

What Is Literary Criticism?

Literary criticism is the study, analysis, and evaluation of literature.

Authors present us with work that can have multiple meanings, expecting us to consider thoughtfully—to interpret. Writers and critics build on each others' understanding of a work of literature in a kind of dialog. Good criticism can help us develop a better understanding of a work. It can help us develop a point of view about a work, whether or not we agree with the opinions of the critic.

As you work with literary criticism in your writing, it is important that you incorporate your own reactions and points of view.

Approaches to Literary Criticism

There are a variety of ways to analyze a text. Each approach offers a different perspective from which one can interpret the literature. Select the approach or approaches that best suit the work you are analyzing.

- I. Formalistic Approach**
- II. Philosophical Approach**
- III. Biographical**
- IV. Historical**
- V. Psychological**
- VI. Sociological**
- VII. Archetypal**
- VIII. Feminist**