

# Literary Terms

**Plot** - a sequence of events that brings about the resolution (conclusion) of a conflict

**Elements of Plot** (in order):

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Rising Action
- 3) Climax
- 4) Falling Action / Resolution (conclusion)

**Characterization** - the methods used by the author to create characters

**Methods of Characterization:**

- 1) Physical Appearance
- 2) Speech & Actions
- 3) Thoughts & Feelings
- 4) Other characters' reactions

**Conflict** - a problem or struggle between two opposing forces

**Types of Conflict:**

- 1) **Internal** - the problem or struggle is INSIDE of the main character  
ex: (wo)man vs. self
- 2) **External** - the problem or struggle is OUTSIDE of the main character  
ex: (wo)man vs. (wo)man, (wo)man vs. nature, (wo)man vs. society,  
(wo)man vs. supernatural, (wo)man vs. unknown, (wo)man vs. machine,  
(wo)man vs. environment, ect.

**Setting** - the time, place, and general environment in which a story takes place

**Figurative Language** - language expanded beyond its ordinary literal meaning

ex: simile, metaphor, personification, irony, symbolism, alliteration, rhyme, rhythm

**Symbol(ism)** - a concrete object that represents an abstract idea

**Metaphor** - an implied comparison of two unlike things that does not use "like" or "as"

**Simile** - a comparison of two unlike things that does use "like" or "as"

**Alliteration** - repeated consonant sounds occurring at the beginning of words or within words

**Rhyme** - the repetition of syllable sounds

**Rhythm** - the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables

**Irony** - the difference between what appears to be and what actually is

### **Types of Irony:**

- 1) **Situational Irony** - an outcome, which is the opposite of what was expected, it's a surprise!
- 2) **Dramatic Irony** - when a reader, or viewer, knows more about a situation than the characters involved
- 3) **Verbal Irony** - saying the opposite of what was meant for humorous or sarcastic effect

**Theme** - the main idea; the underlying message the author wants the reader to think about

**Stereotype** - a broad generalization about something or someone that leaves no room for individual differences

**Foreshadowing** - an author's use of hints or clues to suggest events that will occur later in the story

**Flashback** - an interruption to a story to present an earlier event

**Inference** - a reasonable conclusion drawn by the reader from author's clues

**Mood** - the overall feeling (eerie, frightening, chaotic) of a work of art or literature

**Imagery** - concrete details appealing to the senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch)

**Climax** - the moment in which the conflict is solved in either a good or bad way; it is always toward the end of a story

**Point of View (p-o-v)** - the author's choice of narrator

### **Types of Point of View:**

- 1) **First Person** - the narrator is a character INSIDE the story; "I" or "me" is telling the story
- 2) **Third Person** - the narrator is a character OUTSIDE of the story; the narrator is not participating in the plot

**Third Person Objective** - the narrator only reports speech and action

**Third Person Omniscient** - the narrator reports thoughts, feelings, speech, and actions



## Additional Literary Terms

**Analogy** - a point-by-point comparison between two apparently dissimilar things made to clarify a certain point about them

**Author's Perspective** - the author's beliefs or attitudes as expressed in his/her work that is done through voice and tone

**Author's Purpose** - his/her reason for creating a particular work (to entertain, explain, inform, express an opinion, or persuade)

**Connotation** - the ideas and feelings associated with a word, as opposed to its dictionary definition ("mom" has connotations of love, warmth, and security)

**Denotation** - a word's dictionary definition

**Foil** - a character who provides a striking contrast to a main character

**Genre** - a category of literature

**Onomatopoeia** - words whose sounds suggests their meaning (buzz, pop, sizzle)

**Personification** - the giving of human qualities to an animal, an object, or idea

**Tone** - the writer's attitude toward his/her subject

**Voice** - a writer's unique style of expression; reveals much about the writer's personality, beliefs, and attitudes

**Dynamic Character** - characters that change significantly

**Static Character** - characters that change little if at all

