



Literary Terms

-words used in discussion, classification, criticism, and analysis of poetry, novels, and picture books

LITERARY TERMS

Argument- a form of discourse in which reason is used to influence or change people's ideas or actions

Example: "However," John protested, "This policy does NOT serve all of the republic."

LITERARY TERMS

Antagonist- a person or force which opposes the protagonist in a literary work

Example: The Joker in the movie, Batman

LITERARY TERMS

Central Idea- the central, unifying element of the story; the dominant impression or the universal, generic truth found in the story (theme)

Example: We must work together, despite our differing viewpoints, if our team is going to be successful.

LITERARY TERMS

Characterization - the method a writer uses to reveal the personality of a character in a literary work

Example: The pampered child, a snotty, spoiled brat, promptly started a brouhaha

LITERARY TERMS

Dialogue - a conversation between characters

Example: "Let's go to Subway!" exclaimed Mitch. "Sounds great," Edith replied.

LITERARY TERMS

Dynamic Character- a character who undergoes an important and basic change in personality or outlook

Example: Neville Longbottom (Harry Potter)

LITERARY TERMS

Evidence- facts, documentation, or testimony used to strengthen a claim, support an argument, or reach a conclusion

Example: Pizza is served in the cafeteria everyday.

LITERARY TERMS

Falling Action- All of the action that follows the turning point and leads to the resolution or conclusion

Example: Ha finally has a host family in Alabama.

LITERARY TERMS

Fate - an event (or course of events) that will inevitably happen in the future

Example: Your hair will turn grey.

LITERARY TERMS

Figurative Language- writing or speech that is not meant to be taken literally.

Example: Billy Bob waited 3 days for Parker to exit Holister.

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Flashback: a scene that interrupts the action to show an event that happened at an earlier time.

Example: “Back in 1st grade, I was the best dodge ball player in the school. It all began when...”

LITERARY TERMS

Foreshadowing: the use of hints or clues in a narrative to suggest what action is to come and helps build suspense in a story because it suggests what is about to happen.

Example: The I Ching Teller of Fate predicts Ha's life will turn inside out.

LITERARY TERMS

Genre: a division or type of literature.

Example: Biography

LITERARY TERMS

Inference: a conclusion one draws (infers) based on evidence.

Example: The fear in her word choice indicates that violence and turmoil are coming closer to home.

LITERARY TERMS

Irony: the use of words to convey a meaning that is the opposite of its literal meaning.

Example: The traffic cop had his license suspended for unpaid parking tickets.

LITERARY TERMS

Literal Language: a fact or idea stated directly (when a writer intends something to be understood exactly as it is written, he or she is using literal language).

Example: The teacher is walking around the classroom.

LITERARY TERMS

Metaphor: a figure of speech comparing two unlike things without using like or as.

Example: The goalie is a brick wall.

LITERARY TERMS

Mood: the feeling created in the reader by a literary work or passage.

Example: The dreary clouds mimicked Steve's sullen face.

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Motivation: reason that explains a character's thoughts, feelings, actions, or speech.

Example: His unending love of money led him to rob the bank.

LITERARY TERMS

Plot: the pattern of action in a story.

Example: Introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, conclusion.

LITERARY TERMS

Point of View: the vantage point from which a narrative is told.

Example:

1st Person POV– I must stand on a chair to see.

3rd Person POV– Richard's stomach howled with hunger pangs, but his mind was squarely on the battle that lay ahead.

LITERARY TERMS

Protagonist: the main character that the story revolves around.

Example: Nemo

LITERARY TERMS

Pun: the use of a word or phrase to suggest two or more meanings at the same time (usually humorous).

Example: The best way to communicate with fish is to drop them a line.

LITERARY TERMS

Rising Action: events in a play that lead to a turning point in the action.

Example: Laurie continues to share stories about a classmate with outrageous behavior.

LITERARY TERMS

Resolution: the outcome of the conflict in a story (concludes the falling action).

Example: Laurie's mom and teacher sit down during a parent conference and discuss the first week of school.

LITERARY TERMS

Setting: the time and place of the story.

Example: The sparkling cafeteria was silent at 12:25 p.m.

LITERARY TERMS

Static Character: a character who remains the same throughout a narrative and does not develop or change beyond the way in which they are first presented.

Example: Bond. James Bond.

LITERARY TERMS

Structure: the framework of a work of literature; the organization or over-all design of a work.

Example: the article was written in conventional paragraph form.

LITERARY TERMS

Summary: presenting in a condensed form; concise

Example: After his son is captured in the Great Barrier Reef and taken to Sydney, a timid clownfish sets out on a journey to bring him home.

LITERARY TERMS

Suspense: quality of a literary work that makes the reader or audience uncertain or tense about the outcome of events

Example: The heavy, oak door creaked slightly ajar and a shadowy figure emerged.

LITERARY TERMS

Symbol: any object, person, place, or action that has a meaning in itself and that also stands for something larger that it does, such as a quality, an attitude, a belief, or a value

Example: A red rose is a symbol for love.

LITERARY TERMS

Theme: a unifying idea that is a recurrent element in a literary or artistic work

Example: Our society must provide funding for education for our leaders of tomorrow to flourish.

LITERARY TERMS

Tone: the quality of something (an act or piece of writing) that reveals the attitudes and presuppositions (beliefs and assumptions) of the author.

Example: “You’ll be lucky to get out of your room by Christmas!” my dad screamed as the door slammed behind his thunderous voice.