

How to read literature like a professor – part 1 essay sample

[Literature](#), [Fiction](#)



Chapter One- Every Trip Is a Quest (Except when It's Not)

In literature, a quest has 5 aspects. They are: our quester, a place to go, a stated reason to go there, challenges and trials, and the real reason to go. In Mark Twain's, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, our quester is Huckleberry Finn himself. Huckleberry Finn is unhappy with his life, and the way everyone is trying to make him be. He seeks adventures. A place to go is Jackson's Island. After running away, Huckleberry plans to live in Jackson's island, but plans change and eventually he finds himself heading down the Mississippi River with Jim. The stated reason to go there is that Huckleberry wants to escape the society that wants to civilize him. Challenges and Trials that Huckleberry encounters include Huckleberry having to travel down the river without anybody realizing that he has a runaway slave with him. In addition, he is "dead" so he can't tell anybody who he really is. Lastly, the real reason to go is that Huckleberry is learning about moral choices and responsibilities. This trip soon becomes a spiritual journey, where Huckleberry makes decisions that go against what his society tells him is right. Instead he listens to what he considers is best.

Chapter Eight- Hanseldee and Greteldum

Fairy tales are something most of us are very familiar with. Which is why when we read another work of literature, we can find elements from fairy tales fairly easy. For example, in, *Great Expectations*, by Charles Dickens, there are many fairy tale elements. Miss Havisham for instance, has fairy godmother qualities when she is first introduced into the story. This leads us to believe that she is the one who gave Pip his fortune, and also that she has

good intentions for Pip. However, towards the end of the story, we find out that this is not the case.

Chapter Ten- It's More Than Just Rain or Snow

Weather in literary works hardly ever just means that it's cold or hot outside. For example, in *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley and Bernie Wrightson, weather serves as a foreshadow to what is going to happen. For instance, on the night of William's murder, there is a big storm. This foreshadows the sadness and misery that will follow William's death. During warm weather, the characters tend to be happy. On the other hand, when the weather is stormy the characters tend to be sad or depressed.

Chapter Eleven- More Than It's Gonna Hurt You: Concerning Violence

In literature, there are two types of violence. There is the violence that characters produce to themselves or to other characters, such as bombing, stabbing, poisoning, hitting etc., and then there is authorial violence. Authorial violence is death and suffering that the authors create for the good of the story. In *The Great Gatsby*, both types of violence are present. Jay Gatsby "accidentally" kills Myrtle, which is actually not an accident. The author is the real murderer, he made Jay kill Myrtle for the good of the story. After finding out that Jay killed Myrtle, Myrtle's husband is outraged, so he shoots Jay. This is violence caused by the acts of another character.

Chapter Fifteen- Flights of Fancy

When a character in a book flies, that is a metaphor for escape of freedom. Human's can't fly, so when a character does this, it should be a hint that

there's something else happening. In the 1st Harry Potter book, Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, Harry Potter learns to fly with his new broom for the first time. This signifies freedom because Harry has just left his muggle family where he was mistreated, so by him learning to fly, this is an act of freedom.

Interlude-One Story

Archetype means a typical pattern, it could be a universal symbol or character. The mother figure is an archetype for example. In literature, the mother figure will typically be someone who guides or directs a child. In the stepmother role, this is someone who isn't very kind to their stepchild. The stepmother is an archetype that we see very frequently, especially in fairy tales. In Enchanted, Giselle is sent to New York by her evil stepmother, Queen Narissa. The stepmother in fairy tales is typically always evil. In Cinderella, she is treated as a slave by her evil stepmother. Or the classic Evil Queen from Snow White. The Evil Queen sends out for somebody to rip out Snow White's heart. These aren't exactly "loving" acts, which is why they fit into the stepmother archetype.

Chapter Twenty-Five- Don't Read with Your Eyes

Times have changed. Things aren't viewed the same way today as they were hundreds of years ago. In literature, this can confuse us while reading an older story, because the way people used to view things, or say things, is very different today. For example, in Mark Twain's, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. Huckleberry uses the word, "nigger" very frequently. Today, that word is considered racist and offensive. This can cause confusion

because Huckleberry is not supposed to be a racist character according to the plot. However, during the story's time period, "nigger" was actually a word that was very commonly used, so someone in the early to mid 19th century reading this book would have not considered Huckleberry to be a racist character based on his use of the word, "nigger".