

Core Literary Terms/First Semester

Literary Analysis Vocabulary for 1 st Semester	
<p>Allegory: a work of art intending to be meaningful on at least two levels of understanding: typically, a literal level and an abstract (e.g. moral) level</p>	<p>Examples include George Orwell's <i>Animal Farm</i>, which is a political allegory that can be understood to represent the author's interpretation of political or historical figures. <i>Star Wars</i> is an archetypal allegory examining good and evil, while <i>Monty Python and the Holy Grail</i> is a satirical allegory examining the King Arthur legend and political bias between the British and the French.</p>
<p>Allusion: an allusion is an indirect or inexplicit reference by one text to another text, to a historical occurrence, or to myths and legends.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A direct allusion refers to a historical, mythic, or legendary person, place or activity by name. • An inexplicit allusion relies on associations that only those readers who are familiar with history, myth and legends may notice. 	<p>Here is where it becomes critical for the college-bound student to be well-read and observant on multiple levels, and why we will be doing so much close reading this year. Students who do not catch key allusions by the time they are seniors can score lower on a standardized test even if they have the base knowledge.</p> <p>Allusions also can be found in any genre of good modern music, making that song or songs even more profound than its rhythm or initial context.</p>
<p>Antagonist: The term is most often used to designate the main adversary of the hero or protagonist, or a character with whom the protagonist comes into conflict.</p>	<p>The word comes from the Greek meaning "to struggle" against". Remember, the antagonist does not always have to be the villain.</p>
<p>Archetype: the word is most often used to refer to characters, plots, themes and images that recur throughout the history of literature, both oral and written.</p>	<p>You will be receiving a handout with the most common archetypes. We will discuss these during one of the flex days.</p>
<p>Dialogue: Any written form of conversation between two or more speakers</p>	<p>Dialogue generally serves two main purposes: to advance the plot and to reveal character.</p>
<p>Diction: the kinds or levels of language employed in a work.</p>	<p>Literary critics sometimes seek to distinguish between formal and informal diction. An example of the latter will be found in "The Cask of Amontillado" by Poe, where we see Poe's diction operating on a high level. Alice Walker's <i>The Color Purple</i>, and Mark Twain's <i>Huckleberry Finn</i> both operate on a low level of diction.</p>
<p>Epic: A long narrative poem "celebrating episodes of a people's heroic tradition."</p>	<p><i>The Odyssey</i> will be the classic example of epic we will be studying this year. Epics tend to mix myth with history, and still are written to this day, as in the case of Chinua Achebe's <i>Things Fall Apart</i></p>
<p>Fable: (see also allegory) A brief tale, in either prose or verse, that offers a moral lesson.</p>	<p><i>Animal Farm</i> works well as a modern fable that serves the purpose of a political satire</p>
<p>Foreshadowing: a technique by which an author suggests or predicts an outcome or plot.</p>	
<p>Genre: A category or type of literature</p>	<p>Broad genres include prose fiction (novels and short stories), poetry, drama, and nonfiction prose works (essays). Narrow categories include: comedy, tragedy, romance, novel, epic and autobiography</p>
<p>Hyperbole: To describe a deliberate exaggeration in literature</p>	<p>"Hyperbole" is a Greek word, meaning "excess, or a throwing beyond".</p>
<p>Hubris: excessive pride</p>	<p>In Greek tragedy, hubris is often viewed as the flaw that leads to the downfall of the tragic hero</p>
<p>Irony: using a word or phrase to mean the exact opposite of its literal or normal meaning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> dramatic irony: in which the reader or the audience sees a character's mistakes or misunderstandings, but the character does not. <input type="checkbox"/> verbal irony: in which the writer says one thing and means another. ("The best substitute for experience is being sixteen" <input type="checkbox"/> situational irony: in which there is a great difference between the purpose of a particular action and the result

<p>Figure of Speech: a literary device used to create a special effect or feeling by making some type of interesting or creative comparison.</p> <p>The most common are listed to the right. You will need to study these for the test!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Antithesis: an opposition, or contrast, of ideas : “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness.” ❑ Hyperbole: an exaggeration, or overstatement “I have seen this river so wide it only had one bank. ❑ Metaphor: a comparison of two unlike things in which no word of comparison (<i>as</i> or <i>like</i>) is used. ❑ Personification: a literary device in which the author speaks of or describes an animal, object, or idea as if it were a person. ❑ Simile: a comparison of two unlike things in which a word of comparison (<i>like</i> or <i>as</i>) is used. “She stood in front of the altar, shaking like a freshly caught trout,” –Maya Angelou, <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> ❑ Understatement: stating an idea with restraint (holding back) to emphasize what is being talked about.
<p>Mood: Refers to the author’s or the speaker’s attitude toward the subject or theme of a work.</p>	<p>The term “mood” is often used interchangeably with tone and atmosphere. Whereas mood is created by the attitude of the author or speaker to the subject, tone is more nearly the attitude of the author to the audience.</p>
<p>Myth: a traditional story that attempts to explain a natural phenomenon or justify a certain practice or belief of a society</p>	
<p>Oxymoron: A figure of speech in which opposite or contradictory ideas or terms are combined.</p>	<p>A familiar word in the English language that is an oxymoron is the word “sophomore”, which means wise fool. Others include: <i>jumbo shrimp</i>, <i>tough love</i>, or <i>cruel kindness</i></p>
<p>Paradox: A seemingly contradictory or absurd statement that is nevertheless true or sensible.</p>	<p>An example: “The coach considered this a good loss”. If the team wins the championship later, in hindsight the loss was <u>good</u> for the team.</p>
<p>Pathetic Fallacy: figures of speech that assign human emotions to inanimate objects.</p>	<p>This can include personification, but the most common type of pathetic fallacy deals with nature responding to the emotions of the people. For example: a storm occurring before someone dies.</p>
<p>Persona: the voice or personality an author assumes for a particular purpose. It is the character who speaks to the readers (and who may or may not be anything like the author)</p>	<p>We will focus intently on persona this year. In the Latin, the word means “a mask, especially one worn by an actor”. Critics sometimes use the word to designate the role or function of a narrator.</p>
<p>Protagonist: commonly used to refer to the hero or heroine in a story, poem, novel, play or film.</p>	<p>The word derives from the Greek, meaning “the first actor”. This means that a protagonist can be the main character without being a hero. For example, Macbeth (from <i>Macbeth</i>) and Jay Gatsby (from <i>The Great Gatsby</i>).</p>
<p>Satire: a literary work that seeks to criticize and correct the behavior of human beings and their institutions by means of humor, wit, and ridicule</p>	<p><i>Animal Farm</i> will be our classic example of satire; however, satire is prominent in editorial cartoons, and occasionally on <u>Saturday Night Live</u>.</p>
<p>Style: how the author uses words, phrases, or sentences to form his or her ideas</p>	
<p>Theme: means to designate any significant, recurring, or developed idea, concept, or argument in a work of literature.</p>	<p>We will discuss theme at length throughout the school year.</p>
<p>Tone: A term used to describe an author’s attitude toward a reader.</p>	<p>A sample of tone words: bitterness, anger, outrage, sympathy, accusatory, critical, jovial, sarcastic, sincere, sentimental, condescending</p>
<p>Tragedy: a literary work in which the hero is destroyed by some character flaw and by forces beyond his or her control</p>	<p>Be careful with this word: the media loves to use this whenever something bad happens. It is sad, of course, but not always a tragedy.</p>
<p>Other Terms:</p> <p>Denouement: the final solution or outcome of a play or story (also called resolution)</p> <p>Empathy: putting yourself in someone else’s place and imagining how that person must feel</p> <p>Exposition: writing that is intended to make clear, or explain, something that might otherwise be difficult to understand</p> <p>Motif: an often repeated idea or theme in literature</p> <p>Pathos: a Greek root meaning <i>suffering</i> or <i>passion</i></p>	