

## English 8 Literary Terms

**Allusion** – A reference to a historical or literary figure or event.

**Antagonist** - is the character that is directly *opposed to the protagonist* (a rival, opponent, enemy). The antagonist can be another character in the work, the forces of nature, fate, chance, or any combination of these things.

**Anti-hero** - is the protagonist who is the opposite of what we would expect a hero to be.

**Character** – The people, animals, or figures in a story.

**Characterization** - is the creation of imaginary persons so that they seem lifelike. The author creates and *reveals the characters personality* through the following:

1. Physical characteristics
2. Character's speech and behavior
3. Opinions and reactions of other characters to the individual
4. Character's thoughts and feelings

**Conflict** - is the *struggle* between two opposing forces. The five basic types of conflicts are:

1. *Person vs. Nature* is where man struggles with weather, wind, water or other natural elements.
2. *Person vs. Person* is where humans struggle against other humans or human forms.
3. *Person vs. Self* is where a human struggles against two or more elements within himself. Internal and external struggles.
4. *Person vs. Society* is where man struggles against society's institutions (such as IRS, legal systems, prejudice, peer pressure etc.)
5. *Person vs. Supernatural* is where a human struggles with some opposing force outside of the ordinary (such as ghosts, "magical forces," etc.)

**Climax** - is always the point of highest interest where the reader feels the greatest emotional response. It is usually the *turning point* in the action.

**Denouement or falling action** - is usually the unraveling of the "knot" created by the struggle between the main characters. It is the solution of the mystery or the explanation or outcome of what happens because of the climax or crisis.

**Dialogue** – When 2 or more characters engage in conversation.

**Figurative** - means an intentional departure from the normal meaning of the words.

**Figurative Language** – The use of words outside of their literal, or usual, way. The most common figures of speech are simile, metaphor, hyperbole, and personification.

**Flashback** – An interruption in the major action of a story, play or nonfiction work to show an episode that happened at an earlier time and place. A flashback can shed light on the characters and events of the present by providing background information.

**Flat Character** - is a character constructed around a single idea.

**Foreshadowing** - is the technique an author uses of giving the reader, listener, or viewer of a story hints of what is to come later in the work.

**Genre** - is used to designate the categories into which a work of literature may be placed (romance, science fiction, adventure, etc.).

**Hero** - is the central character in a work that overcomes or conquers a challenge.

**Hyperbole** - is a *great* exaggeration to emphasize strong feeling (ex. I can't believe that lunch is 30 minutes away, I'm going to starve to death!).

**Idiom** - is the figurative use of words in a certain way that has meaning that should not be taken literally. "Stop pulling my leg!" means stop joking, NOT that someone is actually physically pulling your leg.

**Imagery** – The use of concrete details that appeal to the five senses. This collection of images that is painted by words in a given work, establish a mood, arouse a reader's emotions, and leave the reader with a deeper meaning of the work.

**Inference** - A logical conclusion or an assumption about a character or an event in a story, based on limited details (clues) within the story and/or your own experience (background knowledge).

**Irony** - A contrast between two things. Three types of irony are:

1. *Verbal* is a contrast between what is said and what is meant (sarcasm).
2. *Dramatic Irony* happens when the reader or viewer is aware of something that the characters involved are unaware of.
3. *Situational Irony* is when the opposite of what we expect to happen, happens.

**Literal** - means keeping accurate, exactly to the letter without embellishing.

**Metaphor** - is a figure of speech that implies comparison between two different things (WITHOUT using *like* or *as*).

**Mood** - is the overall feeling or atmosphere the writer creates in a work through the choice of setting, imagery, details, and descriptions.

**Motif** - is a term for a reoccurring theme or idea in a piece of literature. In *The Outsiders*, one reoccurring motif is the repeated reference to literary works in an attempt by the main character to make a connection with the reader about the characters within the story.

**Narrative hook** - is any device at the opening of a work to capture the interest of the readers and make them continue reading.

**Oxymoron** - is a combination of contradictory terms (silent scream, civil war, jumbo shrimp, freezer burn).

**Paraphrase** - is a restatement of an idea that keeps the same meaning but uses different words.

**Personification** - is when you give human characteristics to animals or inanimate objects.

**Plot** - A series of related events which form a story. The usual pattern of plot is (conflict), introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, and conclusion.

**Point of view** - is the viewpoint from which an author presents a story.

1. *First person* – The narrator “I” is a character in the story who can reveal only his own thoughts and feelings and what he/she sees. “I couldn’t believe my eyes and wondered how she could let that happen.”
2. *Third person objective* – The story is told by someone outside of the story. The outsider can only report what he/she sees and hears: “He scanned the crowded restaurant, obviously searching for a familiar face.”
3. *Third person omniscient* – The voice telling the story can enter the minds of all or most of the characters. This POV is able to relates feelings, thought, and emotions of all the characters with a god-like intuition: “Gary was afraid; he had never felt like this before. His heart felt like it would beat right out of his chest. She silently took his hand and instantly understood. They both knew they would never forget what happened.”
4. *Third person limited* – The narrator is an outsider who can only enter the minds of a limited number of characters. (Knows the thoughts of 1 or 2 characters) “Lynn looked very angry and David instinctively knew he shouldn’t mess with her when she got that way.”

**Protagonist** - is the chief or *main character in a short story*, play, or novel.

**Pun** – A play on words...humorous use of words that have different meanings. (ex. “A bicycle can’t stand on its own because it’s two tired.”)

**Rising action** - includes events that complicate the conflict and it leads the story to the climax. This is where the tension builds and the suspense grows in a story.

**Setting** – The time and place in which the action of a narrative occurs.

**Simile** – A figure of speech involving a comparison using the words *like* or *as*.

**Stereotype** – A conventional character or plot with little or no individuality

**Symbol** – Something concrete, such as an object, person, place or happening, that stands for or represents something beyond itself. For example, a dove is a bird, but it may also be a symbol for peace.

**Theme** - The central idea or underlying meaning of a work. It is the message about life or human nature, but it is not always directly stated. Not all literary works have a theme, although some have more than one. Some common themes found in literature are abstract terms such as: love, faith, courage, survival, etc.

**Tone** - The way in which a writer uses their choice of words or arrangement of ideas and events to convey the writer’s attitude toward a subject.