

Analyzing Elements of Style
Diction, Syntax, Point of View, Tone, Mood, Theme

Diction = Word Choice & Figures of Speech

"The difference between the right word and almost the right word is like the difference between lightning and the lightning bug." Mark Twain

Is the diction mostly *formal* or *informal*? List five words/phrases from the story that illustrate your choice:

Choose one sentence from the story and paraphrase it using the *opposite* kind of diction: _____

Most of the meaning in the story is carried by words that are **monosyllabic / polysyllabic** (Circle one.)

List some words from the story that are...

...*connotative*: _____

...*cacophonous*: _____

...*euphonious*: _____

...*abstract*: _____

...*concrete/specific*: _____

Describe the descriptive *imagery* in the story: _____

Copy a sentence that illustrates the *imagery*: _____

List examples of...

...*similes* and/or *metaphors*: _____

...*personification*: _____

...*hyperbole* and/or *understatement*: _____

...sound devices like *alliteration* or *onomatopoeia*: _____

What is the **effect** (on the reader) of the **diction** in this text? Write a paragraph explaining your answer.

Analyzing Elements of Style

Syntax = Sentence Structure – Syntax controls verbal pacing and focus.

Examine sentence patterns and variety for their effects.

Are the sentences *simple and direct* or *complex and convoluted*? _____

Copy a sentence that illustrates the previous response: _____

Is there variety in the *sentence patterns*? _____

List examples of...

...*repetition*: _____

...*parallel structure*: _____

...*rhetorical questions*: _____

Point of View = The narrative voice (speaker) the author employs to tell the story

Be careful to differentiate the author (writer) from the speaker.

What is the *point of view* of this story? (Circle one.)

first person

third person limited

third person omniscient

Tone = The writer's attitude toward the subject, a character, a situation, or the audience

Tone is revealed not just through what is said but how it is said. Tone is reflected in the author's "voice."

Explain the speaker's attitude in the story? Does it change? How is it different than the writer's attitude?

Mood (Atmosphere) = The emotional effect on the reader

Describe the emotional *mood* (atmosphere) of the text: _____

Copy a sentence that illustrates this *mood*: _____

Theme = A statement about life, human experience, motivation, or condition that the text illustrates

List single-word subjects (topics) addressed in this story: _____

Choose one of these topics and write a sentence that indicates what the author is saying about it in this story:

How does the writer's style contribute to the theme of the story? On a separate page, write an essay that addresses this question. Use the information on this page to support your argument.