "Stories like this usually begin by..."
- "This moment matters because literature often..."

Now apply this to your current text:

*We are studying **Literature** which requires **knowledge** of the literary **methodologies** and the **material** text. We bring these together which is called **synthesis**. When we bring them together, we are intending for the methods to change what we think about the material, or the other way around. When one changes the other, we are **analysing**. Our **Literature** is *Frankenstein*, which is a **novel** by the author Mary Shelley. This **novel** is read by an 19th Century **audience**. One **fact** about 19th century texts is that they were often about science and innovation because science was fairly new and exciting. **Readers** were not used to people coming back from the dead like *Frankenstein's* creature. So for them, this text feels like science fiction, but today we are familiar with resuscitation, CPR and defibrillation. So the original audience found this unfamiliar and strange. Literature is meant to feel unfamiliar and strange, and the **concept** is called **defamiliarisation**.*



L102 Fiction and Non Fiction

Learning Objectives

Today we are aiming to understand how authors blend reality and the made up to construct their stories. We are also learning about two different 'ways' of reading.

Core Knowledge:

Literature consists of two important elements; things that have been made up by the author, and things that are reflecting the real world. This means that when we are reading, some of this has been designed merely for the emotional joy of reading, and some of it has been designed for us to view the world through. A critical reader must know which parts of the story are made up and which are real.

Vocabulary

- **Fiction** – elements made up by the author.
- **Non fiction** – elements that are based on reality
- **Virtual Witness** – the act of experiencing something without being present
- **Efferent reading** – reading to build information about the world
- **Aesthetic reading** – reading to experience tone, mood, emotion

Sentence Stems

- “Here, the author is reflecting reality...”
- “Here, the author is writing to affect us emotionally through a fictional drama...”
- “The reader is able to be a virtual witness to this event without being there...”
- “If the reader is taking an efferent stance, we learn...”
- “If the reader is taking an aesthetic stance, we feel...”

Now apply this to your current text:

Diary Of A Young Girl is our material in *Literature*, by the author Ann Frank. It is in the form of a diary. Diaries are **non-fiction**, meaning they are based on reality. But authors will often mix **fiction** in too, so the made-up can enhance the reality (or vice versa). When reading this text, we are seeing a events that happened in the real world and we can look for this reality. When looking for elements of the real world, we are undertaking an **efferent** reading. But sometimes we don't care for the real world and want to simply enjoy the book in an **aesthetic** way.

Frank tells us about the experiences of Jews in WWII and so an **efferent** reading discovers the racism and prejudice she faces. But she also writes in detail about the little joys and terrifying moments that thrill us as readers, and so we are impacted in an **aesthetic** way. Importantly, we can learn efferently about Frank's dangers without risk to ourselves; we are a **virtual wit-**



L103 How Do Texts Get Their Meanings?

Encoding & Decoding in Literature



Learning Objectives

Today we are learning how texts get their meanings. By the end of the lesson, you will understand that:

- Writers encode meaning into texts using shared signs
- Readers decode meaning using what they have learned
- Strong analysis explains how meaning is encoded and decoded

Core Knowledge:

Anything which can carry meaning is called a sign. Road signs and sign language are obvious carriers of meaning that must be learned before they can be understood. But secret codes, encryption, colours and shapes can carry meaning and are also signs with meaning that can only be known through learning.

Very little in this world carries no signification, but the closest examples might be *things scattered randomly*, *things screwed up without intention*, or other *accidental figures*. We 'read' all sorts for meaning: clouds, rivers, geology, movements of people. Like any language, we must learn how to understand them.

Vocabulary

- **Sign** – something that stands for something else
- **Encode** – to build meaning into a text
- **Decode** – to interpret meaning using knowledge
- **Difference**—often we need to know what does not count as meaning

Sentence Stems

- "The writer **encodes** meaning through the sign of _____."
- "Readers **decode** this sign as meaning _____"
- "This meaning is not personal; it is **learned**."
- "we understand this meaning better when we are aware of its opposite to _____"

Now apply this to your current text:

*Blood in Macbeth is not just physical detail. Literature **encodes** blood as a sign of guilt and moral corruption, which audiences are trained to **decode** through religious and cultural ideas about sin. The **sign** of blood on your hands meaning guilt might have been originally **encoded** in the bible - the stigmata (sign of blood on your hands) is held up by Jesus to say 'look what they did' or 'I am resurrected'. Shakespeare didn't start the **encoding** of this sign as meaning guilt and sin, but he borrows the **meaning** from earlier literary texts. Blood on the hands **meaning** guilt has a literary history of its own, and the audience will need to be aware of the religious **encoding** done upon the symbols of 'blood on the hands' to properly **decode** this scene - lack of biblical aware-*



L104 Who Decides What a Text Means? Authorized and Unauthorized Readings



Learning Objectives

By the end of the lesson, you will understand that:

- Not all meanings are equally valid
- Some readings are **authorized**, others are **unauthorized**
- Strong analysis explains *why* a meaning is authorized

Core Knowledge:

When we interpret a text, **not all interpretations are equally strong**. Some meanings are called *authorised* because they are backed up by the text and by shared ways of understanding how literature works. Other interpretations are *unauthorised* if they ignore evidence or go against how stories usually create meaning. This means that interpretation is **not just personal opinion**. You are free to think creatively, but your ideas must stay connected to the text and to the methods readers use to explain meaning accurately.

Vocabulary

- **Interpretation** – an explanation of meaning
- **Authorized** – supported by evidence and shared understanding
- **Unauthorized** – not supported by the text or methods

Sentence Stems

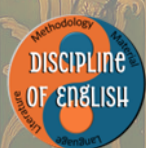
"This is an authorized reading because..."

"This interpretation is supported by..."

"This reading is unauthorized because it ignores..."

Now apply this to your current text:

*An **authorized** reading recognises that Pip and Joe are poor and that he "had no hope of any personal participation in the treasure" of his earnings. Pip is ultimately not building up any wealth from his work, but this is the nature of poverty - children must contribute to the family finances for survival. It would be **unauthorised** to suggest that Pip is being exploited and having his money stolen, or that he is like a slave. Everyone must contribute to affording food and shelter, even though it can look like meanness to some. We have to **interpret** the passage in terms of the wider story and the context - the authorized reading is to see how characters are valuable despite the presence or absence of money. You cannot buy 'class'.*



L105 Who Is the Text Written For? The Ideal

Reader



Learning Objectives

Today we are learning why some readers understand texts better than others. By the end of the lesson, you will understand that:

- Texts imagine an **ideal reader**
- The ideal reader has learned how to decode signs
- Becoming a better reader means learning these methods

Core Knowledge:

Texts are not written for just any reader, but for an **ideal reader**. This does not mean a real person, but a reader who understands how the text is meant to work. The ideal reader knows how to **decode signs, conventions, and patterns** in literature, such as how characters, symbols, or genres usually create meaning. Readers do not start as ideal readers — they **become better readers through learning**, practice, and experience. The more you learn about how literature works, the closer you move to reading like the text expects you to.

Vocabulary

- **Ideal Reader** – the type of reader a text is designed for
- **Positioned** – guided to read in a certain way
- **Conventions** – shared rules or patterns in literature

Sentence Stems

- “An **ideal reader** would understand that...”
- “The text **positions the reader** to...”
- “This assumes the reader knows...”

Now apply this to your current text:

*This moment **positions** the reader to recognise Bertha's behaviour as a **sign** of madness because the text draws on gothic **conventions** of confinement and violence. An **ideal reader** understands that nineteenth-century literature often **encoded** mental illness through physical wildness, animalistic movement, and imprisonment, so the scene invites us to **decode** Bertha not simply as a “violent woman” but as a figure shaped by historical literature. The **ideal reader** is someone who is aware of that in Literature, women are often presented as 'dangerous' such as Lady Macbeth, Miss Havisham or Medusa. The **ideal reader** is not surprised to find Bertha is mad because we have a similar education in books as the author. We are **positioned** by literature to **decode** Bertha's actions as the 'hysterical woman'.*



L5 Where Do Stories Come From? Ur-Forms and Intertextuality



Learning Objectives

Today we are learning how texts are connected to other texts. By the end of the lesson, you will understand that:

- Meaning comes from how texts connect to other texts
- Stories are built from earlier story patterns
- Writers reuse and transform existing ideas

Core Knowledge:

Stories are not created from nothing. **There is no single original story that all others copy**, even though we sometimes imagine there is one. Instead, writers build new stories using **ideas, patterns, characters, and structures from earlier texts and traditions**. This network of connections between texts is called **intertextuality**. A text gains meaning because it draws on what readers already recognise from other stories, and then **changes, adapts, or reshapes those ideas** to create something new. Literature moves forward by transforming old stories, not by inventing everything from scratch.

“Stories come from other stories.”

Vocabulary

- **Ur-form** – the idea of a single original story (which doesn't really exist)
- **Intertextuality** – connections between texts
- **Tradition** – repeated story patterns and ideas over time

Sentence Stems

- “This text draws on earlier traditions of...”
- “Rather than inventing something new, the writer transforms...”
- “The meaning develops through intertextual links to...”

Now apply this to your current text:

Never Let Me Go makes a twist on the common theme of creation and authority. This novel feels intertextual with Shelley's *Frankenstein*, in which a part of the novel speaks from the creature's perspective about growing up, knowing he has a creator but is abandoned by him. *Never Let Me Go* is similar, in that the created children are abandoned by their 'originals' until they are needed to serve some purpose. Both *Frankenstein* and *Never Let Me Go* feel intertextual to the Victorian morality test, in which people exhibited art work to demonstrate their inner essence. *Never Let Me Go* takes a modern, science fiction twist on these earlier texts, but there is no ur-form, no unique original, and Ishiguro's work is intertextual to earlier traditions - it's a constant chain of connections going backwards through literary heritage and each author takes themes of old and adapts them for a modern audience.



L107 Why Do Texts Contain Many Meanings at Once? Literature as a Reflection of Its Era Learning Objectives



By the end of the lesson, you will understand that:

- Literary meaning is built from layers of older meanings
- Different eras contribute different ideas to texts
- These layers make modern texts rich and complex

Core Knowledge:

Texts often contain many meanings at the same time because they are built from layers of ideas that come from different historical periods. New ways of thinking do not erase old ones; instead, they are added on top, like layers of rock beneath the ground. These layers are called **strata**. Words, images, and symbols carry older meanings from earlier eras alongside newer ones, which is why a single moment in a text can reflect different beliefs, values, or worldviews at once. Understanding literature means recognising that meanings are gathered over time, not replaced, and that richer texts carry traces of the past within them.

"Texts build upon history, they don't rewrite it." "Texts build upon history, they don't rewrite it."

Vocabulary

Sentence Stems

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Early English – up to roughly 1100; Pagan, warrior, feudal (loyalty to a local king) | • "At the time, this sign would have meant..." |
| • Premodernity – 1100ad - 1600ad; the rise of Christianity, Romance, chivalry | • "Historically, readers were trained to decode..." |
| • Modernity - 1600ad - 1950ad; the rise of rationality, enlightenment, science, industry and the middle classes | • "This sign has layers of meaning attributed in different eras..." |
| • Postmodernity - 1950ad - onwards; globalisation, digital spaces and consumerism | • "This sign couldn't mean ____ to the author because it is too early in British culture for..." |
| • These eras act as a strata / layer of meaning within signs. | |

Now apply this to your current text:

*For Katniss, fire becomes a powerful and much layered symbol. The Collins inherits **early English encoding** in which fire is part of a journey or transition. For Katniss, she is on a transition from district serf to saviour. Collins inherits the **premodern encoding** in which fire is a **symbol** for damnation, and Katniss is being sent into a place of torture and punishment - the games themselves are a parallel for this place of no return. But Fire can also be redemption, and she is able to return from the games as a savior. Collins also needs the **Modernist encoding**, where fire is industrial. For Collins, each district is an industrial hand that feeds the Capitol. And finally fire is a **postmodern symbol** in which her dress is no longer real flame but a simulation designed to entertain an audience. The symbol of fire is then deeply **layered** with many kinds of **meaning**, each **encoded** through a **cultural history**.*



L108 Why Do Some Texts Keep Getting Taught?



Learning Objectives

Today we are learning why some texts are studied again and again. By the end of the lesson, you will understand that:

- Some texts become canonical because they are valued over time
- Canonical texts stay relevant by contributing to a dialogue about culture
- Being canonical is about how texts are used, not just what they contain

Core Knowledge:

Some texts keep getting taught because they have been **valued, preserved, and returned to over time**. These texts are called **canonical**, not because they are perfect or agreed on by everyone, but because different generations have found them useful for thinking about important ideas. Canonical texts stay relevant by contributing to an ongoing **cultural conversation** about society, values, and human experience. This means the canon is **not fixed** — it can change as societies change — and texts remain central to education because they continue to matter, challenge readers, and help cultures understand themselves.

“Canonical texts are the ones we keep coming back to.”

Vocabulary

- **Canonical** – widely taught and valued over time
- **Value** – what a culture decides matters
- **Preservation** – keeping texts in circulation
- **Dialogue of culture** – ongoing discussion about ideas and values

Sentence Stems

- “This text is **canonical** because it contributes to...”
- “The text has been **valued and preserved** because...”
- “It remains relevant as it continues a **dialogue about...**”

Now apply this to your current text:

*Romeo and Juliet has reached **canonical status** because we continue to reference the text, we turn it into new stories, music and movies regularly. It continues to be performed on the stage. And the **signs encoded** in Romeo and Juliet are part of our everyday language; we casually drop into speech 'a rose by any other name would smell as sweet' and 'Where for art though Romeo'. The words of the play are now common English phrases. We still consult the stars for guidance about our lives and the future - Romeo and Juliet was part of the **system** that **encoded** the stars with fate and though we might not be thinking about the play when reading our horoscopes, we wouldn't have horoscopes if it wasn't for literature encoding fate into the star systems. We have a **dialogue** with the play constantly, asking if people really are in control of their lives or whether we are destined to follow certain paths. The way the play is infused into our culture makes it **canonical**, and we study it because of*



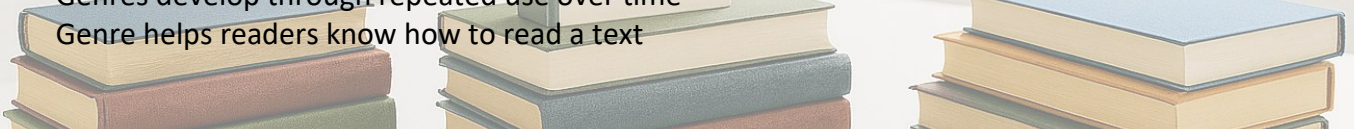
L109 Grouping Literature



Learning Objectives

Today we are learning how and why texts are grouped into genres. By the end of the lesson, you will understand that:

- Texts belong to genres because they share forms and functions
- Genres develop through repeated use over time
- Genre helps readers know how to read a text



Core Knowledge:

Texts are grouped into genres because they share forms and functions, not just because they feel similar or have similar plots. Form refers to the repeated ways texts are structured or written, such as narration, verse, or setting, while function refers to what texts are designed to do for readers, such as entertaining, warning, persuading, or helping us think about society. Genres develop over time as writers reuse these forms and functions across many texts, creating patterns that readers learn to recognise. Understanding genre helps readers know how a text is meant to be read, because the genre signals what kind of meaning and experience the text is trying to create.

“Genre tells us what kind of reading a text expects.”

Vocabulary

- **Genre** – a group of texts with shared forms and functions
- **Form** – how a text is structured or shaped
- **Function** – what a text is designed to do
- **Intertextual** – connected to other texts

Sentence Stems

- “This text belongs to the genre of _____ because it shares the **form** of _____ and the **function** of _____.”
- “Texts in this genre usually aim to _____.”
- “These features connect the text to other works in the same genre.”

Now apply this to your current text:

1984 belongs to the dystopian genre which is hinted to us by the "electric current cut during daylight hours", the "hate week" and the "enormous face". Dystopia for Orwell takes the form of a society in which things do not work for citizens, their rights are being attacked and they are under constant surveillance. 1984 is joined by other dystopian texts like Brave New World and Children Of Men, and each author reimagines the common themes of dystopia within their own narrative. What unites them is their shared function; to warn readers about the dangers of power and loss of freedom. These authors are intertextual to one another, and converse, sometimes agreeing with the function of dystopias or the form they take, and sometimes making alternative suggestions.