

LITERARY TERMS

Know all these words for the test and for all the work to be done with literature in high school.

Literary Term	Meaning	Example
protagonist	the main character	Montressor or Rip Van Winkle
antagonist	the opponent of the main character	Fortunato or Rip's wife
foreshadowing	an event which hints at a later event	Joe the computer stating that Milton was making him do illegal things
theme	the main idea, lesson, or moral of a story	"Be careful whom you trust." - from both "The Cask of Amontillado" and "True Love"
point of view	Who is telling the story?	1 st person narrator <i>or</i> author omniscient
setting	where and when a story takes place	Italy in the 19 th century
characterization	how a character is shown in a story	<i>old</i> Rip has a beard and has pains and is confused
conflict	a battle or struggle between characters or within one character	between Montressor and Fortunato; Rip vs. his wife
turning point	point in a story when something happens to change a character's direction	from happy to sad; from rich to poor; from poor to rich; from failure to success
climax	the most exciting part of a story	Montressor chains Fortunato to a wall.
resolution	who wins and loses the climax	Montressor kills Fortunato.
denouement	added information after the resolution	Montressor says it's been 50 years since he killed Fortunato.
simile	a comparison using <i>like</i> or <i>as</i>	His voice <i>sounds like thunder</i> .
metaphor	comparison calling one thing another	She is an angel.
alliteration	repeating first sounds of words	big baby boy
hyperbole	an exaggeration	He was scared; he <i>stopped breathing</i> .
visual image	words imitating what something looks like	a description
auditory image	words imitating what something sounds like	a scream; a crash
tactile image	words imitating what something feels like	smooth as silk
olfactory image	words imitating what something smells / tastes like	the aroma of coffee
symbol	something that stands for an idea	a heart for the idea of love
personification	giving a quality or ability of a person to a non-person	The wind whispered to me.
onomatopoeia	a word that imitates a sound	Boom! Screech! Whoosh!
mood	The feeling that a reader gets from a story	sad; fear; funny; horrible
rhyme scheme	the pattern of which lines rhyme	AABB <i>or</i> ABAB
rhythm	the pattern of accented and unaccented syllables	iambic (heartbeat) rhythm
stanza	a group of lines in a poem separated from the next group by a blank line	"Richard Cory" has 4 stanzas, each with 4 lines in it.

