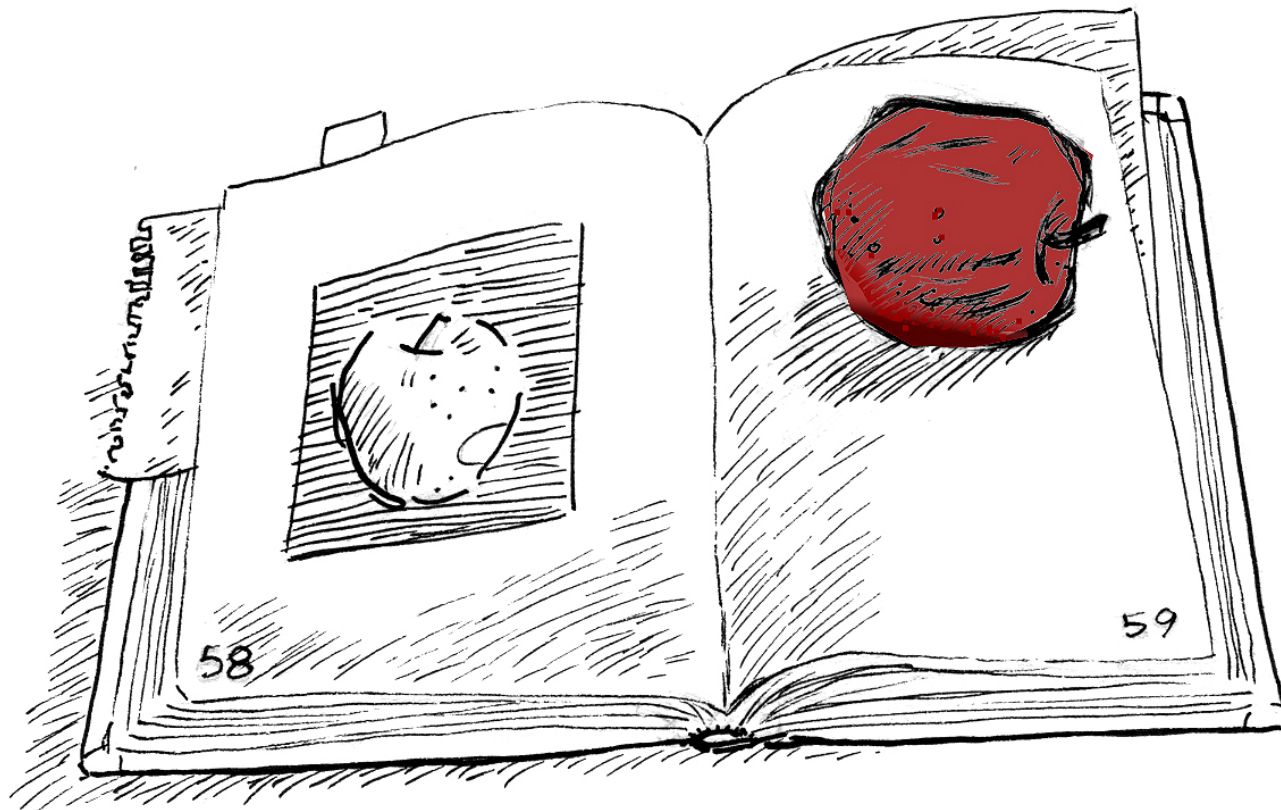


# Critical Analysis & the Reading Process

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# *introduction*

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**Creative writing remains a focal point of our society**—it explains our diversity as humans and enables different ideas to be traded between people and cultures.

# *critical analysis*

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## **Examining past and current literature helps:**

- understand the creative process of an individual author or group of authors;  
explore how a specific author changed the concepts of the time
- show the understanding of a specific culture from historical perspective;  
likewise, show how the contemporary culture has changed over time
- show possible (dis)connection between the author and the culture
- develop new literature from influences of the past

# *critical analysis*

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## **Some English 1301 Concepts that Still Apply:**

- Pre-write: ideas need to be developed first and then explored in detail.
- Likewise, multiple drafts of a paper need to be created before turning in final.
- Understand the boundaries of the assignment.
- Determine your purpose, audience, tone, point of view (narrative voice).
- Follow all MLA and APA guidelines detailed in the *Bedford Handbook*.

# *critical analysis*

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## **Basic Principles of Analyzing a Passage or Full Story**

When a story, essay, or passage in a text seem confusing, some of the following ideas can help a reader gain a better understanding of supplied material.

- **Create a thesis** to explain what you know / what you do not know;  
explain to yourself what the material means
- **Assess word choice** utilized by author (*see page 8*)
- **Describe** briefly what happens in a passage/story, taking a supplied scene and outlining the basic action; underlining character motivation can be revealed in this fashion
- Consider if there are any **hidden meanings** in the text;  
all authors have an agenda, some more overt than others

# critical analysis

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## Basic Principles of Analyzing a Passage or Full Story:

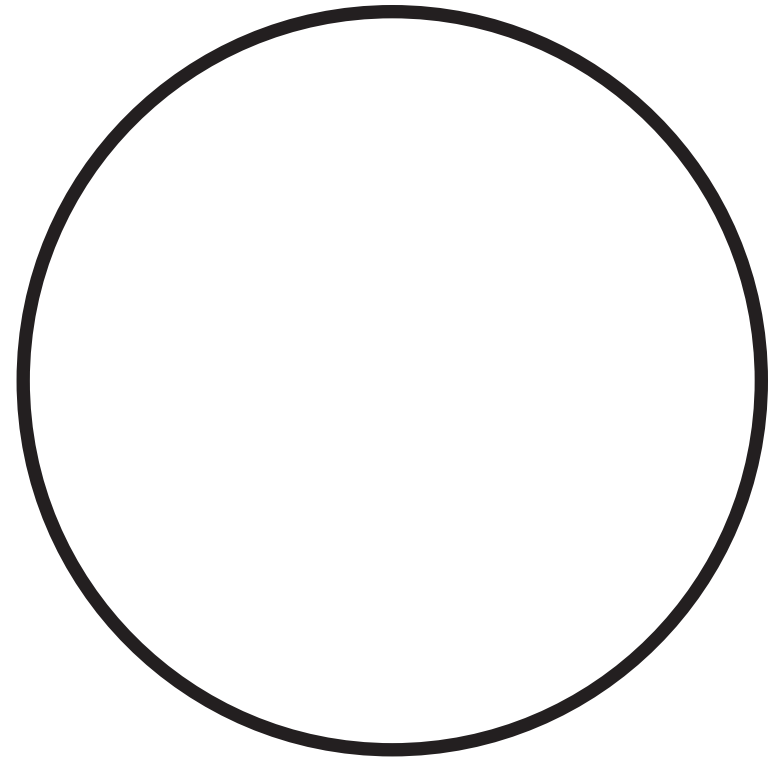
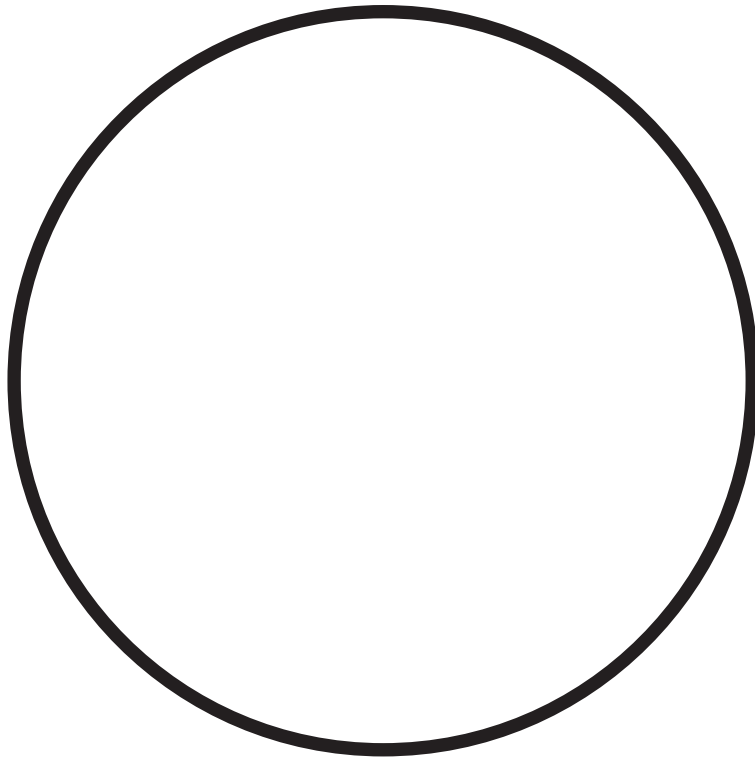
When a story, essay, or passage in a text seem confusing, some of the following ideas can help a reader gain a better understanding of the supplied material.

- **Create a thesis** to explain what you know / what you do not know; explain to yourself what the material means
- **Assess word choice** utilized by author (*see page 8*)
- **Describe** briefly what happens in a passage/story, taking a supplied scene and outlining the basic action; understanding character motivation can be revealed in this fashion
- Consider if there are any **hidden meanings** in the text; all authors have an agenda, some more overt than others

**Collectively, just on a basic level of comprehension, these elements represent a process which helps clarify a text to a reader.**

# *critical analysis*

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*you* = *the text*

As students, the analytical process should be habitual for any course and for any reading assignment.

- This is what enables *you* to understand the *text*.

# *assessing word choice*

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*For example:*

In the “Cask of Amontillado” Edgar Allan Poe uses the specific word ‘impunity.’  
This deliberate choice does reflect back on the theme of the story.

As a reader you should ask yourself:

*Why* does Poe choose this one word for this one particular story?

—*or*—

*How* does this wording affect the main theme?

*impunity*: to escape punishment for a crime committed