

LITERARY TERMS

1. **ALLEGORY:** A story where each character has both a literal meaning and a metaphorical meaning, and so the story proceeds on two levels at once.

Example:

2. **ALLITERATION:** The repetition of the first consonant in two or more consecutive words; often used as an alternative to rhyme in a poem.

Example:

3. **ALLUSION:** A reference in the work to another work, or to another person, or to an event, that the reader is expected to know, without the author actually having to tell us directly.

Example:



4. **FORESHADOWING:** A strong hint or clue of what is actually going to happen later in the story; it builds suspense and interest in the reader; it refers to something that actually does happen in the future. Oftentimes the reader may not be aware that it is foreshadowing until he or she has actually finished reading the story.
5. **HYERBOLE:** An exaggeration of the truth or saying more than is true, in order to emphasize an idea.

Example:

6. **IMAGERY:** a blanket term for the words or phrases used in a written piece to appeal to the reader's senses. (Example: smell, taste, touch, hearing sight, etc) Imagery helps to create atmosphere, mood, and character.

Example:

7. **METAPHOR:** A comparison between two unlike things that implies that one thing is something else, without using the word “like” or “as”.

Example:

8. **ONOMATOPOEIA:** Words that sound like the noise that they make.

Example:

9. **OXYMORON:** A rhetorical antithesis which brings together two contradictory terms. Such contrast makes for sharp emphasis.

Example:

10. **PATHETIC FALLACY:** A connection between nature (or, the weather) and human emotions.

Example:

11. **PERSONIFICATION:** when human qualities, characteristics, or attributes are given to non-human things or objects.

Example:

12. **SIMILE:** A comparison between two dissimilar things that uses the word “like” or “as” in the comparison.

Example:

13. **SYMBOL:** a person, place, action, or object that stands for or represents an abstract idea, or something “deeper” than it does on the surface.

Example:

14. **tone:** The author’s attitude toward this subject and/or audience that is implied in a literary work.

Example:

15. **PARADOX**: a statement or proposition that seems self-contradictory or absurd but in reality expresses a possible truth.

Example:

16. **JUXTAPOSITION**: an act or instance of placing close together or side by side, especially for comparison or contrast.

Example:

17. **EUPHONY** - agreeableness of sound; pleasing effect to the ear, especially a pleasant sounding or harmonious combination or succession of words

Example:

18. **SOLILOQUY** - an utterance or discourse by a person who is talking to himself or herself or is disregarding of or oblivious to any hearers present (often used as a device in drama to disclose a character's innermost thoughts)

19. **MOOD** - a mood or atmosphere is the feeling that a literary work conveys to readers. Mood is created through the use of plot, character, the author's descriptions, etc.

20. **CACOPHONY** - Language that is discordant and difficult to pronounce, such as this line from John Updike's "Player Piano": "never my numb plunker fumbles." Cacophony ("bad sound") may be unintentional in the writer's sense of music, or it may be used consciously for deliberate dramatic effect.

21. **MOTIF** - A motif is an idea, a theme that is repeated or carried through an individual work as when John Steinbeck's narrator constantly compares Lenny to an animal such as horse or bear throughout the novel *Of Mice and Men*. There are musical motifs as well. In *Jaws*, the approach of the shark is always signalled by a strumming of bass strings slowly as the music builds in pitch and speed.

22. **SATIRE** - a literary work which ridicules human vice and folly. It blends a critical attitude with humour and wit for the purpose of improving human institutions or humanity. It differs from a comedy in that comedy evokes laughter mainly as an end in itself, while satire "derides"; that is, it uses laughter as a weapon, and against a subject that exists outside of the work itself.

Example:

23. **PUN** - a play on words or the humorous use of a word emphasizing a different meaning or application. They have been called by some “the lowest form of humour.”

Example:

24. **IRONY** – refers to the discrepancy between what is expected or intended and what happens. The real meaning is often concealed or contradicted by the literal or superficial.

25. **DRAMATIC IRONY** – when the words and actions of the characters of a work of literature have a different meaning for the reader than they do for the characters. This is the result of the reader having a greater knowledge than the characters themselves.

Example:

26. **VERBAL IRONY** – is a contrast between what is said and what is meant. The speaker may say one thing but really mean another. Many sarcastic comments are ironic in nature.

Example:



27. **SITUATIONAL IRONY** – is a contrast between what happens and what was expected. The result of an action is different than the expected or desired effect.

Example: