

Literary Elements

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Literary Terms



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List compiled by Laura Bokesch, Library Media Teacher

"Structure" includes all the elements in a story. The final objective is to see the story as a whole and to become aware of how the parts are put together to produce a unified effect.

ELEMENTS OF PLOT

All fiction is based on conflict and this conflict is presented in a structured format called **PLOT**.

Exposition

The introductory material which gives the setting, creates the tone, presents the characters, and presents other facts necessary to understanding the story.

Foreshadowing

The use of hints or clues to suggest what will happen later in the story.

Inciting Force

The event or character that triggers the conflict.

Conflict

The essence of fiction. It creates plot. The conflicts we encounter can usually be identified as one of four kinds. (Man versus...Man, Nature, Society, or Self)

Rising Action

A series of events that builds from the conflict. It begins with the inciting force and ends with the climax.

Crisis

The conflict reaches a turning point. At this point the opposing forces in the story meet and the conflict becomes most intense. The crisis occurs before or at the same time as the climax.

Climax

The climax is the result of the crisis. It is the high point of the story for the reader. Frequently, it is the moment of the highest interest and greatest emotion. The point at which the outcome of the conflict can be predicted.

Falling Action

The events after the climax which close the story.

Resolution (Denouement)

Rounds out and concludes the action.

CHARACTERIZATION *direct/indirect - see prev. page.***MAJOR CHARACTERS**

Almost always round or three-dimensional characters. They have good and bad qualities. Their goals, ambitions and values change. A round character changes as a result of what happens to him or her. A character who changes inside as a result of what happens to him is referred to in literature as a DYNAMIC character. A dynamic character grows or progresses to a higher level of understanding in the course of the story.

Protagonist The main character in the story	Antagonist The character or force that opposes the protagonist.	Foil A character who provides a contrast to the protagonist.
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MINOR CHARACTERS

Almost always flat or two-dimensional characters. They have only one or two striking qualities. Their predominant quality is not balanced by an opposite quality. They are usually all good or all bad. Such characters can be interesting or amusing in their own right, but they lack depth. Flat characters are sometimes referred to as STATIC characters because they do not change in the course of the story.

POINT OF VIEW**First Person**

The narrator is a character in the story who can reveal only personal thoughts and feelings and what he or she sees and is told by other characters. He can't tell us thoughts of other characters.

Third-Person Objective

The narrator is an outsider who can report only what he or she sees and hears. This narrator can tell us what is happening, but he can't tell us the thoughts of the characters.

Third-Person Limited

The narrator is an outsider who sees into the mind of one of the characters.

Omniscient

The narrator is an all-knowing outsider who can enter the minds of more than one of the characters.

CONFLICT

Conflict is the essence of fiction. It creates plot. The conflicts we encounter can usually be identified as one of four kinds.

Man versus Man

Conflict that pits one person against another.

Man versus Nature

A run-in with the forces of nature. On the one hand, it expresses the insignificance of a single human life in the cosmic scheme of things. On the other hand, it tests the limits of a person's strength and will to live.

Man versus Society

The values and customs by which everyone else lives are being challenged. The character may come to an untimely end as a result of his or her own convictions. The character may, on the other hand, bring others around to a sympathetic point of view, or it may be decided that society was right after all.

Man versus Self

Internal conflict. Not all conflict involves other people. Sometimes people are their own worst enemies. An internal conflict is a good test of a character's values. Does he give in to temptation or rise above it? Does he demand the most from himself or settle for something less? Does he even bother to struggle? The internal conflicts of a character and how they are resolved are good clues to the character's inner strength.

Often, more than one kind of conflict is taking place at the same time. In every case, however, the existence of conflict enhances the reader's understanding of a character and creates the suspense and interest that make you want to continue reading.

FORESHADOWING

An author's use of hints or clues to suggest events that will occur later in the story. Not all foreshadowing is obvious. Frequently, future events are merely hinted at through dialogue, description, or the attitudes and reactions of the characters.

Foreshadowing frequently serves two purposes. It builds suspense by raising questions that encourage the reader to go on and find out more about the event that is being foreshadowed. Foreshadowing is also a means of making a narrative more believable by partially preparing the reader for events which are to follow.

IRONY

Irony is the contrast between what is expected or what appears to be and what actually is.

Verbal Irony

The contrast between what is said and what is actually meant.

Irony of Situation

This refers to a happening that is the opposite of what is expected or intended.

Dramatic Irony

This occurs when the audience or reader knows more than the characters know.

TONE/MOOD

Tone

The author's **attitude**, stated or implied, toward a subject. Some possible attitudes are pessimism, optimism, earnestness, seriousness, bitterness, humorous, and joyful. An author's tone can be revealed through choice of words and details.

Mood

The climate of **feeling** in a literary work. The choice of setting, objects, details, images, and words all contribute towards creating a specific mood. For example, an author may create a mood of mystery around a character or setting but may treat that character or setting in an ironic, serious, or humorous tone

SYMBOLISM

A person, place or object which has a meaning in itself but suggests other meanings as well. Things, characters and actions can be symbols. Anything that suggests a meaning beyond the obvious.

Some symbols are conventional, generally meaning the same thing to all readers.

For example: bright sunshine symbolizes goodness and water is a symbolic cleanser.

THEME

The main idea or underlying meaning of a literary work. A theme may be stated or implied. Theme differs from the subject or topic of a literary work in that it involves a statement or opinion about the topic. Not every literary work has a theme. Themes may be major or minor. A major theme is an idea the author returns to time and again. It becomes one of the most important ideas in the story. Minor themes are ideas that may appear from time to time.

It is important to recognize the difference between the theme of a literary work and the subject of a literary work. The subject is the topic on which an author has chosen to write. The theme, however, makes some statement about or expresses some opinion on that topic. For example, the subject of a story might be war while the theme might be the idea that war is useless.

Four ways in which an author can express themes are as follows:

1. Themes are expressed and emphasized by the way the author makes us feel.. By sharing **feelings of the main character** you also share the ideas that go through his mind.
2. Themes are presented in **thoughts and conversations**. Authors put words in their character's mouths only for good reasons. One of these is to develop a story's themes. The things a person says are much on their mind. Look for **thoughts that are repeated** throughout the story.
3. Themes are suggested through the characters. The main character usually illustrates the most important theme of the story. A good way to get at this theme is to ask yourself the question, **what does the main character learn** in the course of the story?

4. The **actions or events** in the story are used to suggest theme. People naturally express ideas and feelings through their actions. One thing authors think about is what an action will "say". In other words, how will the action express an idea or theme?

IMAGERY: Language that appeals to the senses. Descriptions of people or objects stated in terms of our senses.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Whenever you describe something by comparing it with something else, you are using figurative language. Any language that goes beyond the literal meaning of words in order to furnish new effects or fresh insights into an idea or a subject. The most common figures of speech are simile, metaphor, and alliteration.

Simile

A figure of speech which involves a direct comparison between two unlike things, usually with the words like or as. Example: The muscles on his brawny arms are strong as iron bands.

Metaphor

A figure of speech which involves an implied comparison between two relatively unlike things using a form of be. The comparison is not announced by like or as. Example: The road was a ribbon of moonlight.

Alliteration

Repeated consonant sounds occurring at the beginning of words or within words. Alliteration is used to create melody, establish mood, call attention to important words, and point out similarities and contrasts. Example: wide-eyed and wondering while we wait for others to waken.

Personification

A figure of speech which gives the qualities of a person to an animal, an object, or an idea. It is a comparison which the author uses to show something in an entirely new light, to communicate a certain feeling or attitude towards it and to control the way a reader perceives it. Example: a brave handsome brute fell with a creaking rending cry-- the author is giving a tree human qualities.

Onomatopoeia

The use of words that mimic sounds. They appeal to our sense of hearing and they help bring a description to life. A string of syllables the author has made up to represent the way a sound really sounds. Example: Caarackle!

Hyperbole

An exaggerated statement used to heighten effect. It is not used to mislead the reader, but to emphasize a point. Example: She's said so on several million occasions

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motif (moh-TEEF): a recurring object, concept, or structure in a work of literature. A motif may also be two contrasting elements in a work, such as good and evil. In the Book of Genesis, we see the motif of separation again and again throughout the story. In the very first chapter, God separates the light from the darkness. Abraham and his descendants are separated from the rest of the nation as God's chosen people. Joseph is separated from his brothers in order that life might be preserved. Another motif is water, seen in Genesis as a means of destroying the wicked and in Matthew as a means of remitting sins by the employment of baptism. Other motifs in Genesis and Matthew include blood sacrifices, fire, lambs, and goats. A motif is important because it allows one to see main points and themes that the author is trying to express, in order that one might be able to interpret the work more accurately. See *A Handbook to Literature, The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. **Robert Bean, Student, University of North Carolina at Pembroke**

<http://www.uncp.edu/home/canada/work/allam/general/glossary.htm#m>

SHORT STORY ELEMENTS

SETTING 5	PLOT 3B ^{starting pt. key events}
CONFLICT ^{climax}	CHARACTER 4
POINT OF VIEW 2	THEME 1 _{Dads tell us}

Title

SETTING -- The time and location in which a story takes place is called the setting. For some stories the setting is very important, while for others it is not. There are several aspects of a story's setting to consider when examining how setting contributes to a story (some, or all, may be present in a story):

- a) **place** - geographical location. Where is the action of the story taking place?
- b) **time** - When is the story taking place? (historical period, time of day, year, etc)
- c) **weather conditions** - Is it rainy, sunny, stormy, etc?
- d) **social conditions** - What is the daily life of the character's like? Does the story contain local colour (writing that focuses on the speech, dress, mannerisms, customs, etc. of a particular place)?
- e) **mood or atmosphere** - What feeling is created at the beginning of the story? Is it bright and cheerful or dark and frightening?

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PLOT -- The plot is how the author arranges events to develop his basic idea; It is the sequence of events in a story or play. The plot is a planned, logical series of events having a beginning, middle, and end. The short story usually has one plot

so it can be read in one sitting. There are five essential parts of plot:

- a) **Introduction** - The beginning of the story where the characters and the setting is revealed.
- b) **Rising Action** - This is where the events in the story become complicated and the conflict in the story is revealed (events between the introduction and climax).
- c) **Climax** - This is the highest point of interest and the turning point of the story. The reader wonders what will happen next; will the conflict be resolved or not?
- d) **Falling action** - The events and complications begin to resolve themselves. The reader knows what has happened next and if the conflict was resolved or not (events between climax and denouement).
- e) **Denouement** - This is the final outcome or untangling of events in the story.

It is helpful to consider climax as a three-fold phenomenon: 1) the main character receives new information 2) accepts this information (realizes it but does not necessarily agree with it) 3) acts on this information (makes a choice that will determine whether or not he/she gains his objective).

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CONFLICT-- Conflict is essential to plot. Without conflict there is no plot. It is the opposition of forces which ties one incident to another and makes the plot move. Conflict is not merely limited to open arguments, rather it is any form of opposition that faces the main character. Within a short story there may be only one central struggle, or there may be one dominant struggle with many minor ones.

There are two types of conflict:

- 1) **External** - A struggle with a force outside one's self.
- 2) **Internal** - A struggle within one's self; a person must make some decision, overcome pain, quiet their temper, resist an urge, etc.

There are four kinds of conflict:

- 1) **Man vs. Man** (physical) - The leading character struggles with his physical strength against other men, forces of nature, or animals.
- 2) **Man vs. Circumstances** (classical) - The leading character struggles

against fate, or the circumstances of life facing him/her.

3) **Man vs. Society** (social) - The leading character struggles against ideas, practices, or customs of other people.

4) **Man vs. Himself/Herself** (psychological) - The leading character struggles with himself/herself; with his/her own soul, ideas of right or wrong, physical limitations, choices, etc.

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CHARACTER -- There are two meanings for the word character:

- 1) The person in a work of fiction.
- 2) The characteristics of a person.

Persons in a work of fiction - Antagonist and Protagonist

Short stories use few characters. One character is clearly central to the story with all major events having some importance to this character - he/she is the **PROTAGONIST**. The opposer of the main character is called the **ANTAGONIST**.

The Characteristics of a Person - Direct / Indirect

In order for a story to seem real to the reader its characters must seem real.

Characterization is the information the author gives the reader about the characters themselves. The author may reveal a character in several ways:

- a) his/her physical appearance
- b) what he/she says, thinks, feels and dreams
- c) what he/she does or does not do
- d) what others say about him/her and how others react to him/her

Characters are convincing if they are: consistent, motivated, and life-like (resemble real people)

Characters are...

1. **Individual** - round, many sided and complex personalities. *or Flat*
2. **Developing** - dynamic, many sided personalities that change, for better or worse, by the end of the story.
3. **Static** - Stereotype, have one or two characteristics that never change and are emphasized e.g. brilliant detective, drunk, scrooge, cruel stepmother, etc.

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POINT OF VIEW

Point of view, or p.o.v., is defined as the angle from which the story is told.

1. **Innocent Eye** - The story is told through the eyes of a child (his/her judgment

being different from that of an adult) .

2. **Stream of Consciousness** - The story is told so that the reader feels as if they are inside the head of one character and knows all their thoughts and reactions.

3. **First Person** - The story is told by the protagonist or one of the characters who interacts closely with the protagonist or other characters (using pronouns I, me, we, etc). The reader sees the story through this person's eyes as he/she experiences it and only knows what he/she knows or feels.

4. **Omniscient**- The author can narrate the story using the omniscient point of view. He can move from character to character, event to event, having free access to the thoughts, feelings and motivations of his characters and he introduces information where and when he chooses. There are two main types of omniscient point of view:

a) **Omniscient Limited** - The author tells the story in third person (using pronouns they, she, he, it, etc). We know only what the character knows and what the author allows him/her to tell us. We can see the thoughts and feelings of characters if the author chooses to reveal them to us.

b) **Omniscient Objective** -- The author tells the story in the third person. It appears as though a camera is following the characters, going anywhere, and recording only what is seen and heard. There is no comment on the characters or their thoughts. No interpretations are offered. The reader is placed in the position of spectator without the author there to explain. The reader has to interpret events on his own.

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THEME -- The theme in a piece of fiction is its controlling idea or its central insight. It is the author's underlying meaning or main idea that he is trying to convey. The theme may be the author's thoughts about a topic or view of human nature. The title of the short story usually points to what the writer is saying and he may use various figures of speech to emphasize his theme, such as: symbol, allusion, simile, metaphor, hyperbole, or irony.

Some simple examples of common themes from literature, TV, and film are:

- things are not always as they appear to be
- Love is blind
- Believe in yourself
- People are afraid of change
- Don't judge a book by its cover

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ELEMENTS OF SHORT STORIES

- A short story is a relatively brief fictional narrative or story written without using any rhymes or rhythms. The short story has a beginning, a middle, and an end and is composed of the following elements:
 - Theme
 - Plot
 - Character
 - Setting
 - Point of View

I. THEME—The central idea that the author wishes to set forth in his or her writing.

To find the theme, ask yourself these questions:

1. What is the story about?
2. What is the central idea?
3. What observation did the author make about human nature?

II. PLOT—A series of related events that the author uses to develop the theme of a story. *To identify the plot, ask yourself these questions:*

1. What happens in the beginning of the story?
2. What happens in the middle of the story?
3. What happens at the end of the story?

III. CHARACTER—The action of the story is centered around the characters in the story. One central character usually dominates the story.

IV. SETTING—The stage upon which the action of the story takes place. The setting is to a story just as the background is to a painting.

V. POINT OF VIEW—The author's choice of the teller of the story. The point of view is important to the total structure and meaning of the short story. *To find the point of view, ask yourself who is telling the story.*

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III. CHARACTER—The action of the story is centered around the characters in the story. One central character usually dominates the story.

1. Describe the most important character in the story.
2. Describe at least two other characters in the story.

IV. SETTING—The stage upon which the action of the story takes place. The setting is to a story just as the background is to a painting.

1. Describe the setting of the story. Where does the story take place?
2. In what year and time of year does the story take place?
3. What is the mood in the story?

V. POINT OF VIEW—The author's choice of the teller of the story. The point of view is important to the total structure and meaning of the short story.

1. Who is telling the story?

2. Why do you think the author made this choice?

Literary techniques used to develop theme:

1. **foreshadowing**—giving hints to the reader about what is to happen next
2. **flashback**—the author interrupts the story to go back in time to add scenes or information. This helps the reader understand what is happening in the present.
3. **Irony**—the opposite of what is expected to happen. Either a statement may have an opposite meaning, or an outcome of events may be the opposite of those hoped for or expected.
4. **Tone**—the “feeling” conveyed by the way the writer writes about his subject.
5. **Realism**—the author attempts to portray life in his/her novel realistically. He/she must use details to reflect the reality that we see around us.
6. **Romanticism**—the author uses his imagination to present the world to us. At times his/her view may be extremely idealistic; at other times it may reflect extreme horror.

A. **THEORIES OF LITERATURE:**

1. **Imitative theory**—the author’s job is to present an imitation of the world so we, the reader, can better understand the forces of the world around us that shape our thought and feeling. Art imitates life.
2. **Expressive theory**—the author examines his internal view of the world. “Truth” has nothing to do with the work. The author shapes the world as he internally perceives it.
3. **Affective theory**—this theory is similar to the expressive theory except the focus here is on the feelings of the reader. The author attempts to sway the reader’s perceptions of the world.

QUESTION TO PONDER: Does art imitate life or does art generate or push us, the reader, into new patterns of thought and behavior?

- I. **EXPOSITION**—the beginning stage
 - a. the reader is given the setting of the story

Naturalism
(scientific method)
no supernatural

- b. the reader is introduced to the principal characters and their relationships to each other
- c. the reader is given information about the events that existed before the story actually begins.
- d. The reader is also given some information about the conflict in the story. **CONFLICT** is the struggle between opposing forces.

Types of conflict:

Man vs. man—external struggle between two or more individuals

Man vs. himself—internal struggle concerning emotion and decision

Man vs. nature—external struggle between man and an element of nature.

- e. the exposition sets the groundwork for the story.
- 1. **COMPLICATION**—mini-conflicts that contribute to the rise in action.
 - a. Each mini-conflict must be more intense than the other until the most dramatic conflict occurs
 - b. This dramatic conflict (or **climax**) will hint to either the success or failure of the principal character's ability to win his struggle or to simply solve his problem.
- 2. **CLIMAX**—the turning point in the story, or the emotional high point
 - a. this turning point is for the character, not the reader
- 3. **FALLING ACTION**—the events that lead to the resolution
- 4. **RESOLUTION** (denouement)—the final stage
 - a. The outcome of the conflict or the resolution of the problem.
 - b. The outcome of the resolution will express the general theme of the story.
- A. All characters should be believable—have recognizable human traits and characteristics
- B. **FOUR TYPES OF CHARACTERIZATION**—techniques the writer uses to develop character
 - 1. What the author states
 - a. Physical description
 - 2. What the characters say or do
 - 3. How the characters dress
 - a. The characters' speech and dress play significant factors in the development of their characterizations
 - 4. What other characters say
 - 5. Other

C. Types of characters:

1. **protagonist**—the central character—he or she can be good or bad
2. **antagonist**—the “opposing” character(s)
- Static 3. **flat**—characters who do NOT change in a story.
- dynamic 4. **round**—characters who change

D. Analysis of characters:

1. **motivation**—what motivates the character to cause his/her actions?
2. **Behavior**—what are the actions of the character and why is he/she behaving this way?
3. **Consequences**—what are the results of his/her actions?
4. **Responsibility**—what moral, legal, or mental accountability does the character have?
5. **Expectations**—what expectations do you have for this character?

A. The setting determines the place, time, tone, and atmosphere

1. **tone**—the author’s attitude toward his/her material
2. **atmosphere**—the general feeling or mood set by the author

B. The author must choose items of description that are important not only because of their visual representation, but also in terms of their importance to the over effectiveness of the story.

C. Techniques for establishing setting:

1. **Sensory details**—words that appeal to the senses (sight/hearing/taste/touch/smell)
2. **Figurative language:**
 - a. **simile**—comparison using like or as
 - b. **metaphor**—comparison using is or form of is
 - i. implied metaphor
 - ii. extended metaphor
3. **personification**

II.

A. Types of Point of View:

1. **first person**—the narrator is the main character who tells his own story. The narrator tells the story speaking with an “I” in his/her own language.

2. **First person observer**—the narrator tells the story which he has observed. The character is usually of secondary importance in the story. He looks on and simply reports what the more important characters say.
3. **Third person**—the author is outside the story using “he” or “she”
 - a. **Author-Observer**—allows the author to tell the story using the third person. He remains outside the minds of the characters. He records only what any observer in the same situation might also see.
 - b. **Omniscient author**—may tell what happens with the power to go into the minds of characters and also give his own comments. He/she is “all-knowing.”

B. Identifying point-of-view:

When the narrator is a character in the story ask:

1. Does the main character tell his own story? (first person narrator)
2. Does a minor character tell the main character’s story? (first person observer)

When the narrator is not a character in the story ask:

1. Does the author tell what people think and explain feelings and motives? (omniscient author)
2. Does the author simply tell the story without giving the thoughts and feelings of the characters? (author observer)

RIEGER

Elements of Short Stories Notes

A short story is a relatively brief fictional narrative or story written without using any rhymes or rhythms. The short story has a beginning, a middle, and an end, and it is composed of the following elements

- Theme
- Plot
- Character
- Setting
- Point of view

I. Theme: The central idea that the author wishes to set forth in his or her writing.

- To find the theme, ask yourself these questions
 1. What is the story about?
 2. What is the central idea?
 3. What observation did the author make about human nature?

II. Plot: A series of related events that the author uses to develop the theme of a story.

- To identify the plot, ask yourself these questions:
 1. What happens in the beginning of the story
 2. What happens in the middle of the story
 3. What happens at the end of the story?

III. Character: The action of the story is centered around the characters in the story. One central character usually dominates the story.

IV. Setting: The stage upon which the action of the story takes place. The setting is to a story just as the background is to a painting.

V. Point of View: The author's choice of the teller of the story. The point of view is important to the total structure and meaning of the short story.

- To find the point of view, ask yourself who is telling the story.

Literary techniques used to develop theme

1. foreshadowing: giving hints to the reader about what is to happen next.
2. flashback: the author interrupts the story to go back in time to add scenes or information. This helps the reader understand what is happening in the present.
3. irony: the opposite of what is expected to happen. Either a statement may have an opposite meaning, or an outcome of events may be the opposite of those hoped for or expected.
4. tone: the "feeling" conveyed by the way the writer writes about his subject.
5. realism: the author attempts to portray life in his/her novel realistically. He/she must use details to reflect the reality that we see around us.
6. romanticism: the author uses his imagination to present the world to us. At times his/her view may be extremely idealistic; at other times it may reflect extreme horror.
7. naturalism: this is a scientific method of writing that has no supernatural elements to it.

A. Theories of Literature

1. imitative theory: The author's job is to present an imitation of the world so we, the reader, can better understand the forces of the world around us that shape our thought and feeling. Art imitates life.
2. expressive theory: The author examines his internal view of the world. "Truth" has nothing to do with the work. The author shapes the world as he internally perceives it.
3. affective theory: This theory is similar to the expressive theory except the focus here is on the feelings of the reader. The author attempts to sway the reader's perceptions of the world.

author's feelings

Question to ponder: Does art imitate life or does art generate or push us, the reader, into new patterns of thought and behavior?

Parts of Plot

I. Exposition: the beginning stage

- a. the reader is given the setting of the story
- b. the reader is introduced to the principal characters and their relationships to each other.
- c. the reader is given information about the events that existed before the story actually begins
- d. the reader is also given some information about the conflict in the story. Conflict is the struggle between opposing forces.
 - There are three types of conflict
 - man vs. man: external struggle between two or more individuals
 - man vs. himself: internal struggle concerning emotion and decision
 - man vs. nature: external conflict between man and an element of nature.
- e. the exposition sets the groundwork for the story.

II. Complication: mini-conflicts that contribute to the rise in action.

- a. Each mini-conflict must be more intense than the other until the most dramatic conflict occurs
- b. This dramatic conflict or climax will hint to either the success or failure of the principal character's ability to win his struggle or to simply solve his problem

III. Climax: The turning point in the story, or the emotional high point

- § This turning point is for the character, not the reader

IV. Falling Action: The events that lead to the resolution

V. Resolution (denouement): The final stage

- a. The outcome of the conflict or the resolution of the problem
- b. The outcome of the resolution will express the general theme of the story.

Characters

- A. All characters should be believable and have recognizable human traits and characteristics
- B. There are four types of characterization (the techniques the writer uses to develop character)
 1. What the author states
 - a. Physical description
 2. What the characters say or do
 3. How the characters dress
 - a. The characters' speech and dress play significant factors in the development of their characterizations
 4. What other characters say
- C. There are various types of characters as well
 1. protagonist: The central character. He or she can be good or bad
 2. antagonist: the "opposing" character(s)
 3. flat/static: characters who do not change in a story
 4. round/dynamic: characters who do change in a story
- D. Characters can be analyzed in the following ways:
 1. motivation: what motivates the character to cause his/her actions?
 2. behavior: what are the actions of the character and why is he/she behaving this way?
 3. consequences: What are the results of his/her actions
 4. responsibility: What moral, legal, or mental accountability does the character have?
 5. expectations: What expectations do you have for this character?

Direct
Indirect

Setting

- A. The setting determines the place, time, tone, and atmosphere
 1. tone: the author's attitude toward his/her material
 2. atmosphere: the general feeling or mood set by the author
- B. The author must choose items of description that are important not only because of their visual representation, but also in terms of their importance to the over effectiveness of the story
- C. Techniques for establishing setting are as follows:
 1. sensory details: words that appeal to the senses (sight/hearing/taste/touch/smell)
 2. figurative language
 - a. simile: comparison using the words like or as
 - b. metaphor: comparison using the word is or form of is
 - c. personification: giving human characteristics to non-human things

Types of Point of View

- A. The following are types of point of view:
 1. first person: the narrator is the main character who tells his own story. The narrator tells the story speaking with an "I" in his/her own language
 2. first person observer: the narrator tells the story which he has observed. The character is usually of secondary importance in the story. He looks on and simply reports what the more important characters say
 3. third person: the author is outside the story using "he" or "she"
 - a. Author observer: allows the author to tell the story using the third person. He remains outside the minds of the characters. he records only what any observer in the same situation might also see
 - b. Omniscient author: may tell what happens with the power to go into the minds of

characters and also give his own comments.
He/she is "all-knowing"

B. The following are all ways to identify points of view

When the narrator is a character in the story ask:

1. Does the main character tell his own story? (first person narrator)
2. Does a minor character tell the main character's story? (first person observer)

When the narrator is not a character in the story ask:

1. Does the author tell what people think and explain feelings and motives? (omniscient author)
2. Does the author simply tell the story without giving the thoughts and feelings of the characters? (author observer)

Name:

Period:

Elements of Short Stories Notes

A short story is a relatively brief fictional narrative or story written without using any rhymes or rhythms. The short story has a _____, a _____, and an _____, and it is composed of the following elements

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

I. Theme: The central idea that the author wishes to set forth in his or her writing.

- To find the theme, ask yourself these questions
 1. What is the _____ about?
 2. What is the _____?
 3. What _____ did the author make about human nature?

II. Plot: A series of related events that the author uses to develop the theme of a story.

- To identify the plot, ask yourself these questions:
 1. What happens in the _____ of the story
 2. What happens in the _____ of the story
 3. What happens at the _____ of the story?

III. Character: The action of the story is centered around the _____ in the story. One central character usually dominates the story.

IV. Setting: The stage upon which the action of the story takes place. The setting is to a _____ just as the background is to a _____.

V. Point of View: The author's choice of the teller of the story. The point of view is important to the _____ and _____ of the short story.

- To find the point of view, ask yourself who is telling the story.

Literary techniques used to develop theme

1. _____: giving hints to the reader about what is to happen next.
2. _____: the author interrupts the story to go back in time to add scenes or information. This helps the reader understand what is happening in the _____.
3. _____: the opposite of what is expected to happen. Either a statement may have an opposite meaning, or an outcome of events may be the opposite of those hoped for or expected.
4. _____: the "feeling" conveyed by the way the writer writes about his subject.
5. _____: the author attempts to portray life in his/her novel realistically. He/she must use details to reflect the reality that we see around us.
6. _____: the author uses his imagination to present the world to us. At times his/her view may be extremely idealistic; at other times it may reflect extreme horror.
7. _____: this is a scientific method of writing that has no supernatural elements to it.

A. Theories of Literature

1. _____: The author's job is to present an imitation of the world so we, the reader, can better understand the forces of the world around us that shape our thought and feeling. Art imitates life.
2. _____: The author examines his internal view of the world. "Truth" has nothing to do with the work. The author shapes the world as he internally perceives it.
3. _____: This theory is similar to the expressive theory except the focus here is on the feelings of the reader. The author attempts to sway the reader's perceptions of the world.

Question to ponder: Does art imitate life or does art generate or push us, the reader, into new patterns of thought and behavior?

Parts of Plot

I. Exposition: the beginning stage

- a. the reader is given the _____ of the story
- b. the reader is introduced to the principal _____ and their relationships to each other.
- c. the reader is given information about the _____ that existed before the story actually begins
- d. the reader is also given some information about the _____ in the story. _____ is the struggle between opposing forces.
 - There are _____ types of conflict
 - _____ vs. _____: external struggle between two or more individuals
 - _____ vs. _____: internal struggle concerning emotion and decision
 - _____ vs. _____: external conflict between man and an element of nature.
- e. the exposition sets the _____ for the story.

II. Complication: mini-conflicts that contribute to the rise in action.

- a. Each mini-conflict must be more intense than the other until the most dramatic conflict occurs
- b. This dramatic conflict or _____ will hint to either the success or failure of the principal character's ability to win his struggle or to simply solve his problem

III. Climax: The turning point in the story, or the emotional high point

- a. This turning point is for the _____, not the reader

IV. Falling Action: The events that lead to the _____

V. Resolution (denouncement): The _____

- a. The outcome of the conflict or the resolution of the problem
- b. The outcome of the resolution will express the general _____ of the story.

Characters

- A. All characters should be believable and have recognizable _____ and characteristics
- B. There are _____ types of characterization (the techniques the writer uses to develop character)
1. What the author _____
 - a. Physical description
 2. What the characters _____ or _____
 3. How the characters _____
 - a. The characters' speech and dress play significant factors in the development of their characterizations
 4. What other characters _____
- C. There are various types of characters as well
1. protagonist: The _____ character. He or she can be _____ or _____
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Literary Terms

- Poetry Lesson

Genre is an important word in the English class. We teach different genres of literature such as poetry, short stories, myths, plays, non-fiction, novels, mysteries, and so on. When we speak about a kind of literature we are really speaking about a genre of literature. So when someone asks you what genre of literature you like, you might answer, poetry, novels, comics, and so on.

Carla Beard: Who knows why we call it figurative language?
Student: Because you have to figure out what it means!

Peggy Smith: Cut out newspaper headlines and titles of articles- especially from the sports section. Paste them on a posterboard and number them. Have students identify the figure of speech by number and explain in concrete terms what the line is saying. Some examples from today's Plain Dealer: "Buckeyes clip ice-cold Gophers", "New Crop of Garden Catalogs", "The Heat is Back on Steel Makers". These are pretty lame, but usually there are some good pickings in the daily newspaper.

Allegory

Alliteration

Allusion

Amplification

Anagram

Analogy

Anaphora

anastrophe

Anthropomorphism

Animal related words

Antithesis

Aphorism

Apostrophe/Authorial Intrusion

Archetype

Assonance

Asyndeton

Bibliomania

Bildungsroman

Cacophony

Caesura

Characterization

Chiasmus

Circumlocution

Conflict

Connotation

Consonance

Denotation

Deus ex Machina

Diction

Doppelganger

Ekphrastic

Emulation

Epilogue

Epithet

Euphemism

Euphony

Faulty Parallelism

Flashback

Foil

Foreshadowing

Hyperbaton

Hyperbole

Imagery

Internal Rhyme

Inversion

Irony

Juxtaposition

kennings

Malapropism

Metaphor

Metonymy

Motif

Mood

Negative Capability

Nemesis

Onomatopoeia

Oxymoron

Paradox

Pathetic Fallacy

Periphrasis

Periodic Structure

Personification

Point of View

Plot

Polysyndeton

Portmanteau

Prologue

Puns

Rhyme Scheme

Rhythm & Rhyme

Satire

Setting

Simile

Spoonerism

Stanza

Stream of Consciousness

Syllepsis

Symbol

Synecdoche

Synesthesia

Syntax

Theme

Tone

Tragedy

Understatement

Verisimilitude

Verse

For specific types of poetry like sonnet, ode, etc, go [HERE](#)

Other Sources

- [BedfordStMartins](#)
- [The Forest of Rhetoric](#)
- [Literary Terms](#).
- [Literary and Rhetorical Terms](#) The Department of English, University of Victoria
- [More Lit Terms](#) from Joel Sommer Littauer
- [Rhetorical Figures](#)
- [Virtual Salt](#) A Glossary of Literary Terms from Robert Harris
- [Virtual Salt](#) Rhetorical Devices from R Harris.
- [Wikipedia](#) Literary Terms.
- [Words of Art](#)
- [Writing Tools](#) from Matthew Alexander

Please email comments etc about the entries. Please put the literary term being discussed in your missive on the subject line.

maintained by: **The students in [Cyber English](#)**

“The Most Dangerous Game”

Richard Connell

1. Journal: What activities/ games do you participate in for fun? How do they challenge you? Are they dangerous? Are some people’s hobbies or jobs dangerous?
2. Create a plot chart:
3. Write 3-5 questions you have of the text, author, or situation as you read:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
4. Make a chart including both Zaroff and Rainford. List two traits for each and provide direct textual evidence including the page number citation (60).
5. How are the two men similar? Different?
6. Choose two sections of text that foreshadow something to come. Cite them and then explain what events they foreshadow.
7. Explain the role of conflict in the story.
8. Choose two images presented in the text. Provide the text and then explain the effect Connell’s description has for the story.
9. Explain the twist ending? How does it help build the author’s main idea?
10. Take your own notes. Which parts seem significant to you? Which descriptions are vivid? What is interesting?

"The Necklace"

Guy de Maupassant

Journal: What is status? How do we obtain status? What effect does status have upon our lives?

1. Describe Madame Loisel and provide textual evidence to support your claims. Paragraph or table form is acceptable presentation.
2. How does Madame Loisel respond to her husband's gift? Is she justified in her reaction? How should he feel?
3. What motivates Madame Loisel? Make two columns: Action// Motivation shown
4. What is Madame Loisel's flaw/ downfall?
5. Who should the reader most sympathize with? Why?
6. What is ironic about the situation?
7. Explain how the third-person omniscient point of view affects the story.
8. What lesson do you think the author is trying to impress upon the reader? Support your answer.

“The Open Window”

Journal: What is the difference between lying and joking? Is deceit deceptive no matter the issue?

1. Explain the significance of the characters' names: Vera, Mr. Framton Nuttel, Mrs. Sappleton.
2. Note at least one example of irony.
3. Is this story effective from a third-person narration? How would it be different if told from first person point of view? Would it be as effective? Why or why not?
4. What allows Vera to play her trick on Mr. Nuttel? Multiple aspects make it possible.

“A Sound of Thunder”

Journal: If you could travel in time, where and when would you travel to? Why?

1. What is foreshadowing?
2. Note two examples of foreshadowing from the text. Write the sentence and tell what it foretells.
3. Sequence: Create three timelines: one noting actual time and events in the story for the characters; another noting time periods created by time travel; another that explores cause-effect relationships of the events that then cause the final result (change in presidency).
4. Explain the significance of the statement: “Stay on the Path.”
5. What is the “sound of thunder”?
6. Study vocabulary noted throughout reading.

“Pancakes” by Joan Bauer

Directions: You may save and modify this sheet as needed for class. Answer each of the questions fully citing text where appropriate.

Journal: What is perfect? Can it be reached?

1. Plot: Make a plot chart that shows the progression throughout the story.
2. Characters: In three columns note the character's name, traits/ characteristics, and textual evidence (what is said or done in the story to reveal the traits).
3. Irony: Where in the story is irony used? Note text with page number and explain how it is ironic.
4. Theme: What is the theme or main idea of the piece?
5. Are there any recurring words or ideas?
6. What can be said about Jill? Make a claim and support your claim citing text from the short story.
7. What effects does utilizing a first-person narrator have on the story? How would the story be changed using a third-person narrator? Which would be more effective? Why?

"The Cask of Amontillado"	"The Necklace"
Exposition:	Exposition:
Complications (mini-conflicts):	Complications (mini-conflicts):
Rising Action:	Rising Action:
Climax:	Climax:
Falling Action:	Falling Action:
Resolution (theme):	Resolution (theme):

Save as Chart for short stories

• Short Story - Essay Topics - EC

Complete up to three of the essays for a possible 10 points per essay. These are essays, meaning you must write organized and supported responses. You need to make claims, give evidence from the story, and then explain how the evidence proves the claim.

- How does the concept of justice present itself in both "The Cask of Amontillado" and "The Necklace"?
- Describe how the setting for "The Cask of Amontillado" helps to set the tone of the piece.
- What is one problem that both Montresor and Madame Loisel share and how does the author let us know that they have this problem?
- What is the theme of "The Cask of Amontillado" and "The Necklace"? Are they similar or different and how?
- What point of view were "The Cask of Amontillado" and "The Necklace" written in and what type of impact does that have on each of the stories?