



Tips for Studying Literature

In your language arts or English classes, you will study a variety of literature. This includes novels, short stories, and poems. Use the study strategies below to help you become a better reader. These strategies will help you to better understand the literature you read.

As you read, take notes on the literary elements below. Literary elements include story structure, such as characters, plot, and setting. They also include other elements, such as theme. You might also use the Story Map graphic organizer available on mySylvan to take notes on this information.

- Character—form an opinion of each character based on the following:
 - How the character looks
 - What the character says, does, thinks, and feels
 - How others talk about and treat the character
- Plot—note the parts of the plot:
 - Exposition—the beginning; introduction to the main characters and setting
 - Conflict—the middle; the problem that the characters face
 - Resolution—the end; how the conflict is solved
- Setting—note the setting; just as there can be more than one character, there can be more than one setting:
 - Where the story took place
 - When the story took place
- Theme—this is the main message of the story. Look for the big idea or topic around which the story is built.

Here are some added tips to help you study literary elements:

- Visualize the information.
- Read the information aloud.
- Create possible test questions and write sample answers.
- Study with a partner.

Examine the literary elements in the literature you read. Then, use the study tips to help you remember what you've learned. As you practice doing this, you will better understand the literature you read. This will help you succeed on literature homework and tests.