

Name: _____

Literary Terms

Term	Definition
Alliteration	The repetition of sounds at the start of words – usually 3+ in a sentence. Ex. “She sells sea shells by the sea shore.”
Antagonist	The force that tries to oppose the main character; the “bad guy” of the story – the antagonist is usually another character but can be a force of nature, society itself, or an internal force within the main character.
Author’s Voice	The individuality and personality an author expresses in his/her writing.
Characterization	Description of a character; appearance, personality, traits, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct characterization: Character is clearly described in the novel; either by the author or by other characters. • Indirect: Readers are able to assume character traits from information provided in the book; i.e. “His nose was always buried in a book, and he was willing to solve any problem.”
Claim (Thesis Statement)	The main idea of a text.
Cliché	A saying or idea that is overused in a culture to the point of losing its original, more significant, meaning.
Climax	The turning point of the story – usually when the main conflict of the story comes to a head; tends to occur towards the end.
Conflict	A struggle between opposing forces. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External conflict: Occurs when a character faces a conflict outside of him/herself; can be nature, a physical obstacle, or another character. • Internal conflict: Occurs when a character faces a conflict within him/herself.

Term	Definition
Connotation	A feeling or idea that is suggested by a word in addition to its basic meaning; the emotional implications a word may carry.
Denotation	The dictionary definition of a word.
Dialogue	Written conversation between two or more characters.
Diction	Author's word choice.
Exposition	The beginning of the story where the characters, setting, and main conflicts are first developed.
Falling Action	The stage of plot in between the climax and resolution in which the story begins to draw to a close and tension eases; however, the final outcome of the story is not yet worked out.
Flashback	Occurs when the author shares events that took place at an earlier time; provides information that can help readers better understand a character's current situation.
Foreshadowing	Occurs when future events are hinted at before they actually happen.
Hyperbole	An exaggeration – usually for emphasis or humorous effect. Ex. It took me 5 years to do my language arts homework last night.
Imagery	Descriptive words or phrases that create clear images of what's going on in the reader's mind; usually appeals to one or more of the five senses.
Irony	A strong contrast between reality and expectations.
Metaphor	Comparing two things without using 'like' or 'as.' Ex. "She is the sun" – how Shakespeare describes Juliet in <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> .
Mood	The atmosphere or emotion created by the writing; mostly affected by the setting/how characters respond to what's going on.

Term	Definition
Narrator	The voice that tells the story; sometimes a character within the story (1st person) or an outside voice – not the same as the author.
Personification	When non-living objects are given human traits. Ex. The leaves danced in the wind.
Plot	The series of events in a story; consist of: Exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.
Point of View	How the story is told/how the characters see things. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st – When a character is telling the story from his/her point of view Ex. “I saw...” “We did...” • 2nd – Directions and commands - uses “you” • 3rd – Narrator removed from the story and is telling the events as they happen... “He, she, they...”
Protagonist	The main character of the story; the “good guy.”
Resolution	The end of the story in which conflicts are resolved and loose ends are tied; comes after the falling action.
Rising Action	The stage of the plot that develops the conflict or struggle; the tension rises as the story nears the climax.
Setting	The time and place in which the story occurs.
Simile	A comparison using ‘like’ or ‘as.’ Ex. He was as cool as a cucumber
Symbolism	The use of specific objects, images, numbers, or even characters, to represent ideas present in the book – must be something visible (not abstract or an idea).
Syntax	The order or arrangement of words in a sentence.
Theme	The main idea or message conveyed in a piece of writing. ***Complete sentence!***
Tone	The emotions or attitude of the author/narrator of the story.