



The Elements of Style



Style in non-fiction and fiction literature refers to the overall selection and arrangement of language. It is the various ways that an author uses word choice, sentence structure, figurative language, and sentence arrangement, and how these work together to establish and influence tone, mood, imagery, and meaning in the text.



Style is affected by regional and cultural variations, by changing standards of usage, by the development of new words and new meaning in the language, and by the fertility of an author's imagination.

A good writer chooses and arranges words to convey a particular shade of meaning and to produce a particular effect.

SYNTAX (sentence structure)



When analyzing an author's use of syntax, consider:

- 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?

DICTION (word choice)



When analyzing an author's use of diction, consider:

- Are the words monosyllabic, or polysyllabic?
- Is the diction formal or informal? Colloquial? Slangy? Filled with jargon?
- Is the language concrete or abstract?
- Is there a change in the level of diction in the passage?

RHETORICAL DEVICES



Rhetorical devices are techniques that writers use to create a certain effect on their audience. Rhetorical devices can enliven prose, or assist the writer in achieving their purpose – to emphasize, to shock, to persuade, add humour, to draw attention to a certain word choice, to create suspense, etc.