

Name: _____ Hour: _____ Date: _____

Midaq Alley: Technique versus Feature

Many times when students want to discuss how a writer crafts a certain element of the work for a specific purpose, they end up addressing the *features* of the work instead of the *technique*. This is a normal mistake to make, and even some of the best adults make it as well, but being the young scholars that you are, today we are going to clarify this misconception. Fill out this handout to help guide you through differentiating the difference between these two terms.

What associations or synonyms come to mind when you think of the word *feature*? Write down your ideas below by writing your ideas around the graphic organizer.



What associations or synonyms come to mind when you think of the word *technique*? Write down your ideas below by writing your ideas around the graphic organizer.



Look back at the words you used for both words. What is the difference between the types of words you used to describe them? You might want to think about where or when you would see these words in action or being used, or you might think about what ideas they connect to. Write down your idea(s) here.

When literary scholars (or most fine arts scholars) analyze a work, they often point out a feature and note what techniques create that feature. For example, look at the following picture of a woman:

What facial feature is the most prominent or identifying for her?

How is this feature created? What did the artist do to make it stand out? You want to think about the different choices the artist had to make when he was creating her image. List these, as they are his technique.

The same method can be used when looking not only at an image, but also with writing, particularly when addressing the way an author crafts the features of a specific setting element. Locate one passage that you truly like in which Mahfouz describes some portion of the setting. This should only be **20 line** in length (i.e. not sentences, but how many times the text runs across the page) maximum. Address the questions below in regards to it.

What passage are you addressing? Give the gist of the passage in 1-2 sentences and provide the page number so that we can easily follow along.

What one or two elements of the setting are most striking to you? It might be the lighting or the emotional atmosphere. List them below and note why they are important in the passage.

What specific choices does Mahfouz use to create these different features? It might deal with the connotation of words used in the description, or the sounds repeated, or the colors used, etc. Fill out the following table to help you pick out these different techniques.

Feature	Nugget quote highlighting feature	Writer choice used to create technique	Effect of choice on reader

Look at the effect column. What is Mahfouz trying to achieve with this passage and setting in terms of the larger novel (you can look at a plot element, motif, theme, mood, etc).

How accurate do you feel this description of the setting is in terms of your understanding of the novel and Egypt? Explain your feelings as to why below.