

An Introduction to Analysis

Decoding the What, How, and Why of a Work

AP English Literature

The WHAT

- ❖ surface-level understanding of the work
- ❖ the basic, non-disputable facts
- ❖ does NOT belong in a claim statement (topic sentence) or thesis
- ❖ *Pi is the lone survivor of the shipwreck.*
- ❖ *Werner escapes the cellar in time to rescue Marie-Laure.*

The HOW

- ❖ recognition of the author's craft; identifying the subtleties and nuances of the work's construction (lit. devices, narrative techniques)
- ❖ argumentative in nature—seeks to interpret basic facts
- ❖ DOES belong in a claim statement (topic sentence) or thesis—often the “how” answers the prompt.
- ❖ *Kambili has a complex relationship with her father that leads her to feel vulnerable and weak.*
- ❖ *For Marie-Laure, the sensations she feels, hears, and smells at the ocean symbolize her independence.*

The WHY

- ❖ deepest level of understanding; identifies the purpose, meaning, or theme underlying the text.
- ❖ argumentative—seeks to explain the rationale behind the how
- ❖ appropriate for a claim statement (topic sentence) or thesis; works well as a concluding thought too (end of paragraph, end of essay)
- ❖ *Etienne's ability to overcome decades of post-traumatic stress in an effort to protect his niece suggests that love can be more powerful than the strongest of fears.*
- ❖ *Pi's ordeal highlights the thin—sometimes indiscernible—line between man and beast.*

HOW and WHY together...

- ❖ *Martel's repeated descriptions of the ocean's vastness create a tone of serene reverence.*
- ❖ *The motif of locks and gates throughout the novel emphasize the different types of entrapment experienced by the main characters.*
- ❖ *Kambili's growing comfort with her own voice while in her aunt's home proves that past abuse does not have to define a victim's future.*

Don't worry if the line between "how" and "why" gets blurry — this is where analysis lives!

Analyzing a Painting

We'll work on applying these concepts during our analysis of "The Surrender" by Joseph Griffith. To reinforce the importance of multiple reads, we will view the painting several times.

- ❖ **1st view: 10 seconds**
- ❖ **2nd view: 30 seconds**
- ❖ **3rd view: 60 seconds**

Each time you view the painting, record the details you notice along with your thoughts. At the end of the activity, you'll compose what, how, and why statements with your group.



"The Surrender"

Joseph Griffith

Record what you saw and discuss
what you make of it.



"The Surrender"

Joseph Griffith

Add to your list of details. What did you notice this time? How does that change/affirm your original thoughts about the painting?



"The Surrender"

Joseph Griffith

What additional details did you notice on the third read? What connections can you now make? What are your final thoughts on the deeper meaning of the painting?

Put it in writing...

With your group members, work to compose 6 sentences:

- 3 WHAT statements
- 2 HOW statements
- 1 WHY statement

Use the previous slides for help if you need it.