**DIDLS Method**

Using the DIDLS method for prose helps you pull out the effect of the techniques the author uses in in a passage.

**D**iction

**I**mages

**D**etails

**L**anguage

**S**entence structure

**Diction**

Diction is the denotative and connotative meanings of words. What words does the author choose? Consider his/her word choice compared to another. Why did the author choose that particular word? What are the connotations of that word choice?

* different words for the same thing often suggest different attitudes (happy vs. content vs. ecstatic)
* denotative vs. connotative (dead vs. passed away)
* concrete vs. abstract (able to perceive with 5 senses, tangible, vs. an idea or concept that exists in one’s mind, intangible)
* monosyllabic vs. polysyllabic
* positive vs. negative (slender vs. skinny, determined vs. stubborn)
* colloquial/informal/formal
* cacophonous vs. euphonious (e.g. harsh sounding, raucous, croak or pleasant sounding, languid, murmur)

**Images**

Vivid appeals to understand through the five senses—sight, sound, touch, taste, smell. What images does the author use? What does he/she focus on in a sensory way? How do the kinds of images the author puts in or leaves out reflect his/her style? Are they vibrant? Prominent? Plain? Note: Images differ from detail in the degree to which they appeal to the senses. A farmer and a real estate developer would use different imagery to describe the same piece of land. Imagery would differ in a romantic vs. realistic description of the countryside.

**Details**

Facts that are included or those that are omitted. What details does the author choose to include? What do they imply? What does the author choose to exclude? What are the connotations of the choice of details? Note: Details are facts or fact-lets. They differ from images in that they don’t have a strong sensory appeal. Hard Copy vs. CNN vs. NPR.

**Language**

The overall use of language such as formal, clinical, informal, slang. What is the overall impression of the language the author uses? Does it reflect education? A particular profession? Intelligence? Is it plain? Ornate? Simple? Clear? Figurative? Poetic? Make sure you don’t skip this step. An ambassador will speak differently than a cop or a kid.

**Sentence Structure**

How the author’s use of sentence structure affects the reader. What are the sentences like? Are they simple with one or two clauses? Do they have multiple phrases? Are they choppy? Flowing? Sinuous like a snake? Is there antithesis, chiasmus, parallel structure? What emotional impression do they leave? If we are talking about poetry, what is the meter? Is there a rhyme scheme? Long flowing sentences give us a different feeling than short choppy ones. If the narrator has awkward sentence structure, we might think he is uneducated or fearful. Sophisticated, mature sentences might suggest artistic creativity.