LITERARY TERMS

allegory - a story with two meanings, a literal meaning and a symbolic meaning. Allegory is a form of extended metaphor, in which objects, persons, and actions in a story, have deeper meaning, and characters often represent abstract ideas as charity, greed, or envy. For example, in ***Animal Farm,*** the animals and characters represent various people associated with the Russian Revolution.

allusion - a reference, within a literary work, to another piece of writing, a film, a piece of art, or even a real event or person. An allusion draws on outside sources to provide greater context or meaning to the selection. Examples include references to "Cinderella", Adolf Hitler, McDonalds, or even Justin Bieber made within another text.

analogy - a comparison of an unfamiliar idea to a familiar one in an attempt to explain something that is new or difficult to understand. For example, comparing using voice (good diction) in writing to adding spice to a recipe.

anecdote - a <u>brief</u> story that is not really developed in the way a short story is. For instance, recapping a favourite memory from childhood within an autobiography that tells the story of your entire life.

apostrophe - a figure of speech in which someone absent or dead or something nonhuman is addressed as if it were alive and present and could reply. For example, in ***Romeo and Juliet***, Romeo says, "I defy you <u>stars</u>!"

archetype - a universal symbol that may be a character, theme, symbol, or even setting. An archetype is a typical character, an action or a situation that seems to represent patterns of human nature. For example, **the hero** is an archetype; heroes usually display goodness and struggle against evil in order to restore peace and justice in society. Other archetypes include the innocent youth, the mother figure, the mentor, the villain, the scapegoat, etc.

atmosphere - the feeling surrounding a literary work. For instance, the atmosphere in the trial scene ***To Kill a Mockingbird*** is quite tense and emotional.

character - an imaginary person that inhabits a literary work. Literary characters may be major or minor, static (unchanging) or dynamic (capable of change).

characterization - the means by which writers present and reveal character.

>**Direct characterization** occurs when an author states explicit information that reveals a character. For example, *Jack was a shy boy with an easy smile and a charming way.*

>**Indirect characterization** occurs when the author reveals a character by what he/she says, what he/she does, what other characters say about him/her, and *sometimes*, by a name or a nickname. For example, the nickname *Scout* for Jean Louise Finch in ***To Kill a Mockingbird*** helps reveal her tomboy personality to the reader.

climax - the highest point of tension, suspense, and/or action in a work; the turning point before the plot is resolved.

complication - a series of difficulties that form the central action in a narrative.

conflict - the struggle between two opposing forces within a work.

>**Internal** conflict involves a struggle within (man versus himself). Examples of this include guilt, fear, decision making, etc.

>**External** conflict involves the struggle of a character with an outside force (man versus nature, man versus man, man versus society, etc.).

connotation - the connotation of a word involves the attitudes and feelings associated with a word. These associations can be negative or positive. For many people, the word *mother* calls up strong <u>positive</u> feelings and associations - loving, self-sacrificing, always there for you, understanding; the denotative meaning, on the other hand, is simply "a female animal who has borne one or more children." Connotative meanings do not necessarily reflect reality.

couplet - two successive rhyming lines in a verse of poetry.

denotation - the dictionary meaning of a word.

denouement - the final outcome of a series of events within a text; the resolution.

diction - the effective and precise choice and selection of words in a literary work. A work's diction is one of its most important literary elements. Writers use specific words to convey action, reveal character, imply attitudes, identify themes, and suggest values and convey emotion.

dominant impression or image - in descriptive writing, the one dominant aspect or overall feeling that stands out more than others. For example, terror, beauty, etc.

epiphany - a moment of realization experienced by a speaker or character; often referred to as a "light bulb moment".

falling action - the sequence of events that follow the climax and end in the resolution within a story.

figurative language - a form of language use in which writers and speakers convey something other than the literal meaning of their words. Examples include hyperbole, simile, personification, and metaphor.

> **extended metaphor** - a metaphor that is used throughout a work or is continued for a few lines of a selection.
>
> **hyperbole** - intended exaggeration often used to create a desired effect such as humour or sarcasm.
>
> **metaphor** - a comparison between essentially unlike things without an explicitly comparative word such as *like* or *as*. An example is *I was lost in a sea of nameless faces.*
>
> **personification** - involves giving a nonliving object or an abstract idea, human traits. For example, *the window winked at me*.
>
> **simile** - is a figure of speech involving a comparison between unlike things using *like*, *as*, or *as though*. For example, *This house is as clean as a whistle.*

flashback - an interruption of a work's chronology (order of occurrence) to describe or introduce an event that occurred prior to the main timeframe of the main action of the piece.

foreshadowing - when hints of what is to come in the action of a play or a story are given.

genre - a French word meaning *kind* or *type*. The major genres in literature include poetry, narration, essay writing, fiction, non-fiction, drama.

iambic pentameter - a meter in poetry. The stress is on the second syllable, an example is the word good-BYE. When Iambic pentameter is read aloud it would follow a beat such as Da-dum Da-dum. Shakespeare often uses iambic pentameter. For instance, in Romeo and Juliet, "But soft, what light through yonder window breaks/" (ten syllables - alternating unstressed, stressed).

imagery - language which describes something in detail, using words to substitute for and create sensory stimulation. Imagery often evokes one or more of the senses.

irony (dramatic, situational, and verbal) - There are three distinct types:

> **dramatic irony** occurs when the audience and/or one or more characters in a work are aware of information that another character or characters are not.

> **situational irony** is evident where an unexpected event occurs, in the sense that it is somehow the opposite of what would be expected or appropriate. Mere coincidence is generally not ironic; neither is mere surprise, nor are any random or arbitrary occurrences. For example, in *To Kill a Mockingbird* when the Cunningham's leave Atticus alone after Scout shows up at the jail and speaks about Walter. The audience would expect them to harmed Atticus.

> **verbal irony** is speech in which what is said is the opposite to what is meant. It is a form of sarcasm. For example, saying *I love broccoli*, when really you detest it.

juxtaposition - the arrangement of two or more ideas, characters, actions, settings, phrases, or words side-by-side or in similar narrative moments for the purpose of comparison, contrast, or character development. For instance, villains and heroes are opposites in narratives, and as a result, they are juxtaposed.

literal meaning – involves the reality of what is occurring in a text. Discussing the literal meaning of a selection requires no interpretation on a figurative level. For example, giving the literal meaning of a poem merely involves the retelling or summarizing of what is happening on a literal level.

lyrics - the words to a song.

mood - the overall feeling the reader gets from a text. Most pieces of literature have a prevailing mood, but shifts in this mood may provide comic relief, or echo the changing events in the plot or changes in a character. For example, the prevailing mood during and after the execution scene in *Animal Farm* is tense and suspenseful.

motif - a recurring important idea or image. A motif differs from a theme in that it can be expressed as a single word or fragmentary phrase, while a theme expressed as a complete sentence. A motif in *Animal Farm* is contrast; for example, strong versus weak, intelligent versus ignorant, privileged versus disadvantaged.

oxymoron - involves using contradiction and opposites in a manner that oddly makes sense on a deeper level. Simple or joking examples include *jumbo shrimp*, *sophisticated rednecks,* and *deafening silence*.

paradox - a statement that seems to contradict itself or doesn't seem to make sense, but is somehow true. There's usually a loophole that makes the statement make sense if you dig a little deeper. For example, the saying *More hurry, less speed* is paradoxical since more hurry would typically bring more speed but upon deeper analysis, we realize that rushing usually puts people behind because they are not as careful or clear minded. Another example is, *I know one thing: that I know nothing. -* Socrates

plot development - refers to what happens in a story and the order in which it happens. There are typically five stages in plot development: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, denouement (resolution).

poetic forms:

ballad - a story, usually a narrative poem, in a song. Any story form may be told as a ballad, such as historical accounts or fairy tales in verse form. There is usually some repetition, as well as a set rhythm and rhyme.

blank verse - poetry that is written in unrhymed iambic pentameter. Shakespeare wrote most of his plays in blank verse.

elegy - a type of lyric poem that expresses sadness for someone who has died; a solemn meditation on a serious subject.

epic - a long narrative poem that records the adventures of a hero. Epics typically chronicle the origins of a civilization and embody its central values. Examples include Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

free verse - poetry without a regular pattern of meter or rhyme.

lyric - a poem used to express feelings. Lyric poems have specific rhyme schemes and/or rhythm; usually (but not always) set to music or a beat. They often include repetition, parallelism, and/or rhyme.

narrative - a poem that tells a story; follows some or all of the stages of plot development.

ode - a long, often elaborate poem of varying line lengths and sometimes intricate rhyme schemes dealing with a serious subject matter and is usually written to show respect toward the subject. For example, the "Ode to Newfoundland" praises the province and its beauty.

sonnet - a fourteen-line poem in iambic pentameter. The **Shakespearean or English** sonnet is arranged as three quatrains and a final couplet, rhyming abab cdcd efef gg. The **Petrarchan or Italian** sonnet divides into two parts: an eight-line octave and a six-line sestet, rhyming abba abba cde cde or abba abba cd cd cd.

point of view - the perspective established by the narrator of a literary work.

first-person - a character in the story is telling the story. In this instance, the main character conveys the incidents he/she encounters, as well as giving the reader insight into himself as he reveals his/her thoughts, feelings, and intentions. For example, Scout tells her own story in ***To Kill a Mockingbird***.

second-person - the narrator addresses the protagonist directly as *you* and never reverts back to *I*. The second person point of view is used in essays and poems, but is not common. Includes consistent use of pronouns "you, your".

third-person limited – a person who is not a character in the story, tells the story. The narrator's knowledge of a character is limited and the focus is on the thoughts/feelings of ONE character, as if they are always following that one character. For example, the narrator of ***The Giver*** focuses on Jonas.

third-person omniscient - a person who is not a character in the story, tells the story. The narrator knows everything about ALL of the characters, including their feelings, thoughts, etc. The narrator moves from one character to another as necessary to provide those character's respective motivations and emotions. For example, ***Animal Farm*** uses this point of view.

protagonist - considered to be the main character or lead figure in a novel, play, story, or poem. For example, Snowball in *Animal Farm.*

pun - a humorous play on words. For example, saying *I do it for the pun of it* instead of *for the fun of it*.

purpose - the reason for the existence of a text. The purpose could be to describe, entertain, inform, respond, reflect, clarify, identify, persuade, summarize, etc.

quatrain - a four-line stanza in a poem.

refrain - a phrase, verse, or group of verses repeated at intervals throughout a song or poem, especially at the end of each stanza.

rhythm - the recurrence of accent or stress in lines of verse (bah BAH bah BAH bah BAH). Line breaks, parallel structure, and repetition of words and sounds help create rhythm.

rising action - the sequence of events and complications that build in intensity and eventually lead to the climax in a story.

sarcasm - occurs when verbal irony is used to mock; people say the opposite of what they actually mean. For example, when a person appears to be praising something, but is actually insulting it. This is the case when someone says *I love broccoli*!, when really they detest it.

sestet - a six-line unit of verse constituting a stanza or section of a poem.

setting - the time, place and circumstances of a literary work that establish its context.

speaker - the voice in a poem. The speaker may be the poet or a character created by the poet. The speaker may also be an object or an animal.

stanza - in poetry, a 'stanza' is a unit within a larger poem.

stereotype – a fixed opinion that someone has when making judgments, instead of taking a fresh, open-minded look each time. Stereotypes are often based on biased and/or oversimplified opinions or images of a person or group of people. This literary device is most often used in a negative, and sometimes derogatory, fashion. A few examples are a Harvard student being thought of as a *bookworm*, or an Alaskan that is assumed to live in an igloo, or saying that all teenagers are troublemakers.

subtext – the hidden or unstated meaning of something within a text or situation; to understand the subtext of a text, the reader must "read between the lines". For example, if a character says "Everything is ok" when their actions of slamming books and frowning show that they aren't ok. The subtext of "Everything is ok" in that situation is that everything isn't ok at all.

suspense - the excited anticipation of conflict or an approaching climax.

symbolism - when an object or action in a literary work means more than itself, and stands for something beyond itself. For example, in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the mockingbird symbolizes the innocent and harmless people in society who are treated poorly for no reason.

thematic statement - a single sentence that describes the overall message of a work of literature; the main idea/lesson the text is trying to convey to the reader. It must be brief, focused and insightful.

thematic topic - the subject matter of a piece of writing; in other words, what the text is about. For example, survival, relationships, war, etc.

theme - the message an author wishes to convey in through a work. A theme should not be written as merely one word; it is a statement, nor should it be written as a cliché. Think of a theme as a statement about life that is usually true, and is being conveyed through a literary text. For example, *The quest for power usually leads to corruption.*

title (significance) - the significance of the title can be ascertained by determining how the title relates to the work and what new insights can be gained from the work when one considers the title. Titles are often symbolic, ironic, imply a particular tone, reveal conflict or character traits, or are meaningful to characters within a text.

tone - is the implied attitude of a writer toward the subject and characters of a text. The tone of a selection may be serious, humorous, judgemental, sarcastic, etc.

understatement - a figure of speech that intentionally makes something seem less important, severe, etc. than it really is. For example, telling a friend that the gigantic green stain on their white shirt "doesn't look bad at all".

SOUND DEVICES

alliteration - the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words in close proximity. Alliteration can still exist when the words containing repeated consonant sounds are separated by 1-2 words. For example, *The candy was killing my cavity,* and *The gentle giant jumped.*

assonance - the repetition of similar vowel sounds in different words in close proximity. Assonance can still exist when the words containing repeated vowel sounds are separated by 1-2 words. For example, *Go slow over the road,* and *I might like to take a flight to an island in the sky.*

cacophony - harsh, unpleasant consonant sounds that are used in poetry, often to create an effect. For example, *The canon cracked.*

consonance - the repetition of similar consonant sounds at the ends of words. Assonance can still exist when the words containing repeated vowel sounds are separated by 1-2 words. For example, lines of poetry that end with the following words: *lost / past, confess /dismiss, middle / muddle.* Another example is, *He struck a streak of bad luck.*

euphony - soothing, pleasant, harmonious sounds, especially words spoken in combination. For example, the "s" and "w" sounds in *Success is counted sweetest* are euphonic. Also, the f's in, *From forth the fatal loins of these two foes*.

onomatopoeia - the use of words to imitate the sounds they describe. Words such as *buzz* and *crack* are onomatopoetic.

LANGUAGE TERMS

bias – an opinion that is not based on reason or proof, that shows a preference of one particular point of view over another. For example, someone who thinks that all old people drive slowly are acting in a manner that is biased against the elderly.

cliché - a commonplace or <u>overused</u>, time-worn phrase. For example, *That's as old as the hills*.

coherence – relates to how a piece of writing flows from one point to another; comes from the Latin word meaning "to stick together". Coherence is the quality that makes it easy for reader to follow a writer's train of thought as it moves from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph. There are several ways to create coherence.

>   **Methods of Creating Coherence:**
>   **emphatic devices** - used to emphasize an idea; include listing, font, punctuation, repetition, parallel structure, fragments, and short sentences.
>
>   **parallel structure / parallelism** - using the same pattern of words to show that two or more ideas have the same level of importance. This can happen at the word, phrase, or clause level. For example: *I like run<u>ning</u>, jump<u>ing</u>, and ski<u>ing</u>.*
>
>   **pronoun reference** - replacing key nouns with pronouns. For example, "the children" can be replaced with "they, them".
>
>   **repetition** - repeating key words and phrases, or recognizable synonyms, for key words. Examples include using *baby, infant,* and/or *newborn.*
>
>   **transitions** - using conjunctive adverbs or thought-connecting words such as *nonetheless, moreover, therefore, however, subsequently, accordingly,* etc.
>
>   **sequence** - arranging the sequence of events in some order. For example, narration is usually arranged chronologically, description is arranged spatially, and exposition is arranged logically.

comparison - used to identify the **similarities** and **differences** between two works, characters, ideas, etc.

context - specifically, the parts of a text that come immediately before and after a particular word or passage, giving it a fuller and clearer meaning. It is easier to see what a word means when you see it in context. The context of a text as a whole refers to all the elements or circumstances influencing its creation or interpretation including purpose, time, place, intended audience, cultural or gender influences, etc.

contrast - to examine two or more items by looking at only their **differences**.

emphatic device - used by authors to emphasize an idea. Methods to achieve this include repetition, font [bold and italics], short sentences, punctuation, interrupted movement, short sentences and sentence fragments.
>   **Examples of Emphatic Devices**
>   - **listing** - (numerical order, bullets, sequencing)
>   - **font** - (bold, unusual capitalization, italics, underlining). For example, Hello. *Hello! HELLO!!*
>   - **punctuation** (colon, dash, exclamation mark, ellipsis, brackets) - show breaks in thought and
>   shifts in tone
>   - **repetition** - the repeated use of the same word or word pattern. For example, *It is important you <u>study</u>*

for your test. If you do not <u>study</u>, you will not get the marks you deserve! So, not <u>studying</u> could cost you valuable marks.

- **parallel structure** (see notes below) - For example, *Be sure to eat your supper, complete your homework, and study your notes before going to sleep tonight.*
- **sentence fragments** - an incomplete sentence that can be missing a subject or verb. For example, *The circus clown.*
- **short sentence** – a very simple sentence. For example, *I froze.*

<u>**language style**</u> - the characteristic ways that an individual author uses language; includes word choice, length and complexity of sentences, patterns of sound, and use of imagery and symbols.

Types of Language Style

<u>**colloquial**</u> - the language characteristic of everyday informal speech; it's conversational. For example, *"You're getting on my nerves!"* instead of the more formal *"You are irritating me."*

<u>**dialect**</u> - the way a language is spoken in a particular <u>region</u> or <u>place</u>. For example, in Newfoundland, *"luh!"* is used for *"look"*, and *"me son"* for *"my friend"*.

<u>**euphemism**</u> - a less offensive or harsh way of saying something negative; For example, *"pass away"* instead of *"die"*, and *"unsuccessful"* instead of *"failure"*.

<u>**formal**</u> - polite, respectful, and following particular conventions of language. Used when writing a letter to apply for a job, an important speech, etc.

<u>**informal**</u> - has less strict grammar rules and often has shortened sentences. Informal language is mostly used among friends or co-workers.

<u>**jargon**</u> - words or expressions used by a particular group or profession, such as medical jargon or computer jargon. For example, *"btw"* (by the way), *"AWOL"* (absent without leave = military jargon).

<u>**slang**</u> - an informal variety of <u>speech</u> characterized by newly coined and rapidly changing words and phrases. For example *"goin' for a razz"* (driving around), *"that's sick"* (awesome).

<u>**parallel structure / parallelism**</u> - using the same pattern of words to show that two or more ideas have the same level of importance. This can happen at the word, phrase, or clause level. For example, *"I like runn<u>ing</u>, jump<u>ing</u>, and ski<u>ing</u>"*, and *"We wondered <u>who he was</u> and <u>what he was</u> doing."*

<u>**paraphrase**</u> – a summary of the meaning of a text using different words.

<u>**rhetorical question**</u> - a question for which there is no expected answer. For example, *"Do you think money grows on trees?"*

<u>**style**</u> - is the way an author chooses words, arranges them in sentences or in lines of dialogue or verse, and develops ideas and actions with description, imagery, and other literary techniques. The style may be formal or informal which can largely be determined by the author's choice usage.

<u>**transitions**</u> - words used to connect the sections of the text, and help them to orient the audience to the chronology, structure and other elements of writing. It helps to create coherence. Examples include, *thus, because, therefore, finally*, etc.

logical - show the logical connection between two ideas. Examples: *further, furthermore, moreover, in addition, additionally*, etc.

spatial - function to restrict, limit or qualify space. Examples: *in the middle, to the left/right, in front of, on this side, in the distance, here and there, in the foreground, in the background,* etc.

temporal / chronological -has the function of limiting, restricting, and defining time. Examples: *at the present time, from time to time, sooner or later, at the same time, up to the present time, in the meantime, in the first place,* etc.

voice - the personality of the speaker or creator that is revealed in a work through such elements as style, tone, diction, emphatic devices, etc.