Effective analysis requires much of a writer. Unlike the discourse you see on talk shows, where someone states an opinion based on nothing but his or her own OPINION, analysis requires EVIDENCE. However, moving from the text to a thesis requires more than merely providing a quote. It requires you to

**TAKE A-A-I-M!!**

When you are analyzing a text, you need to make sure that your ideas are based on careful analysis of the text, rather than feelings or random personal opinion. The following steps will encourage discipline in analysis:

1. **Annotate:** In other words, underline words/phrases that seem important. You may even find connections between underlined words/phrases and draw arrows/lines between them. The point is to make sure that you choose some specific textual examples. Look for interesting characterization, symbolism, depiction of theme, irony, tone clues, etc.

2. **Analyze:** At this point, you need to comment directly on the words/phrases you have selected. Are literary devices in action? Is there a discernable pattern? Is there something concrete you notice about the words/phrases? Do they contribute to the literal action, or are they figurative? How do they help you understand character, setting, theme, tone, etc.? Where is there symbolism, connotation, etc.?

3. **Infer:** Now it is time to draw INFERENCES from your observations. In other words, in what ways do all of your observations function in the context of the piece as a whole? What do they mean on a deeper level beyond the surface text?

4. **Main Idea:** Taking all of your observations/Comments/Inferences into account, draft a thesis statement that addresses what you have concluded is a Main Idea in the passage/poem. Remember that your THESIS must always address a CONCEPT and the AUTHOR’S EVALUATION of that concept.