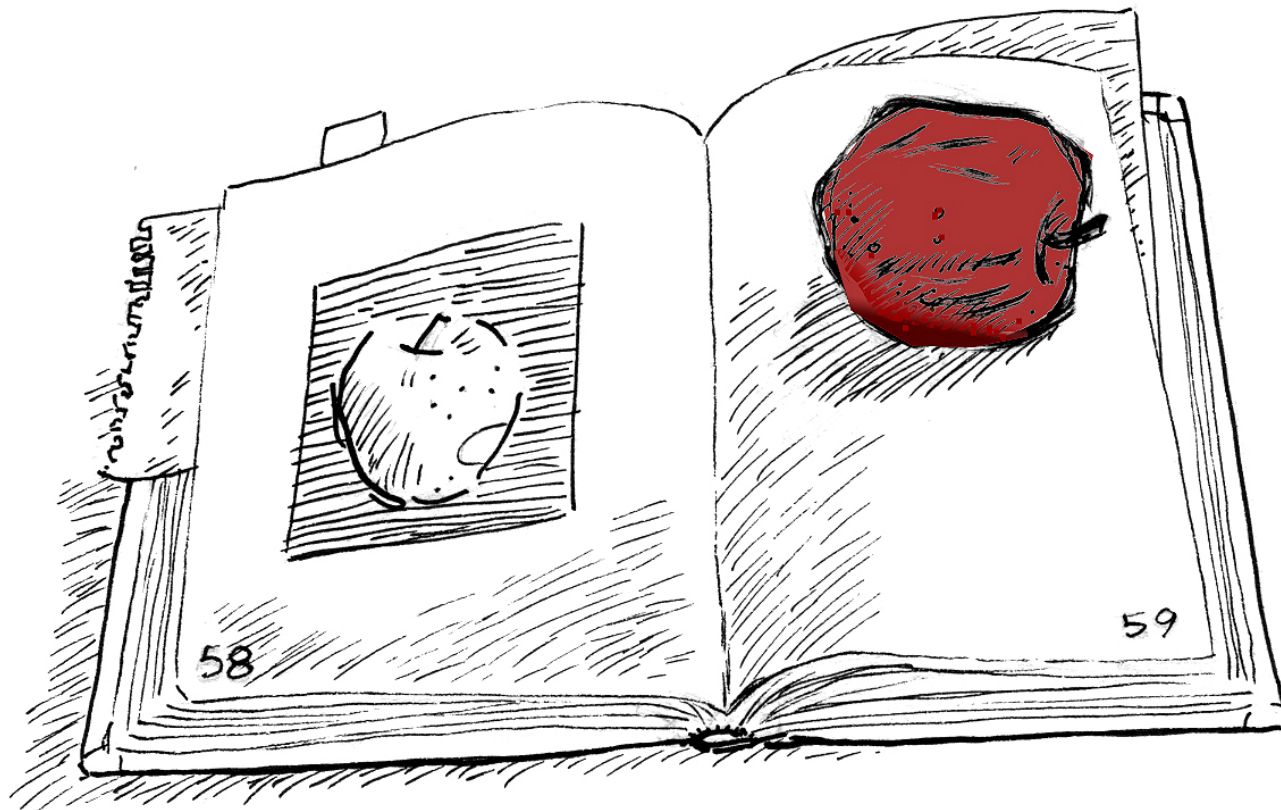


# Literary Criticism Overview

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# *Principles for Analyzing*

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- The paper must offer a thesis which shows a basic observation about the text.
- Every paragraph must offer a topic sentence relating back to thesis.
- Every paragraph must quote the primary source showing evidence
- Discuss what happens in the plot  
—and why it is significant to the work as a whole.
  
- Explain *why* a character is motivated to act in the manner depicted -or- explain *how* their motivations/actions are relevant to the plot itself:  
*For instance, why does Montresor entomb Fortunato alive, rather than just kill him?*
  
- Consider what is said, particularly subtleties of the imagery and the ideas expressed; are there any hidden meanings in the text?

# *Principles for Analyzing*

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- Assess how scenes are laid out:
  - > consider the word choice
  - > the ordering of ideas
  - > sentence structure
- How do these elements contribute to the theme of the story?
- Explain what the elements mean, tying your analysis of the plot back to the importance of the text as a whole.

In other words you are not **summarizing** plot.

In addition, your material will **not** relate **personal responses**.  
These are not reviews, nor are they book reports.

# *Principles for Analyzing*

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**There are three levels of literary appraisals.**

**01. Paraphrase**

**02. Explicate**

**03. A critical analysis** you delve deeper into the text through the explication process. You focus on a specific image or word or symbol and then compare it to the meaning of the entire work as a whole. For instance again to use Poe's "Cask of Amontillado" the word *impunity* is used frequently throughout the piece.

Does this imply Montresor is trying to convince himself that he has no feelings of remorse for getting away with his crime?

# *Defense*

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Remember to always **back up your statements** with examples from the text itself **or** from another critic.

- Always cite evidence from primary source.

## **In this manner:**

1. you are proving your argument sound and defending your point

2. you are showing others agree with you

**or** (on the flip side) you can argue against another critic's opinion and show contradictory evidence.