

**Міністерство освіти і науки України
Харківський національний університет
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Факультет іноземних мов**

**Методичні вказівки
з інтерпретації художнього тексту
для студентів IV та V курсів
кафедри англійської філології
факультету іноземних мов**



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М 80

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Харківського національного університету імені В. Н. Каразіна
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Методичні вказівки, що відповідають вимогами кредитно-модульної системи організації навчального процесу, містять матеріали для розвитку навичок інтерпретації художнього тексту. Розробка складається із двох частин: у першій, призначеній для студентів IV курсу, викладено теоретичні засади лінгво-літературознавчого аналізу художнього твору, у другій, адресованій студентам V курсу, акцент зроблено на розвитку їх вмінь викладення результатів власної інтерпретації літературного тексту у письмовій формі. Додатки містять таблиці, в яких узагальнено стилістичні особливості художнього твору, а список рекомендованої літератури задає вектор самостійного поглиблення інтерпретативних навичок, отриманих на аудиторних заняттях.

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ПЕРЕДМОВА

Інтерпретація художнього тексту у програмі навчальної дисципліни «Англійська мова» за спеціальністю «Мова та література / переклад»

Навчальна дисципліна «Англійська мова» посідає провідне місце в системі професійної підготовки майбутнього фахівця у галузі англійської мови – викладача та перекладача. Загальною метою цієї дисципліни є формування у студентів іншомовної комунікативної компетенції і здійснення виховання та розвитку особистості студента.

На завершальному етапі університетської освіти здійснюється удосконалення набутих протягом попередніх років навчання навичок компетентного вживання англійської мови, зокрема, доведення до високого рівня вміння студентів інтерпретувати автентичні тексти найвищої складності – літературні твори. Пропоновані методичні вказівки з інтерпретації художнього тексту для студентів IV та V курсів кафедри англійської філології факультету іноземних мов Харківського національного університету імені В. Н. Каразіна скеровані саме на цей складник загальної мети навчальної дисципліни «Англійська мова».

Завдання методичної розробки полягають у збагаченні запасу мовних, літературознавчих, лінгвокраїнознавчих, культурологічних та загальних енциклопедичних знань студентів і доведенні до високого рівня досконалості їхніх умінь інтерпретації художнього тексту та академічного письма на відповідну тему. Засвоєння у повному обсязі поданої у методичних вказівках теоретичної інформації та ретельне виконання усіх практичних завдань забезпечує студентові можливість без зусиль розуміти зміст художнього англомовного тексту, творчо інтерпретувати прочитане та надавати пояснення й обґрунтування у зв'язному усному та письмовому викладенні.

Методична розробка складається із двох частин, призначених студентам IV та V курсу відповідно. У першій подано теоретичні засади лінгво-літературознавчого аналізу художнього твору; у другій акцент зроблено на розвитку вмінь викладення у письмовій формі власної інтерпретації художнього тексту.

Згідно з вимогами кредитно-модульної системи організації навчального процесу, матеріал кожної частини зорганізовано у модулі, що відповідають структурі навчальної дисципліни «Англійська мова». Кожен модуль розраховано на передбачену робочим планом кількість годин аудиторної та самостійної роботи, які наведено у таблиці нижче.

Модуль	Аудиторна робота	Самостійна робота
1. АНАЛІЗ ХУДОЖНЬОГО ЛІТЕРАТУРНОГО ТВОРУ		
Модуль 1. (1.1, 1.2 та 1.3)	2 год.	1 год.
Модуль 2. (1.4 та 1.5)	2 год.	1 год.
Модуль 3. (1.6 та 1.7)	2 год.	1 год.
Модуль 4. (1.8 та 1.9)	2 год.	1 год.
Модуль 5. (1.10 та 1.11)	2 год.	1 год.
2. НАПИСАННЯ РОБІТ ТВОРЧОГО ХАРАКТЕРУ		
3 АНАЛІЗУ ХУДОЖНЬОГО ЛІТЕРАТУРНОГО ТВОРУ		
Модуль 1. (2.1 та 2.2)	2 год.	1 год.
Модуль 2. (2.3)	2 год.	1 год.
Модуль 3. (2.4)	2 год.	1 год.

Цєю методичною розробкою можливо користуватися й як довідником: передбачається, що протягом усього періоду навчання на кафедрі англійської філології факультету іноземних мов Харківського національного університету імені В. Н. Каразіна студент застосовуватиме релевантні частини методичних вказівок при виконанні завдань із домашнього, індивідуального та аналітичного читання.

До кожного модулю включено завдання, зорієнтовані на активізацію самостійної творчої роботи студента, формування професійно значущих умінь інтерпретації художнього тексту та академічного письма на відповідні теми.

До методичних матеріалів додаються дві довідкові таблиці («Трони» та «Стильова диференціація лексики»), в яких узагальнено відповідний матеріал курсу стилістики сучасної англійської мови. Список бібліографічних джерел задає вектор самостійного поглиблення знань та аналітичних навичок, отриманих на аудиторних заняттях з інтерпретації тексту.

PART 1. ANALYZING FICTION

MODULE 1

1.1. The fictional world of a literary work

Literature is writing that can be read in many ways. We can read it as a form of history, biography, or autobiography. We can read it as an example of linguistic structures or rhetorical conventions manipulated for special effect. We can view it as a material product of the culture that produced it. We can see it as an expression of beliefs and values of a particular class. We can also see a work of literature as a self-contained structure of words – as writing that calls attention to itself, to its own images and forms.

Viewed in this light, literature differs from other kinds of writing – expressive, persuasive, and expository. Expressive writing aims to articulate the feelings of the writer; persuasive writing seeks to influence the reader; expository writing tries to explain the outer world. By contrast, a work of literature creates a world of its own which makes no reference to the real world as we normally know it, thus it is not expository writing. Nor is it quite the same as persuasive writing – a work of fiction makes no direct appeal to us as audience, no systematic effort to shape our opinions on a specified point. Furthermore, while it looks like expressive writing, it is not the writer but the narrator or a character who is speaking, i.e. the figures the writer has created or imagined. What we have, then, is an independent little world made of words: a world of forms, images, and sounds that are all designed to work together.

This does not mean that works of literature have nothing to do with reality. On the contrary, Walt Whitman's poems often address the reader directly; Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* has everything to do with the history of American slavery; and when Emily Dickinson writes, "I never hear the word *escape* Without a quicker blood," she is surely expressing her own feelings. The world of literature is watered by many streams – by the writer's feelings, by the writer's desire to stir the reader, and by the writer's consciousness of the real world. But in a work of literature, all of these streams flow through the world the writer creates.

1.2. Literary genres

To interpret a literary work, one needs to know something about its genre. The distinctions between genres of literary works are flexible and loosely defined, often with subgroups.

The most general genres in literature are (in a chronological order): *epic*, *tragedy*, *comedy*, *novel*, *short story*, and *creative nonfiction*. They can all be in the genres of *prose* or *poetry*, which shows best how loosely genres are defined. This correlation is shown in Fig. 1.1.

Additionally, a genre such as *satire*, *allegory* or *pastoral* might appear in any of the above, not only as a sub-genre, but as a mixture of genres.

		Genres ²					
Genres ¹		Epic	Tragedy	Comedy	Novel	Short story	Creative nonfiction
	Prose						
	Poetry						

Fig. 1.1. Correlation of literary genres

For practical purposes it might be worthwhile to adopt the point of view, according to which there are two main genres of literature – poetry and prose. Their types are shown in Fig 1.2.

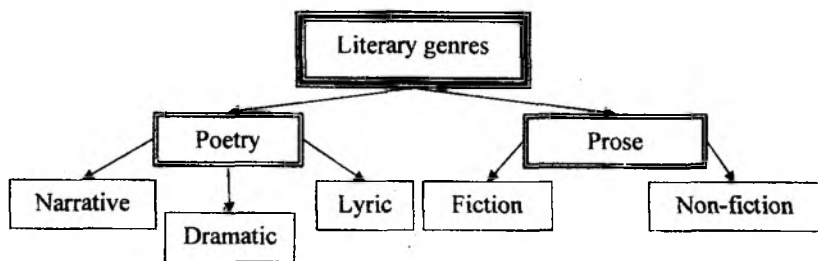


Fig. 1.2. Types of literary genres

Poetry is a comprehensive term which can be taken to cover any kind of metrical composition. It has three types – *Narrative*, *Lyric* and *Dramatic*. *Drama* in general is any work meant to be performed on a stage by actors. A more particular meaning is a serious play, not necessarily a tragedy.

Prose covers literary works that do not adhere to any metrical structure, only to vocabulary and grammar rules. Prose is classified into fiction and non fiction. *Fiction* (from Lat. *factum* – "created") is a rather vague and general term for an imaginative work, usually in prose. Fiction may also be given a more formal definition: "literature created from the imagination, not presented as fact, though it may be based on a true story or situation". In contrast to fiction, there is *non-fiction* which deals exclusively with factual events (e.g.: biographies, histories, etc.).

1.3. Elements of fiction: An overview

Most scholars agree with the claim that there exist certain fundamental elements of the fiction-writing craft, but there appears to be little consensus about their number and composition. Yet in analyzing works of fiction it might be useful to adhere to a certain scheme, like the one given in the box below.

In studying fiction, use the following questions as a guide:

- What are the theme and the message? How does the title relate to them?
- What is the plot structure like? What does the setting contribute to it?
- What central conflict drives the plot? What are other conflicts?
- How is the story told? What does the particular type of narrator contribute?
- Which narrative modes are used? How do they relate to the plot structure elements?
- How does the story reveal its main characters?
- What means of character drawing are used by the author?
- How does the language of the story contribute to the development of the theme and character drawing?

Tasks to Module 1

1. What kinds of writing are there? Give an example of each from an authentic source.
2. How does literature differ from other kinds of writing?
3. How does the world of fiction relate to objective reality? Substantiate your answer with examples from English fiction.
4. Give examples of an epic, a tragedy, a comedy, a novel, a short story. Are they in the genres of prose or poetry?
5. Give definitions for creative non-fiction, satire, allegory and pastoral. Can they be called genres? In what relation do they stand to the genres mentioned in the question above?
6. Give an example of English poetry. Does it belong to the narrative, lyric or dramatic type?
7. Recite a lyric poem in English.
8. What are the fundamental elements of the fiction-writing craft?

MODULE 2

1.4. Theme, message and title

The theme and the message are usually listed among the fundamental elements of fiction. These terms can be used interchangeably, but it is worthwhile to differentiate their content.

The main *theme* of a work of literature is what the story or novel is about. The theme is usually formulated as a nominative syntactic structure (a noun or a nominal phrase) which names things but does not elaborate them.

There may be not one, but several themes in a work of fiction.

The general idea that the reader draws from the story as a whole is called the *message*, which is the product of a reader's interpretation. It is a conceptual distillation of the story, the central idea or insight serving as a unifying element, creating cohesion among different parts of the story. In order to formulate the

message one has to answer the question “What did you learn from this piece of fiction?” The message is rendered by a predicative syntactic structure (a sentence). In some cases the message is a prominent element of the story and thus unmistakable, in other cases its reconstruction requires some thought.

The *title* may refer either to the theme or to the message, or to both of them simultaneously.

1.5. Plot and its components

The plot, or storyline, is another fundamental element of fiction. It is rendering and ordering the events and actions of the story as the writer sees fit. The events in the plot do not always presuppose physical movement of characters, the movement may be psychological. Since the writer selects the events which have special significance for the message of the story, every event in a work of fiction is always suggestive. The structural elements of the plot are presented in the box below.

The basic structural elements of the plot:

- the exposition
- the development (complications)
- the climax
- the unknotting (dénouement)

In the *exposition* the writer introduces the theme, the characters and establishes the setting. The exposition addresses the questions: Who? What? Where? When?

The “Where?” and “When?” components of the exposition make *the setting* of the story, which is sometimes called *the chronotop* (from *chronos* – time, *topos* – place). The setting is commonly given at the very beginning of a story, though different details scattered through the text may also contribute to it.

The setting may perform different functions in the story; some of them are given in the box below.

Functions of the setting:

- evoking the atmosphere (mood);
- reinforcing characterization by either paralleling or contrasting the actions;
- reflecting the inner state of a character;
- placing a character in a realistic environment (place names, historical events);
- revealing certain features of a character (e.g. domestic environment);
- becoming the chief antagonist whom the hero must overcome (in case of conflict between person vs. nature)

There are various ways of denoting the time of the events described. Types of time denotation are presented in Fig.1.3.

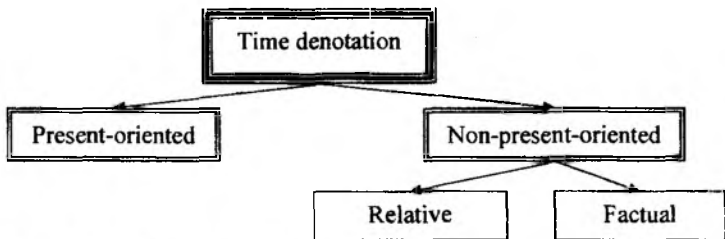


Fig. 1.3. Types of time denotation

Present-oriented time denotation relates the events described to the moment of the narrator's speech. **Non-present-oriented** time denotation is not related to the moment of the narrator's speech. It has two varieties, namely, relative and factual time denotation. **Relative** denotation of time correlates two or more events, showing one of them as preceding or following the other or taking place at the same time with it. **Factual** time denotation states the astronomical time of events directly, or else conveys the temporal meaning in terms of historical landmarks.

The exposition is followed by **complications**, which as a rule are characters' actions, though they may involve thoughts and feelings as well. Each event is called **a moment of complications**. These become tenser as the plot moves towards the moment of its resolution – **the climax**. In some literary works there may be a good deal of fluctuation in intensity, though the general tendency is upward.

The unknottng (dénouement) is the fourth structural component of the plot. It comes after, or sometimes coincides with the climax. It is an event or episode that brings the story to its end. A distinction should be drawn between **the climax of events** and **the climax of characters' emotions**; they usually coincide, but it is not a universal rule. The way of bringing a piece of fiction to a close is called **the ending**. An unexpected turn of the plot withheld till the end of the story is called **the surprise ending**. When the development of the plot is aimed at keeping the reader in the state of uncertainty and doubt, we speak of **suspense**. This device is common in adventure and detective stories.

Novels may have two more components of the plot structure – the prologue and the epilogue. **The prologue** deals with events which took place before the time the story's narrative begins, **the epilogue** contains additional facts about the future of the characters when the events that constitute the plot are over.

The usual order of the components of the plot is as follows: **(prologue) → exposition → complications → climax → dénouement → (epilogue)**. Yet the author may choose to change this order (which is called **chronological**), for example, to begin the narrative with complications or even with the dénouement. Inverting the order of the plot structure components is aimed at eliciting a certain response from the reader, for example, creating a mood, increasing tension and suspense, etc.

An enigma is an important factor in story-telling, when the narrator withholds some information from the reader and keeps him guessing, imagining the probable outcome of the events described, motives of characters' actions, etc. Some stories contain a whole series of enigmas. Withholding information until a certain point in the development of the plot is called **retardation**, which is a widely used narrative technique of mounting suspense.

The flashback (also called **analepsis**) technique is another way of changing the chronological order of events, when a scene which belongs to the past is inserted into the narrative developing chronologically. In literature, **internal analepsis** is a flashback to an earlier point in the narrative; **external analepsis** is a flashback to before the narrative started.

Flashforward (referred to as **prolepsis**) is a glance into the future, remarks or hints which prepare the reader to what is to follow.

Types of plots according to the way of ordering events:

- a straight-line narrative presentation, when the events are arranged as they occur, in the **chronological order**;
- a complex narrative structure, when the events are not arranged chronologically, for example, when there are **flashbacks** to past events;
- a **circular** pattern, when the closing event in the story brings the reader back to the introductory part;
- a **frame** structure – a story within a story; the latter may contrast or parallel.

Tasks to Module 2

1. What are the themes of the novel "To Kill a Mockingbird" by N. Harper Lee? Which one would you call the main theme?
2. Think of a novel you have recently read in English and formulate its message.
3. Does the title of the novel by R. P. Warren "All the King's Men" refer to its theme, message or both?
4. Think of a story you have read in English and identify the components of its plot.
5. Identify the "Where" and "When" components of the setting. Is the setting given at the beginning or are its elements scattered throughout the whole story?
6. What is the type of time denotation in the setting?
7. How many moments of complications are there in the story you have chosen?
8. Identify the climax of the story. Is it the climax of events or the climax of emotions?
9. What kind of ending does the story have?
10. Think of a novel in English and determine whether the events described in it are presented in a chronological order. If the latter is inverted, what is the author's aim in resorting to his kind of sequencing events?
11. Name an English author who is especially fond of enigmas. What is the effect of using enigmas?

1.6. Conflict

The conflict in fiction is the opposition of characters (or sometimes powers). When a character is in conflict with him-, her-, or itself, the conflict is categorized as *internal*, otherwise, it is *external*. The latter has several varieties: Person vs. Person, Person vs. Society, Person vs. Supernatural, Person vs. Machine / Technology.

Types of conflicts:

- Person vs. Person (external)
- Person vs. Self (internal)
- Person vs. Society (external)
- Person vs. Supernatural (external)
- Person vs. Machine / Technology (external)

Person vs. Person is a theme in literature in which the main character's conflict with another person is the focus of the story. An example is the hero's conflict with the villain, which plays an important role in the plot and contributes to the development of both characters. There are usually several confrontations before the climax is reached. The conflict of the Person vs. Person type is external.

Person vs. Self is the kind of conflict which takes place inside a character – in his thoughts, feelings, and attitudes. The internal conflict does not mean that the external world is irrelevant: although the struggle is internal, the character can be influenced by external forces. The internal conflict within an individual may involve the struggle of his sense of duty against self-interest.

Person vs. Society is a theme in fiction where the main source of conflict is social traditions or values. In this sense, the two parties are: (a) the protagonist/s; (b) the society into which the protagonist/s is/are included. Society itself is often considered as a character, just as an opposing party would be considered in a *Person vs. Person* conflict. An example in literature would be "Wuthering Heights" by Emily Bronte. The conflict between an individual and a societal order (poverty, racial hostility, injustice, exploitation, inequality, violation of human rights, etc.) may be *open* or *hidden*.

Person vs. Nature is the type of conflict that places a character against the forces of nature. It is predominant within many survival stories as well as in stories about struggling for survival in remote locales, such as Jack London's short story "To Build a Fire".

Person vs. Supernatural type of conflict places a character against supernatural forces. "Frankenstein" by Mary Shelley is a good example. Conflicts of this kind are also very common in comic books

Person vs. Machine / Technology places a character against robot forces with "artificial intelligence". Conflicts of this kind are limited to science fiction.

The plot of a work of fiction may be based on several conflicts of different types.

1.7. Narrator and narrative modes

Within any story, **the narrator** is the person who tells the story to the audience. When the narrator is also a character within the story, he or she is sometimes known as **the viewpoint character**.

The narrator is one of three entities responsible for story-telling of any kind. The others are **the author** and **the audience**; referring specifically to literature, the latter is called **the reader**.

Entities responsible for story-telling:

- the narrator / the viewpoint character
- the author
- the audience / the reader

The author and the audience both inhabit the real world. It is **the author's** function to create the universe, people, and events within the story. It is **the audience's** function to understand and interpret the story. **The narrator** exists within the world of the story (and only there) and presents it in a way the audience can comprehend.

A narrator may tell the story from his own point of view (as a fictive entity) or from the point of view of one of the characters in the story. In a work of fiction there can also be a mixture of the narrator's own voice and those of others, which results in the effect of **polyphony**.

The act or process of telling the particulars of a story is referred to as **narration**. Along with exposition, argumentation, and description, narration (broadly defined) is one of four **rhetorical modes** (the word *mode* is a synonym for *method* or *form*). More narrowly defined, narration is the **fiction-writing mode** (also called **narrative mode**) whereby the narrator communicates directly to the reader. In this section, the term "narration" is going to be used in the latter, narrower sense.

A writer's choice of narrator is crucial for the way a work of fiction is perceived by the reader. All narrators present their story from one of the following **perspectives** (or **narrative modes**): first-person, third-person limited (observer), third-person omniscient.

Generally, **a first-person narrator** brings greater focus on the feelings, opinions, and perceptions of a particular character in a story, and on how the character views the world and other characters. If the writer's intention is to get inside the world of a character, then it is a good choice.

Some of *the advantages of the first-person narrator* are as follows:

- It is an effective means of revealing the personality of the character who narrates. The narrator tells the reader what he feels and thinks, and the reader can understand his motives without resorting to analysis;
- It enhances the credibility of the story. The narrator's statements tend to be more readily accepted by the reader, for they are backed up by the narrator's presence in the events described – he relates what he himself has seen;
- The story told by a first-person narrator tends to be more confiding. The narrator often assumes the informal tone, addresses the reader directly and establishes rapport with him. The reader comes to be the one whom the narrator entrusts with his innermost thoughts and feelings.

However, *the possibilities of the first-person narrative are limited* by the following factors:

- The story told by a character is limited to what that character could reasonably be expected to know. The first-person narrator cannot enter into the minds of other characters, he cannot know everything they do and say;
- The first-person narrator may be unreliable. He may misinterpret the events which he cannot fully understand. He relates them and evaluates them from his subjective viewpoint. The reader, therefore, gets a biased view of the characters. But this limitation can turn into advantage: the reader is stimulated to think for himself and to come to his own judgment.

A third-person limited narrator is an alternative that does not require the writer to reveal all that a first-person character would know. The story may be told in such a way that readers are given the impression of witnessing the events as they happen – we observe things and hear conversations but never enter immediately into the minds of characters. A third person limited narrator merely records events without analyzing them. The events themselves are in the focus of the reader's attention.

The advantage of this narrative mode is that the observer-narrator allows the reader to watch the characters, to listen to them, and to come up with his own judgment.

A variety of the observer-narrator is the so-called *fallible / unreliable narrator* whose perception and interpretation of events does not coincide with the author's view.

In contrast to the third-person limited narrator, *a third-person omniscient narrator* gives a panoramic view of the fictional world created by the author, looking into the minds of the characters and into the broader background of the story. A third-person omniscient narrator is aware of the feelings of every character. For the stories in which the broad context and the views of a number of characters are important, a third-person narrator is a better choice.

The advantages of the omniscient narrator are as follows:

- There are no spatial or temporal limitations to his freedom. He is all-seeing and all-knowing, i.e. he can follow any character into a locked room or to a desert island. He can get into the characters' minds, give his own analysis of their motives and actions;

- The omniscient narrator may wander away from the theme of the narrative in order to state his personal view or to make a general statement, which is known as *digression*. The latter usually involves a change of grammatical tense from the past (most common in fiction) to the generic “timeless” present. In this way the narrator explicates his presence of a guide and interpreter.

Yet one should be aware that the objectivity of the omniscient narrator's evidence is not to be taken for granted. The reader is expected to rely on the judgment of the omniscient narrator and to adopt his point of view. In such a position there is a vast potential for manipulating the reader.

In quite a number of modern short stories since A. P. Chekhov, the omniscience of the narrator turns out to be *somewhat limited*. The narrator focuses on some character, leaving the inner world of others in the shade. The narrator therefore turns out to be *partially omniscient*.

The interrelation of the narrative modes with the types of narrator can be summarized in the following way:

Narrative Mode	Type of Narrator	
First-person narrative	The main character (internal analysis of events)	A minor character (outward observation of events)
Third-person narrative	The omniscient narrator (internal analysis of events)	The observer-narrator (outward observation of events)

A writer may choose to let several narrators tell the story from different points of view. Then it is up to the reader to decide which narrator seems most reliable for each part of the story. William Faulkner's “As I Lay Dying” is a prime example of the use of *multiple narrators*. Faulkner employs the stream of consciousness technique by narrating the story from the first person view of multiple characters. Each chapter is devoted to the voice of a single character after whom it is titled. Some writers employ an alternate form of this style, in which multiple characters narrate the story at once, or at least a single character narrates the actions of a group of characters while never referring to a “me”, and only to a “we” of the group.

The narrative method conditions the language of the story. If the story is told by the omniscient narrator, its language tends to be literary. When the story is told by a character, the language becomes a means of characterization (see 1.9). It reflects the narrator's education, occupation, emotional state and attitude, etc. The social standing or the character is revealed in the use of non-standard vocabulary and the choice of syntactic structures.

The narrative mode may affect the sequencing of events. Thus, the omniscient author will most likely arrange the events as they occur, in a chronological order. A first-person narrative is infrequently disrupted by digressions, or may leap from one topic to another, or may contain flashbacks to past events.

Tasks to Module 3

1. By what criterion are internal and external types of conflict differentiated?
2. What are the external conflict varieties? Provide a definition to each and illustrate them with examples from fictional writing in English.
3. Can a conflict of the *Person vs. Nature* type be hidden?
4. Think of examples from fictional writing in English which illustrate a combination of different types of conflict.
5. Define the figure of the narrator and comment on its role in a work of fiction.
6. When is the narrator called “a viewpoint character”?
7. What are the entities responsible for story-telling?
8. What is the difference between the author and the narrator?
9. What is the difference between the audience and the reader?
10. What is a mode?
11. What is the difference between narrative / fiction-writing modes and rhetorical modes?
12. What narrative modes are there? Illustrate each with an example from English prose.
13. What types of narrator do you know? Illustrate each with an example from English prose.
14. How do narrative modes and types of narrator correlate?
15. Dwell on the advantages and disadvantages of each type of the narrator substantiating your opinion with examples from fiction.

Themes for academic essays

1. Give an example of a work of fiction with a multiple narrator. Expand your answer with quotations from this literary piece.
2. Prepare a presentation on polyphony drawing on the works of M. M. Bakhtin. Give the necessary definitions and find a suitable extract from English literature for your group mates to analyze according to your guidelines.

MODULE 4

1.8. Rhetorical modes

The narrative mode may also affect the sequencing of *rhetorical modes*. No matter what kind of fiction one is writing, despite surface differences in style and format, writers all employ certain patterns of organization and demonstrate certain patterns in their thinking. The technical terms for these patterns are “*rhetorical modes*”, “*modes of expression*”, “*modes of discourse*”, “*literary representational forms*”.

There is no unity of opinion on the number and composition of rhetorical modes, either. The ones recognized by many scholars are presented in the box below.

Rhetorical modes:

- description
- narration
- exposition
- interior speech
- dialogue
- author's remarks
- represented speech

Description is a rhetorical mode for creating a sensory picture in order either to communicate a sensory image to the reader (*objective description*) or to cause him to feel whatever the writer feels about what is being described (*subjective description*). It is important to remember that description, in contrast to narration, is usually static, i.e. not developing in time.

The essential characteristic of *narration* is sequence, or chronological order. Yet one needs to be alert not only to the sequence of events described – and their connection to one another – but also to the details themselves. Out of the vast number of potential details the writer has chosen these and not others. The initial characteristic of narration, then, is selectivity.

Exposition is the mode for conveying information. According to R. Kernen, "Exposition can be one of the most effective ways of creating and increasing the drama in your story. It can also be the quickest way to kill a plot's momentum and get your story bogged down in detail. Too much exposition, or too much at one time, can seriously derail a story and be frustrating to the reader or viewer eager for a story to either get moving or move on". Exposition in fiction may be delivered through various means. The simplest way is to just place the information between scenes as the all-seeing, all-knowing (but impersonal and invisible) narrator would do. Another means of delivering information is through a character, either as dialogue or through the character's thoughts. When the presentation of information in fiction becomes wordy, it is sometimes referred to as an "information dump," "exposition dump," or "plot dump."

Such rhetorical mode as *interior speech* of a character has a particular significance in contemporary fiction since it allows the reader to enter the inner world of a character, to observe his thoughts and feelings in the making. Interior speech is best represented in the form of *interior monologue*, a lengthy piece of text (usually half a page and over) dealing with one major topic of a character's thinking, explicating the motives of his/her actions. Short in-sets of interior speech present immediate mental or emotional reactions of a personage to the verbal or non-verbal behavior of other characters. The *stream-of-consciousness* technique is extremely popular with the present-day modernist fiction writing.

In *dialogue* characters speak up their mind. Expressing their opinions and attitudes they characterize themselves indirectly.

Both the uttered (dialogue) and inner (interior speech) forms are introduced into the text by *the author's remarks* containing indication of the personage (his name or the name-substitute) and of his verbal or mental act.

Another rhetorical mode is a peculiar blend of the viewpoint and language spheres of both the narrator and the character known as *represented (free reported) speech*. It is close to interior speech; yet it differs from it in its form: it is rendered in the third person singular and may contain the speaker's characteristic words.

1.9. Means of characterization

A literary character may be described in different aspects: physical, emotional, moral, spiritual, social, etc. The description of different aspects of a personage is known as *characterization*. There are two types of characterization shown in Fig. 1.3.

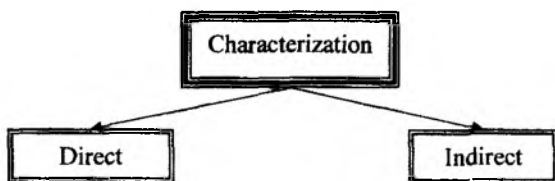
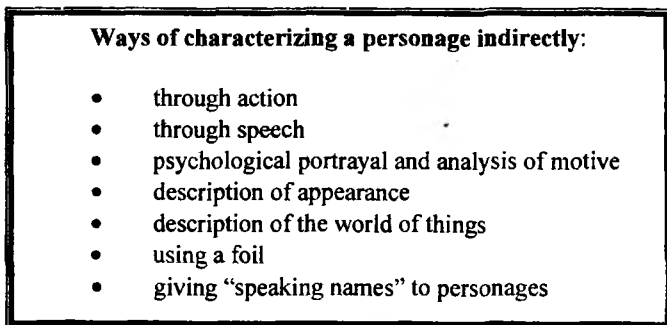


Fig. 1.3. Ways of characterizing a literary personage



Direct characterization by means of qualifying words (usually adjectives) may be given by the narrator or another character.

The narrator may resort to the *indirect* method of characterization and to show characters in action, allow the reader to hear and watch them. It stimulates the reader's cognitive processes of forming his own opinion of the characters.

(1) *Characterizing a personage through action*. Actions here are understood broadly and include not only physical movement, but also gestures, thoughts, speech acts, decisions, impulses, etc.

(2) **Characterizing a personage through speech.** Speech characteristics include a variety of parameters, some of which are presented in the box below:

Speech characteristics of the personage's

- conversational style
- emotional state
- attitude
- educational level
- origin, nationality and social standing
- occupation
- idiolect

(2.1) **Conversational style** markers indicate not only the speaker's social status, but also such permanent characteristics as haughtiness, humility, sincerity, openness, etc., as well as such situational features as being accommodating or dominant, etc. A distinction is usually made between the formal (a) and informal (b) conversational styles. Markers of **official style** are exemplified by such phrases as *I presume, I beg your pardon*, etc. Markers of **informal style** (contracted forms, colloquialisms, elliptic sentences, tags, initiating signals (e.g. *Well, Oh*), hesitation markers, false starts, etc.) are all characteristic of spontaneous colloquial speech and thus often pass unnoticed. Yet in fictional conversation they acquire special significance as they not only increase the credibility of the story, but also function as means of indirect characterization.

(2.2) Markers of the **emotional state** of a character are exemplified by the emphatic inversion, use of emotionally colored words, breaks and abrupt turns in the flow of conversation, silence, interjections, false starts, etc.

(2.3) **Attitudinal** markers are represented by the verbs with the meaning of attitude, such as *resent, despise, hate, adore*, etc.), intensifiers, etc.

(2.4) The character's **educational level** is usually judged by whether he uses complex or simple syntactic structures, bookish or colloquial words, curse words, slang, vulgarisms, barbarisms.

(2.5) Markers of regional and dialectal speech (e.g. foreign words, dialectal words, graphons) suggest the speaker's **origin, nationality** and **social standing**.

(2.6) Terms, jargon words, etc. serve as markers of the character's **occupation**.

(2.7) Finally, in fiction one can come across certain markers of the speaker's **idiolect**, i.e. his individual speech characteristics.

(3) **Psychological portrayal and analysis of motive.** The psychological state of a character is generally revealed by means of interior speech in the form of either free reported speech or free direct speech.

(4) **Description of appearance** is also known as the portrayal of a character. There certainly exists a relationship between the inner world of a person and his appearance. A writer often focuses on some prominent feature of a literary character

which is suggestive of his nature. In this case the feature acquires the status of an *artistic detail*.

(5) *Description or the world of things* which surround the character (room, clothing, etc.). Domestic interiors infrequently gain the status of metonymic or metaphoric extension of the character who owns them.

(6) *The use of a foil* may also serve as a means of characterization. The foil highlights the features of the protagonist by means of contrast.

(7) *The naming of characters*. The use of a proper name to express a general idea is called *antonomasia*. The name may be deliberately chosen to highlight a certain feature of a character.

Tasks to Module 4

1. What are the terms synonymous with that of "rhetorical mode"?
2. Which rhetorical modes are recognized by most scholars?
3. What is the rhetorical mode of each of the paragraphs below?

(a) MY OLD HOUSE _____

I like to remember my old house because there I enjoyed my infancy and adolescence. Although it is a small house, for me it always seems that it was bigger, especially the yard where I played football with my friends. Not far from it was a small pond where we played with paper boats. I remember each corner of my old house, but my favourite place was the window in the living room. From this window I could see the rain in the summer time, and I could feel the freshness of the streets. Moreover, from this window I could admire the stars in the dark sky. For all these reasons this house occupies a special place in my heart.

(b) MILK: THE PERFECT FOOD _____

Milk is one of the most important sources of nutrition for human beings and animals. It is the first food provided for newborn babies because milk contains a large variety of nutritional constituents, and at the same time it is easily digestible. Milk is about 13% solids, and the solids contain 3.3% protein, 5% carbohydrates, 4% fat, and many vitamins and minerals. Moreover, milk protein contains all of the essential amino acids like casein and lactobacillus. Lactose is the principal carbohydrate of milk, and milk is the only source of lactose in nature. Milk also contains all of the known vitamins. For all of these reasons, milk consumption is the keystone of human beings and animals.

4. Define the rhetorical mode of description and find samples of it in English fiction.
5. Which feature differentiates narration from description? Substantiate your answer with samples of English fiction.
6. Define the rhetorical mode of exposition and select a few fragments from English fiction to illustrate linguistic specificity of expository writing.
7. Show the specificity of interior speech by considering relevant extracts from English fiction. Which varieties of interior speech do they illustrate?
8. What makes dialogue different from interior speech?
9. What is the function of the author's remarks? What kind of literature abounds in them?

10. Pick out examples of represented (free reported) speech from the story by H. Munro "The Lumber Room". In what respect does this rhetorical mode differ from the interior speech of the characters?
11. What are the two main methods of characterizing a literary personage? Illustrate each with examples from English fiction.
12. Find some fragments of fictional writing in English where a personage is characterized through different kinds of actions.
13. Read an extract from the work of fiction you are currently studying and find the language markers characterizing the personages' conversational style, emotional state, attitudes, educational level, origin, nationality, social standing and idiolect.
14. Find examples of psychological portrayal and analysis of motive in a work of English fiction.
15. Find a description of a character's appearance and comment on the artistic details used by the author.
16. Give an example of using a foil for characterizing a protagonist.
17. Give examples of *antonomasia* from English fiction and comment on the effects of its usage.

MODULE 5

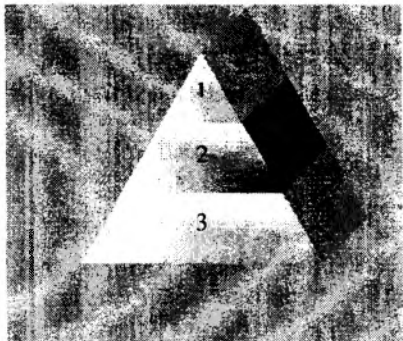
1.10. Images

Images in fiction are carriers of the writer's subjective attitude to things described, thus always being loaded with emotion. Besides evoking visual pictures in the reader's imagination, they also arouse the feelings of warmth, compassion, affection, delight, or dislike, disgust, resentment in him.

The reader's emotional response is triggered by the words which the author uses in creating images. However, the reader actually responds not to the words themselves, but the images which these words create. Quite often a reader cannot remember the exact words which helped him to create an image in his mind, but the image itself stays clear and powerful.

As Joseph Conrad puts it, a writer creates images by means of commonplace words that we all use, "the old, old words, worn thin, defaced by ages of careless usage... My task, which I am trying to achieve, is by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel – it is before all, to make you see. That – and no more, and it is, everything."

The images of a literary work form a system, a hierarchy. The simplest are *micro-images*, which are implemented in a single word or phrase. The images of the highest complexity are called *synthetic* since they are formed by the whole of the literary work. In between these extremes are the so-called *extended images*. This hierarchy is graphically presented in Fig. 1.4, where simpler images occupy less space in the pyramid than more complex ones.



- 1- micro-images
- 2- extended images
- 3- synthetic images

Fig. 1.4. The hierarchy of images

The character-image (synthetic image) is generally considered to be the main element of a literary work. *A character* is a participant in the story, and is usually a person, but may be any personal identity, or entity whose existence originates from a fictional work or performance.

The images of things and landscapes are subordinate to the character-image. *Landscape-images* are usually introduced to establish the setting, to create a certain mood or atmosphere. Yet even a landscape-image, as well as an animal-image, may become central.

Characters may be of several types.

In most literary works, one character is central – it dominates the story from beginning to end. Such a character is called *the main (central, major) character*, or *the protagonist*. The main character may also be called *the hero / heroine* if he or she really deserves to be called so.

The antagonist is the personage opposing the protagonist. *The villain* is the character with obviously negative features. In some works of fiction the author would draw two characters with distinctly opposing features – one character serving as *a foil* to the other.

When a character expresses the author's viewpoint directly, he is said to be *the author's mouthpiece*.

If a character is built on one or a couple of features, he becomes a type or a caricature. *A type* is a bearer of features characteristic of a certain social group or class. *A caricature* is a depiction of a character in an exaggerated way, so that he appears ridiculous, distorted, yet recognizable.

Characters can be static or dynamic. A character who does not significantly change during the course of a story is called *static*, a character who undergoes character development during the course of a story *dynamic*.

1.11. Language

Interpretation of a work of fiction presupposes close attention to the language or the literary work. The scope of language analysis is ample, and thus it might be worthwhile to be guided in this process by the following aspects of the work of fiction which are related to the corresponding linguistic disciplines (for details see the Appendices):

Aspects of language analysis of a work of fiction:

- phonographic
- morphemic
- lexical
- semantic
- syntactic

1.12. A work of fiction as an artistic whole

A literary work is an artistic whole in which all the elements considered above – the characters, the plot, modes of expression, the language, etc. – work together. The writer makes use of different linguistic and extralinguistic elements, carefully planning them to fit one another in order to achieve his aim – to convey his message and have an emotional effect upon the reader.

All the elements of a literary work are relevant to its message, which together with the theme unifies these elements into an artistic whole.

Tasks to Module 5

1. Look up the word *image* in several dictionaries and compare the results of your search. Do all definitions indicate that an image carries an imprint of the author's emotions? Comment on your findings.
2. What kind of image occupies the lowest position on the hierarchy of images in a work of fiction? Expand on it in some detail.
3. What kind of image is the main element of a work of fiction? Give examples.
4. Give some examples of landscape-images and try to establish their functions.
5. When can we call the central character a hero? a protagonist?
6. Is the villain always the antagonist? Is the opposite true?
7. Give an example of a literary character who is the author's mouthpiece.
8. Give an example of a type character. What feature is it built on?
9. Give an example of a caricature personage. What is the feature put to ridicule?
10. Analyze the language of the work of fiction that you are currently studying in class according to the scheme offered in 1.11. It would be better to go over the information presented in Appendices A and B first.

PART 2. WRITING ABOUT FICTION

MODULE 1

There are different ways of writing about fiction. We are going to consider three of them – a summary, a book report and an essay. These “analytical” genres differ in the degree of creativity involved, which is the lowest in a summary and the highest in an essay.

2.1. Summarizing and interpreting: Knowing the difference

To summarize a work of literature is to tell its plot – the sequence of actions that it represents. Summarizing, in fact, is one way of writing about literature, and a good way to test your understanding of what happens in a literary narrative. Summarizing a story also helps you to identify crucial moments in its development.

But to interpret a work of literature, you need to do some jumping of your own. You need to jump off the track of chronological sequence – one thing after another – and consider the meaning of particular events. That is, interpretation aims not to retell the plot of the story but to show what conclusions we can draw about its meaning.

Many good essays on a work of literature include summary – enough to situate the reader in the world of the text so that he or she can follow the writer's argument about it. The opening paragraph of the sample essay (see 2.4), for instance, summarizes Meridel Le Sueur's "The Girl" before stating a thesis about its meaning. But plot summary will not pass for interpretation. To see whether or not you are confusing the two as you write, check the first sentence of each of your paragraphs. If it merely states a fact about what happens in this story, you are falling into summary.

Compare these openings:

PLOT SUMMARY: After hearing that Catherine will accept Linton's proposal, Heathcliff runs away into the night.

ANALYSIS: In running away after hearing that Catherine will accept Linton's proposal, Heathcliff reveals his bafflement and desperation.

2.2. Writing a summary

A summary is a brief composition that gives the most important points of a longer work. To write a summary, you must first read the original work carefully, deciding which points are most important. Then you must write the summary in your own words, being careful not to omit important information or to add any ideas of your own.

2.2.1. Pre-writing

(a) Read the source (for instance, a short story) at least twice. The first time, skim the story, reading it quickly and noting its overall organization and most important points. The second time, read it more carefully, looking for supporting and

main ideas. Read the introductory paragraph slowly and thoughtfully, since the whole point of the story is often expressed there in a general way. Read the final paragraph in this manner also; it often sums up the main idea.

An important critical thinking skill in writing a summary is analyzing ideas to determine their relationships. You must distinguish between the main ideas and the supporting ideas, or details.

To begin analyzing relationships among the ideas, identify the main theme of the story. It is the most general statement that you can make when asked, "What is the story about?" Next, locate *the message*, or *the main idea*, i.e., the most important point the author makes about the topic. Finally, identify *supporting ideas*, or *details*, which may describe, explain, exemplify, or support the main ideas.

(b) Take notes

When you take notes for a summary remember to:

- use a dictionary to look up unfamiliar words or phrases
- identify your source correctly
- follow the pattern of organization used in the source
- put ideas into your own words instead of copying
- use words or phrases, rather than sentences and use abbreviations
- if you use a direct quotation copy the writer's exact words, enclose them in quotation marks and give the page number on which the quotation appears.

(c) Evaluate the importance of ideas. A summary includes all the ideas of the literary work you are summarizing, that is, the main idea as well as the most important supporting details. To evaluate the importance of details, think of theme, message, and supporting details as occupying different levels on a branching, or tree, diagram which is presented graphically in Fig. 2.1.

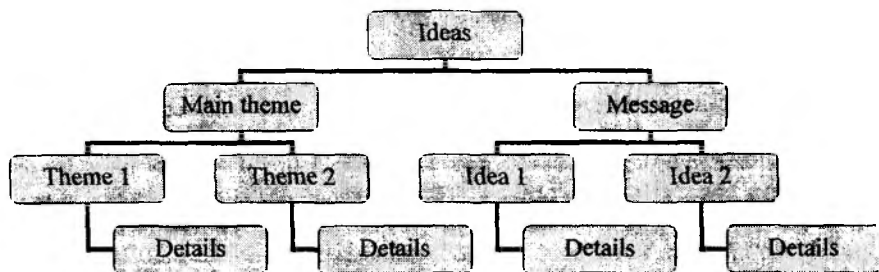


Fig. 2.1. The ranking of ideas

At the top of the diagram is the most general term – “Ideas”. The theme and the message are branching from it on a lower level. The third level is formed by other themes and ideas which develop the main theme and the message. The fourth level includes details about other themes and ideas, and so on.

Note that you have now arranged the ideas in *a descending order*, i.e. proceeding from the most general ones to more specific.

In writing a summary your goal is to cover only the most important points. As details become more and more specific, as they occupy lower and lower levels, they become less important to understanding the main points in the article.

2.2.2. Writing

Put aside the story and use your notes to write the summary. Don't begin with “This story is about...”; instead, begin directly: “Capital punishment, which is the death penalty for crime, has existed long as there have been laws and courts...”

As you write your summary, remember to:

- state ideas clearly and briefly
- present ideas in the same order used in the original story
- include all important ideas but do not add ideas not in the story
- keep your summary to one-fourth or one-third length of the original story

Task 1. Summarize a fragment, from the literary work you are currently studying, making it one-third of its length. Be sure to indicate the number of words at the end of your paper.

2.2.3. Revising and evaluating

To be a good writer, you need to develop the ability to look at your work critically. It is often easier to recognize the strengths and weaknesses in another writer's work. You should, therefore, try to read a draft you are self-editing as if it had been written by someone else. If possible, put your first draft away for a day or two so that you see it more objectively. Skim once more the story you summarized, this time comparing your summary with it. It sometimes helps to read your draft out loud. You might hear problems with the flow of ideas that you would otherwise miss. A good way to self-edit your draft is to check it out several times.

Guidelines for revising summaries

Theme:	Does the summary identify the theme of the story?
Message:	Does the summary include the story's message?
Other themes:	Does the summary include other themes?
Order:	Does the summary present points in the order in which they are given in the text summarized?
Paraphrasing:	Is the summary written in the writer's words, not those of the original work? Are quotations included correctly?
Length:	Is the summary one-fourth to one-third the length of the original piece?

Task 2. Select a three- or four-paragraph passage from your textbook. Read the selection, take notes, and write a summary. To determine the importance of ideas, prepare a four-level tree diagram before you write. Revise the summary along the guidelines above.

Peer editing is sharing a draft of something you have written with another student or a group of students. You reader's questions and comments give you valuable information about your draft. For instance, a peer editor can tell you whether your main idea is clear, whether your organization makes sense, and whether your details are interesting. A peer editor can also point out those parts of a draft that are written especially well. Positive feedback is often as useful to a writer as negative criticism.

Peer editing is most helpful when you are revising a draft for ideas and for form. Remember that you want your peer editors to react primarily to your ideas and how you present them, not simply to point out mechanical errors.

Task 3. Take a draft of a summary you wrote. In order to gather comments about your work, use both self-editing and peer-editing. Begin with peer editing. Work with a partner or in an editing group. Then self-edit the draft. Study the comments you have gathered and use them to revise your draft.

MODULE 2

2.3. Writing a book report on a novel

A book report is an expository composition in which you explain your understanding and evaluation of a book. In your English classes, you are infrequently set a task to write a book report on a novel. This task requires you to use many of the reading, thinking and writing skills you have learned. In planning and writing a report on a novel, you should include the same steps as in working on a summary: prewriting, writing, revising and evaluating.

2.3.1. Prewriting

(a) Determining audience and purpose

As you begin to plan your book report, consider your audience and purpose. If you are writing a report to be read only by your teacher, your purpose will probably be to demonstrate how well you understand the novel and how thoughtfully you evaluated it. If, on the other hand, your report will be read by your peers, your purpose might be to encourage (or discourage) their reading the novel. Your audience and your purpose will affect your choice of the book (if you are free to make a selection), the details you will be alert to as you read, and the way you will use details in the report.

(b) Reading the novel and taking notes

Read the book carefully, noticing the settings and moods that the author creates, the characters and how they are developed, the plot, the author's tone, and the dominant theme/s of the novel.

To be sure that you remember details, take notes as you read.

As you take notes for your book report, ask yourself the following questions:

- Who is the audience for this report?
- What is the purpose for this report? (to show how well I understand the book? to interest others in reading the book?)
- What opinions about the book will I include in this report?
- What incidents, statements, or other details from the book I use to support my opinion?

Although you may wait until you have finished the book, an effective approach is to write notes after reading each chapter or some other division of the book.

(c) Developing a working plan / an outline

Follow the steps that you use in writing any longer composition. With your audience and purpose in mind, determine the main idea that your report will develop. State this idea clearly as your thesis. List the details from your notes that will support and illustrate your thesis. Arrange your details in an appropriate order.

An outline has a balanced structure based on the principles of Parallelism, Coordination, Subordination and Division.

Parallelism. Whenever possible, in writing an outline, coordinate heads should be expressed in parallel form. That is, nouns should be made parallel with nouns, verb forms with verb forms, adjectives with adjectives, and so on.

E.g. Nouns: *computers, programs, users*;

Verbs: *to compute, to program, to use*;

Adjectives: *home computers, new programs, experienced users*.

Although parallel structure is desired, logical and clear writing should not be sacrificed simply to maintain parallelism, i.e. there are times when nouns and gerunds at the same level of an outline are acceptable. Reasonableness and flexibility of form is preferred to rigidity.

Coordination. In outlining, those items which are of equal significance have comparable numeral or letter designations: an *A* is equal to a *B*, a *1* to a *2*, an *a* to a *b*, etc. Coordinates should be seen as "having the same value." Coordination is a principle that enables a writer to maintain a coherent and consistent document.

Subordination. In order to indicate levels of significance, an outline uses major and minor headings. Thus in ordering ideas, you should organize it from general to specific or from abstract to concrete – the more general or abstract the term, the higher the level or rank in the outline. This principle allows your material to be ordered in terms of logic and requires a clear articulation of the relationship between component parts used in the outline. Subdivisions of each higher division should always have the same relationship to the whole.

Division. To divide you always need at least two parts; therefore, there can never be an *A* without a *B*, a *1* without a *2*, an *a* without a *b*, etc. Usually there is more than one way to divide parts; however, when dividing, use only one basis of division at each rank, and make the basis of division as sharp as possible.

2.3.2. Writing

You have completed prewriting for your report. Now you are ready to draft the first version.

As you write this first draft, three things are important:

- keep your audience in mind
- keep your purpose in mind
- follow the details and order of your working plan

2.3.3. Revising and evaluating

An important aspect of evaluating your book report is checking to see that you have written more than a plot summary. A good report reveals enough of the plot to

give the audience a general idea of the story. However, a book report has a purpose beyond this – for example, to encourage others to read the book, to analyze the theme, or to evaluate the style.

Guidelines for revising book reports on novels

- Purpose:** Does the report have a clear purpose that suits the intended audience?
Plot: Is there sufficient information about the plot to acquaint the reader with the novel?
Details: Does the report go beyond plot summary to fulfill a specific purpose?
Development: Is this purpose well developed with specific details that are logically ordered?

Task 4. Using a novel assigned by your teacher or one of your own choosing, follow the steps for planning and writing a book report on a novel. Before you begin, study the following sample book report.

Charles Dickens certainly knew how to snare a reader's attention and hold it to the very end of his novel. In "A Tale of Two Cities" Dickens created a masterful story by combining unforgettable characters with suspenseful action. As if this were not enough, he included one more element, the romance of heroic love. Readers who like any or all of these qualities will be absorbed in reading "A Tale of Two Cities"

The story takes place in England and France in the eighteenth century. It opens with a mysterious episode of a man's being "recalled to life". That early event draws the reader into mystery, espionage, the cruelties of war and imprisonment, the joys of friendship and love. The plot weaves back and forth among different generations of people, all of whom are caught in some way in the drama of the French Revolution. The novel ends somewhat the way it began, with another episode of a man's being "recalled to life".

One of these characters whose life is part of the Revolution is a woman named Madame Defarge. She is the wife of a wine shop keeper. At first she puzzles the reader. Each time she is

the main idea

the first point of development

*the second point of development
the purpose of report*

*this paragraph acquaints the
reader with the plot*

an unforgettable character

why readers remember her

present in the story, she is sitting behind the counter in the wine shop, observing everything, saying little, and always knitting. As the plot unfolds, the reader begins to fear Madame Defarge; she is cruel and without pity.

By the end of the novel her personal history is revealed; the causes of her cruelty are terrible. Many readers end up feeling deeply sorry for her. Whether one's response is fear or pity, no reader forgets Madame Defarge or her knitting.

There are many levels of love in the novel. *heroic love*
In many instances the love demands heroism. To save her daughter's happiness, Dr. Manett *example 1*
courageously goes back into his fearsome past.
Lucie braves the frenzy of maddened *example 2*
revolutionaries to stand each day where her prisoner husband might get a glimpse of her and their little girl. It is Sydney Carton, though, whose *example 3*
love reaches astounding heroism. He speaks love just once in the story, but the message of his love is the most often quoted line from this moving novel.

Charles Dickens fills the imagination and *restatement of the main idea of*
memory of his readers. They are caught in the *the paper*
movement of the Revolution. They see, hear and feel with the characters. They never forget the love with which the novel reaches its bittersweet ending.

Task 5. Use the guidelines above to evaluate your book report. Then revise the draft. When you are satisfied with your revised draft, prepare a final copy. Always proofread the final version.

Task 6. Either use a novel you have already read and remember well or select a new novel. First, write a summary of the novel, then write a book report on it (the purpose of the book report is to interest your classmates in reading the novel). Be prepared to discuss the differences between your summary and your book report. What information did you include in the summary that you did not include in the book report? What ideas did you discuss in the book report that you did not put in the summary?

2.4. Writing an essay on a work of literature

An essay has been defined in a variety of ways. One definition is "a short piece of writing which often presents the personal point of view of its author".

It is difficult to define the genre into which essays fall since they can deal with literary criticism, politics (manifestos), learned arguments, observations of daily life, recollections, reflections of the author, etc. Aldous Huxley, a leading essayist, gives guidance on the subject. He notes that "Like the novel, the essay is a literary device for saying almost everything about almost anything, usually on a certain topic. By tradition, almost by definition, the essay is a short piece, and it is therefore impossible to give all things full play within the limits of a single essay".

In some countries, essays have become a major part of formal education. In both secondary and tertiary education, essays are used to judge the mastery and comprehension of material. Students are asked to explain, comment on, or assess a topic of study in the form of an essay. So-called academic essays, which may also be called "papers", are usually more formal than literary ones. They may still allow the presentation of the writer's own views, but this is done in a logical and factual manner, with the use of the first person often discouraged. Longer academic essays (often with a word limit of between 2,000 and 5,000 words) are often more discursive. They sometimes begin with a short summary analysis of what has previously been written on a topic, which is often called a literature review.

2.4.1. Pre-writing

Pre-writing an essay about a work of literature is in some ways like pre-writing an essay on any other topic. But since writing about literature makes its own peculiar demands, you will do well to consider the following.

(a) Noting significant detail

Provided you own the text you are reading, you should feel free to mark it and make it your own. Watch for significant detail: words, phrases, and images that tell you something revealing about the main character, the theme, or the central conflict in the work. Read the following story by Meridel Le Sueur. Underline or highlight significant items and write your comments in the margin.

THE GIRL

She was going the inland route because she had been twice on the coast route. She asked three times at the automobile club how far it was through the Tehachapi Mountains, and she had the route marked on the map in red pencil. The car was running like a T, the garage man told her. All her dresses were back from the

cleaner's, and there remained only the lace collar to sew on her black crepe so that they would be all ready when she got to San Francisco.

She had read up on the history of the mountains and listed all the Indian tribes and marked the route of the Friars from the Sacramento Valley. She was glad now that Clara Robbins, the math teacher, was not going with her. She liked to be alone, to have everything just the way she wanted it, exactly.

There was nothing she wanted changed. It was a remarkable pleasure to have everything just right, to get into her neat fine-looking little roadster, start out in the fine morning, with her map tucked into the seat, every road marked. She was lucky too, how lucky she was. She had her place secure at Central High, teaching history. On September 18, she knew she would be coming back to the same room, to teach the same course in history. It was a great pleasure. Driving along, she could see her lean face in the windshield. She couldn't help but think that she had no double chin, and her pride rode in her, a lean thing. She saw herself erect, a little caustic and severe, and the neat turn-over collar of her little blue suit. Her real lone self. This was what she wanted. Nothing messy. She had got herself up in the world. This was the first summer she had not taken a summer course, and she felt a little guilty; but she had had a good summer just being lazy, and now she was going to San Francisco to see her sister and would come back two days before school opened. She had thought in the spring that her skin was getting that papyrus look so many teachers had, and she had a little tired droop to her shoulders and was a little bit too thin. It was fine to be thin but not too thin. Now she looked better, brown, and she had got the habit of a little eye shadow, a little dry rouge, and just a touch of lip-stick. It was really becoming.

Yes, everything was ideal.

(b) Recording your personal reactions

It is often helpful to set down on paper your first reactions to a text: any thoughts or questions that occur to you as you read. Here, for instance, is what one student wrote after first reading the opening paragraphs of "The Girl".

What to make of this "girl"? Something of a puzzle. Wants a little adventure, so she goes through the mountains, but has to be sure there'll be no surprises. So she's got to know just how many miles it is and have the route marked in red, "every road marked," and learn all the history. Nuts about order – "nothing messy" in her life. Just imagine what she'd say if she saw my room! And you'd think she'd be looking forward to seeing San Francisco – the Golden Gate and all that – but no, she's looking forward to coming back – to teach the same course in the same room!

A loner, too. Doesn't even want her girl friend with her, and no thoughts of a man in her head. But she likes her looks, likes looking at herself in the mirror. Does she unconsciously fantasize about some sort of romantic adventure?

"Everything was ideal." Yeah – perfect. Too perfect. She must be headed for some sort of mess.

(c) Choosing and refining your topic

Choosing a topic for an essay about a work of literature begins with choosing the work itself. If you are given a choice among those you have read in a course, take the work you like best – the work you find most interesting. That is the one you are most likely to enjoy writing about. If you are assigned a specific work to analyze, of course, you can proceed at once to the task of defining your approach to it.

The longer the work, the greater the need to concentrate on a specific part or feature of it. If you're writing a short essay on "Moby-Dick", for instance, you can't possibly treat the novel as a whole, or trace the full development of its major character. You need to focus on a chapter, on a minor character, or on some recurrent feature of the whaling voyage, such as the "gams" – the occasional meetings between ships at sea. Whatever you choose to examine closely, ask yourself how it helps to reveal the theme of the work – as you interpret it – or its major conflicts.

Suppose you decide to write about Chapter 36 of "Moby-Dick", in which Captain Ahab tells his crew that their whole purpose must be to hunt the great white whale. This chapter dramatizes a conflict that is central to the development of the novel: the conflict between Ahab and Starbuck, his first mate. Ahab's obsession with revenge at any cost collides with Starbuck's practical concern for safety and profit. So your topic (and a working title) might be "Revenge and Practicality in Chapter 36 of "Moby-Dick".

Another way of approaching the choice of a topic for an essay on a long work is to think of the general ideas you want to explore, and then choose a specific part or feature of the work to explore them in. Suppose, for instance, you want to analyze Ahab's defiance of warnings against his pursuit of revenge. If you anchor this general topic to one or more of the chapters about gams, your topic might then be "Warning and Defiance in the Gams of "Moby-Dick".

Besides looking for something specific to write about, look for something interestingly problematic: something that provokes a question you would really like to answer. If Ahab is obsessed with a purpose that is manifestly irrational and dangerous, how does he persuade the crew to follow him? If Starbuck makes good sense, why does he fail to match Ahab's influence on the crew? The search for answers to questions like these should lead you to a thesis that does far more than state the obvious. In fact, if such questions stir your own interest in the topic, you're much more likely to produce an essay that interests your reader.

If you are writing about a short story, you can certainly choose a topic that includes the whole work, but you will still need to identify the basic idea – or better still the basic conflict – that your paper will explore.

(d) Formulating a thesis

A good thesis about a literary work makes an arguable assertion about its meaning, or the way that meaning is shaped. It must be more than an inarguable statement of fact or a statement of your topic:

STATEMENT OF FACT: In Chapter 36 of "Moby-Dick", Ahab goads his entire crew to swear vengeance on the great white whale.

STATEMENT OF TOPIC: Chapter 36 of "Moby-Dick" is about the conflict between Ahab's lust for revenge and Starbuck's concern with practicality.

STATEMENT OF THESIS: In Chapter 36 of "Moby-Dick", Ahab's refusal to heed Starbuck's warnings about the folly of pursuing a single whale shows the intensity of Ahab's obsession with revenge.

STATEMENT OF FACT: In Gwendolyn Brooks' "Mrs. Small," the title character has to pay an insurance premium.

STATEMENT OF TOPIC: Gwendolyn Brooks' "Mrs. Small" is about the difference between male and female business.

STATEMENT OF THESIS: In Gwendolyn Brooks' "Mrs. Small," the superficial contrast between a man's business and a woman's absentmindedness gives way to the point that this woman's business is crucial to human life.

2.4.2. Writing: A sample essay on a short story

The following essay illustrates a method of critical analysis that focuses on the elements of the literary work itself. Specifically, the student author tries to show how the actions, descriptive detail, and dialogue of a short story all work together with the reported thoughts of the main character to reveal a central conflict within her.

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English 202
Professor Payne
26 October 2002

Desire and Repression in Le Sueur's "The Girl"

Meridel Le Sueur's "The Girl" is the story of what happens when a prim, unmarried, unnamed schoolteacher sets out to drive alone from Southern California to San Francisco on a bright, hot September day. Stopping for lunch at a service station, she reluctantly takes on a passenger – a muscular, sunburnt young farmhand who needs a lift to a bridge some fifty miles up the road. His personal remarks disturb and frighten her. When she stops the car at one point and he suggests that they lie down together in the shade, she silently refuses, drives on until she drops him off, and continues her trip. But the story makes it clear that in rejecting his desires, she also stifles her own, dooming herself to a life of repressive order in which she will "never never change" (212).

Her love of order and predictability shows up at once. Though taking the inland route in order to see something new (she has taken the coast route twice before), she has done everything she can to forestall surprises. Her neat little roadster is "running like a T" and her dresses are freshly cleaned. She has "asked three times at the automobile club how far it was through the Tehachapi mountains," has carefully marked on her map every road she will take, has studied the history of the mountains and made a list of its Indian tribes. Furthermore, rather than looking forward to any new experience, she relishes the thought that she will soon be

returning to her job, "coming back to the same room, to teach the same course in history" at Central High (204).

Her love of order goes hand in hand with an aversion to company. Initially, she is "glad" that Clara Robbins, the math teacher, is not with her, and she has no wish to take on anything or anyone else

Chat might be "messy" (204). When she first sees the young man at the service station looking for a ride, she instantly decides that "she wouldn't pick him up, that was certain" (205). Even after the station owner tells her that he knows the young man's family and can "vouch for him" the sight of his smiling, eager face makes her feel only that he and the owner both "want something": something other than the "mite of education" that the owner "cunningly" suggests she could give the young man on the ride (207). "Men like that," she says to herself, "hate women with brains. She trusts neither of them. Realizing "that she despised men and always had," she tells the station owner, "I don't like to drive with a strange man" (207)

In taking the strange man on, however, she not only yields to the station owner's urging. She also reveals something she can hardly admit to herself, let alone anyone else: a desire to attract men. We get a hint of this earlier, when we learn that she takes pride in her appearance. Looking at herself in the windshield, she admires her own "lean" face ("no double chin"), lightly tanned skin, and deftly applied makeup: "a little eye shadow, a little dry rouge, and just a touch of lipstick. It was really becoming" (204). During the ride itself, neither her fear of being touched nor her annoyance at being flattered "just as if she were any common slut" (209) can altogether keep her from showing herself off. When she feels her passenger inching toward her "as if about to touch her leg" (208), she shrinks away and draws her skirt down sharply. But minutes later, "she let her skirt slip up a little. She knew she had good legs, tapering down swiftly to her ankles" (210).

The powerful appeal of sexuality in this story is symbolized by the heat of the day and the mountains, which are repeatedly described in terms that suggest the human body. Before the woman has even seen the young man, the sun skines "like a golden body" and she looks "into the fold upon fold of earth flesh lying clear to the horizon" (205). Like the muscular, sunburnt man himself, the contours of the sun-baked land repel and arouse her by turns. At first appalled by the "terrifying great mounds of earth and the sun thrusting down like arrows" (205), she is gradually entranced by "naked" mountains, by "bare earth curves, tawny and rolling in the heat" (208). At the same time, she feels the glowing presence of the man like a force of nature, and she tries to slow down on the curves "so that his big body would not lounge down upon her like a mountain" (209). As that passage suggests, he never overcomes her fear. As long as he remains in the car, she feels frightened as if they were "about to crack up in a fearful accident" (209). Yet when she stops the car and he invites her to lie down with him, she is nearly overpowered by the combined effects of his body and the sunburnt landscape, which have now become virtually one: The rocks that skirted the road glistened like bone, . . . like the sheer precipice of his breast looming toward her so that she could feel the heat come from him and envelop her like fire, and she felt she was falling swiftly down the sides of him . . . and an ache, like lightning piercing scone, struck into her between her breasts (211).

This moment leaves her to struggle with two desires – the man's and her own. She thwarts his desire by simply pulling back from him "in hard resistance" (211). As soon as she does so, he withdraws from her "completely" (212) and gets out of the car by himself to catch a ride with a man driving a truckload of melons. Yet the melon that he gives her as he says good-bye symbolizes all he might have given her, and all she has refused: "some sumptuous feast she had been unable to partake of, the lush passionate day, the wheaty boy, some wonderful, wonderful fruit" (212). In rejecting the fruit of passion, she stifles her own desire.

As a result, she feels both "safe" and withered. When she stops the car after dropping off the man, she looks in the mirror and sees something quite different from what she saw in the windshield at the beginning of her trip. While she earlier admired her lean, well-made-up face, now she feels "like a stick" and looks "like a witch" (212). She is "safe – safe" from violation (212), but she also realizes that she is stuck in a life of sterility. In the end, the prospect of order and sameness gives her only a grim satisfaction: "She would never never change, pure and inviolate forever; and she began to cry" (212).

Works Cited: Le Sueur, Meridel. "The Girl." *Ripening: Selected Work, 1927-1980*. Ed. Elaine Hedges. Old Westbury: The Feminist Press, 1982. 204-12.

2.4.3. Avoiding Pitfalls. There are at least four common assumptions about writing about fiction **which** interfere with rather than help the writer. Learn to avoid them.

(1) **Plot Summary Syndrome:** assumes that the main task is simply recalling what happened in detail. Plot summary is just one of the requirements of writing about fiction, not the intended goal.

(2) **Right Answer Roulette:** assumes that writing about fiction is a "no win" game in which the student writer is forced to try to guess the RIGHT ANSWER that only the professor knows.

(3) **The "Everything is Subjective" Shuffle:** assumes that ANY interpretation of any literary piece is purely whimsy or personal taste. It ignores the necessity of testing each part of an interpretation against the whole text, as well as the need to validate each idea by reference to specifics from the text or quotations and discussion from the text.

(4) **The "How Can You Write 500 Words About One Short Story?" Blues:** assumes that writing the paper is only a way of stating the answer rather than an opportunity to explore an idea or explain what your own ideas are and why you have them. This sometimes leads to "padding," repeating the same idea in different words or worse, indiscriminate "expert" quoting: using too many quotes or quotes that are too long with little or no discussion.

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INTERNET RESOURCES

http://www.gale.cengage.com/free_resources/glossary/glossary_de.htm

<http://www.britannica.com/>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

TROPES = lexical / semautic stylistic devices (transposition of meaning)

FIGURES OF RELATION

FIGURES OF QUALITY

Metaphoric group (semantic transposition based on similarity of things)	Metonymic group (semantic transposition based on contiguity of things)	Mixed group	Identity	Opposition	Inequality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simile <p>e.g. <i>my heart is like a singing bird.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • metaphor - simple <p>e.g. <i>He is a mule.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sustained <p>e.g. <i>Night is creeping on its silent feet.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • epithet - metaphorical <p>e.g. <i>the dawn with silver-sandalled feet</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - syntactic <p>e.g. <i>the doll of a baby</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - constant <p>e.g. <i>merry old England</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - paired/chained <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personification <p>e.g. <i>Time, Death, Love</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • metonymy - a symbol <p>e.g. <i>the Crown</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - instrument for action: <p>e.g. <i>ear (= hearing)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - result for cause: <p>e.g. <i>to take the death (= the fishing hook)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - feature for person: <p>e.g. <i>the loud mouth (= the person who talks in a loud voice)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • synecdoche: <p>part for whole:</p> <p>e.g. <i>Cold hard eyes were around her.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allegory - proverbial: <p>e.g. <i>All is not gold that glitters.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - metaphoric: <p>e.g. <i>Every cloud has a silver lining.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - metonymic: <p>e.g. <i>to turn ploughs into swords</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - satirical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • antonomasia <p>- proper name for common noun:</p> <p>e.g. <i>He is the Napoleon of crime.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - common noun for proper name: <p>e.g. <i>his new acquaintance</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • joining words within a context: - paired synonyms: <p>e.g. <i>He was trembly and shaky from head to foot.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - synon. variation: <p>e.g. <i>education ... instruction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • substituting words: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - euphemisms: <p>e.g. <i>the lady of doubtful age (= not young).</i></p> <p>Cf. disphemisms:</p> <p>e.g. <i>to kick the bucket (= to die)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - periphrasis: <p>e.g. <i>the disturber of the piano keys (= pianist).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • joining words within a context: - antithesis: <p>e.g. <i>It was the age of wisdoms, it was the age of foolishness.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - oxymoron: <p>e.g. <i>Oh heavy lightness!</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • substituting words: - euphemisms: <p>e.g. <i>the lady of doubtful age (= not young).</i></p> <p>Cf. disphemisms:</p> <p>e.g. <i>to kick the bucket (= to die)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - periphrasis: <p>e.g. <i>the disturber of the piano keys (= pianist).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • internal (of feelings, opinions, etc.): - climax: <p>e.g. <i>I am sorry, I am so very sorry, I am so extremely sorry!</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - antichiasm: <p>e.g. <i>The woman who could face the devil himself -- or a mouse!</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • external (of objects, phenomena): - hyperbole: <p>e.g. <i>You couldn't hear yourself because of the noise.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - litotes: <p>e.g. <i>The face wasn't a bad one: it had wat they called charm.</i></p>

VOCABULARY

LITERARY

NEUTRAL

COLLOQUIAL

GENERAL / bookish / learned/ high-flown (known to all English speakers)	SPECIAL (known to limited groups people)	GENERAL / standard (used by all native speakers of English)	SPECIAL
<p>e.g. <i>perforation</i> = a hole <i>inhale</i> = to breath in <i>conflagration</i> = fire <i>an individual</i> = a person <i>to commence</i> = to begin <i>a rejoinder</i> = an answer <i>proliferation</i> = spreading <i>to be cognizant</i> = to know</p>	<p>1. Terms (technical words): e.g. <i>compass</i>, <i>to make a bid</i>, <i>triangle</i>, <i>vowel</i>, <i>stylistics</i></p>	<p>1. Colloquialisms: e.g. <i>dad</i>, <i>kid</i>, <i>fan</i>, <i>folks</i>, <i>guy</i>, <i>chap</i>, <i>chunk</i></p>	<p>1. Slang (can become general colloquial) e.g. <i>sky-scraper</i>, <i>cab</i>, <i>cop</i>, <i>movie</i>, <i>piano</i>, <i>swell</i>, <i>flue</i></p>
	<p>2. Archaisms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical words / historicisms / material archaisms (denote obsolete notions): e.g. <i>yeoman</i> = a free peasant, a landowner; <i>falconet</i> = a light gun • Poetic words (in XVII – XIX c.c. poetry, the Bible) (ousted by other words): e.g. <i>to deem</i> = to consider, <i>spouse</i> = husband, <i>woe</i> = sorrow, <i>realm</i> = kingdom • Archaic forms proper: e.g. <i>methinks</i> = I think, <i>maketh</i> = makes, <i>thou wilt</i> = you will, <i>oft</i> = often, <i>morn</i> = morning 	<p>2. Children's language: e.g. <i>tummy</i> = stomach; <i>kitty</i> = cat</p>	<p>2. Jargon words / jargonisms (unlike slang, these are used by a limited group of people)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional: e.g. military: <i>sewing machine</i> = machine gun, <i>chopper</i> = helicopter, <i>coffin</i> = plane • Student: e.g. <i>to cut</i> a lecture, <i>to swat</i>, <i>to cheat</i>, <i>math</i>, <i>PT</i>, <i>prof</i>. • Cant: e.g. thieves' jargon: <i>barker</i> = gun, <i>to bog</i> = to kill
		<p>3. Diminutives: e.g. <i>piggie</i>, <i>Bobby</i>, <i>Polly</i></p>	
	<p>3. Foreign words / barbarisms: e.g. Fr.: <i>protege</i>, <i>apropos</i>, <i>bonjour</i>, <i>chic</i>, <i>idee fixe</i>, <i>l'amour</i>; 4. It.: <i>dolce vita</i>, <i>bellissimo</i>, <i>concerto</i>, <i>finale</i>; Lat.: <i>alter ego</i>, <i>en extremis</i>; Germ.: <i>Kindergarten</i>, <i>gross book</i></p>	<p>6. Phonetic contractions: e.g. <i>feller</i> = fellow, <i>gonna</i> = going to, <i>won't</i> = will not</p>	<p>5. Dialectal words / regional dialects e.g. Southern: <i>fat</i>, <i>fox</i> – <i>vart</i>, <i>vox</i>; Cockney: <i>to say</i> = <i>sy</i>, <i>thank you</i>, <i>sitin'</i>; They are different from uneducated words: e.g. <i>ain't</i>.</p>

Навчально-методичне видання

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для студентів IV та V курсів кафедри англійської філології
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