

CHECKLIST: ANALYZING FICTION

Narration

- What is the point of view? Who is the narrator?
- How would you describe the narrator's voice? What is the narrator's relationship to the story? Is the narrator reliable?
- To what extent does the narration (point of view and voice) effectively convey the story's meaning?

Setting

- What physical location is this? What does it look like? What details help us visualize the setting? How is the lighting? What are the dominant colors? What is the weather like? How would you describe the atmosphere?
- When does the story take place? What difference does it make to the story?
- How are the people behaving? How are they dressed?

Conflict and Plot

- What is the primary external conflict? The primary internal conflict?
- Are there other conflicts? If so, what are they?
- How would you support your identification of conflict by what is in the text?
- To what extent do the traits of the characters lead to conflict?
- Can you identify the plot? Does it conform to the traditional structure? If so, how so? If not, what is the structure?

Character

- What is your impression of the characters? What do the characters do that makes you feel this way? What do they say? What is said about them?
- To what extent are the characters motivated and consistent? Believable? Flat or stock characters?
- Who is the protagonist? One or more antagonists?
- What evidence from the text of the story supports your responses?

Language and Style

- Is the language formal or informal? In what way does the language tell you about the narrator or characters?

- Are there many instances of figurative language (imagery, simile, metaphor)? Is there a dominant symbol? Are there any other symbols? Explain.
- Are there instances of verbal or situational irony? Explain.

Theme

- What are the major details (characters, conflicts, outcome) of the story?
- What conclusion about the story did you draw from these details?
- To what extent does this conclusion lead to a generalization about life? What is the central idea or theme of the story?
- Is the story didactic? Does it reveal or does it preach? Explain.

Source: Madder, Frank. Exploring Lit.