

**Mrs. Ryan**  
**English 8**

**Literary Terms**

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1. **allusion**-a reference to a well-known historical person, place, event, literary work, or work of art.
2. **antagonist**-a character in a literary work who directly opposes the main character.
3. **atmosphere**- overall feeling created in a work of literature which leads the reader to expect certain things will happen.
4. **character**-an individual in a literary work. Characters may be people, animals, robots, or whatever the author chooses. **Main characters**-the most important character in the story. **Minor characters**-the other characters that make up the story.
  - a. **dynamic character**-develops and changes in the course of the work
  - b. **static character**-remains the same from the beginning to the end
  - c. **flat character**-reveals only one personality trait
  - d. **round character**-reveals many traits
  - e. **stereotype**-a flat character of a familiar and often repeated type

Five aspects of characterization:

1. *Psychological*-Why does he act the way he does?
2. *Physical*-What does he look like?
3. *Social*-How does he get along with others?
4. *Intellectual*-How smart is he?
5. *Moral*-What are his values?

5. **characterization**-the methods an author uses to reveal a character's personality
  - a. **direct characterization**-the author makes direct statements about a character's traits. *Example*: "He was a tall man."
  - b. **indirect characterization**- the author reveals a character's personality through the characters own words, thought and actions
6. **climax**-the decisive event or high point in the story which leads to the final outcome of the story. It usually follows the crisis (a point when two opposing forces face each other in a decisive action).

7. **conflict**-a struggle between opposing forces, characters, ideas or emotions

**internal conflict**-exists within the mind of a character who is torn between different courses of action

a. man vs. himself

**external conflict**-exists when a character struggles against some outside force (another character, nature, society, or fate)

a. man vs society

b. man vs. man

c. man vs. nature

d. man vs. fate

8. **crisis**-a point at which two opposing forces face each other in a decisive action. At this point the story must go one way or another; it is an incident which causes a permanent change in the life of one or more of the characters.

9. **conclusion**-the final outcome of the story.

10. **denouement**-the winding down of the story; the events that follow the climax of the story.

11. **dialect**-a form of language spoken people in a particular region.

12. **dialogue**-a conversation between two characters.

13. **exposition**-an introduction revealing the setting, background, characters and primary conflicts in a work of literature.

14. **flashback**-a return to events that happened before the beginning of the story.

15. **foreshadowing**- an author's use of clues that hint at events that will occur later in the plot.

16. **figurative language**-language not to be interpreted literally.

17. **figure of speech**-expression or word used imaginatively, not literally.

18. **genre**- a type of literature (poetry, short story, novel, play etc.)

19. **inference**-an educated guess derived from the information presented to the reader.

20. **irony**-a contrast between appearance and reality. It is a technique that uses a word or phrase to mean the opposite of its normal meaning.
- a. **situational irony**-when the opposite of what is expected occurs
  - b. **verbal irony**-when a person says one thing and means another
  - c. **dramatic irony**-when the reader knows something that the character does not know
21. **metaphor**-a comparison of two unlike things.  
*Example: "The exam was a piece of cake."*
22. **mood**-the atmosphere or feeling that an author creates in a work.
23. **moral**- the lesson to be learned from the work, right or wrong.
24. **narrator**-a person who tells the story.
25. **plot**-the sequence of events in a narrative work.
26. **point of view**-the way in which the reader is given the information.
- a. **first-person point of view**-the main character in the story is referred to as "I"
  - b. **third-person limited**-the narrator reveals the thoughts, feelings and observations of only one character, referring to that character as "he" or "she"
  - c. **third-person omniscient**-all knowing point of view. The narrator is not a character in the story but someone who stands outside the story and comments on the action.
27. **protagonist**-the central character in a literary work around whom the main conflict revolves. The protagonist is the person with whom the readers sympathize or identify.
28. **realism**- a manner of writing in which things are represented as they actually exist in a life; a truthful presentation.
29. **satire**-the use of wit, exaggeration or ridicule to present serious criticism of individuals, customs, or social and political institutions.
30. **setting**-the time and place of the story
31. **simile**-a comparison using like or as  
*Example: "Her love is like a red, red rose."*

32. **suspense**-the feeling of excitement or apprehension about the outcome which keeps the reader interested.
33. **symbol**-an object, person, a place or an experience that represents something else, usually abstract.
34. **tone**-a reflection of the author's attitude toward a subject of a poem, story, or other literary work.
35. **theme**-the main idea or message of a literary work. It is the idea that the author wishes to convey to the reader.