

21st Century Literature from the Philippines and the World Unit 1: Contextual Reading Approaches

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GRADE 11/12 | 21st Century Literature from the Philippines and the World

UNIT 1

Contextual Reading Approaches



All literary texts were written by different authors with different background, culture, society, language, etc. On the other hand, you, as a reader, also differ from the writer and other readers of the literary text. This lesson will help you understand the different literary texts that you will encounter not only in this course but also during your leisure reading. This will help you understand texts based on their authors' biography, society, and language and how these factors connect to your own experience and reading.

Unit Objectives

In this unit, you should be able to:

- identify the different ways one may evaluate a literary text, specifically by examining its biographical context, sociocultural context, and linguistic context;
- distinguish various critical reading strategies; and
- analyze different literary texts through different contexts using different critical reading strategies.



Lesson 1: Literary Reading through a Biographical Context

While it is important to know the characters in a literary text, it is also essential for readers to understand the author's background. Through studying the author, they may be able to connect the characters and their morals to the author's life, and analyze the patterns of behavior shown between and among the characters, the author, and the reader himself. After all, it is through getting to know others that we also get to know ourselves better.

Essential Question

How does looking through the eyes of the author help us better understand the text?



Warm-up!



Inside-Outside Circles: Line up facing each other in two concentric circles. Students from the inside circle ask questions to the students from the outside circle. Take turns in asking and answering questions.

Questions that will be read by the teacher are based on the following: (1) personal beliefs, (2) religion, (3) family culture and tradition, (4) and

any other things about their lives.

Reflect on the following:

As you may have heard from what you have listened to from others, what made you understand your classmate/friend better? Do these personal beliefs affect their way of thinking and way of interacting shown in their daily activities?



Learn About It!

In your previous English and Filipino classes, perhaps you have been asked by your teachers to read about the author before reading his or her work. Some teachers ask you to read about the life of Francisco Baltazar before discussing *Florante at Laura*. This is because the author's life may affect his or her writing.

There are reasons to read literature through the biographical context (Gioia and Kennedy 2007):

- Understanding the author's life can help you understand his or her work thoroughly.
- Reading the author's **biography** or **autobiography** helps you see how much his experiences shape his or her work directly and indirectly.

Here are biographical strategies that you may use:

- Research on what the author believes in and also what he or she does not.
- Analyze how the author's belief system is reflected in his or her work.
- Look at the author's other works and analyze if there is a pattern with regard to the theme that is indicative of his or her life and beliefs.

When you are reading literature through a biographical context:

- In what **year** was the text written and published?
- Is there anything **significant** that happened in the **author's life** during this time? What were the **circumstances** that happened to the author before the writing of the text?
- Were there several **drafts** of the text? What can you say about the changes that the author made? What aspects do you think the author struggled with during the revision? What is the effect of the revisions to the published text?
- Are there **characters** and situations in the text that could be **representative** of or are similar to the ones in the author's life?
- How will knowing about the author amplify your appreciation of the work?

Vocabulary

- **biography** - comes from the Greek words *bios*, which means life, and *graphia*, which means writing; a detailed account or narrative of a person written by someone else
- **autobiography** - also a narrative of a person, but written by the person himself or herself

Take note of the following before reading a text through a biographical context:

- You should not assume that all works are confessional, biographical, or even “true to life.”
- A literary text is according to the author’s perspective and will be heavily influenced by him or her, but it is not the only way of studying literature.

Here are some examples of literary works written by authors of different backgrounds. In their sample writings, their personal stories and beliefs reflect the way they project the characters in their narrative:

1. “Under My Invisible Umbrella” by Laurel Fantauzzo is a literary essay that talks about a Filipino-Italian who was born in the United States. Because her features are more Italian than Filipina, she had encountered problems with people treating her as “extra special” in the Philippines, but she finds it more isolating than welcoming.

Fantauzzo’s way of writing reflects a lot about her personal encounters within the Philippines. To understand her essays better, the reader must know her background first so that they may know the reasons behind her dilemmas.

2. *Catch a Falling Star* by Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo is a collection of realistic short stories that revolve around a child character named Trissy or Patriciang Payatot. In the narratives, you would find out that Trissy is not much involved in outdoor games; she was more inclined to writing, paper doll making, and other simple crafts.

If one tries to research about the author, she may be classified as a female Filipino writer who belongs to the intellectual elite; that’s why her writings are influenced by upper-middle class situations.

Let's Check In!

Recall one of your favorite stories. Find out the life story of its author and answer the following questions:

- Describe the author of the story.
- What are some personal experiences of the author that affect his viewpoint in life?
- How are viewpoints reflected in one's writings?

**Check Your Understanding**

Answer the following questions:

1. What are the details that a reader should look for in reading an author's biography?
2. Why is it important to know the character and the author's life as well?
3. How can an author's belief system be reflected in an excerpt?
4. How can we gain more understanding by learning about the year a work was written and published?
5. If you were an author, how would you describe your main character?

**Let's Step Up!**

Recall one author of a favorite story or book you read. Search about his or her biography. How does his or her background and personal viewpoints in life affect the style and concept of his or her writing?

Let's Revisit The Essentials!

Go back to the essential question on the introduction page and discuss in class.



Lesson 2: Literary Reading through a Sociocultural Context

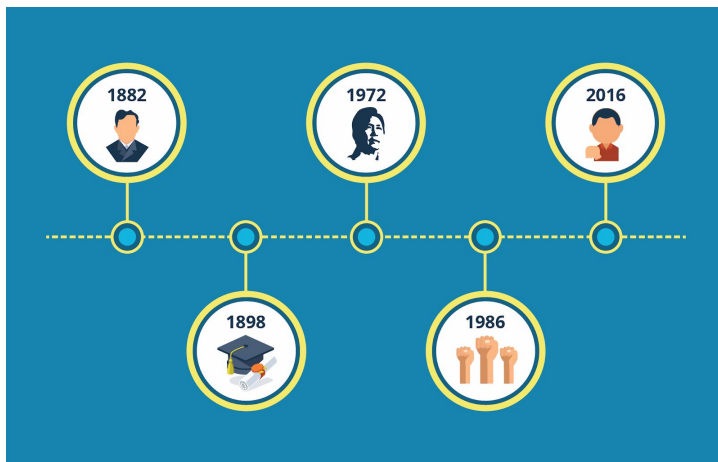
Aside from understanding a literary text through a biographical perspective, it is also important to note the year or period it was written. Readers would be able to identify the historical events that took place in that year. We would also find out the roots of an event's cause and the reasons behind the character's motives and interests.

Essential Question

Why would a particular event or an outside situation affect a literary piece?



Warm-up!



Quick Draws

Recall the timeline of Philippine history. Reflect on some events that may have transpired during those periods of time by creating a visual image that represents each of them. Share the images drawn and the ideas behind it with a partner.

What are some important events that took place in the following years? What would a third-person observer living in those times

have written about his or her situation?

- 1882 – Rizal, a well-known hero of today, leaves for Spain to pursue his studies.
- 1898 – Americans introduced formal education in the Philippines.
- 1972 – Ferdinand Marcos declared Martial law in the Philippines.
- 1986 – People Power Revolution took place among the Filipino people.
- 2016 – Rodrigo “Digong” Duterte was elected the 16th president of the Philippine Republic.



Learn About It!

According to the critic Wilbur Scott, “Art is not created in a vacuum; it is the work not simply of a person, but of an author fixed in time and space, answering a community of which he is an important, articulate part.” In reading using the sociocultural context, you will examine the factors that affect the writing of the literary text and how the work was received by the readers during the time it was written.

The following are reasons to read literature through sociocultural context (Gioia and Kennedy 2007):

- Reading using the sociocultural context helps you understand the social, economic, political, and cultural forces affecting the work that you are reading.
- Analyzing the sociocultural context of the text makes you examine the role of the audience (readers) in shaping literature.

How can we analyze a text through a sociocultural context? Here are guide questions that you may answer when you are reading literature through the sociocultural context:

- What is the **relationship** between the **characters** or the speakers in the text and their **society**?
- Does the text explicitly address **issues of gender, race, or class**? How does the text resolve these issues?
- Who has the **power**? Who does not? What is the reason for this setup?
- How does this story **reflect the nation**? What does this say about the country and its inhabitants?
- Who has the **economic or social power**? Is there oppression or class struggle? How do the characters overcome this? Does money or finances play a large role in the narrative?
- What is the **prevailing social order**? Does the story or poem accept or challenge it?

Vocabulary

- **literary theory** - refers to different schools of thought and body of ideas that can be used as a tool in understanding literary context
- **sociocultural** - of, relating to, or involving a combination of cultural and social factors

Take note of the following before reading a text through the sociocultural context:

You may use several sociological, economic, and cultural perspectives when reading using the sociocultural context. **Marxism** is one of the famous perspectives used for this reading. **Feminism, queer theory, historicism, postcolonialism,** and **New Historicism** are also perspectives or **literary theories** that you may use.

Perspective	Explanation
Marxism	According to the Marxist perspective, literature shows class struggle and materialism. Thus, it looks into the social classes portrayed in the work. It also looks into how the text serves as a propaganda material. It also examines oppression, social conflicts, and solution to these struggles as shown in the literary work.
Feminism	The feminist perspective examines the role of the women in the literature. It looks into how the female character may be empowered or discriminated against.
Queer Theory	The queer perspective is concerned with the queer or the third gender. The perspective itself was named in 1991. Under this perspective, the third gender, meaning the gay, lesbians, and other characters or persona in literature that may fall under queer are being examined.
Historicism	Historicism or traditional historical criticism is a perspective dealing with the history that influenced the writing of literature.
Postcolonialism	Postcolonialism is a literary perspective that looks into the changes in the attitude of the post colonies after the colonial period. Through this perspective, the dependence or independence of decolonized countries or people are being examined.
New Historicism	New Historicism is another perspective in the sociocultural context. It focuses not only on the history when the literary text was written, but also how the history happened. In New Historicism, the abovementioned perspectives can be integrated with each other.

When reading a text or writing a critique through the sociocultural context, **set aside your personal political ideologies**. Say for example, if you greatly believe that boys should only like girls and vice versa, it should not hinder you from analyzing a text using the queer theory in an objective way. Your personal ideologies may lead you to overread the text according to what you believe in even if the text is not related to your political inclinations. Do your best to

be unbiased in reading.

Let's Check In!

1. What are some popular movies we can watch and analyze through the Marxist, feminist, or queer perspectives?
2. What are some historical or biographical narratives that we can analyze through historicism, postcolonialism, and New Historicism perspectives?



Check Your Understanding



Fill in the blanks with the correct answer.

1. _____ is the perspective we can use to distinguish the roles of marginalized women in the society.
2. _____ distinguishes the social stratification between the capitalists and the working class, the ruler and its members, and the rich and poor.
3. _____ highlights the occurrences that take place after a certain period of outside influence in colonization.
4. _____ is the perspective used in determining a “coming-of-age” story where a character develops and unveils his desired identity.
5. _____ points out the effects of a government or political change taking place in a certain area.



Write the type of literary perspective suitable for each Philippine movie title.

- _____ 1. Jun Robles Lana's *Die Beautiful*
- _____ 2. Artikulo Uno productions' *Heneral Luna*
- _____ 3. Loy Arcenas's *Ang Larawan*
- _____ 4. Marilou Diaz-Abaya's *Muro-Ami*
- _____ 5. Rory Quintos's *Anak*



Watch or recall a movie or book that talks about a certain Philippine historical event. Answer the following questions:

1. What is the historical situation taking place?
2. What do you think is the prevailing social order shown?
3. What is the main idea or theme of the story?
4. How do the people during those times act? How do they differ from our generation?
5. How does the event affect the author and his perspectives about the situation?



Let's Step Up!

On a piece of paper, recall a movie that you watched in your previous history or literature classes. Write a short analysis about the movie using an appropriate literary perspective.

Let's Revisit The Essentials!

Go back to the essential question on the introduction page and discuss in class.



Lesson 3: Literary Reading through a Linguistic Context

According to David Richter, “Practically everything we do that is specifically human is expressed in language.” This is why literary texts can be read through the context of the language used to write the text as well as the way language is used in the text. This literary reading adheres to Roland Barthes’s famous maxim, “The author is dead.” Reading through a linguistic context focuses on the language used in the literary work and how it is used to convey meaning.

Essential Question

What is the importance of understanding the way language is used in a literary text?



Warm-up!



Think-Pair-Share

Listen to the most popular songs you know about. Share with your partner the meaning and symbolisms found in it.



Learn About It!

Here are some reasons to read literature through the **linguistic** context:

- Reading the text on its own, regardless of the author's biography and sociocultural context, may help you understand the literary text through analyzing the words, sentences, patterns, imagery, etc. of the text.
- Analyzing the literary text's grammar, **syntax**, or phonemic pattern may help you find the meaning of the text within its form and help you interpret it by simply analyzing the content of the literary work.

The following are some strategies you may use to read a text through the linguistic context:

- Analyze the **diction** or choice of words in the text.
- Examine the texts' **syntax** or use of sentences, clauses, phrases, line cuts, etc.
- Observe the use of **figurative language**.
- Analyze the **mood and tone** of the text.
- Observe the text's **overall structure**.
- Analyze the **content** of the text.

Here are guide questions that may help you when you read literature through the linguistic context:

- What were the **striking words** in the text? What words were unfamiliar to you? Which words attracted your attention? What words were dramatic?
- What nouns are the most prominent? Are these concrete or abstract nouns? What about verbs? Does the author use common words or lofty diction? Are the words short or long? Is there any word that has two or more meanings?
- Are the **sentences** in the usual **order** of subject-predicate? What are the dependent clauses? What are the independent clauses? If you restructure a sentence or a phrase, would it make a difference? Is the voice active or passive? Is there a rhythm in the sentence structure in relation to the length of the sentences or lines?

Vocabulary

- **linguistic** - of or relating to language or the study of language
- **syntax** - the study of how linguistic elements form phrases, clauses, or sentences

- What **literary devices** are used? Are there images? Do those images stand for anything aside from their literal meaning?
- What is the tone? Is the speaker happy about the subject? Is the tone negative or positive?
- What is the structure of the text? Is it a narrative? Is it linear or nonlinear? What is the point of view of the text? Is it a poem? What type of poem is it?
- Does the language help in delivering and understanding its content? Is there a theme? What is it saying about its subject matter? How do the literary elements contribute to the effectiveness of the text?
- What is the text saying about the world in general?

Take note of the following before reading a text through the linguistic context:

- Even if literature uses language, it does not mean that the structure of literature and the language are the same. Some writers **may not follow grammatical rules**, and this kind of deviation may be used in your analysis. You may ask, “Why is the text not following standard grammar?” and other similar questions.
- The **characteristics of the language** in which the text was written may help in analyzing the text. You may also ask, “Why is the text written in this language?”, “Is this considered a weak language or a strong language?” and other similar questions.
- You may consult literary approaches that focus on language. **Structuralism**, **poststructuralism**, and **formalism** have linguistic aspects. These approaches may lead you in your view of reading through the linguistic context.

Perspective	Explanation
Structuralism	Structuralism relates the texts being examined to a larger structure. The structure may be a particular genre, a range of intertextual connections, a model of a universal narrative structure, or a system of recurrent patterns or motifs.
Formalism (or New Criticism)	Formalism is a school of literary criticism and literary theory that focuses on the structure of a particular text. It examines a text without taking into account any outside influence.
Poststructuralism	Poststructuralism is the reaction to structuralism. In the linguistic context, there may be underlying structures that may have different interpretations based on how the words or phrases were used in the text.

Let's Check In!

What is your favorite song? What words from that song seem to be immortalized by time? What do these words mean to you?

**Check Your Understanding**

Below is a poem that Jose Rizal has written:

*Josephine,
Who to these shores came,
Searching for a home, a nest,
Like the wandering swallows,
If your fate guides you
To Shanghai, China, or Japan,
Forget not that on these shores
A heart beats for you.*

Analyze the poem through its literary context by answering the following questions:

1. What are the striking words used in the poem?
2. How many meaningful statements are used in the poem?
3. How were the lines cut? Did the line cuts help in conveying the message of the poem?
4. Are there rhymes? Is there a certain rhythm? How does the presence or absence of rhyme and rhythm help convey the message of the text?
5. What imagery was used in the poem?
6. What is the mood of the poem?
7. Did the use of language help in conveying the poem's message? How?



Let's Step Up!

Compare and contrast the expressions of love shown during the time of Rizal and the present time. How does distance and setting affect the language conveyed in one's literary work?

Let's Revisit The Essentials!

Go back to the essential question on the introduction page and discuss in class.



Lesson 4: Critical Reading Strategies in Literature

Sometimes, we read for entertainment, leisure and fun. It takes a keen observer and valid researcher to become a critical reader. Being a critical reader means that you do not aim to simply memorize facts and information in the text that you are reading. Being a critical reader means that you are looking for ways of thinking about the subject matter of the text that you are reading.

Essential Question

What does it mean to critique someone's work?



Warm-up!

Thought Balloon

Create an interpretation of the passage below stated by F. Sionil Jose. Write a response to the National Artist about whether you agree with him or whether you want to simply respond to his critical thoughts:

“We are shallow because our media are so horribly shallow. Every morning, I peruse the papers and there is so little to read in them. It is the same with radio — all that noise, that artifice.”



Learn About It!

To help you in your critical reading, listed below are the steps or modes of analysis that are reflected in three types of reading and discussion as presented by Daniel J. Kurland (2000):

- What a text **says** is the **restatement**. At first, you simply **talk** about the **same topic** as what is written in the original text.
- What a text **does** is the **description**. Next, you **discuss and examine** the **aspects** of the discussion or the **content** of the text.
- What a text **means** is the **interpretation**. As you read critically, you should **analyze** the text and **assert** a **meaning** for the text as a whole.

Vocabulary

- **critique** - a detailed analysis and evaluation of something
- **arguments** - a set of reasons given to prove a statement or a stand

Here are the three main goals of critical reading that require inference from reading within the text (Kurland 2000):

- First is to recognize the author's **purpose**, which involves **inferring** a basis for choices of content and language.
- Second is to understand the **tone** and **persuasive elements** of the text, which involves **classifying** the nature of language choices used by the author.
- Third is to **recognize bias**, which involves **classifying** the nature of patterns of choice and language used in the text.

The following critical reading strategies will help you cope with different reading texts:

- **Previewing**. Before you begin reading the text, preview it by gathering important information about it. Previewing helps prepare your mind for the barrage of information that is to come when you do the actual reading. When you preview a text, you skim it to get the big picture or an overview of the entire text. Consider the following:
 - ❑ Who wrote the text? What are the author's other works?

- Where and when was the text published? What were the major events around the time the text was written or published?
 - What can you infer about the text based on the title?
 - What seems to be the general progression or organization of ideas based on the chapter titles or section headings and subheadings?
 - What is your purpose for reading the text?
- **Annotating.** Annotating involves highlighting or making notes of important ideas in the text. This can be done by doing the following:
 - With a pencil or a pen in hand, underline important ideas such as the thesis, topic sentences, and key concepts. Also, highlight unfamiliar words so you can look them up later.
 - Make notes such as questions and comments or responses on the margins as you read.
 - Develop a symbol system. You may draw symbols to mark important words or sentences so that the text will not appear cluttered.
 - **Contextualizing.** When you contextualize, you consider the historical, cultural, or biographical context of the text. Identify the context(s) in which the text was written and determine how this context differs from your own. Keep in mind that your understanding of a particular concept is influenced by these contexts, in the same way that they influence an author's.
 - **Outlining and Summarizing.** Outlining and summarizing the text help you identify the main ideas in the text and express them again in your own words. In outlining the text, you identify the basic structure of the text (i.e., the main ideas and the supporting ideas) and make connections between those ideas. Outlining helps you understand how the author developed the text through the ideas presented. After making an outline, you can now summarize the text. Summarizing the text allows you to present your understanding of the text by reviewing and synthesizing important ideas, and then restating them in your own words.
 - **Analyzing.** Analyzing a text deals with examining the information presented to support the author's argument(s). In analyzing a text, you look at the evidence, sources, and author's bias(es). Consider the following questions:
 - Is there enough evidence to support the author's argument? Does the evidence

relate to and support the thesis or the main point the author is trying to convey?

- Are the pieces of evidence relevant, credible, and up-to-date?
- Are the sources of information credible?
- Why did the author take that particular position? What is the author's background that may have led to or influenced his or her position?

- **Rereading.** Rereading requires a repeated examination of the text to enable you to improve your comprehension of the text and to identify ideas that you may not have noticed in initial reading. Critical readers read the text more than once to fully grasp the meaning of the text and what the author is conveying.
- **Responding.** After you have developed a clear understanding of the text, you are now ready to respond to the text. Responding to the text means drawing meaning from what you have read and presenting it in writing or talking about it to others. When you respond to a text, you express your thoughts, feelings, and questions about the text. You can write why you agree or disagree with the text or the author's arguments, or you can interpret the text. You can also respond to a text by discussing it with others. Sharing the information that you gained from a text with others who have read the same text is a good way to check your understanding.

Let's Check In!

If you were asked to evaluate a text, how would you check the reliability of the information if there are multiple arguments given?



Check Your Understanding

Answer the following comprehension questions:

1. What are the strategies for critical reading in literature?
2. What is an "author's argument"?
3. In reading an article, how does a reader make a cross-reference?

4. In preparing for a debate or a thesis defense, what do you need to take note of?
5. Why is it important to ask questions instead of simply agreeing and believing?



Let's Step Up!

What does it mean to “agree to disagree”? Why is it important to filter all the information we hear? How does one become an effective critic?

Let's Revisit The Essentials!

Go back to the essential question on the introduction page and discuss in class.



Performance Task

Unleash Your Inner Historian!

Goal: Your task is to watch one of any of these movies related to Philippine history: (1) Lualhati Bautista's *Dekada '70*, (2) Ricky and Raymond Lee's *Anak*, or (3) Michiko Yamamoto's *Magnifico*. The goal is to analyze the movie according to its biographical, sociocultural, and linguistic context through critical reading and viewing.

Role: You are a 21st century historian/researcher who was tasked by the National Museum to conduct a critical study of the history behind the movie through utilizing the strategies of critical reading.

Audience: The target audience is high school or university students who will take a tour at the archives center in National Museum. You need to convince them that what are shown in the movies are based on historical events and situations that transpired in the past.

Situation: You need to research and learn about the past, particularly the period depicted in the movie you have chosen. The challenge involves dealing with critics who will tell you that you were not born yet when the incident happened. It also involves having to look through various sources and evaluating their credibility.

Product/Performance and Purpose: You will create a 3-5 page essay that analyzes the movie according to its biographical, sociocultural, and literary context. You need to develop this critical analysis based on the different schools of thought learned in this unit.

Standards & Criteria for Success: Your performance needs to have reliable and credible resources. Your work will be judged based on the set of criteria listed in the rubrics:

Criteria	Beginning (1-2 points)	Developing (3-4 points)	Accomplished (5 points)	Score
Content	The essay discusses only one to two scenes in the movie and does not analyze	The essay discusses only two scenes in the movie or discusses three scenes but does	The essay discusses at least three scenes in the movie and comprehensively analyzes them	

General		them through a biological, sociocultural, and linguistic context.	not thoroughly analyze them through a biological, sociocultural, and linguistic context.	through a biological, sociocultural, and linguistic context.	
	Organization	The essay is not organized well; ideas do not progress logically; the transitions are vague or completely lacking.	Some ideas in the essay are not organized well; transitions are missing between some ideas.	The ideas in the essay are organized well; there are clear transitions between ideas.	
	Language (spelling, mechanics, grammar, and word choice)	There are eight or more language errors in the essay.	There are four to seven language errors in the essay.	There are only three or fewer language errors in the essay.	
Task-specific	Topic (Thesis statement is well-established.)	The thesis statement is not well-established.	The thesis statement is well-established, but some details do not clearly support the thesis statement.	The thesis statement is well-established; all the details given support the thesis statement.	
	Sources	The sources are questionable; the essay lacks proper citations.	The sources are reliable and credible, but some parts lack proper citations.	All sources are reliable and credible; proper citations are used.	
TOTAL SCORE:					



Self-Check: How Well Did I Learn?

Do a self-check on how well you learned the lessons in this unit. Place a checkmark in the appropriate box.

Skills	<i>I think I need more practice and assistance</i>	<i>I am familiar and can perform well with minimal assistance</i>	<i>I am confident that I can perform this on my own</i>
I can identify the different ways one may evaluate a literary text, specifically by examining its biographical context, sociocultural context, and linguistic context.			
I can distinguish various critical reading strategies.			
I can analyze different literary texts through different contexts using different critical reading strategies.			



Wrap Up

Biographical Context	Sociocultural Context	Linguistic Context	Critical Reading Strategies
This context requires the reader to analyze the life and experience of the author to understand the literary text.	This context requires the reader to analyze the social, economic, political, and cultural standpoint of the literary text.	This context requires the reader to analyze the language, form, and structure of the text.	Different strategies may be employed in analyzing the text using the aforementioned contexts.



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