**Literary Devices**

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| **Literary devices** express ideas through language. Essentially, a literary device is the creative use of words to create a particular effect or mood.  **Elements of fiction** (or literary elements) are common characteristics to all literary and narrative forms. (Examples: theme, setting, conflict, point of view, etc.) |

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| Allegory | A story illustrating an idea or a moral principle in which objects take on symbolic meanings. |
| Alliteration | The repetition of consonant sounds within close proximity, usually in consecutive words within the same sentence or line. (Birdsong is a **s**weetly **s**atisfying **s**ound.) |
| Allusion | A reference to a famous person or event in life or literature. (She is as pretty as the Mona Lisa.) |
| Analogy | A comparison in which different items are compared point by point, usually with the idea of explaining something unknown by something known. (Sword is to warrior as pen is to writer.) |
| Antagonist | A character that opposes the protagonist in a significant way. He or she is usually the source of the main conflict. |
| Character | The people who inhabit and take part in the story. |
| Characterization | The author’s means of conveying to the reader a character’s personality, life history, values, physical attributes, etc. |
| Climax | 3rd element of plot – the turning point in a story, at which the end result becomes inevitable, usually where something suddenly goes terribly wrong; the dramatic high point of a story. |
| Conflict | A struggle between opposing forces which is the driving force of a story.   1. Character vs. Character 2. Character vs. Society 3. Character vs. Self 4. Character vs. Nature 5. Character vs. Unknown |
| Context | Conditions, including facts, social/historical background, time and place, etc., surrounding a given situation. |
| Dialogue | Where characters speak to one another. (In a play, many of the characters’ thoughts and actions are revealed through dialogue.) |
| Dramatic irony | Where the audience or reader is aware of something important, of which characters in the story are not aware. |
| Exposition | 1st element of plot, found at the beginning of a story, which provides important background information, introduces characters and establishes setting. |
| Figurative language | Any use of language where the intended meaning differs from the actual literal meaning of the words themselves. (metaphor, simile, hyperbole, personification, onomatopoeia, verbal irony, and oxymoron.) |
| Flashback | A device that shifts the narrative from the present to the past, usually to reveal a change in character or to illustrate an important point. |
| Foil | A character who is meant to represent characteristics, values, ideas, etc., which are directly opposed to those of another character, usually the protagonist. (Two characters who are opposites.) |
| Foreshadowing | Future events are suggested to the reader by the author. Clues and hints strategically placed within a story for the reader to guess or figure out the outcome of events. |
| Hyperbole | A device that uses deliberate exaggeration for the purpose of emphasis. (It took him a million years to get here!) |
| Imagery | A picture created by a writer using concrete details, adjectives and figures of speech that gives readers a vivid impression of what or who is being described. It generally includes at least two of the five senses. |
| Metaphor | A direct relationship where one thing or idea substitutes for another without using “like” or “as”. (Your eyes are the brightest stars.) |
| Mood | The atmosphere or emotional condition created by the piece, within the setting (dark, mysterious, intriguing, happy, joyful, full of promise and wonder...) |
| Motif | A recurring important idea or image. A symbolic pattern throughout the story. |
| Onomatopoeia | Where sounds are spelled out as words; or, when words describing sounds actually sound like the sound they describe. (buzz, mumble, gurgle, boom, splat, beep, slurp, etc.) |
| Oxymoron | A contradiction in terms. (cold fire, feather of lead, sick health, bittersweet, fiery ice, etc.) |
| Paradox | Where a situation is created which cannot possibly exist, because different elements of it cancel each other out. (“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.”) |
| Parallelism | Use of similar or identical language, structures, events or ideas in different parts of a text. |
| Personification | Where inanimate objects, abstract concepts and even animals are seemingly endowed with human self-awareness; where human thoughts, actions, perceptions and emotions are directly attributed to the object, concept or animal. (The branches are dancing in the wind.) |
| Plot  Plot graph | Sequence of events in a story. (Exposition (introduction), *Inciting Force*, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, Conclusion. |
| Point-of-view | The identity of the narrative voice; the person or entity through whom the reader experiences the story. There are 5 main point-of-view: first- person involved, first-person observer, third-person omniscient, third-person limited and third-person reporter. |
| Protagonist | The main character in a story, the one with whom the reader is meant to identify. The person is not necessarily good by any conventional standard, but he/she is the person in whose plight the reader is most invested. |
| Pun | A play on words where a word has two meanings at the same time, thereby resulting in humour. (Graveyard workers really dig their jobs.) |
| Repetition | Where a specific word, phrase, or structure is repeated several times, usually in close proximity, to emphasize a particular idea. (The wolf crept to its prey *slowly, slowly, slowly* approaching with stealth and determination.) |
| Setting | Time, place and mood a story takes place. It can be specific or ambiguous. |
| Simile | A direct comparison using the words “like” or “as”. |
| Situational irony | Where an event occurs that is unexpected, in the sense that it is somehow in absurd or mocking opposition to what would be expected or appropriate. (A surgeon needs heart surgery and dies on the operating table.) |
| Symbolism | The use of specific objects or images to represent abstract ideas. A symbol must be something you can hold in your hand or draw a picture of, while the idea it symbolizes must be something you can’t hold in your hand or draw a picture of. |
| Theme | The main idea conveyed in the story. (Friendship, Family, Revenge, Hate, Trust, Good vs. Evil, Love, Power, Corruption, Survival, Hope) |
| Tone | The emotional state, or “attitude” of the speaker/narrator/narrative voice, as conveyed in the story. (The speaker’s tone is sarcastic, angry, matter-of-fact, serious, upbeat, joyful...) |
| Tragedy | A dramatic genre where a story ends with a negative or unfortunate outcome which was essentially avoidable, usually caused by a flaw in the central character’s personality. |
| Tragic flaw | The single characteristic or personality disorder which causes the downfall of the protagonist/tragic hero. |
| Verbal irony | Where the meaning of a specific expression is, or is intended to be, the exact opposite of what the words literally mean. Sarcasm is irony used to wound a person with remarks.  Irony: - “What a terrible movie!” - “Yeah, that was worth my time.”  Sarcasm: - “I’ve broken mom’s vase.” - “Good job! You’re so careful.” |