

What to look for in a text?

The author's key concerns

Prepare your checklist of the author's key ideas, their concerns, and their themes. You must locate their viewpoint. Be precise. Show an awareness of the deeper meanings of the text; avoid generalisations.

What is the author's purpose and message, their views and values?

- » Look for narrative devices and comparisons.
- » Identify the technique and explain its significance. How does it shed light on the author's key concerns?
- » Include quotes from the excerpt. Explain the significance of the quote, and show that you understand the deeper meanings of the text.

How many techniques can you find?

- ◆ **Analogy** — is a special kind of comparison that focuses on a similarity between two things. The author infers that because two things are alike in some way they might be alike in another way. An analogy invites readers to see an event or issue from another, possibly more familiar, perspective. This tactic may sway readers who can identify with the example. For this reason football analogies are very effective! They also convey a common touch.
- ◆ **Antithesis** is the technique of placing two words or ideas in opposition to bring out a contrast.
- ◆ **Imagery** — Authors often use an image or (an extended) metaphor as a structuring device. It sets up a significant comparison, usually at the beginning of the text, and this is used as a “framework” or “lens” through which a character's views, behaviour and attitudes are viewed, compared and contrasted.
- ◆ **Metaphor** — A metaphor is a figure of speech in which something is spoken of as if it were actually something else. In other words, one thing becomes another thing or is substituted for another. It involves an implied comparison.
- ◆ **Simile** — A simile says that something is like something else. In other words, one thing is “like” or “as” another.
- ◆ **Stereotype** — A stereotype is a generalisation about a person or group of persons. It is based on an image that is often incorrect about what people in that group are like.
- ◆ **Symbol** — A symbol is a figure of speech in which a concrete object is used to stand in for an abstract idea. Symbolism is the use of an object to represent or stand for something else: scales symbolise justice; a dove symbolises peace.
- ◆ **Rhyming words** — Alliteration refers to the repetition of rhyming consonants (“free fruit Friday”) and assonance is the repetition of vowels (“walk the talk”).
- ◆ **Tripling** is the use of three similar words, phrases, or clauses for dramatic effect. Juxtaposition involves the placing side by side of words or ideas. It may be used to emphasise a contrast or to suggest similarities.
- ◆ **Personification** — Personification is the giving of personality or life to inanimate objects or ideas. It is also a special kind of metaphor. For example, cartoonists may draw machines with human limbs.

