

LITERARY TERMS



HOW TO SHOW NOT TELL

*Allegory

- a work in which the characters and events are to be understood as representing other things and symbolically expressing a deeper, often spiritual, moral, or political meaning.
- Ex. The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe

*Alliteration

- is the **repetition** of initial sounds in neighboring words
- generally more than 2 words
- ex. “We wink when widows wince...”

*Allusion

- is a **brief reference** to a person, event, or place, real or fictitious, or to a work of art.
- ex. I am not the type to say, “To infinity and beyond.” Rather, I am an awkward dinosaur or a three-eyed alien.

*Analogy

- is the **comparison** of two pairs that have the same relationship.
- ex. Teachers are the bourgeoisie as students are the proletariat.

Characterization

- is the method used by a writer to develop a character.
 - (1) showing the character's **appearance**
 - (2) displaying the character's **actions**
 - (3) revealing the character's **thoughts**
 - (4) letting the character **speak**
 - (5) getting the reactions of **others**.

Conflict

- is the opposition between or among characters or forces in a literary work that shapes or motivates the action of the plot.
- Conflict may be *internal* or *external*.

*Conflict Cont.

- (1) Man in conflict with another Man (300, Rocky)
- (2) Man in conflict in Nature (Titanic)
- (3) Man in conflict with Self (Fight Club, Beautiful Mind)
- (4) Man in conflict with Machine (Matrix, Terminator)

Diction

- is a writer's choice of words, phrases, sentence structures, and figurative language which combine to help create meaning.

Foreshadowing

- is a literary device in which an author drops subtle hints about plot developments to come later in the story.

***FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE**

- **TO DESCRIBE SOMETHING BY COMPARING IT TO SOMETHING ELSE.**
 - **Simile**
 - **Analogy**
 - **Metaphor**

*Hyperbole

- is a deliberate and obvious **exaggeration** used for effect
- ex. I called you a billion times and you never picked up!
- ex. I worked a shift that seemed to last forever.

Imagery

- is writing or language that evokes one or all of the five senses.

*Irony

- incongruity between what actually happens and what might be expected to happen.
- ex. The fireman's house burnt down.

LITERAL LANGUAGE

- TO DESCRIBE SOMETHING AS IT IS.

*Metaphor

- is a comparison of two unlike things using the verb "to be" (am, are, was, were, etc.) instead of using 'like' or 'as'.
- ex. Her words **are** butterflies.
- ex. I am an old abandoned house.

*Metonymy

- is substituting a word for another word closely associated with it.
- ex. Calling the police 'pigs' or 'the fuzz'

Motif

- is an important and sometimes recurring theme or idea in a work of literature.

Mood

- is the atmosphere or state of mind of a work.

*Oxymoron

- is putting two contradictory words together.
- ex. Jumbo shrimp

*Paradox

- is a statement, proposition, or situation that seems to be absurd or contradictory, but in fact is or may be true.
- ex. 'Everything begins where it ends.'
- ex. 'The first shall be last.'

*Parody

- is a piece of writing that deliberately **copies** another work in order to comment or critique it.
- ex. Tina Fey parodies Sarah Palin on SNL.

Pastiche

- is a piece of writing that deliberately **copies** another work yet **does not comment** or critique it.
- ex. Every Family Guy episode.

Personification

- is giving human qualities to inanimate objects.
- ex. The sun smiled down on us.
- ex. The gate squawked closed.

Point of View

- is the perspective on events of the narrator or a particular character in a story.
- 1st person: _____
- 2nd person: _____
- 3rd person: _____

Satire

- is the use of wit, especially irony, sarcasm, and ridicule, to critique politics and society.
- ex. South Park
- ex. The Simpsons

Setting

- is the time and location in which a story takes place.

*Simile

- is a comparison between two different things using 'like' or 'as'.
- ex. "You spin a story **like** a spider spins her web." - The Format
- ex. He jumped as if his feet were on fire.

Stream of consciousness

- is a literary style that presents a character's continuous random flow of thoughts as they arise.

Symbolism

- is the use of symbols to represent something abstract by something concrete.
- ex. The color white often symbolizes purity.

Theme

- is a broad idea in a story, or a message or lesson conveyed by a work.
- How to find the theme in a work:
 - 1. Ask yourself, “What is the work about?”
 - 2. Ask yourself, “What about _____?”
- Theme is **NEVER** just one word.
 - “Love” isn’t a theme / “Love endures all things” is a theme

Tone

- is the attitude toward the subject and/or toward the audience implied in a literary work.