**\*\* This works for a longer, more complex text. Students can be broken into groups, and assigned a “lens.” They will identify its presence, say why the author used it, and what we can learn by looking at the story through that lens\*\***

**\*\* It might be helpful to review this list with students as some of the descriptions are challenging\*\***

**Lenses**

The following modes of literary and rhetorical criticism and some of their key underpinnings have been adapted from Barry Brummett’s *Rhetoric and Popular Culture*.

**Marxist Criticism / Economic Lens**

* *Materialism, bases, superstructure*

According to this type of criticism, everything belonging to the world of ideas, concepts and behavior comes from material conditions and practices. How do the material conditions of the text, ie the available resources, relationships, cultural norms and natural environment influence characters’ behaviors or the author’s or subjects’ attitudes?

* *Economic metaphors, commodities, signs*

How are certain physical details mentioned in the text indicators of class status, or economic conditions? How do these conditions vary among people?

* *Preferred / Oppositional readings*

What would be considered a “target” audience? Why? What type of reader would be inclined to side with the writer, or protagonist, or dislike them?

**Visual Criticism / Imagery Lens**

* *Images as the focus of meaning attribution*

Do images serve a rhetorical purpose? Do they accentuate the central meanings/moods of the text? How?

* *Images as collective memory, community*

Identify some important images in the text and describe their possible cultural meanings. How might “insider” and “outsider” cultures, as they pertain to the text or world of the story, see these images?

**Psychoanalytical Criticism / Desire Lens**

* *Making the mind and the self*

How do people define themselves in relation to other people? When and why do they say they are “like” certain people, and “unlike” others? Who are their friends and enemies, and what does this say about them?

* *Desire*

What is it that the author or protagonist or other characters / individuals wants, and why do they want it? How might this person react to *not* getting what they want? Is anyone trying to prevent them from getting what they want? What does *that* person desire?

**Feminist Criticism / Feminist Lens**

* *Standpoint theory*

This theory states the world is only known to us through marginal perspectives that are limited by class, race, gender, geography, and sexual identity. Are the perspectives of the author or characters limited in these ways, or not? Why is this so?

* *Gendered language and images*

What power structures does the writer and / or the characters experience? What are the “normal” or “expected” gender roles? Is gender related to power or the lack thereof in any way? How are different genders expected to behave? Is this significant to the text?

* *Empowerment and alternative worldviews*

Who exists outside of the dominant power structures of the text? How do they feel about this? What is their emotional reaction? To what extent is gender a factor in their insider or outsider status?

**Narrative Criticism**

* *Language and motive*

Who in the text is adept at using language? How does this serve them? How do people attempt to persuade each other? Why or why not does the persuasion work?

* *Comedy and tragedy*

How is social transgression a source of comedy? Is the transgressor accepted back into society? What social taboos are committed by people? What are the consequences for these actions? Do the consequences represent societal rejection?

**Media Criticism / Technology Lens**

* *Medium*

How is technology and media used socially? Professionally? For good? For evil?

* *Media logic*

How does media and technology influence people’s daily routines? Their expectations? Their relationships? Their value systems?