

Literary Terms

Alliteration – The repetition of the same or very similar consonant sounds at the beginning of words that are close together.

Allusion – A reference made to a story, person, or event that the author expects the reader to recognize.

Assonance – The repetition of the same or very similar vowel sounds at the beginning of words that are close together.

Character Trait – Each of the little details that make up a personality (*not* physical appearance).

Flat Character – One that shows mainly one character trait during the course of a story.

Round Character – One that shows several character traits during the course of a story.

Static Character – One that does not change during the course of a story.

Dynamic Character – One that does change in some important way during the course of a story.

Characterization – The process of revealing the personality of a character in a story. A writer can reveal a character in the following ways:

- by letting the reader hear the character speak
- by describing how the character looks or dresses
- by letting the reader listen to the character's inner thoughts and feelings
- by revealing what other people in the story think or say about the character
- by showing the reader what the character does – how he or she acts
- by telling the reader directly what the character's personality is like (for example, cruel, kind, sneaky, brave, and so on).

Direct Characterization – Occurs when the author directly tells the reader what the character's traits are.

Indirect Characterization – Occurs when the reader must draw conclusions about a character based on the clues given by the author.

Conflict – The struggle of the story; the problem to be solved.

External Conflict – A struggle between a character and some outside force; man vs. man, man vs. machine, man vs. nature, man vs. the supernatural

Internal Conflict – A struggle within a character that usually involves decisions about right and wrong or whether or not to do something; person vs. self.

Connotation – The meaning of a word other than its dictionary meaning; how everyday people understand the word.

Denotation – The dictionary definition of a word.

Dialog – Verbal exchanges between characters; characters speaking to each other.

Euphemism – Substituting a mild or indirect expression for one that is harsh, blunt, or unpleasant.

Figure of Speech – A word or phrase that describes one thing in terms of something else and is not literally true.

Flashback – A break in the natural timeline of a story to inform the reader of events that took place in the past.

Foreshadowing – The use of clues in a story that suggest events which have yet to occur.

Hyperbole – An exaggeration made for effect, such as, "I ate a ton of ice cream!"

Idiom – A traditional way of saying something that does not make literal sense. "Raining cats and dogs," is an example.

Irony – An outcome contrary to what was expected or what might have been expected.

Dramatic Irony – When the audience understands the outcome of a situation but the characters do not.

Imagery – The use of words and phrases to create mental images for the reader that are tied to one or more of the five senses.

Metaphor – A direct comparison of unlike things; stating that something "is" something else.

Mood – The atmosphere created by the author for the reader.

Onomatopoeia – Words that imitate actual, natural sounds.

Oxymoron – A phrase that has a contradiction in it. For example, "jumbo shrimp."

Paradox – A contradiction that, when carefully considered, contains truth.

Personification – Giving human characteristics and sensibilities to non---human things, such as animals, plants, or natural forces.

Point of View – The perspective that a story is told from.

First Person Point of View – A character in the story tells the story. The pronoun “I” is used throughout the narrative (not just in dialog). The character telling the story may or may not be a reliable source of information.

Second Person Point of View – The author places you, the reader, as the narrator. The pronoun “you” is used during narration. This point of view is rare in fiction.

Third Person Omniscient Point of View – A voice outside the story tells the story. The narrator not only reports observations to the reader, but also has the ability to see some or all characters’ thoughts and feelings.

Third Person Limited Point of View – A voice outside the story tells the story. The narrator either only reports observations to the reader or may also have access to *one* character’s thoughts and feelings (and is therefore “limited”).

Setting – The time and place in which a story occurs.

Simile – A comparison of two unlike things that uses “like,” “as” or terms of indirect comparison.

Symbol – Something that stands for or represents something else.

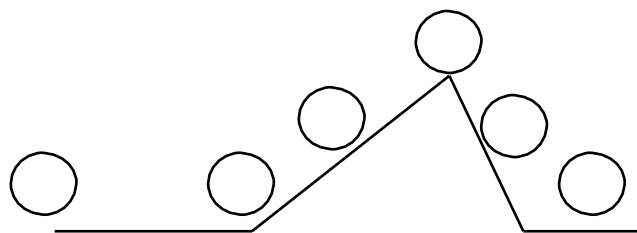
Theme – The lesson of the story; the “big idea” that the author wants to pass on to the reader.

Tone – The attitude of the narrator toward the subject matter.

Plot – The sequence of related events that make up a story.

Plot Diagram

- 1 – **Exposition** – The introduction of the story, the reader finds out about the characters and the setting.
- 2 – **Inciting Incident** – The introduction of the central conflict.
- 3 – **Rising Action** – The events which lead up to the high action point of the story during which the story becomes more complicated.
- 4 – **Climax** – The high point of action or tension in a story. The central conflict is either resolved or its resolution becomes clear.
- 5 – **Falling Action** – The events of a story after the high action point which lead to the end of the story.
- 6 – **Resolution (or Denouement)** – How the story ends; the loose ends are tied up.



Types of Fiction	
Realistic Fiction	Believable fiction that is set in the present.
Historical Fiction	Fiction that is set in the past, involves fictional characters but actual historical events and places.
Fantasy	Highly imaginative fiction that uses strange or unusual characters, setting, and plot.
Mystery	Fiction that includes secrets or crimes to be solved.
Science Fiction	Fiction that deals with futuristic science or technology.

Types of Folktales	
Fable	A folktale that teaches a moral lesson, often including animals as characters.
Fairy Tale	A folktale that usually includes magical elements.
Myth	A folktale that is considered sacred (usually to some past civilization) and that attempts to explain how things came to be.
Legend	A folktale that is based on a real person or event.

Types of Nonfiction	
Biography	Nonfiction that is informational writing about real people or a real person.
Autobiography	Nonfiction that is a biography of a real person written by himself or herself.
Informational	Nonfiction writing about a topic, including books and newspaper or magazine articles.