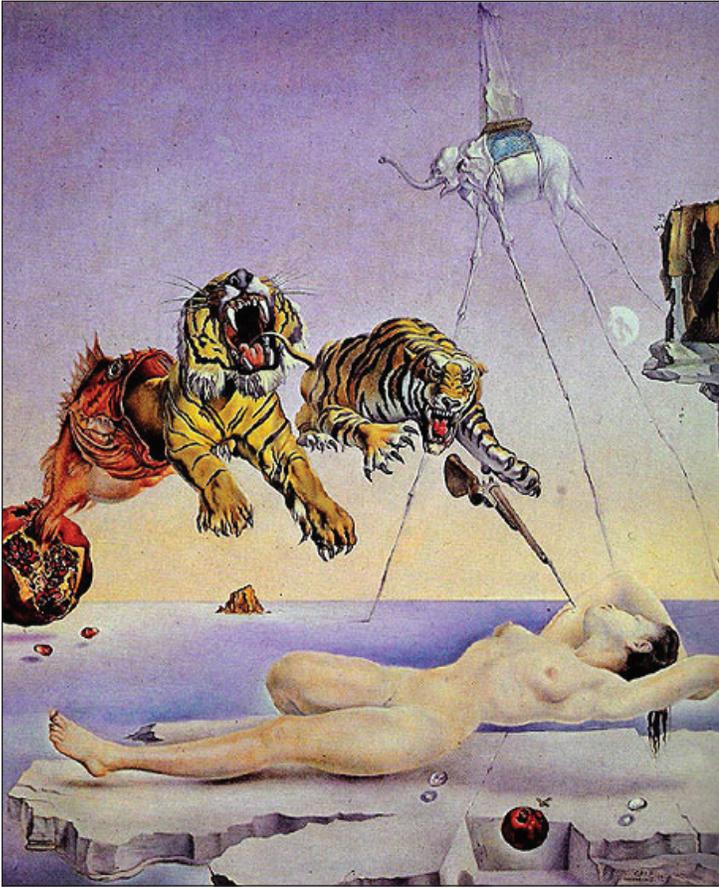


Summary vs: Analysis: A Visual Explanation



“Dream Caused by the Flight of a Bumblebee around a Pomegranate a Second Before Awakening” by Salvadore Dali (1944)

In your English classes, you will often be asked to **analyze a text**. Many students struggle with analysis and end up **providing a summary** of the text. Let’s examine how analysis and summary differ.

Summary: Providing a **description** of the **plot, characters, and other elements** so that another person can envision the story/art/movie/etc.

Analysis: Examining the **meaning** of a story/art/movie/etc and/or how the writer (painter, director, etc.) creates a particular effect on the audience by using various devices, such as **word choice, character relationships, narration, or other devices**. (In art, you would examine how the illustrator uses colors, lines, dominance, and other artistic devices to create an effect.) **Analysis will vary from person to person:** How you and I interpret a piece may be very different, and that’s okay as long as we back up our ideas with evidence from the book/film/art.

Summary of the painting (above)

The painting features:

- a thin, naked girl lying on her back and floating slightly above a piece of concrete
- a pomegranate floating nearby her
- a bee flying near the pomegranate
- a larger pomegranate in the distance
- an orange fish swimming out of the pomegranate
- a yellow tiger coming out of the fish’s mouth
- another yellow tiger whose tail is coming out of the other tiger’s mouth
- the second tiger is snarling and has its claws extended
- a shotgun floats in the air in front of the tiger
- the sky is indigo and yellow, almost like dawn
- there’s an elephant in the background with really long, skinny legs

Possible Analysis of the painting

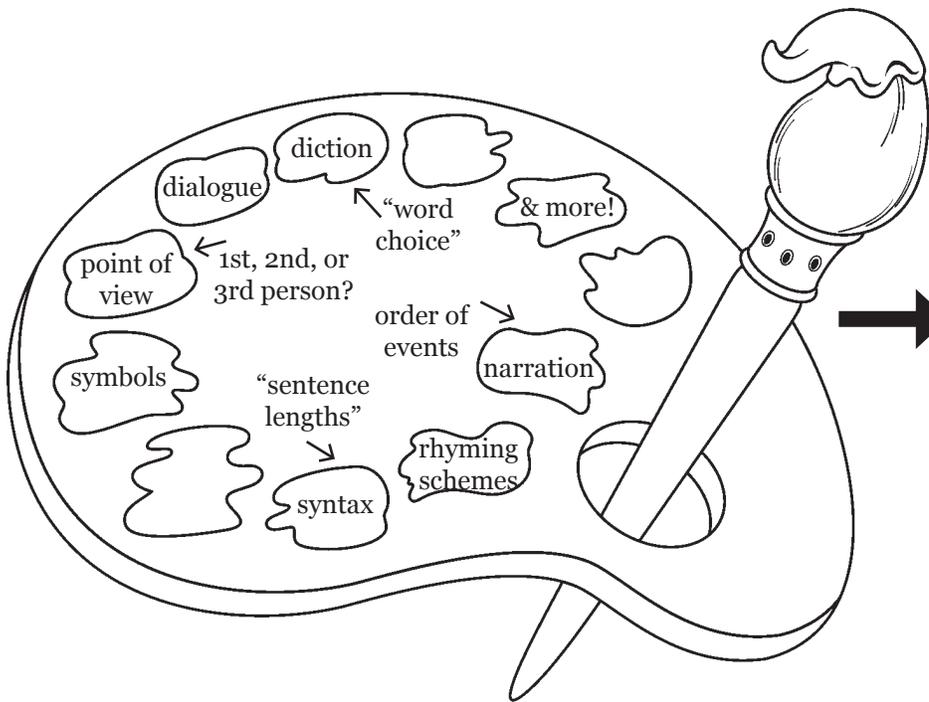
Dali’s painting **illustrates an evolution of violence**, from a piranha-like fish to vicious tigers to a gun, all aimed at a young woman.

The young woman **symbolizes vulnerability** because she is naked.

Dali **draws the viewers attention** to the pomegranate, fish & tigers by using bright colors (red, orange and yellow) against a dismal background (indigo, pale tan). So they are obviously important. (What do they mean?)

Dali uses **repetition** in his painting, such as the roundness of the two pomegranates and the moon, and the spindly legs of the elephant and the point of the shotgun. The tigers’ stripes also mimic the elephant’s legs. (Why are the elephant’s legs so long? What does that mean?)

An Author's Palette...



Authors use writing techniques to appeal to a certain audience and to achieve a purpose. They may want to persuade, entertain, or inform / teach — or a combination of these!

In literary works, authors also use their tools to create even deeper meanings beneath the surface of the story or poem.

As readers, we see/feel the effect or outcome of their techniques. For example, we may think an essay is very funny. When we analyze the work, we have to be able to explain what writing devices made it funny and why.

Consider this: If you had a wild, crazy spring break, how would you describe it to your close friends? Your parents? What would change in your diction or narration, for instance? What would be your purpose when you told your friends? How about when you told your parents?

How to Start Analyzing Texts

You have to do a close reading and annotate as you go. This is hard to do the first time — you will be new to the story!

We recommend that you plan on reading the text at least twice: once to fully understand the story and another time to focus on how the author used various literary techniques to achieve a goal. Remember, how s/he uses a technique affects the reader's perception. (Remember the spring break analogy?)

If you bought the book, we recommend writing in the margins and highlighting or underlining phrases that stand out to you. This is what "annotating" means. Now you are engaging with the text.

Example: Annotating a Text

Suggests father may be an alcoholic.

Death is usually negative, scary. Boy is afraid to go? Is it a boy? Who is "I"? The author? Someone else? First-person voice makes it feel personal.

Repeats "waltz" from the title. A romantic dance, yeah? Why use that? What does it symbolize for them? For the boy? Odd mixing with scary stuff.

Romped sounds playful, but pans falling? Abuse? Mother afraid to step in?

Holding him by the wrists sounds violent.

Every step reminds me of dancing... like the steps in the dance. Why would the boy want to be around? What is the author saying about kids who grow up in violent homes? Buckle = violence.

What does "beat time" mean? Beat = violent action. Beating time? What did it do to the boy? He grew up faster? Why does the dad have dirt on his

My Papa's Waltz
by Theodore Roethke

The whiskey on your breath
Could make a small boy dizzy;
But I hung on like death:
Such waltzing was not easy.

We romped until the pans
Slid from the kitchen shelf;
My mother's countenance
Could not unfrown itself.

The hand that held my wrist
Was battered on one knuckle;
At every step you missed
My right ear scraped a buckle.

You beat time on my head
With a palm caked hard by dirt;
Then waltzed me off to bed,
Still clinging to your shirt.

hands? Maybe look up info about the author of the poem to see if true...