



## Asking Questions about Literature

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Listed below are some questions to help you develop a critical view of fiction, poetry, and drama. Use these questions as guides for reading and writing about literature.

### Writing about Fiction

- Who is telling the story?
- How would the story be changed if the viewpoints were changed?
- What is the tone of the story?
- Does the tone change with events or remain fixed?
- Who are the principle characters in the story?
- Do the characters change during the course of the story? How? Why?
- What is the plot of the story?
- What is the setting?
- Does the setting play an important part in the story?
- What is the theme of the story?
- How does the story begin, develop, and end?
- What are the lessons learned in the story?

### Writing about Poetry

- Who is the speaker?
- What does the poem reveal about the speaker's character?
- What is the speaker's tone? Is it consistent?
- Is the speaker addressing a particular person or thing? If so, who and why?
- Does the poem have a setting?
- Is the theme of the poem stated directly or indirectly?
- If the speaker is describing specific events, from what perspective is he or she doing so?
- Does the figurative language (similes, metaphors, personification) of the poem reveal any patterns? For example, do the words rhyme or repeat sounds? What is the effect?
- Does the poem have a plot?
- Are there images in the poem?
- Which images are based on the five senses?
- Do these images form a pattern? How is this accomplished?
- Does the poem contain any symbolism?
- If so, what do the symbols represent?

### Writing about Drama

- Who are the principle characters, and how are their distinctive qualities dramatically conveyed?
- Where is the play set?
- Is it significant that it is set there?
- What is the play's theme?
- How does the dramatic action embody that theme?
- What is the climax, or turning point, of the play?
- What is the result, or outcome, of the play?
- What decisions do the characters make, and what are the outcomes and consequences?