

A Checklist for Reading and Writing about Literature

- Give yourself to the reading the first time through and make your notes on the second reading.
- Remember that theme, symbolism, and language are concerns in nearly all literary works.
- When reading fiction, think about plot, character, setting, and point of view.
- Read poems aloud, and, as you do, think about meter and rhyme.
- Try to employ both factual analysis and informed speculation about the meanings in the work.
- Identify what interests or confuses you most, and use that as the basis of your analysis.
- Develop an essay on literature as you would other argumentative essays, with a thesis, evidence, warrants.
- Avoid mere plot summarizing and character analysis.
- Let the structure of your argument take priority over the structure of the text you are interpreting.
- Write in the present tense.

(From *Writing Worth Reading*)

Source: Clark, Irene L. *Writing in the Center*. 3rd ed. Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 1998.