LITERARY PRÉCIS

_____

A literary précis differs from a summary in that it is a less neutral, more analytical condensation of both the content and method of the original work. If you think of a summary as primarily a brief representation of what a text says, then you might think of the literary précis as a brief representation of what a text says and does.

Although less common than a summary, a literary précis is a particularly useful way to sum up your understanding of how a fictional text works. (Adapted from *Reading Rhetorically*, 62)

▶ THE STRUCTURE OF A LITERARY PRÉCIS

Sentence One: Author name, credentials, genre, and title of work, date in parentheses; a rhetorically active verb, and a THAT clause containing a message or theme explored by the text.

Sentence Two: A brief1-2 sentence **summary** that includes a reference to the **main character, the setting and plot.**

Sentence Three: An explanation of how the author **structures** the text to develop and convey the **theme**.

Sentence Four: A statement of the author's apparent purpose, followed by an "in order to" which explains what the author wants the intended audience to *feel, think* and/or *do* as a result of reading the work.

Sentence Five: A description of a place in the text in which the author uses a literary device to achieve a specific purpose.

▶ LITERARY PRÉCIS SENTENCE STARTERS

SENTENCE ONE (WHO/WHAT?)

_____, _____ in the , _____ , _____,
Author's Credentials (Name Author)   (Genre of Text)   (Title of Text)

 published by_____ addresses the topic of _____ and argues that _____.
              (Company) (Year)   (Topic/Idea)

SENTENCE TWO (BOOK SUMMARY)

The novel is set _____ and follows the story of _____ a/an _____
                      (Place)   (Character Name)   adj.

_____ and _____ who _____.
    adj.   adj.   description of event or conflict

SENTENCE THREE (HOW?)

_____ develops his/her theme initially by _____
    (Author's Last Name)

second by _____, and finally by_____.

SENTENCE FOUR (WHY?)

The author's overall purpose is to _____ in order to / so that _____

SENTENCE FIVE (WHAT AND TO WHOM?)

In _____ the author uses _____to _____ in/to/the _____ .
    identify chap/page/section   name the literary device   (verb + adj.)   (purpose)