

- I. *In Cold Blood* 1965
  - A. “Nonfiction novel”/ true crime
  - B. Story
    1. In the fall of 1959, a family of four was brutally murdered by two killers in Holcomb, Kansas. The story gives insight to the killers, victims, and community connected to the case.
    2. This novel explores themes of dreams, evil, human nature, and religion.
- II. Publishing history and critical response
  - A. Praise among the public with some controversy
  - B. Critics found it to be a gripping work that was the first of its kind, while others criticized Capote for a shallow, biased narrative.
- III. Place
  - A. Place is more than setting; It is the entire atmosphere and “sense of place” that is created by the time period, neighborhood, social class, and perspective of an area.
  - B. Connection to book
    1. Holcomb, Kansas is a small farming community that values religion, serving one another, and trust.
    2. To show how distrust and confusion arose from the townspeople after a horrible act was committed against a family that emanated the town’s values.
  - C. Supportive and Explanatory Examples
    1. “Nancy...a leader in the 4-H program and the young Methodists League, a skilled rider,” (Capote 18).
    2. “But that family represented everything people hereabouts really value and respect, and that such a thing could happen to them---well, it’s like being told there is no God” (Capote 88).
    3. “But in Finney County one is still within the Bible Belt borders, and therefore a person’s church affiliation is the most important factor influencing his class status” (Capote 34).
- IV. Voice
  - A. Voice is the “sound” of the narrator, which features include presence, quality, and attitude.
  - B. Connection to book
    1. The voice of this narrator is outside the action, informative, sympathetic, and doleful.
    2. Capote employs the use of voice to enhance the themes, to build tension, and to give more insight into the characters.
  - C. Supportive and Explanatory Examples

1. "...She set out the clothes she intended to wear to church the next morning; it was the dress in which she was to be buried" (Capote 56).
2. "Gone, too, was Perry O'Parsons," the name invented for the singing sensation of stage and screen he'd half-seriously hoped some day to be" (Capote 202).

## V. Character

A. Characters are defined by their desires, their physical description, and their motivations.

B. Connection to book

1. Every character has in depth descriptions as well as the community itself.
2. Creates a sense of sympathy from the reader as one gets to deeply understand the characters/community.

C. Supportive and Explanatory Examples

1. "Every damn one of you got an education. Everybody but me. And I hate all of you, all of you---Dad and everybody" (Capote 185).
2. "I guess Dick resented it, not getting to college" (Capote 166).

## VI. Narrative

A. Narrative is designed to elicit a response in the reader and to support our understanding of the books message or theme; it is how a book is revealed, paced, and structured.

B. Connection to book

1. 4 part, nonlinear timeline with slow pacing
2. Creates dramatic irony, tension, and follows the true-crime genre in following a typical crime sequence

C. Supportive and Explanatory Examples

1. "For Bobby, as he was to learn before nightfall, was their principal suspect" (Capote 72).
2. "Not that they were claiming them; Dewey and his team decided to keep secret the existence of this evidence" (Capote 83).

## VII. Style

A. Style is the overall effect of the choices the author makes regarding literary elements and devices.

B. Connection to book

1. Use of diction and syntax, dramatic irony, motifs, and metaphors
2. The use of diction, syntax, and metaphors gives characters their own unique tone of voice, while dramatic irony and motifs add tension.

C. Supportive and Explanatory Examples

1. “Deal me out, baby. I’m a normal” (Capote 111).
  2. “A warrior angel who blinded the nuns with its beak, then so gently lifted him, enfolded him, winged him away to “paradise” (Capote 93).
  3. “Get the bubbles out of your blood. Nothing can go wrong” (Capote 42).
- VIII. Universal Specificity
- A. The idea that an author creates a story and gets the specifics right, so that the reader may infer its broader, more universal significance.
  - B. Overall theme
    1. Capote gives insight on a cold-blooded murder case and shows the weaknesses of human nature.
    2. He captured how a real life tragedy has an effect on real people.