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# Teaching Through Play: Applying Gamification in Literary Analysis

For Higher Education Faculty

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# Gamification vs. Game- Based Learning

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## Gamification

Adds game-like elements to existing tasks

E.g., points for discussion, badges for writing style

Enhances motivation & engagement

## Game-Based Learning

Learning **through** full games

E.g., using a mystery game to teach plot

Games are the core learning activity

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# Gamification vs. Game- Based Learning

**Gamification** means adding **game-like elements** to something that isn't a game—like turning your seminar or lesson into a challenge, using points, levels, or narrative. For example, instead of giving a regular discussion assignment, you might offer students a series of 'quests' to complete for points.

- **Game-based learning**, on the other hand, means using **actual games** as the core of the learning experience. You might play a detective game to teach narrative structure, or a strategy game to explore ethical decision-making.

## Why it works

First, it taps into both **intrinsic** and **extrinsic motivation**.

Students are motivated by curiosity, autonomy, and mastery—but they also like recognition, achievement, and a little friendly competition.

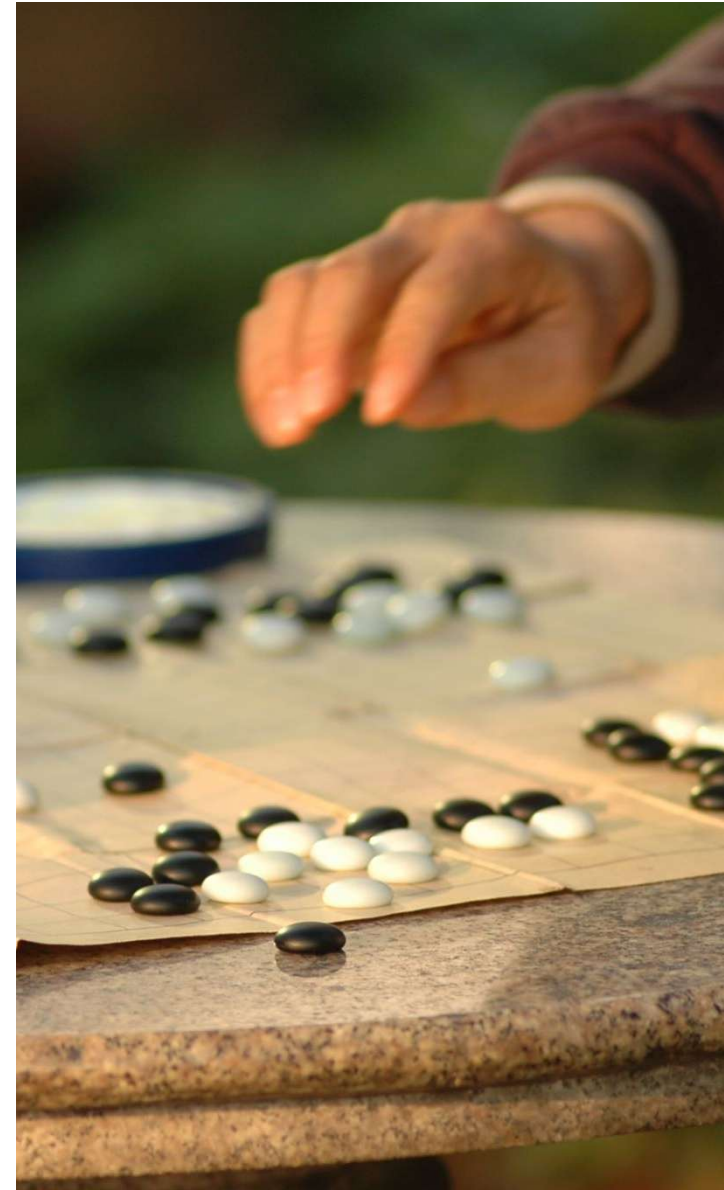
Second, gamification supports **active learning**. Students don't just read and respond passively—they engage, move, compete, collaborate, and solve problems.

Third, it fosters **peer interaction**. Many game-based tasks are best done in teams, which supports discussion, social learning, and shared responsibility.

- Finally, gamification allows for **differentiated learning**. Students can take different paths to complete tasks, explore topics that interest them most, and even role-play different perspectives.

# *Using Games and Gamification in Literary Pedagogy*

- Traditional literary analysis can feel abstract, rigid, and intimidating.
- Students often struggle with engagement, retention, and application.
- Solution: Gamification – the integration of game elements into learning.



# Why Gamify Literary Analysis?

Gamification helps students:

Engage actively with complex texts

Think critically and solve problems

Apply literary concepts in dynamic ways

Develop agency and creativity

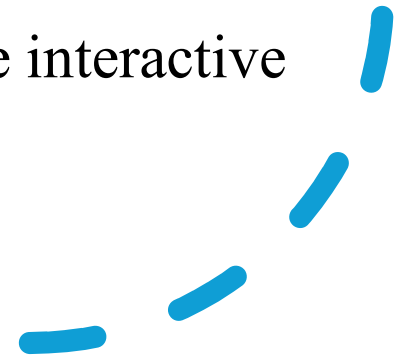
Bonus: Builds soft skills like collaboration, communication, and reflection.

# Core mechanics

- **Points:** You can reward students with points for completing analytical challenges, engaging in discussion, or showing creativity.
- **Badges:** These are symbolic rewards that can motivate students. Think of a ‘Theme Hunter’ badge or ‘Symbol Master’ for identifying literary devices.
- **Leaderboards:** These show rankings, but use them carefully—they can increase competition, which isn’t always productive.
- **Quests:** Break down assignments into mission-style tasks. For example, one quest might be “Find three quotes that expose hypocrisy in the story.”
- **Narratives:** Build a backstory for your classroom activity—make students villagers, detectives, rebels, or historians.
- **Levels:** Let students unlock deeper challenges only after completing foundational tasks.

# Methods of Gamifying Literary Analysis

1. Escape Rooms (e.g., decode themes, symbols, authorial intent)
2. Digital Badges for mastering concepts (metaphor, irony, etc.)
3. Character Quests (e.g., “Be Hamlet’s therapist – what’s his diagnosis?”)
4. Literary Roleplay (debate as characters or narrators)
5. Choose-Your-Path Analysis (like interactive fiction)





# Why Gamify Literary Analysis?



- INCREASES STUDENT  
ENGAGEMENT AND  
RETENTION



- ENCOURAGES DEEPER  
TEXTUAL EXPLORATION

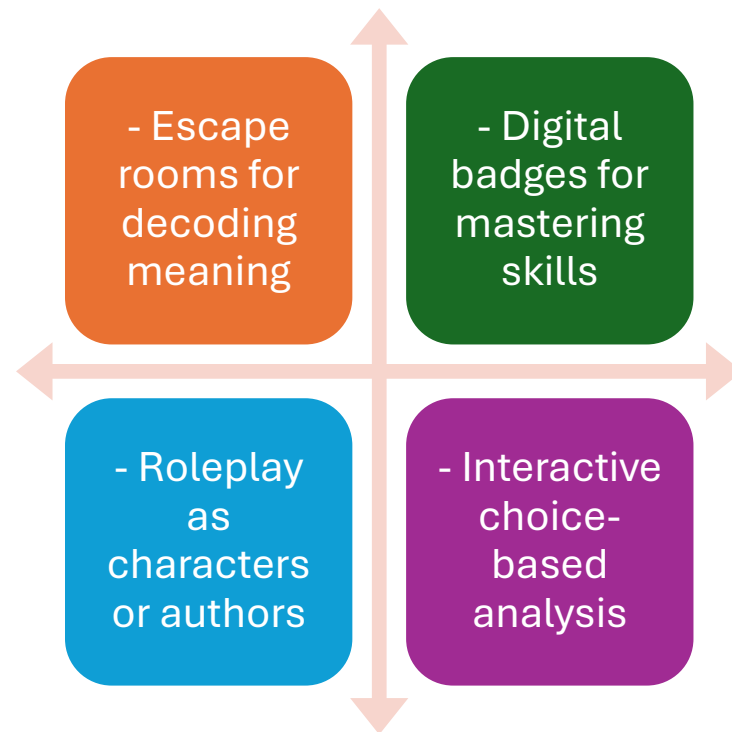


- PROMOTES CRITICAL  
THINKING AND  
CREATIVITY

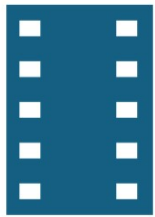


- SUPPORTS TEAMWORK  
AND AGENCY

# Methods of Gamifying Literary Analysis



# Case Study – Escape from Macbeth's Mind



- Format: Escape Room

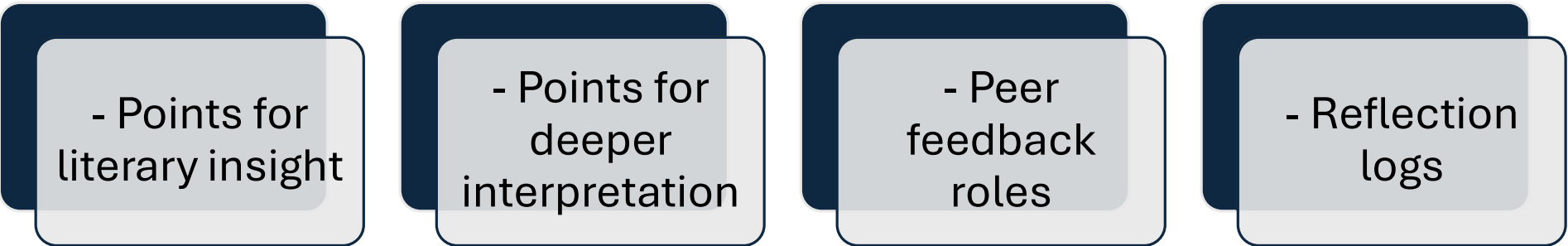


- Analyze Macbeth's soliloquies  
and character arc



- Tasks: Theme puzzles, symbol  
decoding, moral dilemmas

# Assessment in Gamified Learning



- Points for literary insight

- Points for deeper interpretation

- Peer feedback roles

- Reflection logs

# Tips for Implementation



- Align games with objectives



- Keep mechanics simple and meaningful



- Provide narrative context




- Offer choice and autonomy

## Challenges and Solutions

Distraction? Tie rewards  
to analysis

No tech? Use roleplay or  
paper games

Time limits? Gamify single  
units or tasks



## Let the Games Begin

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- Choose one unit to gamify

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- Add one mechanic

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- Watch engagement shift

# Examples

- <https://dashboard.blooket.com/my-sets>
- <http://zzi.sh/dhn82860>
- <https://app.quizalize.com/dash/R3JvdXA6ZDI5NTcxMTUtYmNmMS00OGUwLTlmMGltOGQ4ZmJjZmU5NTky/activity/QWN0aXZpdHk6MTQyZWQ3YzktOWI1Ni00NjM3LThhY2QtYzViMzMxYmI1MzZl/overview>





Gamify the analysis!

# The Assignment

- Chosen story: “The Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin (public domain)
- Analyze the story (themes, plot, characters, emotional tone)
- <https://archive.vcu.edu/english/engweb/webtexts/hour/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpXDqBvj6Fs>

# Analytical Questions for "*The Story of an Hour*"

## Theme & Symbolism

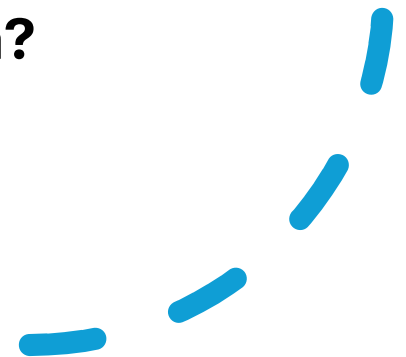
1. What does the open window symbolize in Louise Mallard's room? How does it reflect her inner transformation?
2. How does Chopin use nature imagery (sky, trees, birds) to support the theme of freedom?
3. What is the significance of the phrase "free, free, free"? How does it challenge traditional gender roles?
4. How is time used as a motif in the story? What does "an hour" mean symbolically?

## Character Analysis

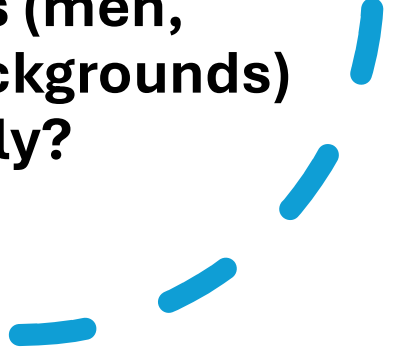
- 5. How does Mrs. Mallard's emotional journey evolve during the story? Do you think her feelings are justified?**
- 6. Why does Chopin mention Louise's heart trouble at both the beginning and end of the story?**
- 7. In what ways is Mrs. Mallard a product of her society, and in what ways does she rebel against it?**

## **Narrative Voice & Style**

- 8. What role does the third-person limited narration play in shaping our understanding of Louise's emotions?**
- 9. How does Chopin use irony, especially at the end of the story, to convey her critique of marriage?**
- 10. How does the brevity of the story influence the emotional impact and pacing of Louise's realization?**



## **Interpretive & Open- Ended**

- 11. Do you think Louise Mallard was truly happy in her marriage, or was she simply conforming? Explain.**
  - 12. If the story had continued beyond the ending, how do you imagine Louise's life would have changed?**
  - 13. Is the story more about death, or about life? Support your argument with textual evidence.**
  - 14. How might different readers (men, women, different cultural backgrounds) interpret the ending differently?**
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# Activity

- Use any game we learned about during our internships to make the game.
- Form groups.
- Present.
- Discuss.

