

Literary Analysis Seeing the Parts

Remember the definition of ANALYSIS: Breaking something down into its COMPONENT PARTS and EXPLAINING HOW/WHY those parts WORK TOGETHER TO CREATE THE WHOLE.

You'll need 4 "colors" for this.

- Underline your **THESIS** in PINK.
 - Underline your **TOPIC SENTENCES** in PINK.
 - Underline references to the **TECHNIQUE** or **STRATEGIES** in BLUE. *Where have you described what the author/speaker has done or how s/he has done it? The word "uses" is a dead giveaway; we're going to work to avoid this at all costs. Also look for "repeats," "contrasts," "juxtaposes," and labeling something "ironic." All of those are TECHNIQUE.*
 - Underline **SPECIFIC REFERENCES** to the **TEXT** in GREEN. *These aren't always quotations, but many should be.*
 - Underline **ANALYSIS** – your **ASSOCIATIONS** and **EXPLANATIONS** -- in YELLOW.
1. Look at your PINK highlighting. Are the ideas LINKED? (Pink/Link) This gives your paper direction and organization. If the ideas are not linked, link them now.
 2. Do you have some BLUE highlighting? If not, you need to look at ways to add it. "He says. . ." can't be the only way you've noted technique.
 3. Look at your GREEN highlighting. Are there huge chunks? There shouldn't be. Try to limit your quotations to no more than six words in a row (per quotation.) Remember that we don't want any quote bombs – hit-and-run quotations that do more to confuse the issue than they do to analyze.
 4. Look at your YELLOW highlighting. Yellow SHEDS LIGHT, so this should be the bulk of your essay. Read this material carefully. Are you connecting DEVICE TO MEANING? (D2M)
 5. Look at your introduction and thesis. (These might be the same sentence.) Does it contain
 - ✓ TAG?
 - ✓ Answers to both the BIG and little questions?
 6. How long is the essay? I don't want you focusing just on word count, but high-scoring essays are longer: 300 – 500 words.
 7. Finally, do your ideas flow *organically*? The best essays show **how an idea develops** (like time-lapse photography) **throughout the passage or the novel**. There is no "one right" way to organize an essay, but papers that flow chronologically usually score higher.