УЧЕБНО-МЕТОДИЧЕСКОЕ ПОСОБИЕ ПО АНАЛИТИЧЕСКОМУ ЧТЕНИЮ

Часть 1

Учебное пособие для вузов

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The exposition usually contains the setting of the scene (i.e. the time and place of the action) and some preliminary information about the topic and subject of the story, its main characters etc. By nature it is a static part of the story and contains no action.

The plot consists of a series of episodes relating to the development of the central conflict of the story. It usually starts with the so-called **narrative hook,** which introduces the conflict and begins the dynamic (sometimes, dramatic, and in that case we may call it *suspense*) action aiming at the ultimate resolution of the conflict. The highest point in the development of the plot is called **the climax.** The series of events preceding the climax is usually termed, **rising action**, whereas post-climax events are **falling action** coming to a **resolution** (or **dénouement**). When all the action is over, the author may supply some extra information about the following events, the after-life of the story characters etc. Similarly to the exposition, this part of the story is static rather than dynamic, and is called **the epilogue**. It should be noted, that the above-described three-part structure is by no means the universal type, which can be applied to all existing fiction texts. The composition of a story is a matter of the personal choice of the author, who may decide to end the story just at the point of its climax, or, start it in the middle of the action, or introduce chronological steps back in the action. A special feature of the story composition is a *framed story*, or *a story-within-a-story*. In such stories, the theme and the main conflict are developed within the 'inner story', related by one of the characters of the 'outer story' (or a frame).

The verbal composition concerns the modes of presenting the story. *Narration* moves the plot and can be presented from different points of view: the **first** person, the **third** person, **a limited third person** (the story is presented through the limited perspective of one of the characters), a **shifting** point of view; there can also be **the author-observer** (observing the characters' actions but not penetrating in their thoughts and feelings), as opposed to the **omniscient author** (knowing all about the characters' inner life, their past and sometimes even the future). These points of view are important in the process of conveying the author's attitudes and ideas to the reader, creating a certain tone or atmosphere in the story.

Description usually has emotional-evaluative implications depending on the choice of vocabulary and imagery. Characters' speech exists in emotive prose in the form of **a monologue/inner monologue, dialogue.** Besides there can be *digressions* (the author's remarks breaking the narration and containing some personal reflections concerning the story, its theme, problems, setting or characters)

Another aspect of a story is represented by **characters**
Useful tips:
Since all fiction stories include some action (which makes it different from other types of texts, e.g. essays), they necessarily have a character, or,

more frequently, several characters to perform this action. Traditionally, all characters are divided into ***principal*** (or main) and ***secondary*** ones. Those, who form the focus of the author's (and, hence, the reader's) attention, and take an active part in the central conflict of the story are the main characters, others serve as the background for the portrayal of the main characters and their conflict. If there is only one main character in the story, he is sometimes called ***the protagonist***, his main opponent in the conflict would be then ***the antagonist***. Also, in literary criticism there are further terms to describe different types of characters: ***static* vs. *dynamic*** (the former stay virtually the same as regards their traits of character, values, attitudes etc, whereas the latter undergo some serious changes in the course of the story events) and also ***round* vs. *flat*** (the former are drawn in detail, including the characteristic of their inner selves, the latter are more or less schematic). The analysis of the characters should include (if the text supplies the necessary details, or, at least implies them) their physical description, social background, some distinctive traits of their character, their typical ideas, attitudes, manner of speech (which can be very characteristic and suggestive), actions, relations with other characters and their role in the central conflict, and, finally, the author's attitude towards them (whether it is directly revealed or implied implicitly).

Step 1в

The next part of the analysis deals with **the stylistic features** of the text. It focuses on ***the language register***, or combination of different registers (formal, semi-formal, neutral, semi-informal, informal; high-flown, poetic, casual, colloquial etc.) employed by the author, on ***syntactic peculiarities of the text*** (types of sentences prevailing, rhetoric questions, elliptical or inverted phrases, parallel constructions), ***special choice of the vocabulary*** (terms, dialectisms, slang etc.), stylistic tropes (see a short description of some of them below), and the general tone or atmosphere of the text (serious, light, elevated, solemn, ironical, humorous, gloomy and so forth). The thorough analysis of these features will enable you to define the author's position, his/her attitude towards the subject of the story and its problems, towards the characters and their actions, and finally to understand properly the author's message, the main idea of the story. Sometimes these attitudes and the message are expressed openly and directly (usually in the beginning or the end of the story), but more often than not it is revealed indirectly in the whole complex of linguistic and stylistic peculiarities of the text, in the author's characteristics of the characters, in the atmosphere created by the author in the story. Hence, the analysis of stylistic features of the story has a principal importance for the proper understanding of its message.

Step 2a

What **messages** does the system of images convey?

Useful tips:

The system of images includes both **macro** and **micro images.** Macro images are those that develop within the whole book or within a considerable part of it: characters' images, the image of nature, the image of war etc. Micro images exist within a sentence or a paragraph. The images are created with the help of **stylistic devices.**

Metaphor *(метафора)*

<metaphor> is based on transference of names based on the associated likeness between two objects, on the similarity of one feature common to two different entities, on possessing one common characteristic, on linguistic semantic nearness, on a common component in their semantic structures. The expressiveness is promoted by the implicit simultaneous presence of images of both objects – the one which is actually named and the one which supplies its own "legal" name, while each one enters a phrase in the complexity of its other characteristics.

The wider is the gap between the associated objects the more striking and unexpected – the more expressive – is the metaphor.

Personification (*олицетворение* или *персонификация)*

a <metaphor> that involves likeness between inanimate and animate objects.

Metonymy (*метонимия)*

<transference> of names based on contiguity (nearness), on extralinguistic, actually existing relations between the phenomena (objects), denoted by the words, on common grounds of existence in reality but different semantic (V.A.K.) is based on a different type of relation between the dictionary and <contextual meaning>s, a relation based not on identification, but on some kind of association connecting the two concepts which these meanings represent (I.R.G.)

Pun, paronomasia, play on words (*парономасия, игра слов)*

simultaneous realisation of two <meaning>s through

a) misinterpretation of one speaker's utterance by the other, which results in his remark dealing with a different meaning of the misinterpreted word or its homonym,

b) speaker's intended violation of the listener's expectation

Epithet (*эпитет)*

a <stylistic device> based on the interplay of emotive and <logical meaning> in an attributive word, phrase or even sentence, used to characterise and object and pointing out to the reader, and frequently imposing on him, some