

## LITERARY TERMS AND DEVICES

**PLOT** -- the action of a story, the sequence of events, what happens

**EXPOSITION** -- an introduction to setting, characters and background of the plot

**CLIMAX** -- the turning point or high point in the plot

**DENOUEMENT** -- the resolution of the conflict, the final outcome of the story

**FORESHADOWING** -- a hint that something is about to happen

**FLASHBACK** -- telling a story out of chronological order, looking back to earlier episodes

**IN MEDIAS RES** -- (“in the middle of things”) beginning a story at a point of high conflict rather than telling the tale chronologically

**DEUS EX MACHINA** -- (“god from the machine”) the resolution of a plot by highly improbable means

**SETTING** -- the time and place in which a story takes place

**CHARACTERS** -- any persons involved in a story

**PROTAGONIST** -- the central character in a story, the one with whom the reader identifies

**ANTAGONIST** -- a character who is in conflict with the protagonist

**FOIL** -- a character whose presence reveals aspects of another character’s personality

**FLAT CHARACTER** -- a character whose personality is summed up in one or two traits

**ROUND CHARACTER** -- a character who is complex and many-sided

**STOCK CHARACTER** -- a stereotyped character, one whose nature is familiar to us from many sources

**STATIC CHARACTER**--a character who is the same sort of person at the end of the story as in the beginning

**DYNAMIC CHARACTER**-- a character who undergoes a permanent change in personality during the course of the story

**POINT OF VIEW** -- the reference point of the narrator of the story

**OMNISCIENT POINT OF VIEW** -- told in 3rd person, the narrator knows all and can tell the reader what characters are thinking

**LIMITED OMNISCIENT POINT OF VIEW** --told in 3rd person, the narrator limits himself to telling the reader about what one character is thinking

**FIRST PERSON POINT OF VIEW** -- told in 1st person, the story is told by one of its characters

**DRAMATIC POINT OF VIEW** -- told in 3rd person, the narrator limits himself to reporting what characters say or do; he does not interpret their behavior or tell us their private thoughts

**TONE** -- the author's attitude toward his subject, the emotional meaning of a work

**THEME** -- the central idea of a story

**SYMBOLISM** -- an object that means more than what it is, that suggests something related to the theme of a story

**MOTIF** -- a recurring symbol or idea, somehow connected to the theme of the story

**CONFLICT** -- a clash of actions, desires of goals, a struggle of some type

**MAN VERSUS MAN** -- a conflict between two characters

**MAN VERSUS ENVIRONMENT** -- a conflict between the protagonist and an external force such as nature or society

**MAN VERSUS HIMSELF** -- a conflict within a character

**IRONY** -- a disconnect between what is expected and what is real

**VERBAL IRONY** -- what is said is the opposite from what is meant

**SITUATIONAL IRONY** -- reality is not what it appears to be

**DRAMATIC IRONY** -- the reader knows more than the character about some aspect of the story

**PERSONIFICATION** -- giving human qualities to an animal, an object or an idea

**SIMILE** -- a comparison between two things or ideas using “like” or “as”

**METAPHOR** -- a comparison between two things or ideas NOT using “like” or “as”

**ALLEGORY** -- a narrative having a second meaning beneath the surface one

**EPIC** -- a tale about a hero who undertakes some difficult task for the benefit of society,

**SATIRE** -- a piece of writing that makes fun of the weaknesses of a society

**FARCE** -- a silly, wildly improbably form of comedy

**PARODY** -- a piece of writing that makes fun of a familiar song or story