

Complexity, Duality, Ambiguity: Scaffolding for Poetry and Prose Analysis

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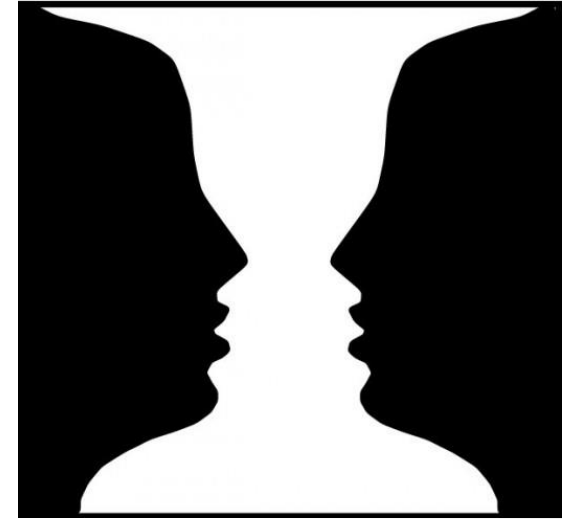
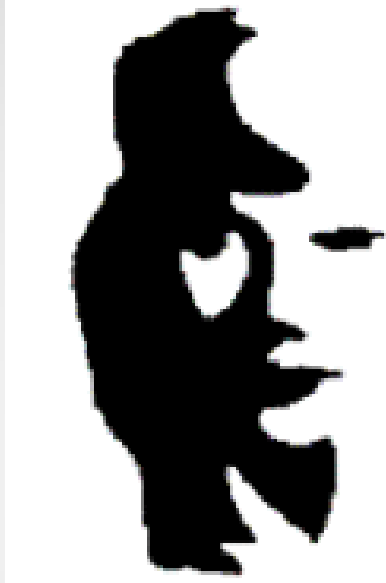
2012 Georgia Teacher of the Year Finalist

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- **(Q1 2012) In the following poem by Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586), the speaker addresses the subject of desire. Read the poem carefully. Then write a well-developed essay in which you analyze how poetic devices help to convey the speaker's complex attitude toward desire.**
- **(Q2 2011) The following passage is from the novel *Middlemarch* by George Eliot, the pen name of Mary Ann Evans (1819–1880). In the passage, Rosamond and Tertius Lydgate, a recently married couple, confront financial difficulties. Read the passage carefully. Then write a well-developed essay in which you analyze how Eliot portrays these two characters and their complex relationship as husband and wife. You may wish to consider such literary devices as narrative perspective and selection of detail.**
- **(Q2 2010) In the following passage from Maria Edgeworth's 1801 novel, *Belinda*, the narrator provides a description of Clarence Hervey, one of the suitors of the novel's protagonist, Belinda Portman. Mrs. Stanhope, Belinda's aunt, hopes to improve her niece's social prospects and therefore has arranged to have Belinda stay with the fashionable Lady Delacour. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze Clarence Hervey's complex character as Edgeworth develops it through such literary techniques as tone, point of view, and language.**
- **(Q1 2009) In the following speech from Shakespeare's play *Henry VIII*, Cardinal Wolsey considers his sudden downfall from his position as advisor to the king. Spokesmen for the king have just left Wolsey alone on stage. Read the speech carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how Shakespeare uses elements such as allusion, figurative language, and tone to convey Wolsey's complex response to his dismissal from court.**

Complexity, Duality, Ambiguity



Ambiguity





If You Focus on Complexity, Scaffolding is Necessary.

Our students . . .

- **come to us with limited skills as writers and literary analysts.**
- **rarely read classic literature.**
- **possess insufficient knowledge of humanities (writers, thinkers, artists) to recognize overarching themes.**

Our Students Need Structured Guidance.

1. Direct Instruction

2. Small-Group Practice

3. Independent Practice

4. Feedback and Self-Reflection

5. Assessment

6. Feedback and Self-Reflection

7. Revision

Strategies to Scaffold Complex Thematic Understanding



- **Teach various texts of related thematic focus.**
- **Provide mini-lessons to broaden students' understanding of ideas.**
- **Create and use templates to guide students.**

Guide students to search for larger thematic meaning.

Step one:

You must first decide on the topic of the literary work. Choose an abstract concept like *unrequited love*, *freedom*, *abuse*, *jealousy*, *self-pity*, or *apathy* that the work explores. Then, finish this sentence:

The _____ by _____
(genre) (title) (author)

is about _____.
(topic/abstract concept)

Teach students to focus their analysis on the human condition.

Step two:

Now, you need to state what the literary work expresses about the topic. If a poem is about *jealousy*, what idea does it express about that concept? Finish by inserting a clause to complete the following statement:

The _____ by _____
(genre) (title) (author)

is about _____ and reveals that
(topic/abstract concept)

(opinion statement about humanity or human condition)

Guiding Students to Recognize Complexity and Duality



- 1. Teach and use vocabulary from AP Exams.**
- 2. Model and teach annotation.**
- 3. Require articulation of complexity:**
_____ *yet* _____
***both* _____ *and* _____**

Create Scaffolded Assessments for Student Success



In the following poem by _____, the speaker examines the complex relationship between man and time. Read the poem carefully. Then write a well-written essay in which you analyze how the author uses literary devices to contribute the meaning of the poem.

Thesis Identifying Abstract Idea, Recognizing Complexity, and Stating Theme

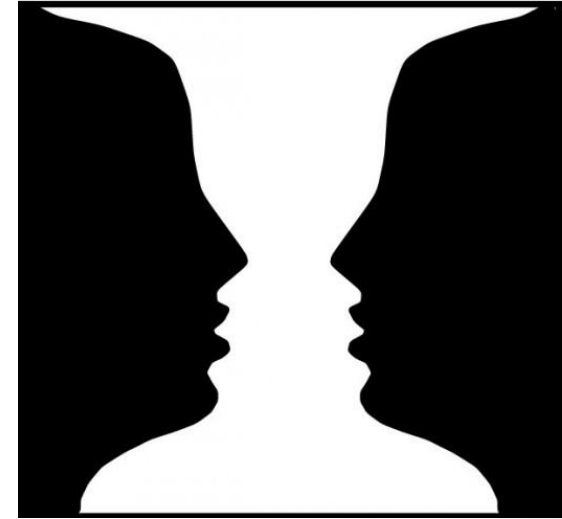
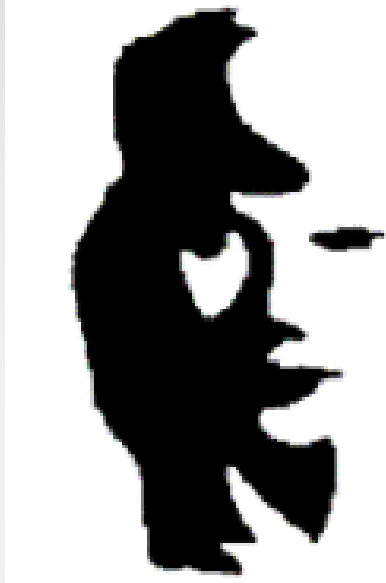
In the _____, _____,
(specific genre) (title punctuated properly) (author)

_____, highlighting the
(reflects upon, examines) (abstract idea)

tension between _____ and _____, and
(opposing concept) (opposing concept)

ultimately revealing _____.
(THEME, statement about the human condition)

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Ambiguity

