

Literature Term Vocabulary

- Allegory-** A story, poem, or picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically a moral or political one. Examples: *Narnia*, *The Pilgrim's Progress*
- Alliteration-** The repetition of the beginning sound or letter in two or more words in a line of verse such as “dappled doggies dash,” “bouncy bunnies,” “careening cars crashing,” etc.
- Antagonist-** Main character’s adversary (competition) who is often villainous. The antagonist can also be a force of nature or a character might be “their own worst enemy”.
Example:
- Assonance-** The repetition of the sound of a vowel or diphthong in nonrhyming stressed syllables near enough to each other for the echo to be discernible (e.g., penitence, reticence).
- Caesura-** (noun) (In Greek and Latin verse) A break between words within a metrical foot. For example, “To Err is human; || To forgive, divine.”
by Alexander Pope.
- Characters-** The characters are the people, animals, or other “beings” in a narrative. They can be fictional or real.
- Characterization-** Things told to us by the author and things we conclude based on information the author has given us.
- Cliché-** A phrase or opinion that is over used and lacks original thought (ex: “Actions speak louder than words”, “Don’t judge a book by its cover”).
- Climax-** Fourth stage of plot; moment at which the main character fails and succeeds; turning point in the story.

Conclusion: The author closes the story, often putting an interpretive spin on the story's events, hinting at its theme.

Conflict- Driving force or problem of a story; can be external or internal.

Consonance- The repetition of consonant sounds anywhere in a word (not just at the beginning as in alliteration) in a line of verse for example, "As Tommy Snooks/ and Bessy Brooks/ Were walking/ out one Sunday." (nursery rhyme)

Couplet- Two lines of poetry that rhyme and usually contain one complete idea.

Denotation/Connotation- Denotation-literal meaning of a word.

Connotation- an idea or feeling that a word invokes in addition to its actual definition.

Denouement- The author discloses the secrets of the plot, "unravels" the mysteries and answers the reader's questions.

Diction- Manner in which the author writes or character's speak-can be informal (slang), Colloquial (everyday), or formal (highly educated).

Ex:

Didactic- (adjective) Intending to teach, particularly in having moral instruction or as an ulterior motive.

End Rhyme- (also called external rhyme) When there is a rhyming of words at the ends of two or more lines of a poem, for example, "Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall, /Humpty dumpty had a great fall."

Exposition- First stage of plot; background information of story.

Falling Action- Fifth stage of plot; all the events that occur after the protagonist fails or succeeds. Loose ends are tied up.

Foot- A unit of meter, iambic, anapestic, trochaic, dactylic, or spondaic (see meter). A group of two or three syllables is called a poetic foot.

Foreshadowing- (verb) To show or indicate beforehand. When an author provides a clue about something that is going to happen in the story. Allows the reading to make predictions about what is going to happen next in the story. For look up foreshadowing.org for examples. *Romeo and Juliet* will have many instances of foreshadowing throughout the play.

Genre- Broad category of literature broken into fiction and non-fiction.

Imagery- The image the words in a story or poem paint in the reader's mind (e.g. It was dark and dim in the forest.)

Internal Rhyme- Rhyming of words within a line of poetry, for example, "Jack Sprat could eat no fat."

Interior Monologue-Internal flow of character's ideas, thoughts, or memories. A **soliloquy** is the conversation a character has with him/herself in a play when no other characters are present.

Irony- (noun) The expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or emphatic effect. For example, a family tries to protect themselves with various forms of security systems and devices. In the end, one of the devices kill their child...that's ironic. Another example would be, a book titled *How To Read*.

Litotes- (noun) Ironic understatement in which an affirmative is expressed by the

negative of its contrary. For example, “you won’t be sorry” really means “you’ll be glad”.

Metaphor- Compares two different things as if they are the same, without using comparison words such as “like” or “as”; for example, “The moon is a white frisbee floating over the mountain.”

Meter- A pattern of stressed and unstressed (or accented and unaccented) syllables in a line of poetry. For instance, in the word “window” the first syllable is stressed and the second syllable is unstressed. In the word “casino”, only the second syllable is stressed. Here are some examples of the various types of meter in poetry:

Iambic: anew, goodbye, surprise, go home

Trochaic: doorknob, teaspoon, hangnail, jumpstart

Dactylic: angel food, talk to me, rabbit’s foot, Saturday

Anapestic: cigarette, resurrect, disinfect, creamy soup, big blue book

Amphibrachic: tremendous, courageous, humongous, terrific, the palace, the right Way

Sonnetic: heartburn, big top, red house, cold fish, run down

Pyrrhic: in a, so he, with it, with the, and the

Mood/Atmosphere- Feeling created by the narrator’s tone and story’s setting that affects the reader’s emotions and state of mind.

Narrator- Person who is telling a story; can be a character in the tale or an unknown person.

Onomatopoeia- A word that mimics the sound it represents; words such as buzz, swish, zip, growl, hiss, gulp, zigzag, meow, slither.

Oxymoron- a figure of speech in which apparently contradictory terms appear in conjunction (e.g. a new classic, a little big, almost ready).

Plot- Series of events, actions, reactions of characters from the beginning, middle, to the end of the story; usually divided into 6 distinct parts.

Example: (story arc)

Point of View- The vantage point from which a story is told (i.e. 1st person, 2nd person, etc.).

Problem- Main issue a character must face and overcome.

Prose- Any written literature other than poetry.

Protagonist- Main character in a story, usually faces a plethora of internal and external conflicts. Example:

Quatrain- A four-line stanza (see stanza) of four rhymed lines, rhyme scheme of various forms such as a-a-a-a, a-b-a-b, a-b-b-a, a-a-b-b-, a-b-c-d

Repetition- Repeating a word, phrase, or sounds to add emphasis or rhythm. Probably the best example of repetition would be the lines of Edgar Allan Poe's, "The Raven." "While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping, as of someone gently rapping rapping, at my chamber door."

Resolution- Conclusion of a story that can be either happy or sad.

Rhyme- Two or more words with the same or similar sounds.

Rhyme Scheme- A pattern of rhyme in a poem. For instance, if it is a quatrain and the first and the third lines are rhyme, it has the pattern of a-b-a-b. If all four lines rhyme with each other, it has a rhyme scheme of a-a-a-a. If the second and fourth lines rhyme, the pattern is a-b-c-b.

Rising Action- Third stage of plot, subsequent conflicts with a lot of tension/suspense.

Satire/Parody- Satire ridicules or makes fun of an institution or specific people to bring about change.

Parody makes fun of another work by imitating a particular piece (comical-Weird Al Yancovich).

Sentence Inversion- (noun) Any sentence in which the word order is reversed with, with the verb coming before the subject or the complete subject and predicate coming after another clause. For example, “Rarely **have I eaten** better food.”, “ Never again **will I do** that.”

Setting- Time, place, season or when and where a story occurs.

Simile- Comparison of two different things using comparing words such as “like” or “as”.

an example is “I’m as hungry as a bear.”

Solution- How the problem is solved

Stanza- A division or section of poem named for the quality of lines it contains; for instance, the couplet is a two line stanza, the triplet, a three line stanza, a quatrain is a four line stanza. There are also sestets (six lines), septets (seven lines) and octaves (eight lines).

Symbolism- Assigning concrete objects abstract meaning. Example: The letter A in *The Scarlet Letter*.

Tense- A story can be told in the past, present, or future tense.

Theme- An insight about human life that is revealed in a literary work. **Not one word** (e.g. love). What is the writer’s message? Example:

Tone/Mood- Tone: The writer’s attitude toward the character, audience, and subject...the person.

Mood: The climate or feeling of a literary work (i.e. environment).

Verse- A line of traditional poetry written in meter. In addition, verse has a name depending upon the number of feet (see foot) per line: one foot (monometer), two foot (dimeter), three foot (trimeter), four foot (tetrameter), five feet (pentameter), six feet (hexameter), seven feet (heptameter), eight feet (octometer).

Word Usage- Diction (words a writer chooses), Dialect (a particular way of speaking), Dialogue (discussion)