Weekly Author Style Analysis

ANALYZE means taking the whole apart, or looking at the page as a whole (what is going on) and then taking it apart to see how that meaning was created.

When is it due? Thursday before you go to sleep.
Can I turn it in early? Yes. You can submit it any day during the week.
How long does it have to be? Between 250-500 words.
How much time should I spend on this assignment? About 20 minutes.
Why are we doing this? To slow down your reading once a week so that you can pay attention to how the ideas are created by authors; develop your literary analysis skills; develop your vocabulary for talking about literature and writing
Can I write about the same writing style features every week? No. Try to vary or combine writing style features from week to week. With only 250-500 words, there is not enough space to talk about everything each week.

Steps for a successful WRITING STYLE ANALYSIS:
1. Select just one FULL page from your book that was "good" (or not).
2. Look at the writing closely: syntax, punctuation, diction, imagery, dialogue, and sensory language. What stands out to you?
3. Take a picture of the page from your book that you are choosing to analyze with your phone or Chromebook and upload it into the analysis document
4. Requirements
   a. Picture of one page in the book
   b. Summary (about 50-100 words): Type a concise summary of the page or the pages leading up to this scene. Do not give your opinion or interpret, just state: Which characters are on this page? Where the scene takes place- inside, outside, home, school? When the scene takes place -- month, year, time of day? What is going on: what the characters are talking about, thinking about, trying to figure out?
   c. Identify features of the author's style and give several examples to show the feature's specific impact on plot or meaning(100-300 words)
   d. Discuss what the overall impact of the author's writing choices on the story and you as a reader, including a discussion of the story as a mirror (and its distortions) (about 50-100 words)

NAME OF BOOK, page

The title of the book is _____by _____. Here is a concise summary of the what is going on in the book around page _____, which I selected to analyze. The characters in this scene are _____.As for the setting, the place is _____; the time of year is _____, and the time of day is _____. Briefly, what's going on is _____.

A notable feature of writing on this page _____. Looking closely at this page, I notice _____; for example, _____. The impact of this is _____

Another notable feature is _____; for example, _____. The impact of this is _____
Overall, the author, _____, explores this scene with (features) to emphasize or show _____ (what details about the character, what atmosphere on the page, what information about the plot/setting, what mood for you, the reader).

On a personal note, this scene is a mirror (familiar in emotion, struggle, family issue, personal experience) for me as _____ because _____. This story reflects humanity's struggle with _____, too. It is a window, learning about people different from me, because it shows the identity group (race, ethnicity, gender, class, immigration, ability, geography) of _____, and what I am learning about this identity group from the story is _____
_____Finally,my favorite part was _____because _____

Features of Writing to Analyze

SYNTAX (the arrangement of words).
- Are the sentences short (5 words or less), medium (18 words), or long (30 words)? Is there variety?
- What type of sentence patterns: simple, compound, complex, compound-complex?
- What type of sentences: interrogative/questions, rhetorical questions, command/imperative, declarative, exclamatory sentences?
- **Ask yourself, what is the purpose of this syntax:** If there are a lot of short sentence, the pace may be faster. The writing or the character using simple sentences or short words might be called "economical" or "direct" or "cold" or "shy." If the sentences are long or paragraphs are long-winded, the syntax is expansive. This may mean that there is a lot of description, that the plot, time period, setting, or character is extremely important or detail oriented. It may mean that the character is unaware of how much he or she talks, maybe arrogant, perhaps very long-winded.

PUNCTUATION: Be on the lookout for anytime there is a form of punctuation other than a period or a comma.
- Is there an ellipsis (...)? **Ask yourself:** What was omitted with the use of that ellipsis? How is that different than if the author wrote everything out explicitly?
- Is there a dash? **Ask yourself:** Does it indicate an interruption or a clarification? If the author only uses one exclamation point, pay attention to that one. If the author uses ten, ask yourself why?
- If the author uses semicolons, **ask yourself** why not a period? Does the clause that follows explain the first? Is there a complex list being created? Does the narrator have lots of doubt in his/her personality, so he/she doesn't want to finalize a thought or commit to an idea, so their thinking is a singly monstrous sentence?

DICTION (word choice):
- Is the word choices formal, casual, slang, and/or geographic or class specific? Does it depend on the character in the dialogue?
- Notice a powerful, unusual, or unfamiliar word or phrase. What does it mean (look up its definition)? Does a word or phrase have a positive or negative connotation (mowing the lawn, slashing the lawn)?
- Is the vocabulary used by the author or characters simple or fancy; technical or flowery; local or cultural/geographic specific; cerebral (intellectual or philosophical); punning (funny, play on words); obscure (strange, innovative)?
- **Ask yourself**, why this is important to the plot, setting, or character? Does it teach us, create conflict, bond characters?

IMAGERY:
- Are there metaphors, similes, personification, hyperbole, apostrophe, oxymoron, and/or allusion (references to other texts, myths, famous figures, historical events)?
- Are places or objects symbolic -- as in representing the object and something abstract (like love, friendship, hate, change)? Is there a season or weather that could be use symbolically or for foreshadowing?
- **Ask yourself:** What is the connotation of these images? Is it a positive image or a negative image? What does it have to do with the conflict the character is trying to work through? Who or what is the image symbolizing (joy, hate, change)? What atmosphere does the imagery create: eerie, grim, whimsical, friendly, festive, serene, threatening, ominous, playful? What might the image foreshadow?

DIALOGUE:
- How often does dialogue (and not just regular narration) tell the story? Does the author show the reader whole conversations or just fragments? Does the syntax and diction of the dialogue match the character's age, geography, culture, personality in the slang/formality/knowledge he or she possesses in the book? Does the dialogue show characters interacting?
- **Ask yourself:** What does the dialogue reveal to or hide from the reader-- tension, love, history, perspective, problem-solving, discovery, character motivation?

SENSORY LANGUAGE:
- How much does the language call attention to the senses - smell, taste, touch/texture, sound, sights (colors, shapes, objects)? Do the actual words have musical qualities -- rhyming, alliteration, assonance, consonance, dissonance, rhythm?
- **Ask yourself:** What is the connotation (positive or negative) of the sensory language? What atmosphere does the sensory language create for the reader: eerie, grim, whimsical, friendly, festive, serene, threatening, ominous, playful? What does it foreshadow?

"Oh. Yes. It makes us sound intelligent," Alfonso said. He was not as successful in school as the rest of us. He was capable of getting straight As, but grades didn't come easy to him because he didn't have the time for homework and study. Having to work the fields with his father before coming to school and then going back out there again after the final bell would make anybody's grades drop. But he and his family believed in the power of education, so sounding intelligent was very important to him.

I nodded. "Yes, I like that," I said. "I like that a lot. But we need to concentrate on signs that show we want them to stop the raids and the roundups. That's the bigger issue here."

Natalia suddenly jumped in place. "Oh. Oh. I have a good one. *Stop the Raids! Stop the Heartbreak!*"

"That's really good!" Alfonso said. He turned to Gabriela. "We should definitely make that sign. I know a lot of people are heartbroken because their family members who have no documents to prove they belong here are getting rounded up and sent back. It's not fair. Some of these people were born here, but they lost their documents long ago or just never got registered with the county. These roundups are not just breaking hearts, they're breaking up familias."

"What about the disappeared?" Natalia whispered. "The ones being dragged out of their homes at night because they angered the wrong person? The ones not being given a chance to prove their citizenship? That's happening too, you know. Talk about heartbreak!"

"Lawmen don't care if we're heartbroken," I said. "We

The title of the book is *All the Stars Denie*d by Guadalupe Garcia McCall. Here is a **concise summary** of the what is going on in the book around page 67, which I selected to analyze. The characters in this scene are the main character Estrella and her friends (Natalia, Alfonso, and Gabriela). .As for the setting, the place is the courtyard of her school in Monteseco, Texas in 1930s. The time of year is the fall, and the time of day is in the morning before school. Briefly, what's going on is that Estrella and her friends are making signs to use during their protest march; they want to stop the raids against citizens of Mexican descent.

A notable feature of writing on this page is **dialogue.** Looking closely at this page, Alfonso, Estrella, and Natalia are figuring out what slogans to use on the signs. For example, Alfonso says he wants the signs to make them sound "intelligent," and Estrella agrees but wants the signs to communicate the bigger issue: stopping the raids. The impact of this is that Alfonso's longer paragraph of dialogue explains the impact of the raids on the people; for example, "Some of these people were born here, but they lost their documents long ago...These roundups are not just breaking hearts, they're breaking up familias." In addition, Natalia's dialogue tells readers about "the disappeared": "The ones being dragged out of their homes at night because they angered the wrong person..."

Another notable feature is the **syntax** the author uses for each character. For Natalia, she uses a lot of interrogative questions, which are more rhetorical: "What about the disappeared?" "The ones not being given a chance to prove their citizenship?" So lots of question marks, but she is really not asking questions but making a point. For Alfonso, in the middle of the page, he uses lots of sentence variety: a short sentence to make is point with "It's not fair"; a compound sentence to show effect -- "Some of these people were born here, but they lost..."; and even a complex sentence when he uses the word "because" to show why people are heartbroken. The impact of the syntax variation shows how characters think and communicate in this discussion about protesting.

Overall, the author, Guadalupe Garcia McCall, explores this scene with dialogue and character-distinct syntax to emphasize or show the characters' concerns regarding the raids in their town. For me, this conversation was didactic (teaching) in helping me learn about the discrimination against Mexican-Americans during The Depression while being effective in creating an atmosphere of urgency to stop the raids.

437 words