What is literary analysis?

1. You do literary analysis while reading a newspaper article, dissect a cooking recipe, and when you follow driving directions.
2. While driving, you need to understand everything about the driving directions, where to go, which parts might be confusing, and all that.
3. That’s basically what analysis is.

What are the steps to literary analysis?

1. Comprehension:
2. Overview:
3. Reading a literary work once to figure out how all of the basic parts fit together as a story.
4. Basic understanding of setting, characters, and plot.
5. Questions to ask yourself:
6. Does it make sense as a whole?
7. Do you understand the events that lead from the beginning to the middle to the end—the basic plot?
8. Are there important parts of the puzzle that you need to recognize?
9. Interpretation:
10. Overview:
11. Filling in the pieces of the puzzle that are not directly stated
12. Looking more closely at the literary details that fit the work together, such as author’s style and language
13. Examining things like mood and tone of a scene or why the character does something (character motivation) in a specific moment, as well as setting, characters, and plot
14. You have to look back at the story and read it one more time, this time paying attention to small details.
15. Analytical Statement About the Piece as a Whole
16. Overview:
17. After painting a clear picture in your head about the story, and putting all the information together, you can finish this step.
18. In this step, you draw conclusions about a work based on the story’s elements.
19. Things to Consider While Writing the Analytical Statement:
20. Theme
21. Author Commentary or Choices
22. Overall Character Analysis
23. How Literature Reflects a Time Period
24. Etc.

(The rest of the notes will be about the following story.)

“The Tortoise and the Hare”

The hare was once boasting of his speed before the other animals. “I have never yet been beaten,” said he, “when I put forth my full speed. I challenge anyone here to race with me.”

The tortoise said quietly, “I accept your challenge.”

“That is a good joke,” said the hare. “I could dance around you all the way.”

So a course was fixed and a start was made. The hare darted almost out of sight at once, but soon stopped, and, to show his contempt for the tortoise, lay down to have a nap. The tortoise plodded on and plodded on, and when the hare awoke from his nap, he saw the tortoise nearing the finish line, and he could not catch up in time to save the race.

Plodding wins the race.

Analyzing the above passage:

1. Comprehension:
2. Setting Comprehension (Step 1):
3. No setting is given, or time period, so not clear. No basic setting.
4. Character Comprehension (Step 2):
5. There are two main characters: the hare and the tortoise.
6. Plot Comprehension (Step 3):
7. The fast hare challenges other animals to a race.
8. The slow and steady tortoise accepts the challenge.
9. The hare, who is confident in his abilities, decides to take a nap on the course.
10. As a result, he loses.
11. Interpretation:
12. Setting Analysis (Step 4):
13. Nothing is explicitly stated, so let’s try to find some more details regarding the setting, such as information that is implied.
14. This is an animal world, so it could be part of the setting.
15. Character Analysis (Step 5):
16. The hare is a braggart with confidence in his abilities to move quickly
17. Turtle: The turtle is quiet and predictably slower than the hare
18. Plot Analysis (Step 6):
19. Exposition (Beginning): The initial invitation to race by the hare
20. Rising Action: After the tortoise accepts the challenge, it is the hare’s boastful comments, the initial running of the race and hare’s choice to take a nap.
21. Climax: It comes after the tortoise passes the hare and wins the race.
22. No falling action.
23. Resolution: The lesson learned at the end, “Slow and steady wins the race.”
24. Author Style and Language Analysis (Step 7):
25. This is the use of repetition and any other choices the author makes that create a unique piece. Not only do you have to find this, but you also have to consider why they are there, and what purpose they’ll serve.
26. You must examine the work under the assumption that authors make deliberate choices and their choices support the overall goal of delivering a specific message.
27. Examining the story like this creates a more vivid pictures, while at the same time, analyzes language and word choice.
28. All of this leads up to the final analysis.
29. The author can use many literary devices, such s point of view, imagery, symbolism, and others.
30. Point of view:
31. Explanation:

* Third person omniscient is when you know the thoughts and feelings of all the characters in a story.
* Third person limited is when you only the thoughts and feelings of one character.

1. Story:

* It’s third person limited.
* Clues:
  + There are no pronouns such as “I” or “me” anywhere, so it’s third person.
  + It also says that “The hare took a nap to show contempt for the tortoise.”
  + This means that we are only in the mind of the hare, so it’s third person limited.

1. Imagery:
   * 1. The use of language to create vivid images or pictures in the reader’s mind.
     2. Not many uses of imagery here, as story is rather short.
2. Symbolism and Other Literary Devices:
3. Personification: the animals are talking to each other, acting like humans.
4. Character Foil: the hare and the tortoise are exact foils, or opposites, for each other.
5. Suspense: Who will win the race?
6. Hubris: The hare has excessive pride in his abilities.
7. Final Analysis or Word Choice:
   * + 1. You have to consider all other elements in order to draw conclusions.
       2. Theme:
          1. You should consider the theme, or the overall ideas that govern the piece. Here the themes include “modesty,” “hubris,” and “perseverance.”
       3. Message or Moral:
          1. Also, you have to think about the message or moral the text communicates to the reader. Here, the moral is “Plodding wins the race,” and “Slow and steady will always prevail.”
          2. Other messages include “Boasting will never make you a winner” from the hare, and that “Anything is possible if you try” from the turtle.