

# JAMES BARTELL'S STEPS FOR LITERARY ANALYSIS

Title and author of book	<i>Grendel</i> – John Gardner
Identify the <b>Beginning Situation</b>	Aggressive, innocent, philosophical, questioning and conflicted emotions/inner struggles, reactive and confused, longing mood is similar because of first person narrator
Identify the <b>Ending Situation</b>	Resolved and resigned to fate takes on villain role, violent, hateful, nihilistic
Define the <b>Change</b> that takes place between the two	Dragon (ch.5) and deciding to begin his “war” (killing for pleasure)
<p>Identify the <b>Theme</b> (statement of cause and effect that explains WHY the Ending Situation of a work was inevitable given the Beginning Situation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) statement of the basic nature of the situation with which we are faced at the beg. of work</li> <li>b) the outcome that inevitably derives from such a situation</li> <li>c) the explanation of the underlying Principle of life that explains why the beginning leads to the ending</li> </ul> <p><i>*MUST include a “Because” statement</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the inability to communicate leads to feeling isolated and misunderstood</li> <li>b) and will eventually cause one to redefine their identity by filling the role others assign them, even if it is villainous</li> <li>c) because everyone has a desire to fit somewhere and be part of a community</li> </ul>
Identify the <b>Problem</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1<sup>st</sup> person narrator – why have most chapters, even if they aren’t about G, told from his point of view, which is unreliable and often conflicted?</li> <li>2. Why have character of Wealthow and her role in the text/Grendel’s desire and love for her is pure?</li> <li>3. Why have Shaper be so important to Grendel? Symbolism?</li> </ol>
What is the <b>Approach to Problem</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unreliable narrator helps create strong empathy in the reader and ultimately an understanding of how Grendel (and people in general) become “evil” or “violent”</li> <li>2. She is a symbol for what he will never be able to have– ultimately shows that he cannot be a part of the community/society the way he wants to. His love for her represents the conflicted way he feels toward humans but also his discovery of her imperfections push him over the edge/resign him to evil because he can never understand or have her</li> <li>3. Shaper could be symbolic of the power of communication and the role is plays in relationships, connections, and feelings of belonging</li> </ol>