

Literary Terms and Techniques

1. Metaphor-a figure of speech in which something is spoken of as though it were something else; direct comparison of two unlike things.
2. Simile-a figure of speech in which like or as is used to make a comparison
3. Personification-a figure of speech in which something not human is treated as if it were human.
4. Symbolism-the use of something to represent something beyond itself
5. Alliteration-repetition of the same initial consonant sound
6. Situational irony-exists when what happens is the exact opposite of what is expected to happen
7. Verbal irony-exists when a person says one thing and means another
8. Dramatic irony-occurs when the audience has important information that the characters do not
9. Onomatopoeia-the use of a word or phrase that actually imitates or suggests the sound of what it describes. Example: sparkle
10. Hyperbole-exaggeration. Example: I am so hungry I could eat a horse.
11. Cliché-a phrase that has been so long in use that its meaning is lost
12. Epic-a long narrative poem that traces the adventures of a hero, usually a hero with super human strength
13. Ballad-a short, musical poem usually focused on a single situation, often love or death.
14. Haiku-a three-line poem usually about nature
15. Rhythm-the pattern created by arranging stressed and unstressed syllables
16. Rhyme-repetition of accented vowel sounds and all succeeding consonant sounds
17. Allusion-a reference in a work of literature to a character, place, or situation from another

work of literature, music or art

18. Assonance-the repetition of vowel sounds
19. Flashback-narration of event before the normal time sequence of the plot
20. Free verse-poetry without fixed meter or pattern
21. Blank verse-poetry written in unrhymed iambic pentameter
22. Analogy-when one thing is explained in terms of another
23. Understatement-when a response is incomplete deliberately
24. Foreshadowing-use of clues or hints of what will happen later
25. Epic simile-extended simile in a long epic poem, often several lines
26. Oxymoron-two words that seem to mean the opposite of each other. Example: thunderous silence, dark victory
27. First person narration-narrated by "I"
28. Second person narration-narrated by "you" (doesn't happen in literature)
29. Third person limited-narration limited to one character's thoughts and feelings as the author's own; he or she
30. Third person omniscient-narration in which author knows and reveals several characters' thoughts and feelings
31. Narrative-a story told in fiction, nonfiction, poetry, or drama
32. Lyric-a poem expressing thoughts and feelings
33. Characterization-the act of creating and developing characters
34. Plot-the action sequence of a narrative; what happens
35. Soliloquy-one character on stage thinking aloud alone

36. Tone-the writer's attitude toward his or her audience and subject
37. Theme-the main message of a story
38. Setting-time and place of action
39. Legend-story about someone local or from a particular region
40. Narrative essay-tells a story
41. Descriptive essay-seeks to convey an impression about a person, place, thing, or idea
42. Persuasive essay-tries to get reader to do something or accept writer's point-of-view
43. Expository essay-gives information, discusses ideas, or explains a process
44. Myth-a fictional account that explains the actions of gods or causes of natural phenomena
45. Biography-a work about a person's life written by another person
46. Autobiography-a person tells his or her own life story
47. Short story-a short work of fiction
48. Nonfiction-prose writing presenting ideas or telling about real people, places, objects, or events
49. Protagonist-main character or hero
50. Antagonist-a character or force in conflict with the main character
51. Dramatic poetry-poetry that includes the techniques of drama
52. Rhyme scheme-a regular pattern of rhyming words in a poem
53. Fiction-prose writing telling about imaginary characters and their traits
54. Direct characterization-when the author directly tells what the characters' traits are
55. Indirect characterization-when the author tells what the characters look like, does, say, and how other characters react to them.

- 56. Dynamic character-one who develops or grows during the story
- 57. Static character-character who doesn't change or grow during the story
- 58. Round character-has many different traits
- 59. Climax-high point of interest in a story
- 60. Conflict-struggle between opposing forces
- 61. Figurative language-writing or speech not meant to be interpreted literally
- 62. Satire-using humor to make fun of or change things
- 63. Couplet-a pair of rhyming lines usually of the same length and meter
- 64. Archetype-original pattern or model; all others are copies
- 65. Novel-a long work of fiction
- 66. Narrator-speaker or character who tells a story
- 67. Stanza-a group of lines in a poem considered as a unit
- 68. Tragedy-a work of literature, especially a play, that results in catastrophe for the main character
- 69. Narrative poem-a poem that tells a story
- 70. Sensory language-writing or speech that appeals to one or more of the senses
- 71. Caricature-a drawing of a person in which one feature is exaggerated
- 72. Anecdote-a brief story about an interesting, amusing, or strange event
- 73. Genre-a division or type of literature
- 74. Repetition-more than one use of any element of language
- 75. Prose-ordinary form of written language

- 76. Mood-feeling created in the reader by a literary work or passage
- 77. Monologue-speech by one character in a play, story, or poem
- 78. Diction-word choice
- 79. Comedy-work of literature, especially a play, that has a happy ending
- 80. Denotation-dictionary meaning of a word
- 81. Connotation-meaning of a word in context of a work
- 82. Dialect-form of language spoken by people in a particular region or group
- 83. Dialogue-conversation between characters
- 84. Drama-a story written to be performed by actors
- 85. Foil-a character who is contrasted with another character
- 86. Aside-a short speech delivered by an actor in a play expressing his/her thoughts
- 87. Suspense-a feeling of events in a literary work
- 88. Parody-making fun of a work by writing something similar but exaggerated
- 89. Sonnet-14 line poem in iambic pentameter
- 90. Paradox-a statement that seems contradictory but is actually true
- 91. Rhetorical question-a question asked for effect, not to be answered
- 92. Exposition-the beginning of a story; setting is created, characters are introduced
- 93. Denouement-the end of a story, after the climax.
- 94. In Medias Res-a story that begins in the middle of a sequence of events. Previous events are made evident with flashbacks.