

## Reading theory: Pre-reading activities

List of language and language-based literary categories:

1. global reading skills:
  - prediction
  - inference — inference, both low-level and high level
  - understanding the story— withholding the ending
  - summary (overview)
2. vocabulary building/lexis/collocation
  - word choice
  - guessing lexis from context; morphology
  - archaic, poetic, colloquial
  - collocations
  - idioms
3. language/linguistic elements (= language awareness)
  - register; syntax; etc.
    - register switching, code-switching for effect
  - syntax, phonology, and so on
  - phonology (marking pauses, surprise, intonation)
4. general discourse features
  - parallelism
  - audience inclusion
  - reference ( for example, reference > narrator etc.)
  - responding to the writer's views
  - cohesion markers
    - lexical connections (and, before, however...)
    - discourse markers (above all, then, third...)
5. literary structure, a sensitization to rhetorical structures through teaching students to analyze the rhetorical structures
  - a. structure of expository texts
    - paragraph structure, rhetorical organization
    - topic sentences, theme, controlling idea, and so on
  - b. narrative structure
    - overview of plot structure: theme, characters (through examining specific pieces, not through lectures), relationships, themes; plot; suspense; key scenes
  - c. genre differences
    - genre/text comparisons, (overlaps in part with registers)
      - text re-writing (police report from a story)
    - relating text to charts! diagrams! (This is an exercise in relating one genre to another!)
6. Other
  - reader response to the text
  - graphics

Activity 1:

(taken from a George Murdoch workshop)

Re-arrange the jumbled lines below to make a poem. Once you have arranged the lines, divide the poem into two verses, with four lines in each half. This will split one line in the middle.

turned in the air together  
I saw the two starlings  
just before alighting, they  
That's what got me — to  
  
and landed backwards!  
coming in toward the wires.  
face into the wind's teeth.  
But at the last,

Activity 2: (*overview; lexis and collocation*)

1. What happens in the poem? (*overview*)
2. Which words or phrases do you find interesting or unusual?

Activity 3: (*linguistic features > purpose in text*)

1. Who do the pronouns "I" (line 1) and "me" (line 7) refer to? (*reference > narrator*)
2. Why does the word "they" come at the end of the last line of the first verse — detached from its verb? (*pause > ?*)
3. What is striking about the use of the phrase "that's what got me" (line 7)? (*register shift*)
4. What is the significance of the exclamation mark at the end of line 6? (*intonation? > surprise*)

Activity 4 (*genre and style differences*)

1. Imagine you are writing the script for a TV documentary about birds. Rewrite the poem to describe the movements of the birds which will appear in the film.
2. Which words or phrases in the poem do not suit the style of language for a voice-over script?
3. What kind of words do you associate with "alight"? (*poetic*)

Activity 5: (*theme, personal reactions*)

1. Suggest possible titles for the poem. (*overview, summary*)
2. Is the theme of the poem related to birds or something else?
3. What do you like or dislike about the poem? (*personal*)
4. What is your favourite line in the poem? (*reactions*)