

Outline of a prose text

The following outline will help you recall all that you have studied in the section devoted to fiction as a literary genre. You can use it any time you have to analyse a prose text on your own, or prepare for an oral/written test. A final guideline is also given about the importance of contextualizing the text and expressing personal response.

Data of the text

Author _____ Title _____
Taken from _____ Date _____

References

The title *relevant to meaning?*
Setting in time _____
Setting in place *any proper name? physical? social? historical? supernatural? symbolical?*
It reflects / reveals the character's feelings / mood / the author's view of the world. It helps develop the main theme / capture the spirit of the age. It creates a particular atmosphere

Characters involved _____
Situation _____
• Turning point / climax _____
• The plot revolves around / is based on / is fragmentary / episodic / well-organised / carefully built _____

Narrative technique

Mode *description, narration, dialogue use of flashbacks / forwards* _____
Narrator *first-person; third-person omniscient (knows and controls the character's thoughts, feelings, actions, filters the representation of the world) / non-omniscient; obtrusive (He/she addresses the reader, comments on the narration, makes generalisations, / unobtrusive; more narrators; stream of consciousness / interior monologue* _____

Point/s of view *fixed, inside / outside the story, wide / restricted, shifting* _____

Presentation of characters *direct; indirect* _____

Description of characters:

a. Name	b. Appearance	c. Social status	d. Personality	e. Reactions/ moods	f. Way of speaking
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

- It can suggest qualities or defects, especially in caricatures*
- Face, body and clothes*
- Family, class, education and upbringing*
- Virtues (amiable, sensitive, imaginative, open-minded, sympathetic), defects (stubborn, suspicious, irritable, tense, narrow-minded, corrupted), limitations, attitudes, interests, development throughout the novel*
- Shows / hides his/her feelings, reacts impulsively, is cold / detached*
- Uses a simple / obscure / concrete / redundant language; speaks dialect*

Type of character *flat, round* _____

Analysis of language

Syntax simple, complex; short / long sentences _____

Vocabulary concrete / abstract; realistic / symbolical _____

Language devices:

Device	Example	Connotation
Repetition	_____	_____
Simile	_____	_____
Metaphor	_____	_____
Personification	_____	_____
Symbol	_____	_____

Language of the senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch _____

Tone: neutral, ironic, tragic, committed, regretful, humorous, bitter, melancholic, joyful, passionate, angry, detached _____

Theme: The passage deals with / is concerned with universal / existential / social / moral / psychological theme/s; the main theme is _____

The passage opens with..., the first paragraph sets the tone / the pattern, the second paragraph introduces the theme of / the character, is based upon, the last paragraph sums up _____

Author's style clear / straightforward / vivid / detailed / imaginative / elegant / elaborate / effective / forceful _____

Author's aim satirises / criticises / outlines / shows / focuses on / appeals to / establishes himself in the literary tradition _____

The message**From text to context**

Ties between the text and _____

- the novel it belongs to _____
- the author's biography and works _____
- the literary context _____
- the historical and social context _____
- other texts belonging to the same or different periods _____

Personal response

Reader's reaction/s. In my opinion, I think that ..., The most interesting part of the text is ..., What I like / strikes me ..., The text makes me think of / reminds me of _____

Possible connections between a painting / picture and the text _____