

After defining each term, use this list with your nightly reading assignments. You will be asked to write down examples of these terms that are found in your reading assignments (ex. This work is a short story, the antagonist is Mr. White, the setting is China, an example of imagery is the sun ray, etc.). Your tests and quizzes will be largely based upon these terms and how they are used in the readings. Studying for exams will be made much easier by utilizing this terms list.

**prose** — Ordinary language people use in speaking or writing, distinguished from the language of poetry primarily in that the line is not treated as a formal unit and it has no repetitive pattern of rhythm or meter.

**poetry** — A literary expression in which language is used in a concentrated blend of sound and imagery to create an emotional response; essentially rhythmic, it is usually metrical and frequently structured in stanzas.

**short story** — A short piece of prose fiction, having few characters and aiming at unity of effect.

**novel** — A fictional prose narrative of considerable length, typically having a plot that is unfolded by the actions, speech, and thoughts of the characters.

**character** — A person in a literary work.

**characterization** — The process of creating characters in fiction, often those who are different from and have different beliefs than the author.

**protagonist** — The main character in a drama or other literary work.

**antagonist** — The principal character in opposition to the protagonist or hero of a narrative or drama.

**rising action** — The events of a dramatic or narrative plot preceding the climax, after conflict has been introduced. Generally the protagonists will face more and more conflict, until a climax is reached and the conflict is resolved.

**climax** — A moment of great or culminating intensity in a narrative or drama, especially the conclusion of a crisis. Also, the turning point in a plot or dramatic action.

**theme** — A central idea or the subject in a piece of writing or other work of art.

**foreshadowing** — A literary device in which an author drops subtle hints about plot developments to come later in the story. Each of these hints widens the range of possible consequences and maintains tension throughout the narrative as these possibilities narrow.

**imagery** — The use of vivid or figurative language to represent objects, actions, or ideas, and the use of expressive or evocative images in literature.

**suspense** — Pleasurable excitement and anticipation regarding an outcome, such as the ending of a mystery novel.

**irony** — A literary style using words to express something different from and often opposite to their literal meaning for humorous or rhetorical effect. Also, wit.

**symbolism** — The practice of representing things by means of symbols or of attributing symbolic meanings or significance to objects, events, or relationships.

**alliteration** — The repetition of the same sounds or of the same kinds of sounds at the beginning of words or in stressed syllables, as in “on scrolls of silver snowy sentences” (Hart Crane). Modern alliteration is predominantly consonantal; certain literary traditions, such as Old English verse, also alliterate using vowel sounds.

**conflict** — Opposition between characters or forces in a work of drama or fiction, especially opposition that motivates or shapes the action of the plot.

**internal conflict** — The battle between what the character wants to do and what the character must do; the struggle facing the character from within.

**external conflict** — The external problem that is standing in the way of the the character and his or her goals. The problem can be a natural disaster, loss of a job, death of a loved one, etc.

**couplet** — A unit of verse consisting of two successive lines, usually rhyming and having the same meter and often forming a complete thought or syntactic unit.

**dialogue** — A literary work written in the form of a conversation: the dialogues of Plato.

**monologue** — A literary composition in the form of a soliloquy.

**fiction** — A literary work whose content is produced by the imagination and is not necessarily based on fact, including novels and short stories.

**non-fiction** — An account or representation of a subject which is presented as fact and believed to be truthful at the time of their composition.

**narration** — The recounting of an event or series of events; the act of telling a story.

**novel** — A fictional prose narrative of considerable length, typically having a plot that is unfolded by the actions, speech, and thoughts of the characters.

**personification** — A type of metaphor in which distinctive human characteristics, e.g., honesty, emotion, volition, etc., are attributed to an animal, object or idea.

**plot** — The pattern of events or main story in a narrative or drama.

**resolution** — Something settled or resolved; the outcome of the story.

**rhyme scheme** — The arrangement of rhymes in a poem or stanza.

**scene** — The place in which the action of a play, movie, novel, or other narrative occurs; a setting.

**setting** — The context and environment in which a situation is set; the background. Also, the time, place, and circumstances in which a narrative, drama, or film takes place.

**stanza** — One of the divisions of a poem, composed of two or more lines usually characterized by a common pattern of meter, rhyme, and number of lines.

**sonnet** — A 14-line verse form, usually in iambic pentameter and having one of several conventional rhyme schemes. There are two prominent types: the Italian, or Petrarchan, sonnet, composed of an octave and a sestet (rhyming abbaabba cdecde), and the Elizabethan,

or Shakespearean, sonnet, consisting of three quatrains and a couplet (rhyming abab cdcd efef gg).

**tragedy** — A drama or literary work in which the main character is brought to ruin or suffers extreme sorrow, especially as a consequence of a tragic flaw, moral weakness, or inability to cope with unfavorable circumstances.

**epic** — An extended narrative poem in elevated or dignified language, celebrating the feats of a legendary or traditional hero, or a literary or dramatic composition that resembles an extended narrative poem celebrating heroic feats.

**drama** — A prose or verse composition, especially one telling a serious story, that is intended for representation by actors impersonating the characters and performing the dialogue and action.