

LITERARY DEVICE ENTRIES

Advanced Placement Literature and Composition with Mrs. O'Brien
Pelham Memorial High School

Based on your reading of any given text, you should make sure you are examining the artistry of the piece in addition to reading for plot development and analysis. How has the author crafted the story, novel or poem? To what extent are the literary devices used to enhance meaning in the piece? How do the devices contribute to the meaning as a whole? What is their significance?

STEP ONE: In order to provide a coherent discussion, you should first accurately IDENTIFY the author's use of the device by clearly DEFINING it. (While at times it may seem "too easy," this will prove helpful when examining more sophisticated devices and provide you with good review materials come exam time.)

STEP TWO: Provide an EXAMPLE of where the device appears in the text. Use a QUOTE and provide the page number (and line number if applicable).

STEP THREE: Provide your analysis in a discussion of the FUNCTION of the literary device. In order to provide a coherent discussion, your analysis must include the CONTEXT, CONCEPT and CONNECTION.

- **CONTEXT:** Essentially, set the scene. Provide necessary information about when the device is used.
- **CONCEPT:** Discuss the author's use of the literary device by analyzing the example you have provided.
- **CONNECTION:** Consider how the use of this device contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.

On the back of this page, I have written my own LITERARY DEVICE ENTRY in order to illustrate what I am looking for in regard to these assignments. I have used James Baldwin's "Sonny's Blues" since this is the first piece we are reading together.

Your Name

Mrs. O'Brien

English 12 AP

Date Due

Literary Device Entry: James Baldwin's "Sonny's Blues"

LITERARY ELEMENT: Symbolism. A symbol is anything that stands for or represents something else beyond it—often an idea conventionally associated with it.

The term symbolism refers to the use of symbols, or a set of related symbols.

EXAMPLE: "There was a long pause, while they talked up there in the indigo light and after awhile I saw the girl put a Scotch and milk on top of the piano for Sonny" (Baldwin 148).

FUNCTION: (CONTEXT) At the very end of "Sonny's Blues," the narrator sends a drink over to his brother Sonny after watching him play the piano. (CONCEPT) The milk within the Scotch drink symbolizes the milk of nurturing. In a way, this image echoes back to the narrator's mother's cautionary tale about the uncle—the message is to watch out for his brother—to look after him, and in a sense, protect him as a parent would for his child. (CONNECTION) At the end of the performance, the reader gets the sense that the narrator has gained some new insight about his brother. Here, he recognizes that there is merit in his brother's choice to play jazz music—rather than the suggested classical. What is more, he has formed a connection with his brother through this newfound understanding. The bond between them that was so broken before now stands a chance at being repaired. Sonny is the narrator's brother—the one he is going to protect from being a pile of blood and pulp in the streets.