

Poetry Literary Terms

Alliteration - The occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words. Ex – Benny batted bottles beautifully

Allusion - An expression designed to call something to mind without mentioning it explicitly; an indirect or passing reference to a famous work. EX) “I love scotch, scotch, scotch, scotch.” OR He felt like he should hamlet, being and not being were both options in this circumstance.

Atmosphere - The pervading tone or mood of a place, situation, or work of art. EX) You are scared and waiting in suspense when you watch *SAW*.

Ballad - A poem or song narrating a story in short stanzas.

Blank verse - Verse without rhyme, esp. that which uses **iambic pentameter** → special kind of verse that you will learn in later grades. EX) To be or not to be, that is the question.

Connotation - An idea or feeling that a word invokes in addition to its literal or primary meaning. EX) *The word “discipline” has unhappy connotations of punishment and repression.*

Denotation - The literal or primary meaning of a word, in contrast to the feelings or ideas that the word suggests. EX) *Beyond their immediate denotation, the words have a connotative power.*

Figurative language - Figurative language refers to words, and groups of words, that exaggerate or alter the usual meanings of the component words. EX) The vibrant yellow of the field seemed to dance as if the gentle gusts of wind would bring forth a more promising tomorrow.

Free verse - Poetry that does not rhyme or have a regular meter. EX) Rap and most spoken word.

Hyperbole - Exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally. EX) Gosh! It’s a million degrees in here! OR I have been writing for years!

Image - A mental representation or idea: EX) Her hair was as wild as the jungle and her stance was as low and predatory as the panther that crouched beside her - OR – As the smell of cinnamon hugged my nostrils, the bustle of the kitchen triggered the memory of my mother, whose words I can still remember: “don’t touch!” she would say, “cinnamon buns are only magic when they’re done. Don’t ruin the magic, Jon.”

Imagery - Visually descriptive or figurative language, esp. in a literary work. EX) The hole surrounded my being and the narrow shred of light that might of provided hope for some provided only despair for me; it was then that I realized that I was never getting out.

Irony - the expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or emphatic effect: EX) “Don't go overboard with the gratitude,” he scoffed with a dissatisfied scowl painted all over his face.

Dramatic Irony - Dramatic irony is when the words and actions of the characters of a work of literature have a different meaning for the reader than they do for the characters. EX) “Just keep swimming.” Dori in *Finding Nemo* uses this to describe her life under the sea, but it also describes life on earth.

Situational Irony - An outcome that turns out to be very different from what was expected, the difference between what is expected to happen and what actually does. EX) The hammer came down and hit the nail, only, it was that hammer that was driven back. There the nail stood, defiant of all hammers that might oppose it.

Verbal Irony - Irony in which a person says or writes one thing and means another, or uses words to convey a meaning that is the opposite of the literal meaning.

EX) Actor 1 - "Wasn't that exciting?"

Actor 2 - "Oh yes it was terribly thrilling." ***Actor roles eyes ****

Jargon - special words or expressions that are used by a particular profession or group and are difficult for others to understand: EX) In law, I am disinclined to acquiesce to your request.

Lyric – A poem that expresses the writer's emotions, usually briefly and in stanzas or recognized forms. EX) "Changes" - Tupac

Metaphor - A figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable: EX) "I had fallen through depression's trapdoor."

Mood - The atmosphere or pervading tone of something, esp. a work of art/literature.

Onomatopoeia - The formation of a word from a sound associated with what is named.

Oxymoron - A figure of speech in which apparently contradictory terms appear in conjunction
EX: faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

Paradox - A statement or proposition that, despite sound (or apparently sound) reasoning from acceptable premises, leads to a conclusion that seems senseless, logically unacceptable, or self-contradictory. EX) "All that we see or seem/ is but a dream within a dream." – Edgar Allen Poe

Personification - The attribution of a personal nature or human characteristics to something nonhuman, or the representation of an abstract quality in human form.

EX) The sun's arm reached out and brushed the ocean of flower petals.

Refrain - A repeated line or number of lines in a poem or song, typically at the end of each verse.

EX) BABY, BABY, BABY, OH

BABY, BABY, BABY, OH!!!

Rhyme - Correspondence of sound between words or the endings of words, esp. when these are used at the ends of lines of poetry.

EX) You got's to play it my way,

Two shots stray in the fray.

Rhyme scheme - The ordered pattern of rhymes at the ends of the lines of a poem or verse.

EX)

Bid me to weep, and I will weep A

While I have eyes to see; B

And having none, and yet I will keep A

A heart to weep for thee. B

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhyme_scheme)

Rhythm - The systematic arrangement of musical sounds, principally according to duration and periodic stress.

EX) **Because I Could Not Stop For Death, by Emily Dickinson**

Because I could not stop for Death,

He kindly stopped for me;

The carriage held but just ourselves

And Immortality.

Sarcasm - The use of irony to mock or convey contempt: EX) *His voice, hardened by sarcasm, could not hide his resentment.*

Satire - The use of humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people's stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and other topical issues.
EX) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebexx89yohE>

Simile - A figure of speech involving the comparison of one thing with another thing of a different kind, used to make a description more emphatic or vivid. The comparison usually involves the connecting words "like" or "as" EX) (e.g., *as brave as a lion, crazy like a fox*).

Slang - A type of language that consists of words and phrases that are regarded as very informal, are more common in speech than writing, and are typically restricted to a particular context or group of people: EX) *YOLO -> You only live once*

Sonnet - A poem of fourteen lines using any of a number of formal rhyme schemes, in English typically having ten syllables per line. EX) <http://www.sonnets.org/basicforms.htm>

Speaker - The person who speaks in the poem. This person should not to be confused with the author; sometimes, the author and the speaker possess very different thoughts about their topics.
EX) ***Figure this one out yourself.***

Stanza - A group of lines forming the basic recurring metrical unit in a poem; a verse [a poetic paragraph].

Theme - The subject of a talk, a piece of writing, a person's thoughts, or an exhibition; a topic:
EX) The theme of the sermon was reverence | a show **on the theme of** waste and recycling.

Tone - A manner of expression in writing that usually reflects the speaker of the poem's motivation: EX) There was a general tone of ill-concealed glee in the reporting.

Symbol - A thing that represents or stands for something else, esp. a material object representing something abstract.

EX) pink and red blossoms

artistically arranged

a symbol of love

http://www.poetrysoup.com/poems_poets/poem_detail.aspx?ID=455172

Symbolism - The use of symbols to represent ideas or qualities

EX) In China, symbolism in gardens achieved great subtlety.

Literary Concept Definitions

Content – The plot, basic structure and basic ideas that are held or included in a piece of literature

Character – The way in which a piece of literature is communicated. This general explanation includes, the form of the poem, the structure of the novel, the kinds of literary devices that are used and the ways in which the characters/speakers/advertisers or authors display their ideas.

Context - The circumstances that form the setting for the piece of literature that is being analyzed. These may include events, statements, or ideas, and in terms of which it can be fully understood and assessed

Bias - Prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair EX) *There was evidence of bias against foreign applicants / the bias toward younger people in recruitment*

Chronological order – A record of several events - starting with the earliest and following the order in which they occurred :

Compare – To estimate, measure, or note the similarity or dissimilarity between pieces of work.

Contrast - The state of being strikingly different from something else, typically something in juxtaposition or close association

Colloquial - Language used in ordinary or familiar conversation; not formal or literary.

Description - A spoken or written representation or account of a person, object, or event.

Exposition; expository - A comprehensive description and explanation of an idea or theory.

Persuasion; persuasive - The action or fact of persuading someone or of being persuaded to do or believe something
EX) Monica needed plenty of persuasion before she actually left.

Understatement - The presentation of something as being smaller, worse, or less important than it actually is:
EX) A master of English understatement

Novel / Short Story / Play Definitions

Play Specific

Aside - To one side; out of the way: *he pushed his plate aside / they stood aside to let a car pass / she must put aside all her antagonistic feelings.*

Audience - The assembled spectators or listeners at a public event, such as a play, movie, concert, or meeting : *the orchestra was given an enthusiastic ovation from the audience.*

- the people who watch or listen to a television or radio program
- the readership of a book, magazine, or newspaper
- the people giving or likely to give attention to something

Drama - A play for theater, radio, or television

Comedy – A play that is designed using professional entertainment consisting of jokes and satirical sketches, intended to make an audience laugh.

Tragedy - A play dealing with tragic events and having an unhappy ending, esp. one concerning the downfall of the main character.

Short Story/Novel/Play terms and devices

Antagonist - A person who actively opposes or is hostile to someone or something; an adversary [to the protagonist].

Protagonist – The leading character or one of the major characters in a drama, movie, novel, or other fictional text.

Cliché - A phrase or opinion that is overused and betrays a lack of original thought *EX) the old cliché “one man's meat is another man's poison.”*

Climax – The most intense, exciting, or important point of something; a culmination or apex : *the climax of her speech / a thrilling climax to the game.*

Conflict (internal, external) - A serious disagreement or argument, typically a protracted struggle that lasts throughout the work of literature.

Man vs Man → Man vs Nature → Man vs Self

Dialogue – A conversation between two or more people as a feature of a book, play, or movie

Direct presentation – The author tells us straight out, by exposition or analysis, or through another character.

Indirect presentation - author shows us the character in action; the reader infers what a character is like from what she/he thinks, or says, or does.

Character - A person in a novel, play, or movie. Also the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual

Characterization – Used to describe the distinctive nature or features of a person in a work.

Dynamic character - The opposite of static characters, dynamic characters will undergo some kind of change in the course of the story.

Flat character – Minor characters in a work of fiction who do not undergo substantial change or growth in the course of a story.

Foil - A foil is a character who contrasts with another character, usually the protagonist, and, in

so doing, highlights various facets of the main character's personality.

Round character - A round character is a fully developed character that has a fully developed physical appearance and psyche. This way the reader has a good picture of their looks and personality.

Static character - A character does not change throughout the events of the conflict.

Stereotyped character – A character that is regularly used in many different types of literature: EX) a jester/ clown or a power hungry maniacal king.

Flashback - A scene in a movie, novel, etc., set in a time earlier than the main story

Foreshadowing - A warning or indication of (a future event).

Narration – To give a spoken or written account of a chain of events.

Narrator - a person who narrates something, esp. a character who recounts the events of a novel or narrative poem.

Point of view – The position from which the reader is able to experience the events of the story.

First person point of view - The narrator does participate in the action of the story. When reading stories in the first person, we need to realize that what the narrator is recounting might not be the objective truth. We should question the trustworthiness of the accounting.

Limited omniscient - A narrator whose knowledge is limited to one character, either major or minor, has a limited omniscient point of view.

Objective point of view – With the objective point of view, the writer tells what happens without stating more than can be inferred from the story's action and dialogue. The narrator never discloses anything about what the characters think or feel, remaining a detached observer.

Omniscient point of view - A narrator who knows everything about all the characters is all knowing, or omniscient.

Plot - The main events of a play, novel, movie, or similar work, devised and presented by the writer as an interrelated sequence.

Inciting incident – The happenstance or action that signifies the beginning of the conflict. This incident is usually at the beginning of most books and plays.

Rising action – The period after the inciting incident where the conflict is outlined and the story is moved forward by the actions and dialogue of the characters

Falling action – The period after the climax in which all of the conflicts in the piece of literature begin to be resolved

Resolution - The action that solve the problem, dispute, or contentious matter that is driving the work's conflict.

Setting - The place or type of surroundings where something is positioned or where an event takes place.

Propaganda - Chiefly derogatory information, of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote or publicize a particular political cause or point of view.