

- Authors often use sensory details to appeal to the senses of readers, enabling them to make mental pictures of what is being described. As the class reads a fiction novel or short story, have them identify places in the text where the author uses sensory details. Afterwards, students can make a collage that captures some of the sensory details they came across while reading. Students may even want to divide their collages into several sections. Each section can be devoted to one of the senses.
- Text-to-self connections are personal connections that students can make while reading a fiction text. These connections may allow students to better understand a character or event in the tale or they may allow students to build vivid mental images of what they are reading because they have a personal reference point from which to build upon. Select a passage from a novel or short story that students are all currently reading. As you read this passage aloud to students, invite them to visualize the characters, actions and feelings of that passage. Afterwards, have students sketch the scene of the passage with the characters. Post these sketches around the room and have students do a gallery-style walk from sketch to sketch. Discuss the similarities and differences in the details of the sketches. What elements of the sketches could have been influenced by personal experiences or knowledge?
- Text-to-world connections are larger connections students can make while reading a fiction text. The worldly connection may remind students of a significant event in history or it may remind students of an event taking place in the world today. In fact, both fiction and nonfiction publishers sometimes rely on this connection between readers and books when determining what types of books to publish. Discuss with students why this might be the case. Then, generate a list of topics or concerns in current events today. Refer to a recent best-seller list to see if those topics are present in the fiction or nonfiction titles on the list. For ideas to extend this lesson, visit [www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/lessons/20011026friday.html](http://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/lessons/20011026friday.html)  
**pagewanted=all.**

### Suggested Resources

Periodically, Internet and print resources are updated on our web site at [www.LibraryVideo.com](http://www.LibraryVideo.com).

- [www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists/bbya](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists/bbya)  
Each year, the Young Adult Library Services Association of the American Library Association publishes a list of the best books for young adults that includes a variety of fiction titles.
- [edsitement.neh.gov/view\\_lesson\\_plan.asp?id=441](http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=441)  
This lesson by the National Endowment for the Humanities discusses point of view and unreliable narrators.

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- [www.readwritethink.org/student\\_mat/index.asp](http://www.readwritethink.org/student_mat/index.asp)  
The Student Materials Index of ReadWriteThink presents a variety of engaging interactive tools that can students can use in their study of literature.
- [www.bibliomania.com/0/5/frameset.html](http://www.bibliomania.com/0/5/frameset.html)  
Bibliomania presents a comprehensive listing of short stories, including those of Jack London, Mark Twain and Anton Chekhov.

### Novels and Short Stories Featured in Analyzing Fiction

- Cisneros, Sandra. *The House on Mango Street*. New York: Vintage, 1984.
- Cooper, Susan. *The Dark is Rising*. New York: Atheneum, 1973.
- Jackson, Shirley. "The Lottery," in *The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction*, 6th ed., ed. R.V. Cassill and Richard Bausch (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000), 781-787.
- Keyes, Daniel. *Flowers for Algernon*. Orlando: Harcourt, 1987.
- Lowry, Lois. *The Giver*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993.
- Paulsen, Gary. *Hatchet*. New York: Atheneum, 1987.
- Spinelli, Jerry. *Maniac Magee*. New York: Little, Brown and Co, 1990.
- Vonnegut, Kurt. "Harrison Bergeron," in *The World Treasury of Science Fiction*, ed. David G. Hartwell (New York: Little, Brown and Co, 1989), 3-9.

### TEACHER'S GUIDE

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### TITLES IN THIS SERIES

- ANALYZING & APPRECIATING POETRY
- ANALYZING FICTION
- ANALYZING NONFICTION
- ELEMENTS OF FICTION
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## ANALYZING FICTION

### Grades 5-9

At the middle school level, students have already been introduced to some basic elements and characteristics of literature. They have been called upon to organize and communicate their understanding of what they read as well as express their own opinions. *Literature for Students* reinforces these skills and challenges students to approach them with a more critical eye. This series journeys through fiction, nonfiction and poetry and explores important elements and characteristics of each. By examining interesting excerpts by a diverse group of authors and sharing one-on-one moments with the hosts as they reflect on their own interests and experiences with literature, students will be challenged to analyze how language is used, how ideas are organized and the many ways in which people connect with and appreciate these different forms of literature.



## Program Summary

Analyzing fiction involves more than just reading a book. When readers analyze fiction, they examine how the elements of character, setting, plot and theme are woven together, as well as the stylistic decisions an author makes, such as mood, tone, point of view and figurative language.

It often only takes a few lines to get a sense of a writer's style. That's the power of words! Mood and tone are important elements of style that help to set the stage for a work of fiction. In addition, mood and tone can shift over the course of a story to allow for the unfolding of events.

Point of view is another stylistic element that authors choose carefully, because whoever tells the tale holds the power to share details about the characters and reveal the action. Point of view includes first-person, third-person limited, omniscient (or all-knowing) and objective. The first-person point of view allows readers to forge a bond, or connection, with the main character because this point of view gives access to his or her actions, thoughts and feelings. However, there are some warnings to keep in mind when reading works written in first-person point of view: 1) be careful not to confuse the narrator and the author, and 2) keep in mind that this point of view tells only one side of the story. Like real people, fictional characters have biases and weaknesses that influence their perspective. While point of view is an important choice authors make, there is no rule that says an author cannot shift the point of view over the course of a work.

By using figurative language, authors can create descriptions that move readers to tears or make them laugh out loud. Figurative language also allows authors to paint scenes that are rich in details. Simile, metaphor and hyperbole are all devices that can enhance descriptions through comparisons or exaggeration. Symbolism is used to infuse fiction with layers of meaning. The beauty of symbolism is that those layers can mean different things to different people. Sensory details allow readers to hear, see, smell, taste and practically touch the action! Onomatopoeia is a figurative language device in which the sound of the word adds emphasis, rhythm or special effects to the story. Repetition and alliteration are sound devices that also create an emphasis or build an effect.

Making connections with a short story or novel is an aspect of literary analysis readers perform almost unconsciously. The connections can be text-to-text, text-to-self or text-to-world. These connections provide a critical context that makes fiction meaningful and valuable.

## Vocabulary

**style** — The way in which an author uses words. This includes word choice, sentence structure and figurative language.

**tone** — The attitude or feeling a writer has towards his or her subject. The tone can change in the course of a work.

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**mood** — The atmosphere or feeling a literary work conveys to readers. The mood can change in the course of a work.

**point of view** — The perspective from which a story is told, or narrated.

**first-person point of view** — A type of narration. The central character is the narrator. This allows readers into the thoughts of the central character. Pronouns such as “I,” “me” and “we” are used.

**third-person limited point of view** — A type of narration. The narrator is outside the story and focuses on the interactions, observations and thoughts of one central character using third-person pronouns.

**omniscient point of view** — A type of narration. The narrator is outside the story and uses an outside voice to reveal the thoughts and actions of all the characters.

**objective point of view** — A type of narration. The narrator is a detached observer who tells what happens without stating more than can be inferred from the story's action and dialogue.

**figurative language** — The deliberate use and arrangement of words to create a special effect. Figurative language includes words, phrases, symbols and ideas that evoke mental images and sensory impressions.

**simile** — A comparison of two things that have a quality in common. The comparison is indicated by the use of words such as “like” or “as.”

**metaphor** — A comparison of two things that have a quality in common. Unlike simile, a metaphor does not use the terms “like” or “as.” It states that one thing is something else.

**hyperbole** — An extravagant exaggeration sometimes used by writers for emphasis.

**symbolism** — The use of a person, place or object to stand for something other than itself. Symbolism is used to create multiple layers of meaning in a work of fiction.

**sensory details** — Story details that draw upon the senses to instill images in the reader's mind.

**onomatopoeia** — The use of words whose sounds suggest their meaning. Buzz, pop and boom are examples of onomatopoeia.

**repetition** — The intentional use of repeated words or phrases to add emphasis or create rhythm.

**alliteration** — The repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words that are close together.

**text-to-self** — A connection made between a text and one's own life, beliefs and ideas.

**text-to-text** — A connection made between two texts.

**text-to-world** — A connection made between a text and the larger world.

## Pre-viewing Discussion

- What is your favorite fiction novel? Get students to start thinking about fiction by discussing their favorite reads. Ask each student to provide three reasons for liking his or her favorite book. Is it the genre? The characters? The plot? The author's use of language? Or do the books remind them of something in their own lives?
- Ralph Waldo Emerson, a 19<sup>th</sup>-century American essayist and poet once said, “There is creative reading as well as creative writing.” Discuss what Emerson may have meant when he said this. Have students write their own definitions for “creative reading” and share them. Generate a list of strategies for creatively reading fiction. After viewing the program, return to the list to add to and revise it.

## Follow-up Discussion & Activities

- Investigate mood and other story elements by having students create a poster advertising the movie version of a fiction novel or short story they are reading. Students can select an exciting and significant scene from a story and include key characters. (Make sure not to give the end away!) Consider how to convey the mood. Will you depict it using details in the setting or perhaps on the facial expressions and appearance of the characters? As an extension, students can write a dramatic movie synopsis to go with their posters.
- Have students work in groups to sketch poster-size images that represent the different points of view introduced in this program (first-person, third-person limited, omniscient and objective). Post these sketches around the room for students to refer to when reading a new fiction novel or short story to determine the point of view chosen by the author. Students can even list each work of fiction they read on the poster that depicts the point of view it is written in. Is there a point of view that seems to be chosen more or less than others?
- When authors determine which point of view to write in, some choose to shift point of view. The shift might happen from chapter to chapter or it may occur in sections. The shift could be from first-person to omniscient or it could stay in first-person and simply shift narrators. Introduce students to a novel or short story that illustrates a shift in point of view. Consider E.L. Konigsburg's *The View from Saturday* (Simon & Schuster's Children's Publishing, 1998) or Paul Fleischman's *Whirligig* (Random House Children's Books, 1999). Discuss the benefits of reading these stories from different points of view. Were there any challenges associated with reading these types of books?

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