

English 9 - Tool Box of Terms

1. **Point of view:** this describes the perspective from which an author relates the story.
Who is the narrator?
 - A) **First Person Perspective** - the narrator is inside the story as a character (sometimes can be the protagonist) Clue: the use of pronouns (first person) I, we, us. We as the reader have access to this person's (character) thoughts
 - B) **Omniscient** - God-like - all knowing, all seeing, etc. this narrator is outside of the story can report or tell everything: thoughts, feelings etc. of all characters - most novels are written in this perspective. Uses he, she, they etc. pronouns
 - C) **Limited Omniscient** - this narrator is also outside the story telling the story from the perspective of one character in the story - this point of view is not necessarily from the perspective of the protagonist
 - D) **Objective** - the narrator is outside the story and is like a movie camera recording the events - sono access to a character's thoughts

2. **Conflict** - a struggle between two opposing forces or characters. All conflicts are either external (physical) or internal (emotional, moral, psychological)
 - A) **Person vs self** - internal conflict - the protagonist experiences an internal struggle
 - B) **Person vs. Person** - a conflict between two characters - protagonist vs. another person - physical, moral, values etc.
 - C) **Person vs. Environment** (society or physical environment)
The protagonist vs. society, nature, or circumstance

3. **Dilemma** - a situation in which a character must choose between two equally unfavorable or favourable choices.

4. **Characterization** - the **way** in which an author presents a character in a literary work.
 - A) **Indirect characterization** - the character is revealed through what the person says (dialogue), does, thinks and reacts. The reader is making a judgment or opinion about the character.

 - B) **Direct Characterization** - the author/narrator comes right out and comments on the character's appearance, characteristics

5. **Symbol - symbolism**
 - Has two levels of meaning - literal (concrete) and figurative (abstract)
 - Concrete - person, place, action, or object can be a symbol in literature – something that can be accessed by your 5 senses
 - Abstract - imagination, emotions, thoughts, beliefs, ideas, isms (philosophies)

<u>Concrete</u> universal symbols	<u>Abstract</u>
Lion	Courage, strength
Dove	Peace
Dog	Loyalty
Rose	Beauty and love
Blanket	Security
Tree	Life and knowledge
Serpents	Evil - devil
Apples	Knowledge - learning
Eagle	Freedom
Maple leaf	Nationhood - Canada

But symbols in literature are not always universal. What is a symbol in one story may not be a symbol in another.

6. Foreshadowing - the narrator/author gives hints as to what might happen later in the story. It gives hints as to what the conflict might be.

7. Plot

- A) Exposition - background information provided by the author - who, what, where etc.
- B) Complicating incident - the complication - the activating circumstance - the thing that gets the conflict going - it can be a decision, an action, something said by a character
- C) A crisis - a moment of intense conflict leading up to the climax - there can be more than one crisis in a story.
- D) Climax - this is the moment of highest intensity for both the reader and the protagonist. It is the turning point in the story where either the protagonist is successful or not in meeting his/her goals. After the climax there is no more tension for both the reader and the protagonist.
- E) Resolution and denouement - the solving of the conflict - a final episode at the end of the story where something is clarified or explained
- F) Rising Action is A-D. The falling action is D-E.

8. Endings

- A) Happy ending - protagonist is successful
- B) Sad ending - protagonist is unsuccessful
- C) Indeterminate ending - a story where there is no clear outcome; the reader has to infer
- D) Surprise - a sudden twist at the end

9. **Irony** - a device used in literature to reveal a contradiction (opposite of what is true or expected)
- A) **Dramatic Irony** - this irony is revealed in a character's dialogue or thoughts; in other words - a character says something, but is unaware of the significance of what he/she is saying but the reader is.
 - B) **Verbal irony** - it too is spoken by a character, but the character is purposely being ironic or saying the opposite to make point. Sarcasm - different tone than irony - it is often hurtful or funny.
 - C) **Situation irony** - the opposite of what you expect or normally hold to be true occurs.
10. **Imagery** - language which appeals to the senses and creates a mental picture - something you see through your 'mind's eye' - you visualize it. Descriptive details and *figurative language* create imagery.
11. **Figurative language** - language used in such a way as to force meaning out of its literal interpretation. - it brings new insights into your understanding of the literature.
12. **Metaphor** - a comparison of two **unlike** things without using like or as. "My love crashed on the shores of despair."
13. **Simile** - a comparison of two **unlike** things using like or as
"My love is like a ship on stormy seas." - the relationship is not so good.
14. **Personification** - giving human attributes to non-human things - "The waves laughed at my despair."
15. **Motivation** - this is what causes a character to do what she/he does - the motivation must be believable and plausible - realistic.
16. **Characterization:**
- A) **Dynamic character** - this character - the protagonist - has a lasting significant change or insight in to his/her outlook on life
 - B) **Static** - does not change in the course of the story. These characters fail to achieve their goals or are defeated by their unwillingness to change or adapt.
 - C) **Round** - is a realistic character - having several sides to his/her nature.
 - D) **Flat** - this is a limited character; usually a minor character with only one apparent quality or characteristic.
 - E) **Stereotype or Stock character** - this character is used in literature and movies so often that he/she is immediately recognized by the reader; for example: the brilliant, but cynical detective, the beautiful damsel in distress in need of rescue, the absent-minded but brilliant professor, the mad scientist, the old hardened cowboy etc.
17. **Theme vs. Moral and Theme statement :**

Moral - is about what is right and wrong - you should not steal, cheat, lie, kill, etc. You can state the moral quite easily - ask yourself what lesson has been taught. BUT writers do not want to teach you a lesson - they want you to understand some facet of what it means to be human.

Theme: is the central idea of the story, it is usually implied rather than directly stated - you have to interpret theme by 'reading between the lines' - by understanding conflict, setting etc. - the tool box terms. Theme is the BIG IDEA ABOUT LIFE.

Rules for writing thematic statements:

1. Theme is not to be confused with the plot or subject of the story - the story may be about fishing or a man in the mountains but it is not the theme or big idea. The theme statement must make reference to the big idea.
2. Theme must be stated as a generalization about life. In stating theme you should not use a character's name or the title of the story - do not make a specific statement make a broad, general one.
3. Because the theme statement is a generalization you do not want state it in terms of the absolute: do not use words such as - always, never, all, every etc. Use words such as - sometimes, some, seldom, can, perhaps, often
4. Theme is the central unifying concept of the story - the theme must be able to be proven with details from the story - it must be stated with facts, evidence and quotes from the story.
5. The statement can be a sentence or up to a paragraph long. Sentence needs a subject and predicate.
6. Avoid clichés:
 - *up- hill battle* = difficult circumstance
 - *the grass is greener on the other side of the fence* = there will always be appearances that someone has more fortunate circumstances than you, but the reality is often not the case.
 - *Go for it* = take a risk or try your hardest
 - *It is crystal clear* = it is evident based on the facts that....

18. Mood/atmosphere -the feeling that you get when you are reading literature - it is created through descriptive language

19. Protagonist – the main character that experiences the conflict

20. Antagonist – the person/force/situation that opposes the protagonist (see conflict)

21. Setting – this term refers to the time and place in which a story is placed; the time and place of story influences the social values shared by the society. The minor characters also contribute to setting. So does the atmosphere and mood which descriptive details create.