

Essay 1–Analysis of Narrative Technique

The Fairy Tales collected by the Brother's Grimm and others, have proven enormously and enduringly popular. "Ashputtel," "Hansel and Gretel," and "Jack and the Beanstalk" are among the most popular of them all. Select ONE of those three stories and write an analysis of how its narrative technique (plot structure, characterization, point of view, style, and so on) creates a unique experience for its reader. Focus on what it is about your chosen story that gives it a special appeal to readers. Your essay should be about 2-3 pages (500-800 words).

Your paper must have a **thesis** (an idea you intend to prove or demonstrate) and you must support your thesis with detailed evidence from the text; with very few exceptions, your evidence will consist of direct quotations from the story. Read the story closely, read it repeatedly, and select relevant details to support your assertions. Offer specific answers to the questions your paper asks. Here is a good rule of thumb: *Make sure that what you say about the story could only be said about that one story.*

In order to teach your reader something about the story, you must have something to say in the first place. So you need to develop a deeper understanding of the story than a casual reader would have. To do that you will need to look at the story closely and many times over, especially at the parts most relevant to your thesis. Although your analysis can address many different narrative techniques, you may want to focus on just the one or two techniques you find most interesting. Analyze those techniques carefully and precisely, and figure out how they work.

Everything you say in your analysis must relate directly to the actual words of the text. Do not get sidetracked; stick with the words. Focus on analyzing a particular story, not on Fairy Tales as a genre, or the culture that produced them, or on the moral messages they may or may not contain, or on anything else but the story in front of you. Here is another good rule of thumb: *Make sure that what you say about the story could not also be said about a plot summary of the story.*

Since you are writing for an audience who has already read and understood the story you will analyze, do not waste any time on plot summary or paraphrase.

Write your essay in classic prose style: clear and concise, specific and engaging. Don't waste my time and yours trying to sound impressive. Make every word count.

In evaluating your essay, I will focus on the intelligence and specificity of your ideas, the precision of your analyses, the clarity of your prose, and the originality and persuasiveness of your thesis.

Your only source for this essay will be the text of your chosen story. You can find “Ashputtel,” “Hansel and Gretel,” and “Jack and the Beanstalk” on the class website under Readings. (See <<http://drmarkwomack.com/engl-1302/readings/>>) You may download the stories from there or use another printed text of them to refer to in your essay. In either case, you must have a Work Cited page with proper bibliographic information on the text and parenthetical references with page numbers. Use proper MLA style for formatting your document. (See <<http://drmarkwomack.com/mla-style/>>: “Document Format,” “Anatomy of a Citation,” and “How to Quote Prose.”)

Due: February 19

Bring THREE copies of your essay to class for Peer Critiques.

Revision Due: March 1

Bring your Revised Draft, your Initial Draft with my comments on it, and all the Peer Critiques you received to class in a folder with your name on the front cover.