

## Essential Literary Terms (9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades)

**Exposition**- *The essential background information at the beginning of a literary work*

**Rising action**- *the development of conflict and complications in a literary work*

**Climax**- *the turning point in a literary work*

**Falling action**- *results or effects of the climax of a literary work*

**Resolution/denouement**- *end of a literary work when loose ends are tied up and questions are answered*

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**Alliteration** - repetition of the initial consonant sounds of words: "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers"

**Allusion** - a reference to something well-known that exists outside the literary work

**Antagonist**- character that is the source of conflict in a literary work

**Aside** - a dramatic device in which a character makes a short speech intended for the audience but not heard by the other characters on stage

**Assonance** - repetition of vowel sounds followed by different consonant sounds: "Anna's apples," "the pond is long gone"

**Characterization**- The manner in which an author develops characters and their personalities

**Conflict** - struggle between two or more opposing forces (person vs. person; nature; society; self; fate/God).

**Dialogue** - direct speech between characters in a literary work

**Diction** - word choice to create a specific effect

**Figurative Language** -language that represents one thing in terms of something dissimilar (non-literal language). *Includes simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, symbol*)

**Flashback**- the method of returning to an earlier point in time for the purpose of making the present clearer

**Foreshadowing**- hint of what is to come in a literary work

**Genre** - type or category to which a literary work belongs

**Hyperbole** - extreme exaggeration to add meaning

**Imagery** - language that appeals to the five senses

**Irony** - Dramatic... when the reader or audience knows something a character does not

Situational... when there is a disparity between what is expected and what actually occurs

Verbal... when the speaker says one thing but means the opposite

**Metaphor** - an implied comparison between dissimilar objects: "Her talent blossomed"

**Motif**- a recurring feature of a literary work that is related to the theme

**Onomatopoeia** - use of a word whose sound imitates its meaning: "hiss"

**Oxymoron** - phrase that consists of two words that are contradictory: "living dead" or "Microsoft works"

**Personification** - figure of speech in which non-human things are given human characteristics

**Plot**- The sequence of events in a literary work

**Point of view**- the vantage point or perspective from which a literary work is told...

1<sup>st</sup> person point of view- the narrator is a character in the story  
(use of 'I')

3<sup>rd</sup> person point of view- the narrator is outside of the story  
(use of 'he' 'she' 'they')

**Protagonist**- the main character in a literary work

**Rhyme** - repetition of similar or identical sounds: "look and crook"

**Rhyme Scheme** - pattern of rhyme among lines of poetry [denoted using letters, as in ABAB CDCD EE]

**Setting**- The time and place of a literary work

**Simile** - a direct comparison of dissimilar objects, usually using like or as:  
"I wandered lonely as a cloud"

**Soliloquy** - a dramatic device in which a character is alone and speaks his or her thoughts aloud

**Speaker** - voice in a poem; the person or thing that is speaking

**Stanza** - group of lines forming a unit in a poem

**Stereotype**- standardized, conventional ideas about characters, plots and settings

**Suspense** - technique that keeps the reader guessing what will happen next

**Symbol/symbolism** - one thing (object, person, place) used to represent something else

**Theme** - the underlying main idea of a literary work. Theme differs from the subject of a literary work in that it involves a statement or opinion about the subject.

**Tone** - the author's attitude toward the subject of a work.