

DIDLS

Prose Analysis Method

Just as each of us has a particular, unique way of presenting ourselves, writers have unique ways of presenting themselves. Our personalities shine through the way we talk, the words we choose, the gestures we use, the clothes we wear. A writer has only language to express his/her personality. The qualities below are the basic elements of a writer's style.

Diction

What words does the author choose? Consider his/her word choice compared to other word choices. Why did the author choose that particular word? What are the connotations of that word choice?

Ex. Author 1: Bill was *unintelligent*. (relatively neutral, as far as intelligence goes)
Ex. Author 2: Bill was a *zipperhead*. (less of a low IQ, more like someone who acts like an idiot)

Images

What images does the author use? What does he/she focus on in a sensory way? The kinds of images the author puts in or leaves out reflect his/her style. Are they vibrant? Prominent? Plain?
NOTE: Images differ from detail in the degree to which they appeal to the senses.

Details

What details does the author choose to include? What do they imply? What does the author choose to exclude? What are the connotations of their choice of details? PLEASE NOTE: Details are facts or fact-lets. They differ from images in that they don't have a strong sensory appeal.

Ex. An author describing a battlefield might include details about the stench of rotting bodies.

Language

What is the overall impression of the language the author uses? Does it reflect education? A particular profession? Intelligence? Is it plain? Ornate? Simple? Clear? Figurative? Poetic?

Sentence Structure (syntax)

What are the sentences like? Are they simple with one or two clauses? Do they have multiple phrases? Are they choppy? Flowing? Is there antithesis, chiasmus, parallel construction? Are they loose or periodic? What emotional impression do they leave?