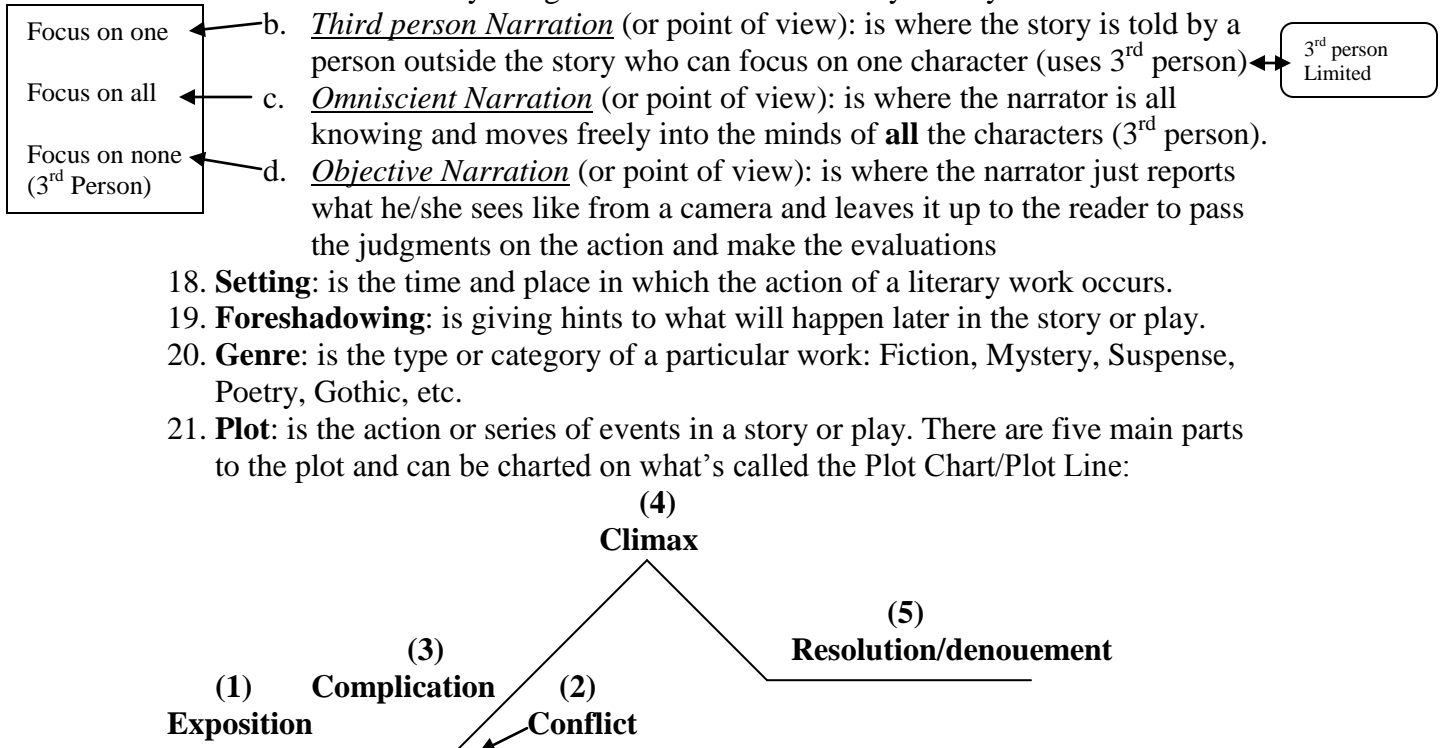


Literary Terms

The following are literary terms we will use in our discussions about literature. This is not an exhaustive list as there are many more literary terms, but these are some of the most commonly used and talked about. As our goal is to learn and to be able to communicate effectively and intelligently, it is important to learn these terms and apply them to every day life. Almost every advertising, media, print source not only understands these terms, but applies them daily.

1. **Figures of speech:** are literary devices used to create a special effect or feeling by making some type of interesting or creative comparison.
 - a. **Antithesis:** is an opposition, or contrast of ideas. "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness . . ." Charles Dickens
 - b. **Hyperbole:** is an exaggeration, or overstatement. "I have seen this river so wide it had only one bank." Mark Twain
 - c. **Metaphor:** is a comparison of two unlike things without using the words like or as. "When he spoke, his words were fiery, revealing the black coal heart grasping his soul."
 - d. **Personification:** is a literary device in which the author speaks of or describes an animal, object, or idea as if it were a person.
 - e. **Simile:** is a comparison of two unlike things using the words like or as. "She stood in front of the altar shaking like a freshly caught trout." Maya Angelou.
 - f. **Idiom:** is an expression that can not be taken literally. "It's raining cats and dogs."
2. **Allusion:** is a reference in literature to a familiar person, place, or thing outside the work itself.
3. **Analogy:** is a comparison of two or more similar objects, suggesting that if they are alike in certain respects, they will probably be alike in other ways too.
4. **Imagery:** are the words or phrases a writer selects to create pictures in the reader's mind. This is usually based on sensory details.
5. **Symbol:** it is what it is in itself but also stands for something else. It can be a person, place, a thing, or an event used to represent something else. A dove is the symbol for peace. A red rose is the symbol for love. The capital building is the symbol for government and power.
6. **Theme:** the major or central idea of a work. It is usually a statement about life that the particular work is trying to get across. "Allusion vs. Reality".
7. **Tone:** is the overall feeling, or effect, created by a writer's use of words. This feeling may be serious, mock-serious, humorous, satiric, and so on.
8. **Irony:** is using a word or phrase to mean the exact opposite of its literal or normal meaning.
9. **Satire:** is a literary tone used to ridicule or make fun of human vice or weakness, often with the intent of correcting, or changing, the subject of the attack.
10. **Connotation:** the implied meaning of a word.
11. **Denotation:** the dictionary meaning of a word.
12. **Characterization:** is the method an author uses to reveal or describe characters and their various personalities.

13. **Antagonist:** is the person or thing working against the protagonist, or main character in the work.
14. **Protagonist:** is the main character in the story. The person who pushes the action forward.
15. **Flat Character:** is a character that doesn't change, is static, and shows only a few characteristics.
16. **Round Character:** a character that experiences a change or grows.
17. **Narrator:** is the person who is telling the story. There are four main types:
 - a. First person Narration (or point of view): is where a character in the story tells the story using I or we. This narrator may or may not be reliable.
 - b. Third person Narration (or point of view): is where the story is told by a person outside the story who can focus on one character (uses 3rd person) ← 3rd person Limited
 - c. Omniscient Narration (or point of view): is where the narrator is all knowing and moves freely into the minds of **all** the characters (3rd person).
 - d. Objective Narration (or point of view): is where the narrator just reports what he/she sees like from a camera and leaves it up to the reader to pass the judgments on the action and make the evaluations
18. **Setting:** is the time and place in which the action of a literary work occurs.
19. **Foreshadowing:** is giving hints to what will happen later in the story or play.
20. **Genre:** is the type or category of a particular work: Fiction, Mystery, Suspense, Poetry, Gothic, etc.
21. **Plot:** is the action or series of events in a story or play. There are five main parts to the plot and can be charted on what's called the Plot Chart/Plot Line:



22. **Exposition:** is where the characters, setting, and backgrounds are introduced. It's used to set the stage of the story or play. This is also a place where we find a great deal of foreshadowing in the work.
23. **Complication:** is where the characters work to resolve the conflict and is typically the meatiest part of the story/play (rising action).
24. **Climax:** is the greatest point of tension, the turning point, and the place where the conflict reaches its height and gets resolved.
25. **Resolution** (or denouement): is where all the loose ends are tied up, all unanswered questions are answered, and/or all mysteries are solved. Not every story or play has one of these to leave the reader to make his/her decision.
26. **Conflict:** is the problem or struggle between opposing forces in a story that triggers the action. There are 2 basic types of conflict: Internal or External.
 - a. **Person vs. Person:** one character in a story has a problem with one or more of the other characters.

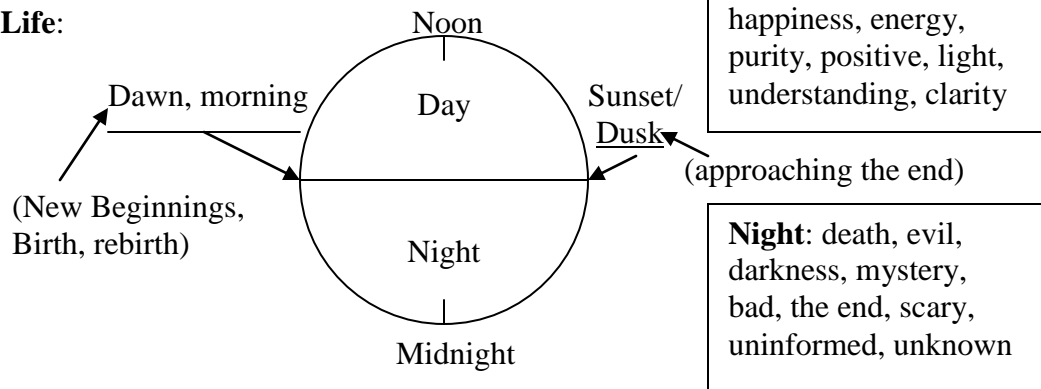
- b. **Person vs. Society:** a character has a problem with some element of society: the school, the law, the accepted way of doing things, and so on.
 - c. **Person vs. Self:** a character has a problem deciding what to do in a certain situation.
 - d. **Person vs. Nature:** a character has a problem with some natural happening—a snowstorm, an avalanche, the bitter cold, or any other element of nature.
 - e. **Person vs. Fate (G-d):** a character must battle what seems to be an uncontrollable problem. Whenever the conflict is a strange or unbelievable coincidence, it can be attributed to fate.
- 27. **Moral:** is a type of value or lesson the author is trying to get across to the reader.
 - 28. **Tragedy:** is a literary work in which the hero is destroyed by some character flaw and forces beyond his or her control. The protagonist experiences a defeat.
 - 29. **Comedy:** is a literary work in which the protagonist experiences a victory.
 - 30. **Tragic Flaw:** this is the flaw in the character that causes the character's downfall.
 - 31. **Tragic Hero:** is a character who experiences an inner struggle because of a character flaw. That struggle ends in the defeat of the hero.
 - 32. **Stanza:** Are the groups of lines in a poem that look like paragraphs.
 - 33. **Free Verse:** is poetry that seems to have no rhyme scheme, specific structure, or metric patterns.
 - 34. **Formal Verse:** is poetry that has a specific rhyme scheme and structure.
 - 35. **Speaker:** is the voice in the poem (as we cannot assume we know that it is the author himself/herself who is talking).
 - 36. **Alliteration:** is the repetition of a consonant sound in a line of poetry (Emphasis)

Prominent Symbols in Literature

The Four Seasons:

- 1. Spring: birth, rebirth, new beginnings, new life, etc.
- 2. Summer: the prime of life, youthful, energetic, growing
- 3. Fall: the decline, the approach of death, getting old
- 4. Winter: death, the end of life, something comes to an end

The Cycle of Life:



Paths/Roads: journey, life's journey, choices, obstacles

Bridges: movement from one place to another symbolically

Water: gives and takes life, thought to be the source of first life, rebirth

Earth: mother, life giving, fertility **Gardens:** fertility, life giving

Rocks/Doors/Weather: obstacles, problems (could be good or bad)

Fog: symbolic of mystery, unknown

The Man in the Glass

When you get what you want in your struggle for self
And the world makes you king for a day,
Just go to the mirror and look at yourself
And see what that man has to say.

For it isn't your father or mother or wife
Whose judgment upon you must pass.
The fellow whose verdict counts most in your life
Is the one staring back from the glass.

You may be like Jack Horner and chisel a plum
And think you're a wonderful guy,
But the man in the glass says you're only a bum
If you can't look him straight in the eye.

He's the fellow to please-never mind all the rest,
For he's with you clear to the end,
And you've passed your most dangerous, difficult test
If the man in the glass is your friend.

You may fool the whole world down the pathway of years
And get pats on the back as you pass,
But your final reward will be heartache and tears
If you've cheated the man in the glass.

By Dale Wimbrow, 1895-1954