Style Analysis
Determining Mood and Tone in *The First Betrayal*
by Patricia Bray

About this Lesson

One of the most frequently assigned essays in upper level high school English courses and college English courses is the style analysis essay. Students must become adept at not only identifying literary elements and devices, but at analyzing **how** those elements create meaning as well. In this lesson, students will discover how to determine a text's mood or tone by analyzing how an author employs patterns of diction, detail, figures of speech, and imagery. By using such strategies as graphic organizers, frame statements, and guided questions, students will gain the skills necessary to discover patterns in texts and to link those patterns to more abstract ideas concerning tone, purpose, or theme.

Passages for LTF® lessons are selected to challenge students while lessons and activities make texts accessible. Guided practice with challenging texts allows students to gain the proficiency necessary to read independently at or above grade level.

This lesson is included in Module 7: Determining Tone.

Objectives

Students will

- read and annotate a passage.
- determine the tone and mood of a passage by analyzing diction, detail, and figurative language.

Level

Grades Six through Ten

Connection to Common Core Standards for English Language Arts

LTF Foundation Lessons are designed to be used across grade levels and therefore are aligned to the CCSS Anchor Standards. Teachers should consult their own grade-level-specific Standards. The activities in this lesson allow teachers to address the following Common Core Standards:

Explicitly addressed in this lesson

Code	Standard	Level of Thinking	Depth of Knowledge
R.4	Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	Analyze	III
R.10	Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	Understand	II
L.5	Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.	Understand	II

W.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.	Create	III
W.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	Create	III
W.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.	Analyze	III
W.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.	Apply	III

Implicitly addressed in this lesson

Code	Standard	Level of Thinking	Depth of Knowledge
R.10	Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	Understand	II
L.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.	Understand	I
L.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.	Understand	I
L.3	Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.	Understand	II
W.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.	Create	III
W.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.	Apply	III
SL.1	Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.	Understand	II

LTF Skill Focus

The foundation for LTF English lessons is the Skill Progression Chart that identifies key skills for each domain, beginning with grade 6 and adding more complex skills at each subsequent grade level while reinforcing skills introduced at previous grade levels. The Skill Focus for each individual lesson identifies the skills actually addressed in that lesson.

Levels of Thinking					
Remember	**Understand**	**Apply**	**Analyze**	**Evaluate**	**Create**
Close Reading *written, spoken, and visual texts*		**Grammar** *purposeful use of language for effect*		**Composition** *written, spoken, and visual products*	
Reading Strategies Annotation **Literary Elements** Detail Diction connotation denotation Imagery Mood Tone tone determined through diction, imagery, detail, **Figures of Speech (Figurative Language)** **Literary Forms** Fiction				**Types (modes)** Expository analytical **The Process of Composition** Drafting timed **Structural Elements** Introduction thesis Body incorporation of quotes	

Connections to AP*

Style analysis of fiction is a skill necessary for success in AP Literature courses and success on the AP Literature exam.

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Materials and Resources
- copies of Student Activity
- copies of the excerpt from *The First Betrayal* by Patricia Bray

Assessments

The following kinds of formative assessments are embedded in this lesson:
- guided questions
- graphic organizers
- timed writing assignment

The following additional assessment is located on the LTF website:
- 2011 Free Response (Style Analysis) with Scoring Guidelines and Rangefinders.

T E A C H E R

Teaching Suggestions
Students should read and annotate the passage for words and phrases that are suspenseful before beginning the lesson. Teachers may wish to have students do the timed writing after they have completed Activity Four. For middle grades students, the activities in this lesson should be used as a whole group guided practice or small group guided practice activity and not assigned as independent practice until students are familiar with style analysis and revision.

Answers
Answers for this lesson are subjective and will vary. To obtain the maximum benefit of the lesson, ask students to go beyond the expected responses.

Activity One: *Concrete Elements: diction, imagery, figurative language; Abstract Elements: mood of suspense*

Activity Two: Answers will vary, but possible combinations might include: *howling, crashing, plunging; swallowed, devoured, consumed; terror, trembled, startled (emotional tone).*

Paragraphs will vary, but one sample paragraph might be:
Patricia Bray creates a mood of suspense by selecting words that convey a <u>menacing tone and forceful tone</u>. For example, the words <u>swallowed, devoured, and consumed</u> create suspense because <u>the threatening actions they represent. Once the action is complete, the object that received the action would cease to exist.</u> The words <u>crashing, howling, and plunging</u> also add to the feeling of apprehension because <u>they portray the forcefulness of the wind and rain that "plung[ed] Josan into darkness."</u>

Activity Three: *The sea <u>threatened</u>; the wind was <u>howling</u>; the angry ocean <u>swallowed</u> Answers will vary, but a sample response might suggest that the figurative language portrays the wind and water as some type of monster whose beastly behavior threatens the narrator's safety.*

Activity Four: Darkness**:** *(line 3) "plunging Josan into darkness," (line 19) "darkness engulfed him," (line 28-29) "darkness engulfed him" Light: (line 20-21) "a place of light," (line 22) "three great lamps," (lines 23-24) "filled the platform with their radiance."*
Answers will vary, but a sample response should recognize that the lighthouse is normally illuminated by the sunlight during the day and by "the great lamps" giving off "their radiance" at night. The contrast between the usual light and the utter darkness created by the storm adds to the mood of suspense in the passage.

Activity Five: 1. The student merely restates the prompt. 2. Answers will vary but the diction can be described as menacing, forceful, emotional; imagery of light and dark, animals or beastly creatures; 3. A sample thesis statement might be: In the excerpt from The First Betrayal, Patricia Bray creates a mood of suspense through the use of menacing diction and light and dark imagery.

Activity Six: 1. flickered, trembled, succumbing 2-4. Answers will vary, but the commentary should tell *how* the device creates suspense. 5. A possible topic sentence might be: The author's choice of menacing words conveys a feeling of dread in the passage.

Activity Seven: Answers will vary.

Style Analysis
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by Patricia Bray

One of the most frequently assigned essays in upper level high school English courses and college English courses is a style analysis essay. Consequently, it is very important for students to practice and perfect this mode of writing.

What is style analysis?
To "analyze" means to examine the component parts in detail to discover their relationship to the whole. Therefore, when writing a style analysis essay, you will examine the components that contribute to a particular style of writing and explain their effect on the literary selection as a whole. The literary components most often analyzed are diction, detail, imagery, figurative language, and syntax. You should learn to note an author's use of precise words and words with connotative meanings, concrete details, patterns of imagery and figurative language, and unusual syntax and to discuss how these elements contribute to the overall theme or tone of a passage.

Before writing a style analysis essay, you must clearly understand the specific directives of the prompt. Often a style analysis prompt will direct you to "analyze how the author uses literary devices." This or similar wording directs you to write an essay demonstrating how the separate components of diction, detail, imagery, and figurative language all contribute to the overall meaning or some aspect of a literary work.

Activity One: Analyzing the Prompt

In this excerpt from Patricia Bray's *The First Betrayal*, the narrator describes a character who is frightened during a violent storm. Using relevant quotations and insightful commentary, write an essay in which you explain how the author uses patterns of diction, detail, and imagery to create a mood of suspense.

Pre-AP* and AP* writing prompts ask you to use **concrete** evidence (e.g., figurative language, diction, imagery) to analyze an **abstract** idea or concept (e.g., tone, mood, purpose, or theme). When you read a Pre-AP or AP prompt for the first time, you should begin by identifying what concrete devices and abstract ideas you need to address in your essay.

Read the prompt again. Underline the concrete elements in the prompt and draw a box around the abstract idea or concept. Then write the concrete and abstract elements below:

Concrete elements:

Abstract elements:

Read the excerpt from *The First Betrayal* by Patricia Bray. Annotate any words or phrases that you think create suspense.

Excerpt from *The First Betrayal*
by Patricia Bray

In this excerpt from Patricia Bray's *The First Betrayal*, the narrator describes a character who is frightened during a violent storm. Read the passage below carefully. Using relevant quotations and insightful commentary, write an essay in which you explain how the author uses patterns of diction, detail, and imagery to create a mood of suspense.

The lantern flickered as a gust of wind blew through the lighthouse tower. Then the flame died, plunging Josan into darkness. His right hand searched the floor beside him
5 till he found the sparker, then he groped for the base of the lantern with his left. Using the edge of his cloak to protect his hand from the heated glass, he removed the chimney. His hand trembled so much that it
10 took three tries before he was able to relight the wick. Finally, it caught, and with a sigh of relief he carefully replaced the glass. The soft light illuminated the small platform for a few brief moments before succumbing[1] to
15 another draft. This time, Josan did not bother to relight it.

He told himself that he did not need to see, but could not repress the shiver of unease as the darkness engulfed[2] him.
20 Before tonight this had always been a place of light, the large windows letting in the daylight, and at dusk the three great lamps would be lit, powerful beacons that filled the platform with their radiance as they guided
25 ships far out at sea. But tonight the signal lamps were dark, for not even the most sheltered flame was proof against the howling wind. Now darkness had consumed the light, just as the sea outside threatened to
30 devour the tower.

In the dark, every sound was magnified as the rain lashed against the wooden shutters, and the merciless wind sought the cracks in his defenses. Strange drafts swirled
35 inside the tower and he drew his knees to his chest, pulling his coarse woolen cloak more tightly around him. The wind outside intensified, howling until he could scarcely hear himself think. From far beneath him he
40 heard a crash. Startled, he began to stand, then common sense reasserted itself and he resumed his seat. There was nothing he could do until the storm passed. Instead he listened intently, and underneath the sound
45 of the wind and rain he heard the relentless crashing of the waves. It sounded as if they were breaking all around him, and he knew the lighthouse was being swallowed by the angry ocean.

50 He wondered if the ocean would eventually release its prize, or if the stone tower would crumble beneath the fury of the storm. He tried to view his situation dispassionately, the question of his survival
55 as a mere intellectual exercise, but none of the tricks he had learned in his years of study could dispel[3] his fear. He could almost taste the terror as it rose up and threatened to overwhelm him, just as the sea threatened to
60 overtake the tower.

[1]**succumbing**: surrendering, giving in
[2]**engulf:** surround, swallow up
[3]**dispel**: chase away, dismiss

Activity Two: Analyzing Diction

Diction is an author's choice of words for an intended effect. When analyzing diction, students should isolate one connotative word and explain how that particular word helps the author achieve his or her purpose.

As you analyze the author's word choice, you should look for patterns or similarities between words. By making associations between words that a writer uses, you will be able to determine the tone the writer wants to convey to the reader. The following list of words can be used to help describe an author's word choice.
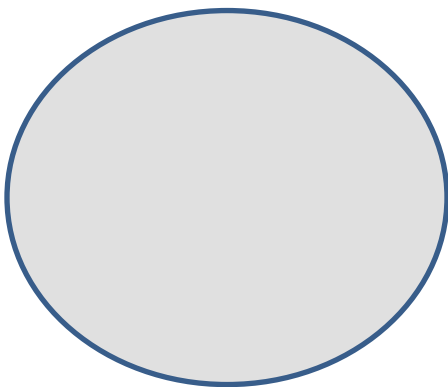
Words to Describe Diction:

concise, precise, clinical, ironic, poetic, plain, simple, emotional, forceful, natural, formal, literal, figurative, colloquial, humorous, extravagant, sentimental, euphemistic, harsh, menacing, vague, coarse, obscure, grotesque

The words listed below are used by Patricia Bray to create a mood of suspense. Select at least three words that are similar in meaning or have something in common and group them together in one of the circles below. Using the remaining words, create another group of similar words for the second circle.
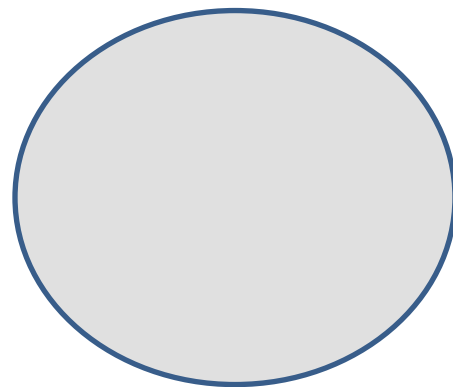
startled	crashing	angry
lashed	gust	relentless
engulf	groped	howling
flickered	consumed	unease
darkness	illuminated	devour
merciless	succumbing	trembled
terror	swallowed	plunging

The words in this circle convey
a _____ tone.

The words in this circle convey
a _____ tone.

Look at the associations you have made between the words in your circles. What type of pattern can you see in the author's choice of words? (Hint: You might refer to the "Words to Describe Diction" for help.) Discussing these words in the same paragraph will make your essay more coherent and clearly organized.

Patricia Bray creates a mood of suspense by selecting words that convey a _____

tone . For example the words _____, _____, and

_____create suspense because_____

_____

The words_____, _____, and _____

also add to the feeling of apprehension because _____

_____

Activity Three: Analyzing Figurative Language

Figurative language is not intended to be literal. Figurative language often involves an imaginative comparison between seemingly unlike things. The most common forms of figurative language are simile, metaphor, and personification. It is not necessary to identify and label the particular types of figurative language in your essay. It is, however, very important to recognize a writer's use of figurative language and the effect it has on the passage as a whole.

Fill in the blanks below to indicate the *figurative* action each subject is performing.

The sea_____ (line 29).

The wind was _____(line 37-38).

The angry ocean _____(line 48-49).

How does the figurative language used to describe the wind and the water create a feeling of

suspense? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Activity Four: Analyzing Details and Imagery

> *Imagery* consists of the words or phrases appealing to the senses—the descriptive diction—a writer uses to represent persons, objects, actions, feelings, and ideas. Imagery helps establish the mood and tone of a passage.
>
> A *detail* consists of words or phrases that are less appealing to the senses—facts or information—than imagery. Details can also help reveal the tone or attitude of the author.
>
> The line between imagery and detail is not always distinct. It is more important to understand how these elements contribute to the overall tone or theme.

When analyzing details, imagery, and figurative language, you should look for both patterns and contrasts. Complete the chart below with phrases from the lines in parentheses that indicate light and dark.

Darkness	Light
(line 3)	(line 20-21)
(line 19)	(line 21-22)
(line 28)	(line 23-24)

Follow the directive of the prompt—explain how the author uses patterns of detail and imagery to create a mood of suspense—to explain how the contrast between darkness and light creates suspense.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Revising and Editing Student Essays

> The remarks that explain or offer an interpretation of an author's literary style are called *commentary.* Commentary should provide the reader of the essay with insight or inferences that the essay writer makes after analyzing a literary selection.

Most students are able to write an effective thesis statement and select textual evidence that will support their thesis statement. However, many students feel frustrated when asked to write commentary about the evidence they have chosen to support the thesis. The purpose of this lesson is to help you avoid those feelings of frustration.

Often an essay prompt will require you to "explain how the author uses diction and imagery to achieve his purpose." To write an effective essay you must explain *how* a particular word (diction) the author uses helps to achieve his or her purpose or explain *how* a particular image the author creates helps to achieve his purpose.

To help you understand what effective commentary is, let's look at some examples of what effective commentary is not. All of the examples in the boxes below are from actual student essays.

Commentary is not offering suggestions…

Your job as a writer is not to offer suggestions for improving the text or to supply a list of words the author might have used in place of another word. This type of writing is called a literary critique rather than a literary analysis of a work.

> *"The author uses the word succumbing other [rather] than synonyms like surrendering or giving in to create a suspenseful interest."*

Commentary is not defining literary or rhetorical devices…

While it is important to be familiar with the names and definitions of literary terms, it is not necessary to define the terms in your essay. The reader of your literary analysis essay will be familiar with literary terms and will be more concerned with how you connect those devices to the meaning of the work as a whole.

> *"Diction, or the way the author uses word choice, is prevalent in this passage and seen throughout in many forms and fashions. Without diction, this story, as well as any other story worth telling, would be bland and dull. Diction adds details that describe a number of things."*

Commentary is not stating the obvious…

Your job as a writer is not to restate what the author has already said. You job is to analyze the author's word choice and writing style, and then to explain the effect these choices within the text.

> *"The wind outside intensified, howling until he could scarcely hear himself think." The text above is reffering to the wind as "howling" which is personification which creates suspense because it reffers to the wind as howling. Suspense is created through mainly the words intensified howling."*

Activity Five: Student Essay

> In the passage, *The First Betrayal,* Patricia Bray's use of diction, imagery, and details creates a mood of suspense.
> For example, in the first paragraph it says, "The lantern flickered." To me, that makes me feel scared because you don't know what's causing it and you don't know if the lantern is going to go out or stay lit. Later along it said, "His hand trembled so much that it took three tries to relight the wick." The first question I asked myself was why was his hands trembling in the first place? In lines twelve and thirteen it said the light was succumbing which means the light was giving up. Which is a form of personification.
> In line 17, "He told himself that he did not need to see, but he could not repress the shivers of unease as the darkness engulfed him. That means he was scared but he did not need to see.
> In the passage, *The First Betrayal,* Patricia Bray uses diction, imagery, and details to create a mood of suspense.

To be effective, a thesis statement should express the essay writer's opinion on the subject and not merely restate the prompt. By describing the writer's word choice or describing the type of imagery and details a writer uses, the essay writer offers an opinion he or she can then prove in the essay.

1. What is the student's opinion about the abstract subject (*the mood of suspense*)?

2. Select several adjectives that you might use, other than *suspenseful*, to describe the diction and imagery used by Patricia Bray in the passage._____

3. Rewrite the student's thesis statement to reflect your opinion of the author's word choice and patterns of imagery or details. _____

Activity Six
In paragraph two of the student essay, highlight all of the textual evidence (direct or indirect quotations) along with the words used to introduce the quote.

1. What three words has the student writer selected as textual evidence to show a mood of suspense? _____

2. What did the essay writer say about the word *flickered*? Does the essay writer's commentary explain how this word creates suspense? _____

3. What did the essay writer say about the word *trembled*? Does the essay writer's commentary explain how this word creates suspense? _____

4. What did the essay writer say about the word *succumbing*? Does the essay writer's commentary explain how this word creates a feeling of suspense? _____

5. This paragraph is missing the topic sentence. Write a topic sentence to support the thesis statement. The topic sentence should connect the three words used as textual evidence so that the paragraph will have a coherent, unified idea.

_____

_____

Activity Seven

The concrete task of the prompt is to explain how the author uses diction, imagery, and details. In Paragraph 3 the student writer does not indicate a specific word that creates suspense. Do you think that the textual evidence he or she selected is a better example of imagery or a detail?

_____

Complete the following chart

Textual evidence	How do these words create a feeling of suspense?
"shivers of unease"	
"the darkness engulfed him"	

Write a topic sentence for Paragraph 3. Remember that your topic sentence must explain or introduce a major point from the thesis statement.

_____

_____

Activity Eight
Rewrite the student essay so that the revised version will
- effectively address the writing prompt.
- provide effective analysis of diction, imagery, and detail.
- present supporting textual evidence and organization.