

# How to Analyze the 5 Layers of a Creative Work

Each **Layer** Consists of **4** Possible Elements to Seek Out and Identify in the Work.

## **NARRATIVE:**

- (1) The story
- (2) The back or pre-story
- (3) The other or hidden story
- (4) The message

## **AESTHETIC:**

- (1) The appeal
- (2) The reward or benefit
- (3) The skill/mastery of the author/artist on display
- (4) The new/different/unusual

## **MECHANICAL:**

- (1) Technique
- (2) Form/structure
- (3) Methods
- (4) Symbolism

## **DYNAMIC:**

- (1) Surprise
- (2) Tension
- (3) Emotion
- (4) Movement

## **CONNECTIONS:**

- (1) To other works of art -- books, music, painting, etc.
- (2) To history
- (3) To oneself
- (4) To the author's/artist's other works or their personal life

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Group Book Talk # 1: Narrative (Story) layer

My IR Book Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Pages \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_ Genre: \_\_\_\_\_

**Be ready to talk about the NARRATIVE layer of your book.** You may talk about any of the four elements below. Take enough notes so you can talk for about 1 minute.

(1) The story (What is the story about?)

(2) the back or pre-story (What do you need to know/understand before beginning to read the book/story? Was there a "prequel"? What made you want to read this story -- what is YOUR story for wanting to read this story?)

(3) the other or hidden story (Whose story is NOT being told in this story?)

(4) the message (What is the author trying to tell you about life in general or about human condition or the world at large in this story? What is the central idea/theme/lesson of this story?)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Group Book Talk #2: Aesthetic (Beauty) layer

My IR Book Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Pages \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_ Genre: \_\_\_\_\_

**Be ready to talk about the AESTHETIC layer of your book.** You may talk about any of the four elements below. Take enough notes so you can talk for about 1 minute.

(1) The appeal (What about the book/story drew you in to read it? What do you like about the book/story?)

(2) The reward (What benefits did you gain by reading the book/story – knowledge? a good cry? laughter? powerful life lesson? self-confidence? empathy? etc.)

(3) The skill/mastery of the artist/writer (What special or exceptional writing skills do you notice about the author? Which sentences or images or scenes are written beautifully?)

(4) The new/different/unusual (What is different about this book/story from all the other books/stories you've read? What makes this book/story stand out from all the rest? What was something unexpected you found or learned from the book/story?)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Group Book Talk #3: Mechanical (How it's made) layer**

My IR Book Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Pages \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_ Genre: \_\_\_\_\_

**Be ready to talk about the MECHANICAL layer of your book.** You may talk about any of the four elements below. Take enough notes (use the back if needed) so you can talk for about 1 minute and answer any questions.

(1) Technique (What literary devices (metaphor, simile, dialogue, dialect, etc.) does the author use to make the story and characters come to life? How does the author "paint pictures with words"?)

(2) Form/structure (Is the story written in prose, poem, or both? If chapters or headings are used, why are they divided at those points? Is the story told "from the beginning to end" or in flashbacks -- why? Are there illustrations, charts, maps, etc. included with the story -- for what purpose?)

(3) Methods (Whose POV (point of view) is the story told from and why? Is the narrator a reliable narrator -- can you trust what the narrator is telling you? Is the narrator also the main character/hero?)

(4) Symbolism (Are there objects/colors/images that represent something else -- like an idea or a character? How does the symbol fit the theme of the story?)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Group Book Talk #4: Dynamic (Energy & Change) layer**

My IR Book Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Pages \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_ Genre: \_\_\_\_\_

**Be ready to talk about the DYNAMIC layer of your book.** You may talk about any of the four elements below. Take enough notes so you can talk for about 1 minute.

(1) Surprise (What surprises did you find in the story? Do the characters experience any surprises in the story?)

(2) Tension (Were there any parts that made you feel tense or suspenseful -- why? Do the characters feel tense or spend some time in a state of "not knowing"?)

(3) Emotion (What feelings did you experience reading the book? What feelings does the main character experience throughout the story?)

(4) Movement (Does the story move fast? Slow? What makes it feel that way to you? Does the main character change inside (as a person, emotionally/mentally) and/or outside (where they live, who they spend time with, how they spend their time, etc.)?)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Group Book Talk #5: Connections layer

My IR Book Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Pages \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_ Genre: \_\_\_\_\_

**Be ready to talk about the CONNECTIONS layer of your book.** You may talk about any of the four elements below. Take enough notes so you can talk for about 1 minute.

(1) To other works (How can you connect this book/story to another book/story? to a movie/video? to a play, a song, a piece of music, a painting, a drawing, a sculpture? or any other type of art?)

(2) to history (How can you connect this book/story to real-life history or to current events/news?)

(3) to oneself (How can you connect this book/story to yourself?)

(4) to the artist's other works or personal life (How can you connect this book/story to the same author's other books or to the author's personal life? Would you be interested in reading more from the same author or finding something out about the author's personal life -- why/not?)