

Critical Analysis & the Reading Process



introduction

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

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

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 2009 MLA guidelines from the *Bedford Handbook*.

critical analysis

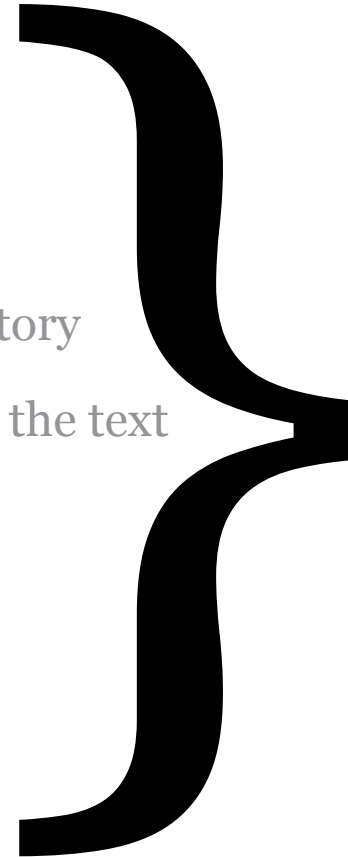
Basic Principles of Analyzing a Passage or Full Story:

- Create a thesis to explain what you know / what you do not know;
explain what the material means
- Assess word choice (*see page 8*)
- Describe briefly what happens in a passage/story
- Consider if there are any hidden meanings in the text

critical analysis

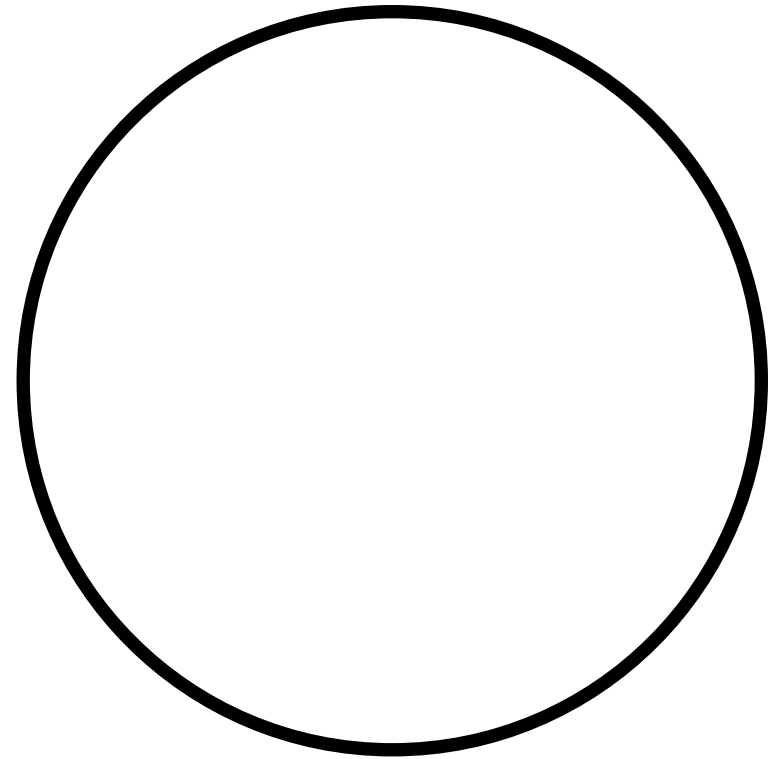
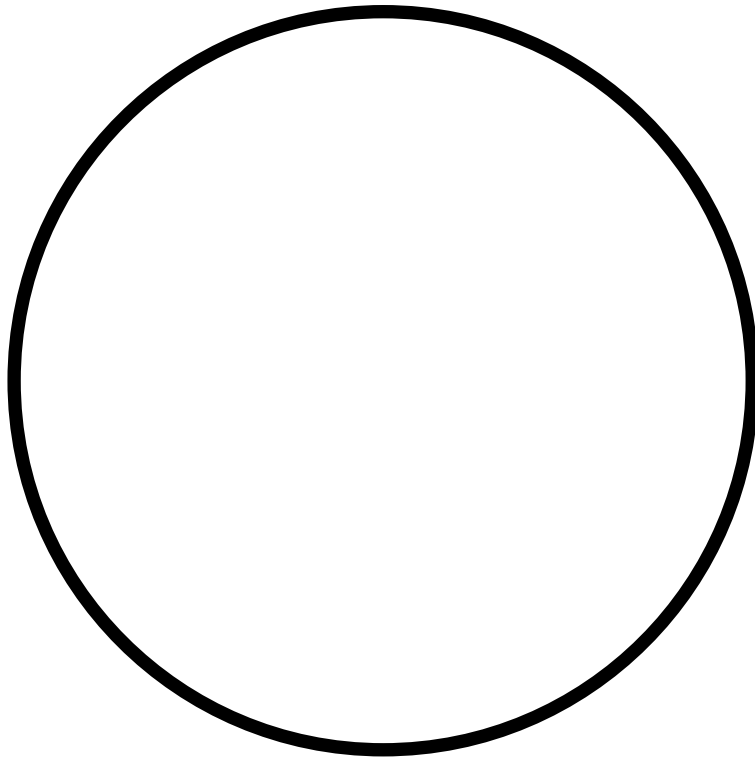
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Collectively, just on a basic level of comprehension, these elements represent a process which helps you clarify a text to yourself.

critical analysis



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

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