



What is Literary Criticism?

Literary criticism means comparing, analyzing, interpreting, and/or evaluating literary works. Literary criticism is not a plot summary, a biography of the author, or a description of what you think is wrong with the work. When you practice literary criticism, you give your opinion of a literary work, and support that opinion with evidence that takes into account its theme, style, setting, historical, and/or political context. A work of literary criticism puts your ideas together with both the work being considered, other people's ideas about the work, and/or research you have done relevant to the work. Literary criticism can have a positive or a negative bias. The ultimate goal of literary criticism is to explain to other people why you think that a literary work is or is not worth reading. There are a number of established perspectives that literary criticism can take:

Biographical	Consideration of the literary work within the context of the author's life.
Comparative	Consideration of the literary work in the context of other literary works.
Ethical	Consideration of the literary work from an ethical context
Expressive	Consideration of the literary work primarily in relation to its author
Feminist	Consideration of the literary work in the context of patriarchal attitudes
Historical	Consideration of the literary work in the context of the time in which it was written
Mimetic	Consideration of the literary work in the context of its literary or cultural models
Pragmatic	Consideration of the literary work that fills in the gaps between the author and the reader with a greater understanding of the ideas in the work
Psychological	Consideration of the author's unintended messages within the literary work
Social	Consideration of the relationship between the literary work and society
Textual	Consideration of different versions or textual variations within the literary work
Theoretical	Consideration of the literary work in the context of some theory of literature or which uses the text to support the development of a new literary theory