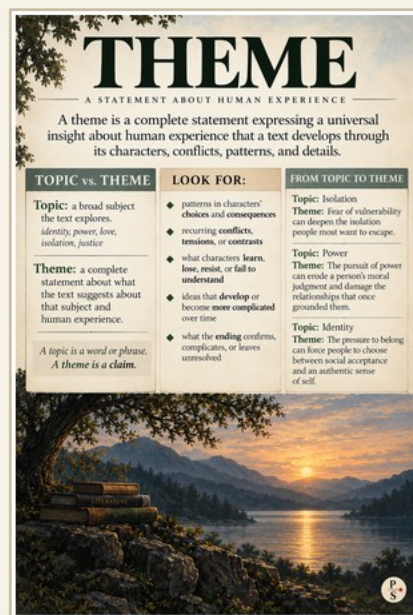


LITERARY ANALYSIS CONCEPTS

10 printable posters for secondary ELA

Definitions • Look-Fors • Examples • Analytical Questions



THE COMPLETE COLLECTION

Ten concepts students return to across literary analysis.



Symbolism



Motif



Theme



Imagery



Diction



Syntax



Tone



Point of View



Irony



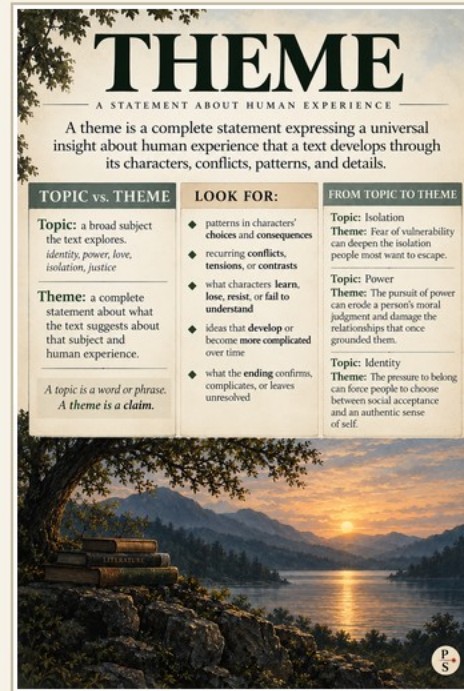
Allusion

BUILT TO CLEAR UP COMMON CONFUSIONS

The posters distinguish concepts students often collapse together.



Symbol vs. Motif



Topic vs. Theme



Tone vs. Mood

Useful as a teaching reference during reading, discussion, and literary analysis writing.

THE ANALYTICAL MOVE IS BUILT IN

Students are prompted to ask what a choice does—not just name it.

DICTION

THE WRITER'S CHOICE OF WORDS

Diction is a writer's deliberate choice of words. Through connotation, specificity, formality, and patterns of language, diction shapes tone, characterization, and meaning.

WAYS DICTION CAN VARY	LOOK FOR	WORD CHOICE → EFFECT
Formal ↔ Informal elevated or conversational language vs. conversational language	♦ noticeable or unexpected word choices	LOOKED → GLARED "Glared" suggests anger or hostility.
Concrete ↔ Abstract specific, tangible language vs. language naming ideas or qualities	♦ repeated words or patterns of language	WALKED → STRODE "Strode" suggests confidence, purpose, or authority.
Literal ↔ Figurative words used directly vs. words used through comparison or association	♦ connotations carried by important words	THIN → GAUNT "Gaunt" carries associations of illness, hunger, or suffering.
Neutral ↔ Loaded relatively objective language vs. words carrying strong positive or negative associations	♦ shifts in formality, intensity, or specificity	The basic action may stay the same. The connotation changes what the reader understands.
Denotation: a word's literal meaning Connotation: the feelings and associations the word carries	♦ words that reveal a character's attitude, values, or identity	
	♦ patterns of diction that shape tone and meaning	

ASK:
Why this word—and not another?



Why this word—and not another?

SYNTAX

HOW SENTENCES SHAPE THE READER'S EXPERIENCE

Syntax is the arrangement of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. Writers manipulate syntax to control emphasis, pace, rhythm, tone, and meaning.

WAYS SYNTAX CAN VARY	LOOK FOR:	STRUCTURE → EFFECT
Sentence Length Short sentences can isolate ideas or create a clipped rhythm; longer sentences can accumulate detail, delay a point, or mirror complex thought.	♦ noticeably short or long sentences	Short and Abrupt "The door opened. She froze." Effect: The brief sentences isolate each action, creating a clipped rhythm and heightening tension.
Clause Structure Writers can layer subordinate, coordinate, or separate ideas to show relationships among them.	♦ repetition or parallel structure	Accumulating Structure "He ran past the houses, past the fields, past the last streetlight, into the dark." Effect: Repetition and length create momentum and a sense of movement.
Patterns & Interruptions Parallelism and repetition establish rhythm; fragments, interruptions, and abrupt shifts can disrupt it.	♦ fragments, interruptions, or abrupt shifts	Interrupted Structure "She knew—or thought she knew—what waited upstairs." Effect: The interruption conveys hesitation and uncertainty.
Word Order Standard word order feels natural; inversion or unusual placement can emphasize particular words or ideas.	♦ unusual word or clause placement	
	♦ sentence boundaries and punctuation that shape pace or rhythm	
	♦ syntax that mirrors a character's thoughts or emotional state	
	♦ shifts in sentence structure at important moments	

ASK:
Why arrange the sentence this way?



Why arrange the sentence this way?

IRONY

A MEANINGFUL CONTRAST BETWEEN EXPECTATION AND REALITY

Irony is a meaningful contrast between appearance and reality, expectation and outcome, or literal words and intended meaning. Writers use irony to create humor, tension, criticism, or insight.

THREE TYPES OF IRONY	LOOK FOR:
Verbal Irony A contrast between what is literally said and what is actually meant. "Wonderful," she said, staring at the leaking ceiling. Effect: Often used for humor, criticism, or emphasis. Sarcasm is one form of verbal irony, but verbal irony is not always sarcastic.	♦ a gap between literal words and intended meaning
Situational Irony An outcome sharply contradicts what the situation leads us to expect, often revealing something significant about the situation, character, or larger idea. A character spends years protecting a secret, only to discover that everyone already knows. Effect: The reversal can expose a character's flaw, pride, or misunderstanding and contribute to a larger idea or theme.	♦ an outcome that meaningfully contradicts expectation
Dramatic Irony The reader or audience knows important information that one or more characters do not. The audience knows there is danger behind the door, but the character opens it anyway. Effect: Creates tension, suspense, humor, or tragedy because the reader understands more than the character does.	♦ moments when the reader knows more than a character
	♦ contrasts between appearance and reality
	♦ irony that reveals something about character, society, or a larger idea

ASK:
What is the contrast?
Why does it matter?
What does the irony help reveal?



What is the contrast? Why does it matter?

FROM TEXTUAL DETAIL TO MEANING

Visual cues and concise examples support close reading without turning the wall into a worksheet.



Symbolism



Imagery



Point of View



Allusion

Ideal for: High school English • Honors • AP Literature • Ongoing classroom reference

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Everything is ready to print and display.

- 10 literary analysis posters
- 10-page US Letter printable PDF
- 10 individual 8 x 12 JPG files
- Consistent 2:3 poster format

POSTERS INCLUDED

Symbolism • Motif • Theme • Imagery • Diction • Syntax •
Tone • Point of View • Irony • Allusion

PLOTTING SOMETHING

