

# SMART™ Lesson

## Literary Nonfiction: Analyzing Structure and Style

### Introduction

Before we dive into the analysis of structure and style in literary nonfiction, let's first understand what it is:

Literary nonfiction is a genre of writing that uses true and factual events to tell a story in a way that is literary, or artistic. It often reads like a story, but the events and situations are based on real life rather than fiction.

### Analyzing Structure

The structure of a literary nonfiction piece is the way that the story is organized. This can include the order in which events are presented, the way that the story is broken up into sections or chapters, and the way that the narrative flows.

Here are a few questions that you can ask when analyzing the structure of a literary nonfiction piece:

1. How is the piece organized?
2. Does the author use flashbacks or other non-linear methods to tell the story?
3. What is the relationship between the different parts of the story?
4. How does the structure affect the way that the story is told?

Let's look at an example:

In the book, "Into Thin Air" by Jon Krakauer, the author tells the story of his experience climbing Mount Everest. The book is structured into different sections, each one focusing on a different part of the climb. Krakauer also uses flashbacks to provide background information on the other climbers and the history of Everest. This structure allows the reader to understand the complexities of the climb and the events that led up to the tragic ending.

### Analyzing Style

The style of a literary nonfiction piece relates to the way that the author uses language to tell the story. This includes the author's tone, word choice, and use of literary devices such as metaphor and simile.

Here are a few questions that you can ask when analyzing the style of a literary nonfiction piece:

1. What is the author's tone?
2. What kind of language does the author use to describe events and people?
3. Does the author use literary devices such as metaphor or simile?
4. How does the author's style affect the way that the story is told?

Let's go back to our example:

In "Into Thin Air," Krakauer uses a very descriptive and detailed writing style to transport the reader into the experience of climbing Mount Everest. He also uses metaphors and similes to describe the physical sensations of the climb. Additionally, his tone shifts throughout the book, from excitement and anticipation to despair and grief. All of these stylistic choices help to create a powerful emotional impact and a vivid sense of the experience.

## Conclusion

Analyzing the structure and style of a literary nonfiction piece can enhance our understanding of the story and the impact that it has on the reader. By looking at the organization of the story and the way that the author uses language, we can gain deeper insights into the themes and messages of the piece.

Now it's your turn to practice analyzing structure and style in literary nonfiction. Choose a book or article of your choice and answer the following questions:

1. What is the structure of the piece?
2. How does the structure affect the story?
3. What is the author's writing style?
4. How does the author's style affect the reader's experience?