

# 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.



# Tone

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