### Checklist: Elements of Literary Style


| **Sentence Structure** | • Are the sentences long or short? Why do they change?  
• Do they contain many subordinate clauses, or are they often fragments?  
• Are there any digressions or interruptions?  
• Is the word-order straightforward or unconventionally crafted? |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pace</strong></td>
<td>• Is the writing heavily descriptive, with emphasis on setting and atmosphere, or does it focus on action and plot movement?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Expansive/Economical Diction** | • Is the writing tight and efficient, or elaborate and long-winded?  
• When does the author use one or the other mode, and why? |
| **Vocabulary**         | • Are the words simple or fancy? Are they technical, flowery, colloquial, cerebral, punning, obscure (and so on...)? |
| **Figures of speech**  | • Are there any metaphors, similes, or symbols?  
• Are there any other uses of figurative language (personification, metonymy, and so on)? |
| **Use of Dialogue**    | • How often does dialogue tell the story?  
• Do we see whole conversations or just fragments?  
• Does the conversation use slang or is it formal? Does it appear natural or contrived?  
• Does the dialogue give a sense of pacing, of pauses, of the unsaid?  
• How much does it substitute for narration? |
| **Point of View**      | • Possibilities: first, second, third, omniscient, limited omniscient, multiple, inanimate, free indirect discourse. |
| **Character development** | • How does the author introduce characters, and how do we see their evolution in the story?  
What is their function and motivation?  
• What kinds of characters are they? Full/round? Stock characters? Stereotypes? Caricatures? |
| **Tone**               | • What is the author’s attitude? What is the mood of the story?  
• Whatever the tone, where is it visible in the narrative? |
| **Word Color, Word Sound** | • How much does the language call attention to or depend on the quality of its sound, e.g. through alliteration, assonance, consonance, dissonance, rhythm, unusual word choice, and so on? |
| **Paragraph / Chapter Structure** | • Are paragraphs very short, or are they enormous blocks running across many pages?  
• Are the chapters short or long? How many are there, how are they organized, and why is this important? |
| **Time Sequencing / Chronology** | • How has the author organized the chronology of events? To what effect? What is the work’s structural “rhythm”? |
| **Allusions**          | • How and how often does the author refer to other texts, myths, symbols, famous figures, historical events, quotations, and so on? |
| **Experimentation in Language** | • Are there any unusual techniques, such as stream-of-consciousness, mixing styles and genres, unusual layout on the page, breaking rules of grammar and form, odd or unstable narrative perspectives, onomatopoeia, aporia, and so on? |
| **Metafictional techniques** | • Does the author call attention to his or her own process of narration?  
• Are the narrator’s position, role, and thoughts as a storyteller mentioned explicitly in the text? What function does this serve? |