

## LITERARY TERMS – FICTION AND POETRY

These terms will be covered during the year. You are expected to know these terms before you get to 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

Term	Definition	
Accented and unaccented syllable	Develops rhythm; an accent=stress/emphasis	
Allegory	A story with a second distinct meaning partially hidden behind its literal meaning.	
Alliteration	Repetition of initial consonant sounds—“And how the <u>s</u> ilence <u>s</u> urged <u>s</u> oftly”	
Allusion	Reference to a well-known person, place, event, literary work, etc.	
Antagonist	The most prominent of the characters who oppose the protagonist.	
Aside	Remark made in drama that is inaudible to the other characters on a stage but <u>i</u> s audible to the audience.	
Assonance	Repetition of vowel sounds—“In my <u>s</u> ight I <u>t</u> ried to see a fly”	
Atmosphere	Feeling generated in the reader by a piece of literature (same as mood)	
Characters		
Round	Multifaceted character; one with different traits; complex.	
Flat	A character with few characteristics known; simple.	

Static	A character that doesn't change throughout plot action	
Dynamic	A character that changes/develops throughout plot action	
Conflict	Struggle	
Internal	Struggle within a character; making decisions, etc.	
External	Struggle between man and man; man vs. society; man vs. nature; man vs. universe.	
Connotation	The implications that words or phrases may carry with them; not the dictionary definition.	
Consonance	Repetition in 2 or more words of consonants—"add and read"	
Couplet	A pair of rhyming lines	
Diction	Choice of words in a literary work.	
Feet	A group of syllables	
Iambic	Unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable	
Foil	Character whose qualities or actions emphasize those of another character by providing contrast.	
Foreshadowing	Use of clues that suggest events that have yet to occur.	
Hubris	Excessive pride that leads to a character's downfall.	
Hyperbole	Exaggeration for the sake of emphasis—"I'll love you until all the seas go dry"	

Image/imagery	Words appealing to one or more of our senses.	
Visual	See	
Tactile	Touch	
Olfactory	Smell	
Auditory	Hear	
Gustatory	Taste	
Irony	The opposite of what is expected.	
Verbal	When a character says the opposite of what he/she means; he does know the truth.	
Dramatic	When the audience knows the truth of the statement but the character does not; when the audience knows something that the character does not.	
Situational	When what happens (the plot) is the opposite of what is expected.	
Line lengths	The number of feet in a line of poetry.	
Monometer	One	
Dimeter	Two	
Trimeter	Three	
Tetrameter	Four	
Pentameter	Five	
Hexameter	Six	
Heptameter	Seven	
Octameter	Eight	
Lyric	Highly musical verse (poetry) that expresses the observations or feelings of one person.	
Metaphor	The comparison of two unlike things not using “like” or “as”	

Meter	The rhythmical pattern in a poem.	
Mood	The feeling created in the reader by the piece of literature (same as atmosphere)	
Onomatopoeia	Use of words that imitate sound	
Oxymoron	Two contradictory terms in a compressed paradox— “brawling love”	
Paradox	A statement that seems contradictory but is actually true—“To have freedom we must have laws”	
Parallel structure	Grammatical structure that is similar—“Tellson’s was dark; Tellson’s was incommodious; Tellson’s was inconvenient to its customers; Tellson’s was respected”	
Persona	The assumed “I” in a piece of literature.	
Personification	A figure of speech in which something nonhuman is given human characteristics.	
Plot line	Sequence of events in a literary work.	
Exposition	Introduces setting, characters, and the basic situation	
Setting	Time and place of action	
Rising action	Events that lead to the climax (involves conflicts and complications)	
Climax	Turning point	

Falling action	All events that follow the climax	
Denouement	Clearing up or untying of the complications; all mysteries and destinies clarified	
Resolution	End of central conflict.	
Point of view	Viewpoint of a piece of literature	
First person	Character will tell story as he/she experienced it or saw it—uses “I”	
Third person limited	Outside narrator tells story through mind, feelings, or viewpoint of <b>one</b> character; uses third person pronouns	
Third person omniscient	Outside narrator can tell story through the mind, feelings, or viewpoint of <b>every</b> character; <b>all-knowing</b> ; uses third person pronouns	
Protagonist	Main character in a play or story	
Quatrain	Stanza made up of four lines, usually with a definite rhythm and rhyme scheme	
Rhyme scheme	Regular pattern of rhyming words in a poem	
Satire	Writing that exposes the failing of individuals or institutions in hopes of improving them; usually done implicitly or “tongue-in-cheek”	
Scansion	Analysis of poetic meter in verse lines by using stressed and unstressed marks	

Simile	Comparison of two unlike things using “like” or “as”	
Slant (or near) rhyme	An imperfect rhyme (the final consonants agree but the vowel sounds don’t, such as “cape” and “deep”)	
Soliloquy	Long speech in a play expressing the thoughts of one character alone on stage.	
Sonnet	14-line poem with iambic pentameter; rhyme scheme is ababcdcdefefgg; used by Shakespeare	
Stanza	Group of lines in a poem	
Symbols	Anything that stands for or represents something else	
Theme	Central message or insight into life revealed through a literary work; must be stated in general terms without the use of character’s specific names.	
Tone	Writer’s attitude towards his or her audience and subject matter; writer’s feelings toward a character.	