

Story Terms

Character Terms

- Protagonist:** is the main character in a story (working toward a goal)
- Antagonist:** is the major character or force in conflict with the protagonist
- Motivation:** the incentives or goals that combine with a character's personality and cause him/her to behave as they do (is whatever causes a character to do what he or she does).
- Flat character:** is a limited character who has only one or two apparent (visible) qualities (traits).
- Round character:** is a realistic character with several (many) qualities or traits.
- Dynamic character:** is a character who undergoes a significant, lasting change, usually in his or her outlook
- Static character:** is the same sort of person at the end of the story as at the beginning.
- Stereotyped character:** is a predictable, one-dimensional character who fits a set pattern of behaviour. (e.g. "the jock," "the brain," "the nerd" etc.)
- Foil:** is minor character whose situation or actions contrast with those of a major character. The contrast provided by the foil sets off or illuminates the major character.
- Direct Presentation:** The author tell us what a character is like or has another character tell us about the character.
- Indirect Presentation:** The author reveals a character through the character's actions and speech.

Plot Terms

- Conflict:** is a struggle between opposing characters or forces, usually between the protagonist and someone or something else.
 - External conflict:** is a struggle between a character and his or her surroundings or between two characters. The struggle between characters can be physical, emotional or psychological.
 - Internal conflict:** a struggle within a character over desires, ideas or goals.
 - Dilemma:** is a difficult choice between two equally unpleasant alternatives. (Internal conflict)
- Plot:** is the series of events that make up the story.
- Subplot:** is a minor storyline, secondary to the main plot
- Antecedent Action** is the significant action that takes place before the story begins
- Initiating Incident:** is the event that begins the conflict
- Rising Action:** is the series of events that lead up to the climax
- Climax:** is the major crisis in the story and usually is a turning point for the protagonist. It is also the highest point of emotional intensity for the reader.

- ★ **Denouement:** is the resolution of the conflict that occurs after the climax. Often things which were unclear earlier in the story are explained.
- ★ **Suspense:** a feeling of uncertainty or anxiety felt by the reader over what will happen to the protagonist. The quality that makes a reader eager to find out what happens.
- ★ **Foreshadowing:** a hint of what is going to happen later in the story
- ★ **Flashback:** a shift in the story from the present to the past to fill in important details.
- Happy Ending:** an ending in which events turn out well for a sympathetic protagonist
- Unhappy Ending:** an ending in which events turn out unhappily for a sympathetic protagonist
- Indeterminate Ending:** an ending in which the conflict is unresolved.
- Surprise Ending:** a completely unexpected revelation or turn of the plot at the end of the story.
- Deus ex Machina:** ("god from the machine") Refers to the resolution of the conflict by some highly unlikely coincidence.

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- ★ **Setting:** is the place and time in which a story occurs.
- Atmosphere:** is the pervading feeling created by a story (sometimes called Mood).

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- ★ **Theme:** is the central idea (or message) of a story. It is usually implied rather than directly stated. Themes are expressed as statements (complete sentences!).
- ★ **Symbol:** is something that stands for, or represents something else. Often it is a concrete object that represents an abstract idea.

Point of View

- Point of View:** is the perspective from which a story is told.
- First person:** The protagonist tells the story directly to the reader using first person ("I"). The reader knows the thoughts and feelings of the protagonist only.
- Limited omniscient:** A narrator tells the story, and refers to characters as he/she. This point of view shows only what one character thinks and feels.
- Omniscient:** A narrator tells the story, and refers to characters as he/she. The narrator knows the thoughts and feelings of several or all characters.
- Objective:** A narrator tells the story revealing only what characters say or do. There is no insight into characters' thoughts.

Irony

- Irony:** involves a contrast which provides depth of meaning and impact. When irony is used meanings tend to become concealed or contradictory.
- Verbal irony:** occurs when what is said contrasts with what is meant. (ex. sarcasm is verbal irony)
- Situational irony:** occurs when what takes place contrasts with what is expected or what seems appropriate.
- Dramatic irony:** occurs when what a character says or believes contrasts with what the reader (or audience) knows to be true.

Miscellaneous Terms

- Allegory** A tale in which characters, actions or settings represent abstract ideas or moral qualities.
- Analogy** A process in which a complex idea is compared to a simple or familiar idea.
- Anecdote** A short summary of a humorous event.
- Dialect** is a manner of speaking peculiar to an individual, a group or a region.
- Diction** A writer's choice of words. (Ex. formal or informal; simple or sophisticated)
- Colloquial** Informal expressions ("Hey man, have you seen the rest of the guys?")
- Jargon** Specialized, technical language used by a specific group
- Euphemism** Use of neutral or inoffensive words in place of harsher, more realistic words. (Ex. To say a car is "pre-owned" instead of "used")
- Escape Fiction** Literature written purely for entertainment (with little or no attempt to provide insights into human nature).
- Interpretive Fiction** Literature that provides valid insights into human nature.
- Fantasy** A type of fiction which features creatures and events beyond the boundaries of reality
- Juxtaposition** A contrast in which positioning is important (ex. two contrasting characters placed side by side in a story).
- Moral** A rule of conduct for living that is stated or implied as the lesson of a story. (example: "Slow and steady wins the race" from "The Tortoise and the Hare")
- Stream of consciousness** Narrative that shows a character's thoughts as they occur, without interpretation and possibly without conventional punctuation.
- Sentimentality** Contrived tender feelings (story that attempts to make readers cry)
- Style** An author's characteristic way of writing. (Ex. One author may write long, complex sentences. Another author may write short sentences with few adjectives.)
- Tone** The attitude the writer takes toward his or her subject, characters or audience.

Poetry Terms

Figurative Language (affects the meaning of literature)

- Allusion** A reference to a person, place, event or literary work that a writer expects a reader to recognize and respond to. Allusions may be drawn from history, literature, myth or religion.
- Apostrophe** A direct address to an absent or dead person, to an abstract quality or to something nonhuman. (Ex. "Death, where is thy sting?")
- Hyperbole** Deliberate exaggeration used for effect.
- Imagery** Words or phrases that create pictures in the reader's mind.
- Metaphor** A direct comparison between two dissimilar things.
- Metonymy** A figure of speech in which something very closely associated with a thing is used to stand for the thing itself. (ex. "the crown" to mean king; "the White House" to mean U.S. President)
- Oxymoron** A figure of speech that combines opposite or contradictory ideas or terms.
- Paradox** A statement that reveals a kind of truth, although at first it seems contradictory. (Ex. "Stone walls do not a prison make, / Nor iron bars a cage")
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- Personification** To give human qualities to something nonhuman.
- Pun** A word used to suggest more than one meaning. Words used in puns sound the same, but have different meanings. (principal/principle; guilt/gilt)
- Simile** A comparison between two dissimilar things introduced by "like" or "as."
- Synecdoche** A figure of speech that substitutes a part for a whole. (ex. all *hands* on deck)
- Understatement** Deliberately underrating something, or stating it to be less than it is. (Ex. Upon winning a million dollars you say, "That's nice.")

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Auditory Devices (affect the sound of literature)

- Alliteration** The repetition of initial sounds of two or more words. It is the sound, not the spelling, that is considered. (Ex. "I'd rather wrench...").
- Assonance** The repetition of stressed vowel sounds in a group of words. (Ex. "our echoes oll from oul to oul")
- Consonance** The repetition of consonant sounds which is not limited to the initial sounds of each word as is alliteration. (Ex. "high school girls with clear skin smiles")
- Onomatopoeia** The use of a word whose sound imitates or suggests its meaning.
- Refrain** A word, phrase, line or lines repeated at intervals in a poem.

- Rhyme** The repetition of sounds in two or more words that appear close to each other.
- Internal Rhyme** Rhyme which occurs within a line of poetry.
(Ex. "For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams")
- Rhyme Scheme** The pattern of rhyme in a poem. Letters are used to show the rhyme scheme.
ex. abcb, aabb).

Rhythm The flow of a poem created by stressed and unstressed syllables.

Iambic Pentameter is a line of poetry with 10 syllables in a repeated pattern of one unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable.

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- Stanza** A group of lines which form a division of a poem.
- Couplet** Two consecutive lines (Rhymed couplet - two consecutive rhyming lines)
- Quatrain** A four-line stanza or poem.
- Sestet** A six-line stanza or poem.
- Octave** An eight-line stanza or poem.

Speaker The person(s) who speaks the words of the poem

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Types of Poems

- Concrete** A poem in which the shape of the poem contributes to its meaning.
- Didactic** A poem written to teach or to state an informative message. Didactic poems may make a comment on society, or explain an event or issue.
- Lyric** A short poem that expresses a speaker's thoughts, feelings, or impressions.
Lyric poems include the elegy, ode and sonnet.
- Elegy** A poem of mourning, usually over a death (employs a solemn tone).
- Ode** A lyric poem written in a formal style on a serious subject, in an exalted tone. (often to commemorate an event, or to honour a person or thing).
- Sonnet** A lyric poem of 14 lines written in iambic pentameter.
- Narrative** A poem that tells a story
- Ballad** A narrative poem that contains a pattern of rhyme, much repetition and often a refrain.
Ballads usually tell of a dramatic event, such as the sinking of a ship.
- Epic** A long narrative poem telling of the deeds of a great hero.
- Parody** A humorous imitation of a work of literature, art, music, etc. Usually the parody imitates the tone and form of the original, but is written about a ridiculous topic.

Types of Verse

- Blank Verse** Verse written in unrhymed iambic pentameter.
- Free Verse** A poem without a pattern of line length and meter.

Drama Terms:

- Aside** A short speech made to the audience while other characters are present, but do not hear. The purpose is to reveal a character's thoughts.
- Exeunt** An exit of two or more characters
- Soliloquy** A speech made to the audience by a character alone on stage. Again, the purpose is to reveal a character's thoughts.

The Language of Shakespeare

- Blank Verse** Unrhymed iambic pentameter, used for upper-class characters.
- Rhymed Verse** Rhymed iambic pentameter, used to express significant ideas (and for love).
- Prose** Ordinary language without rhythm or rhyme. Shakespeare used it for lower-class, uneducated characters, or to indicate a state of mental distress.
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Types of writing:

- Analytical** Presents a detailed examination of the topic
- Descriptive** Uses language to create vivid images of people, objects, events, etc.
- Expository** Explains, interprets, or provides commentary on a topic (much like analytical writing)
- Narrative** Tells a story
- Objective** States facts that are not coloured by feelings or opinions (does not use "I")
- Persuasive** Attempts to convince the audience of a particular point of view
- Reflective** Is contemplative; shows the author meditating (reflecting) on the topic
- Satirical** Uses ridicule, irony or sarcasm to expose foolish or immoral behaviour, or to lampoon an individual. (Also known as **Satire**.)
- Subjective** Expresses a point of view that is personal or individual