Literature Analysis

Passage Analysis

The focus is not on offering your opinion about the work; rather, the focus is to interpret and analyse the text. You offer your informed opinion of the text’s interpretation, but you do not assess the merits of the text or tell readers whether or not you liked the work. You offer your informed opinion of the text’s interpretation, but you do not assess the merits of the text or tell readers whether or not you liked the work. Other features of literary analysis include a clearly stated thesis (often called a claim) that is supported by reasons and evidence from the text. Writers use present tense verbs to discuss the work rather than past tense.

In order to write well about literature, you must be able to read the text closely, looking at its structure, the words the author has chosen, the characters’ motivations, the patterns of language and literary devices.

You read closely and carefully, looking at not only what the writer is saying, but also looking at why it’s being said and how it’s being said.

Furthermore, the critical reading strategies that you employ in reading literature heighten your sense of observation and draw upon your life skills. For instance, as you read a literary text and notice the characters, you have to think about and respond to each character’s motivation construct a reasonable claim, supported by evidence and logic.

Setting Analysis

Can we gather any more information about setting? Time? Place? Ethnicity?

Does the setting hint at a social context/cultural context?

Character Analysis

What can we say about the characters?

Personality? Behaviours?

How have they developed?

How are they brought to life in our mind?

How does the reader respond to them?
Literature Analysis

Plot Analysis

What are the essential elements of the plot? 
( rising action, climax, falling action, resolution )

Foreshadowing?

Author Style and Language Analysis - Tone
Mood  Language, point-of-view, imagery, symbolism, other literary devices, use of repetition

First Impressions:
What is the first thing you notice about the passage?
What is the second thing?
Do the two things you noticed complement each other? Or contradict each other?
What mood does the passage create in you?
Why?

Vocabulary and Diction:
Which words do you notice first? Why?
How do the important words relate to one another?

Discerning Patterns:
Does an image here remind you of an image elsewhere in the book? Where? What's the connection?
How might this image fit into the pattern of the book as a whole?
Could this passage symbolize the entire work?
Could this passage serve as a microcosm—a little picture—of what's taking place in the whole work?
What is the sentence rhythm like?
What is the style like?
Look at the punctuation. Is there anything unusual about it?
Is there any repetition within the passage?
What is the effect of that repetition?
How many types of writing are in the passage?
(For example, narration, description, argument, dialogue, rhymed or alliterative poetry, etc.)
What is left out or kept silent? What would you expect the author to talk about that the author avoided?
Point of View and Characterisation:

How does the passage make us react or think about any characters or events within the narrative?

Are there colors, sounds, physical description that appeals to the senses? Does this imagery form a pattern? Why might the author have chosen that color, sound or physical description?

Who speaks in the passage? To whom does he or she speak? Does the narrator have a limited or partial point of view? Or does the narrator appear to be omniscient, and he knows things the characters couldn't possibly know? (For example, omniscient narrators might mention future historical events, events taking place "off stage," the thoughts and feelings of multiple characters, and so on).

Symbolism:

Are there metaphors? What kinds?

Is there one controlling metaphor? If not, how many different metaphors are there, and in what order do they occur? How might that be significant?

How might objects represent something else?

Do any of the objects, colors, animals, or plants appearing in the passage have traditional connotations or meaning?

What about religious or biblical significance?

If there are multiple symbols in the work, could we read the entire passage as having allegorical meaning beyond the literal level?