**LITERARY TERM DEFINITIONS**

**1. Plot-** The order or sequence of events in a story.

**2. Exposition-** Gives the **CHARACTERS’ NAMES, SETTING**, and the **CONFLICT** or basic situation. Also called the

**prologue** when reading a play.

**3. Rising Action-** All events that lead to the turning point of the story.

**4. Climax-** The **TURNING POINT** of the story. The **point of no return**.

**5. Falling Action-** All events that lead to the conflict being solved.

**6. Resolution-** When the **CONFLICT** of the story is **SOLVED.**

**7. Denouement-** Anything that happens after the conflict is solved.

**8. Setting-** The **TIME AND PLACE** a story takes place.

**9. Local color-** Writing that truthfully imitates ordinary life and brings a region alive by portraying its typical dress,

mannerisms, customs, character types, and dialect.

**10. Protagonist-** The **MAIN CHARACTER**.

**11. Antagonist-** The person or thing that **GOES AGAINST THE MAIN CHARACTER.**

**12. Foreshadowing-** Giving **HINTS** of what is going to happen.

**13. Suspense-** Creates excitement or **tension** to prepare the reader for what is about to happen.

**14. Conflict-** A struggle between opposing forces.

**15. External Conflict-** A problem you have with someone or something **OUTSIDE OF YOU**. (man vs man; man vs nature)

**16. Internal Conflict-** A problem you have WITHIN YOURSELF; **A MENTAL PROBLEM.**

**17. Characterization-** Techniques used to develop or describe a character.

**FOUR WAYS TO CHARACTERIZE**

**A)** Give a physical description.

**B)** The character’s own speech, thoughts, feelings or actions.

**C)** The speech, thoughts, feelings, or actions of other characters.

**D)** The narrator’s own direct comments.

**18. Static Character-** A character that **DOES NOT CHANGE**.

**19. Dynamic Character-** A character that **CHANGES**.

**20. Foil-** **Contrasting characters**; when a character makes another character’s personality traits stand out.

**21. Flat character-** A character with a **single important trait**.

**22. Round character-** A three-dimensional character.

**23. Archetypal character (or Archetype)-** A character who embodies a certain kind of universal human experience.

**Examples:** **Mentor**- A wise teacher who provides guidance. **Damsel in distress**- a young, beautiful woman in need of

saving.

**24**. **Stereotype-** A fixed or conventional notion or conception, as of a person, group, or idea held by a number of people,

and allowing for no individuality.

**25. Topic-** What the story is about; **THE SUBJECT**.

**26. Main Idea-** **WHAT GENERALLY HAPPENS** in the story.

**27. Theme-** The **UNIVERSAL LIFE LESSON**.

**28. Tone-** The author’s **ATTITUDE** toward what he/she is writing about.

**29. Mood-** The **ATMOSPHERE** the author creates.

**\**30*. Figurative Language-** Language that is not meant to be taken literally.

**TYPES OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE**

**31. Simile-** A comparison using the words “like” or “as.”

**32. Metaphor-** A comparison that DOES NOT use “like” or “as.”

**33. Personification-** Giving human characteristics to something that is not human.

**34. Hyperbole-** An extreme **“over”**exaggeration. Ex. I’m so hungry I can eat a horse.

**35. Understatement-** An extreme **“under”**exaggeration. Ex. You say “nice snack” after eating at an all you can eat buffet.

**36. Idiom-** An expression that cannot be translated literally. Ex. “To carry out” literally means to carry something out (of a

room perhaps), but idiomatically it means to see that something is done, as “to carry out a command.”

**37. Paradox-** A **PHRASE or SENTENCE** that is seemingly contradictory or absurd but is actually true.

**38. Oxymoron-** **TWO WORDS** that contradict each other. Ex. Bittersweet, jumbo shrimp, Biggie Smalls

**39. Pun-** **A play on words** either by using a word that has two different meanings but spelled the same way. Ex. “What has

four wheels and **flies**? A garbage truck.” OR by using words that sound the same when you say them but they are

spelled differently. Ex. Pause/ Paws

**40. Metonymy-** When something is called by another name and is commonly accepted. Ex. “the law” is the common name

for the police.

**41. Synecdoche-** When a part of something is used to represent the whole thing. Ex. “wheels” is the name for a car or

transportation.

**TYPES OF IRONY**

**42. Verbal Irony-** When you SAY one thing but mean another.

**43. Sarcasm-** MEAN OR HARSH verbal irony.

**44. Situational Irony-** When you EXPECT one thing to happen but something totally different happens.

**45. Dramatic Irony-** When the AUDIENCE KNOWS something that the CHARACTERS DO NOT.

**46. Allusion-** Making reference to a famous historical or literary figure, event, or object.

***\*47*. Symbol-** Something that stands for or represents something else.

**SYMBOLISM OF NUMBERS**

**#3-** Trinity (father, son, holy spirit), 3 strikes or chances

**#4-** Earth (fire, water, air/wind, earth), 4 corners of the earth, (North, South, East, West)

**#7-** The Bible says it is the perfect number, 7 Deadly Sins, 7 days in a week, it took God 7 days to make the world,

7 years bad luck, completeness and perfection

**#13**- Bad luck, Friday the 13th

**#40-** Jesus fasted 40 days & 40 nights, Hebrews roamed the desert for 40 years, 40 acres & a mule

**SYMBOLISM OF COLORS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **COLOR** | **WHAT THE COLOR MEANS OR SYMBOLIZES** |
| **Black** | **Death, sorrow, evil, confusion, mystery, fear, cunning, confusion, anything bad; sophistication, elegance, formality, power, sexiness** |
| **White** | **Death (implied from shroud or paleness), surrender; innocence, purity, virginity, victory, anything good** |
| **Red** | **Anger, danger, war, rebellion, warning, heart/blood (pressure); love, lust, confidence, seduction, passion, willing to take great risks, strength, determination** |
| **Green** | **Jealousy/envy, greed, money, inexperience; rebirth, youth, life, fertility, growth, nature, harmony** |
| **Purple** | **Royalty, respect, dignity, experience, wealth, enlightenment, fantasy** |
| **Blue** | **Sadness, depression; freedom, loyalty, wisdom, faith, trust, truth, heaven, peace, calmness, relaxation, comfort** |
| **Yellow** | **Cowardice, mental illness, death (jaundice); joy, happiness, intellect, energy, honor** |
| **Orange** | **Fiery, lust, curiosity; wisdom** |
| **Brown** | **Poverty; earthly qualities, Mother Nature** |
| **Gray** | **Depression, defeat, monotony, boredom; neutral, in between** |
| **Pink** | **Possessiveness; happiness, romance, friendship, girly qualities** |
| **Gold** | **Money, wealth; happiness** |
| **Aqua** | **Water, calmness, flow (constant movement)** |

**48. Narrative-** A story.

**49. Narrator-** A person who tells the story.

***\*50*. Point of View-** The perspective from which the story is being told.

**TYPES OF POINTS OF VIEW**

**51. 1ST Person-** When the narrator IS A CHARACTER in the story.

**52. 2nd Person-** When the writer uses the pronoun “you” to address the reader. In fiction, this narrative voice implies that

the reader is either the protagonist or a character in the story and the events are happening to them. In writing, this

point of view is used to address a particular person or audience as in an email, or speech.

**53. 3rd Person Limited**- **Narrator is outside of the story** and telling it through ONE CHARACTER’S EYES.

**54. 3rd Person Omniscient-** **Narrator is outside of the story** and telling it through MORE THAN ONE

CHARACTER’S EYES.

***\*55*. Diction-** Word choice.

**TYPES OF DICTION**

Concrete/ Abstract

Technical/ Common

Formal/ Informal

Literal/ Figurative

**56. Denotation-** The **DICTIONARY DEFINITION** of a word.

**57. Connotation-** The **EMOTIONAL MEANING** of a word; **STRENGTH OF A WORD**.

**POETRY TERM DEFINITIONS**

**58. Poetry**- the careful choice and crafting of language into lines.

**\**59*. Form**- the physical arrangement of the words on the page.

**Ex.** A woman is supposed to have a “coke bottle” form or shape.

A haiku poem (3 lined poem about nature) has 3 lines with the 1st line having 5 syllables, 2nd 7 syllables, 3rd 5 syllables.

**TYPES OF POETIC FORMS**

**60. Fixed form-** A type of poem structure that follows specific rules.

**61. Sonnet-** A 14 lined poem written in iambic pentameter with a specific rhyme scheme.

**62. Blank Verse-** fixed form written in unrhymed iambic pentameter.

**63. Free Verse-** follows no particular structure, rhythm, or rhyme.

**64.** **Stanza**- A group of lines of poetry.

**TYPES OF POEMS**

**65. Narrative Poem-** A poem that tells a story. Ex. Epics and ballads

**66. Epic-** A very long narrative poem.

**67. Ballad-** A song that tells a story.

**68. Lyric Poem-** A short poem with a single speaker that expresses the author’s innermost thoughts and feelings.

***\*69*. Sonnet-** A 14 lined poem written in iambic pentameter.

**2 TYPES OF SONNETS**

**70. English (Shakespearean)-** Contains 3 quatrains with rhyme scheme: **“abab cdcd efef”** and followed by a couplet **“gg”.**

**RECURRING THINGS IN ENGLISH SONNETS**

* The word “fair” means beautiful or beauty
* Dying at a young age so you can be beautiful forever
* Living forever through poems or your children
* The word “counterfeit” means your children or a picture of you
* Comparing seasons to human aging: spring= birth, summer= youth,

fall= adulthood, winter= old age or death.

**71. Italian (Petrarchan)-** Contains an octave and a sestet with rhyme scheme:

**“abba abba cdcdcd” or “cdecde”**. The octave presents the problem and the sestet solves it.

**72. Iamb-** A metrical foot of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed one.

**An iamb is = to 1 foot A foot is = to 2 syllables**

If something is *iambic* it has an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed one.

Shall I **|** compare **|** thee to **|** a sum **|** mer’s day?

**1 2 3 4 5**

**73.** **Pentameter**- Means that there are 5 feet per line of poetry.

***\*74*. Sound devices**- techniques or tools that are used to produce special qualities of sounds in poetry.

**TYPES OF SOUND DEVICES**

**75. Alliteration**- The repetition of consonant sounds at the **BEGINNING** of several words.

**Ex. Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.** (the “p” sound is being repeated.

**76. Assonance**- The repetition of vowel sounds in the **MIDDLE** of several words. This does NOT mean they have to

rhyme. **Ex. Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.**

**77. Consonance**- The repetition of consonant sounds at the **END** of several words.

**Ex. Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.**

**78. Anaphora-** Repetition of words or phrases at the beginning of two or more lines of poetry.

Ex. How dreary – to be – Somebody

How public – like a Frog –

**79. Rhyme**- The repetition of **FINAL SOUNDS** in two or more words.

**80. Rhyme scheme-** The pattern formed by the rhymes at the end of the lines.

**81. Onomatopoeia-** Words that sound like what they refer to. Ex. Hiss

**82. Slant rhyme-** When words kind of rhyme but not really.

**83. Rhythm-** The pattern or beat of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry.

**84. Meter-** The repetition of rhythms in a poem.

**DRAMA TERM DEFINITIONS**

**85. Drama-** A play.

**86. Monologue-** A long speech given by a character on stage.

**87. Soliloquy-** A long speech given by a character **WHO IS ALONE** on stage.

**88. Aside-** A short speech **given directly to the audience** where the other characters on stage cannot hear what is being

said to the audience.

**89. 4th wall-** Refers to the imaginary, invisible wall of any room on stage.

**90. Stage directions-** Provide reference points for actors entering and leaving a scene, technicians setting up a scene, and

explains how the lines should be said.

**91. Tragic character (tragic hero)-** The central dramatic figure who makes an error in judgment that causes his or her own

downfall.

***\*92*. Tragic flaw-** The error in judgment that the tragic character makes.

**TYPES OF DRAMAS**

**93. Tragedy-** A play where something bad happens to the main character. (Does NOT mean they have to die!)

**94. Comedy-** A play written to amuse or entertain.

**95. Expressionism-** A type of play where reality is exaggerated.

**96. Minimalism-** A type of play where there is very little scenery and stage effects; the opposite of expressionism.

**STRUCTURE**

**97. Flashback-** When a work presents material that occurred prior to the opening scene of the work.

**98. In medias res-** When a story starts out in the middle then flashes back to the beginning and then skips to the end.

**(middle, beginning, end)**

**99. Frame narrative-** A story within a story; like a picture in a frame.

**100. Parallelism-** When a writer expresses ideas of equal importance with the same grammatical form.

**Ex. I sit** and look out upon all the sorrows of the world…

**I hear** secret convulsive sobs from young men…

**I see** in low life the mother…

**101. Syntax-** The order of words used to emphasize an idea. **Ex.** He me had. Had me he. He had me tongue-tied. The

words were put out of order to get the reader to understand that he had her speechless.

**TYPES OF PERSUASION/ RHETORICAL DEVICES (STRATEGIES)**

**102. Logos-** An appeal to reason. **Ex. If we don’t do this… then…**

**103. Ethos-** An appeal to character. **Ex. Like you, I share a sense of horror and repulsion at what is happening…**

**104. Pathos-** An appeal to emotion. It is said when emotions enter the room reason and logic exit out of the window.

**Ex. Can we genuinely call ourselves human beings when we allow this kind of thing to continue unabated…**

**105. Kairos-** Timing of an argument. Choosing the right time to argue, when it is relevant.

**106. Genre-** A category or type of literature.

**TYPES OF LITERARY GENRES**

**107. Fiction-** A story that is **not true**.

**108. Nonfiction-** A story that **is true**.

**109. Biography-** A true story written by someone about someone else’s life.

**110. Autobiography-** A true story written by the author about his/her own life.

**111. Memoir-** A true story written by the author about an event in his/her own life.

**112. Drama-** A play.

**113. Tragedy-** A play where something bad happens to the main character. (Does NOT mean they have to die!)

**114. Comedy-** A play written to amuse or entertain.

**115. Satire-** A story that pokes fun at it subject through exaggeration.

**116. Speech-** A talk or address given to an audience.

**117. Short story-** A kind of story shorter than a novel.

**118. Novel-** A long story.

**119. Poem-** A type of literature that may have a variety of metered or rhythmically measured lines and is intended to evoke an

emotional response in the reader.