

Name:
Period:

Using Literary Lenses

	Looking through a mirror:	Looking under a microscope:	Looking through a telescope:

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Using Literary Lenses

Not all reading is equal. Not all reading is the same. The type of reading you do depends on the text and why you are reading it.

Consider these scenarios:

- 1) You're waiting in line at the grocery store and you pick up a magazine.
- 2) You have a math test in two days and you are trying to study.
- 3) You are flying to see relatives and you bring a book along to read on the plane.
- 4) You have to read a chapter of a novel for your English class.

How do you read each text? What elements do you focus on? What information do you look for? How much concentration is needed? How does the way in which you read change for each scenario?

Specifically, when we read fiction, we examine a story from three different perspectives, or lenses:

- 1) As if we are looking THROUGH A MIRROR.**
- 2) As if we are looking UNDER A MICROSCOPE**
- 3) As if we are looking THROUGH A TELESCOPE**

- 1) When we read literature **THROUGH A MIRROR**, we look for a reflection of ourselves and our experiences within the story. We make personal connections with the story that affects our reading and deepens our enjoyment of reading because we feel connected.
- 2) When we read literature **UNDER A MICROSCOPE**, we are examining the construction of the story, similar to the way an architect examines the construction of a home. We try to figure out how the author creates certain effects and what skills they use to create the story. In understanding the construction of the story, we can better appreciate the story's merits and our enjoyment of it.
- 3) When we read literature **THROUGH A TELESCOPE**, we read stories that deal with experiences, people, or places beyond our intimate knowledge. We seek new information and explore unknown topics. We learn new information, and in doing so we come to enjoy the story itself.

Ideally, when you read, you should be quickly shifting lenses, or looking through multiple lenses at once; however, academically it is important to understand the different lenses through which we read, so that you can approach an assignment or text knowing which lens you need to be looking through at the time.