

ALPHABETIC GLOSSARY OF LITERARY TERMS

1. **Alliteration** – repetition of the same consonant sound or one very similar in the words that are close together in a poem.
2. **Allusion** – reference to a statement, a person, place, or event from literature, history, religion, myth, politics, sports, science or pop culture.
3. **Antagonist** (also see Protagonist) The “bad guy.” Person who works against the main character
4. **Assonance** – repetition of similar vowel sounds that are followed by different consonant sounds, especially in words that are close together in a poem. (base/fade, young/love)
5. **Character**
 - a. **Static** (vs.) – one who does not change much in the story
 - b. **Dynamic** – one who changes as a result of the story’s events.
 - c. **Round** – has many different character traits like a real person, which sometimes contradict with each other
 - d. **Flat** – has only one or two traits, which can be described in a few words. No depth, like a flat piece of cardboard.
6. **Characterization**
 - a. **Direct Characterization** – we are told exactly what kind of a person the character is.
 - b. **Indirect Characterization** – we have to use our own judgement to decide what the character is like, based on the evidence the writer has given us (I.e. character speaking, description of how he looks/dresses, when we listen to his inner

thoughts/feelings, what others in the story say about the character, what the character does/acts.)

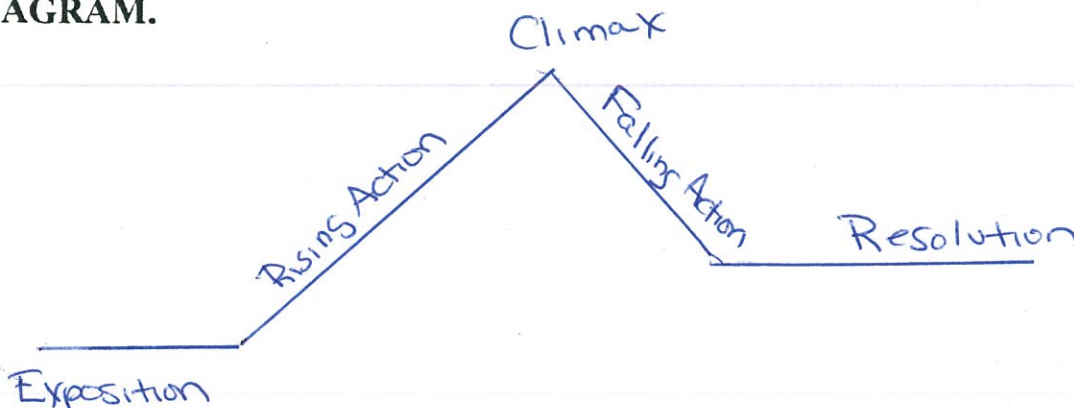
7. **Connotation** – the literal, dictionary meaning of a word.
8. **Conflict** – struggle/clash between opposing characters or between opposing forces.
 - a. **Internal Conflict** – takes place entirely within characters mind. Struggle against opposing needs/desires/emotions within a single person.
 - b. **External Conflict** – struggle against outside force (other character, society, nature)
9. **Diction** – the choice the author makes in terms of words
10. **Figurative Language** – figure of speech. Word or phrase that describes one thing in terms of another and is not meant to be understood on a literal level (simile, metaphor, personification).
11. **Flashback** – scene in movie, play, short story, novel or narrative poem that interrupts present action of the plot to “flash” backward and tell what happened at an earlier time.
12. **Foreshadowing** – the use of clues to hint at events that will occur later in the plot.
13. **Free Verse**: poetry without any set structure
14. **Imagery** – language that appeals to the senses – most are visual creating a picture in the readers mind by appealing to the sense of sight. Others appeal to sense of sound, smell, touch, taste or a number of different senses at once.
15. **Irony**
 - a. **Situational irony** – when you expect things to be one way but they turn out totally different.
 - b. **Verbal irony** – when something said means the opposite

16. **Metaphor** – a figure of speech where a word/phrase denoting one kind of object/idea is used in place of another to suggest a similarity between them.
17. **Mood** – atmosphere – created by setting
18. **Onomatopoeia**: Use of a word whose sound imitates or suggests its meaning.
19. **Paradox** – person, thing conflicting with preconceived notions of what is reasonable or possible. Statement contrary to received opinion, seemingly absurd but perhaps really well-founded statement.
20. **Personification** – special kind of metaphor where a nonhuman thing or quality is talked about as if it were human.
21. **Plot** – sequence of events in a story

a. **Elements of Plot**

- i. **Exposition**- at the beginning of the story where we are introduced to characters, setting and conflict.
- ii. **Rising Action** – the point in the story where the tension increases to the climax
- iii. **Climax** – the highest point of tension in the story
- iv. **Falling Action** – the point in the story where tension is decreasing
- v. **Resolution** – end of story. All conflict resolved.

Each of the above elements of plot (i.– v.) have a spot of the **PLOT DIAGRAM**.



22. **Point of View** – vantage point from which the writer tells the story.
- a. **First Person** - where one of the characters is the narrator telling the story using the pronoun I. We can only know what this person knows or wishes to tell us, or what he/she observes. All our info comes form narrator.
 - b. **Third Person Limited** – the narrator who plays no part in the story, zooms in on thoughts/feelings of just one character. We feel we are observing the action through the eyes/with the feelings of this one character.
 - c. **Third Person Omniscient** – like a god telling a story – knows everything there is to know about the characters and their problems. This all-knowing narrator can tell us about the past, future of all characters, what they are thinking and what is happening elsewhere.
23. **Protagonist** (see also Antagonist) – the “good guy” or the main character, often the hero.
24. **Repetition** – the repeating or a rhyme, sound or word to convey a certain effect in a story/poem.
25. **Rhythm** – musical quality in language produced by repetition. The most obvious kind of rhythm is produced by *meter*.
26. **Rhyme** – repetition of accented vowel sounds and all sounds following them, in words that are close together in a poem.
27. **Rhyme scheme** – the pattern of a rhyme in a poem. (AABB etc.)
28. **Setting** – the time and place of a story or play. Often contributes to stories mood, conflict or reveal character.
29. **Simile** – figure of speech that makes a comparison between two unlike things, using a word such as *like*, *as*, *resembles*, or *than*.

30. **Structured poetry** – poem with a set structure (rhyme scheme, number of lines in a stanza etc.)
31. **Suspense** – the uncertainty/anxiety we feel about what is going to happen next in a story.
32. **Symbol (or symbolism)** – A person, place, thing or event that stands for itself and for something else beyond itself as well.
33. **Theme** – The central idea of a work of literature. An idea/message conveyed by the author throughout a story.
34. **Tone** – The attitude the writer takes toward the audience, subject or character. Conveyed through writers choice of words or details.

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