

# LIDLIPS

## Close Reading of a Prose Passage

**Literal content**—Be sure you understand what is actually happening in the passage. If necessary, briefly note this in the margins.

**Important Details**—What has been included? What has clearly been excluded? This lends itself to theme considerations, understanding characters, studying the authorial voice, etc.

**Diction**—the connotation or associations of word choice

Different words for the same thing often suggest different attitudes toward that thing. (content vs. happy vs. ecstatic)

- a. monosyllabic or polysyllabic?
- b. colloquial (slang), informal (conversational), formal (literary), or archaic?
- c. denotative (exact meaning) or connotative (suggested meaning)
- d. concrete (specific) or abstract (general or conceptual)
- e. cacophonous (harsh sounding—k, t, p, ch, ow—croak) or euphonious (pleasant sounding—m, n, sh, l, ah—languid, murmur)
- f. overall use of language through narrator and/or character(s)

**Literary Devices** (tone, allusion, imagery, symbolism, metaphor, simile, etc.)

**Ideas**—What themes emerge in the passage? Is it complete? Or is it the beginning of an idea the author is exploring? Is it present in a character or a situation? How does it connect to other ideas in the passage?

**Patterns**—Consider patterns that exist as well as those that begin to form and are then broken. Look for patterns in images, characters, relationships, dialogue, figurative language, etc.

**Sentence Structure**—Are they long and flowing? Short and choppy? Fragments? How do they begin? Is there unusual punctuation? Is an emphasis placed on one or more? What effect does the sentence structure have on the tone?