

## Reference list of Literary Terms for Middle School students.

**1<sup>st</sup> person point of view** - the events are told by a character in the story.

**3<sup>rd</sup> person point of view** - the events are told by someone outside the story.

**alliteration** - the repetition of similar initial consonant sounds in order to create a musical or rhythmic effect, to emphasize key words or to imitate sounds.

Example: "He was reluctant to return to the room he called home."

**allusion** - a reference to a well-known person, place, event, literary work, or work of art, often used to help make a comparison.

**biography** - a form of non-fiction in which a writer tells the life story of another person.

**character trait** – the quality of a character; what a character is like.

**climax** – the highest point of action in a story, often the turning point.

**direct characterization** – the writer directly states the character's traits or characteristics.

**dynamic character** – a character who changes over the course of a story

**external conflict** – a problem or struggle between a character and an outside force:

character vs. character

character vs. group

character vs. nature

character vs. society

character vs. fate

**fable** - a brief story, usually with animal characters, that teaches a lesson or a moral.

**fiction** – writing that tells about imaginary characters and events.

**flashback** - a section in a literary piece that interrupts the sequence of events in order to relate an earlier incident or set of events.

**foreshadowing** – an author's use of hints or clues to give a reader an idea of what may happen next.

**free-verse** - poetry that has irregular lines and may or may not rhyme.

**generalization** – a vague or indefinite statement that is made to cover many cases.

Example: “All human beings hope for something.”

**hyperbole** – use of extreme exaggeration.

**idiom** - a word or phrase which means something different from what it says – it is usually a metaphor. An idiom is an expression peculiar to a certain group of people and/or used only under certain circumstances.

**imagery** – words or phrases that appeal to one or more of the five senses and help to create a vivid description for the reader.

**indirect characterization** – the writer allows the reader to draw his/her conclusions as to what a character is like, based on the appearances, words, actions, and interactions with other characters.

**inference** – a conclusion drawn by the reader based on available information.

**internal conflict** – a problem *within* a character (character vs. self).

**irony** - a situation where the opposite of what is expected to occur or exist *does* occur or exist.

**metaphor** - a figure of speech in which something is described as if it were something else; a comparison made *without* using “like” or “as”.

**mood** – the atmosphere or feeling an author creates within the piece of writing.

**moral** – a lesson taught by a literary work.

**motivation** – a reason that explains or partially explains a character’s thoughts, feelings, actions, or speech.

**narrative** – writing or speech that tells a story.

**narrator** – the speaker or character who is telling the story.

**non-fiction** - writing that tells about real people, places, objects, or events.

**objective details** – details that are factual and true to life.

**oxymoron** – the close placement of words having opposite or near opposite meanings in order to create a unique description.

**parable** – a short tale that illustrates a universal truth, a belief that appeals to all people of all civilizations.

**personification** – a type of figurative language in which a non-human subject is given human characteristics.

**plot** – the sequence of events in a literary work.

**point of view** – the perspective from which a story is told.

**pun** – a humorous play on words.

**repetition** – the repeated use of words or phrases in order to emphasize a point.

**resolution** – the events that occur in the falling action of a story’s plot.

**setting** – the time and location of the events described in a literary work.

**simile** – a comparison between two things, using “like” or “as”.

**speaker** – the imaginary voice assumed by the writer of a poem, the one describing the events in a poem.

**stanza** – a group of lines in a poem.

**static character** – a character who does *not* undergo a change over the course of a story

**subjective details** – details that reveal the author’s feelings, attitudes, or judgments.

**symbol /symbolism** – anything that stands for or represents something else.

**theme** – a central message, idea, or concern that expressed in a literary work.

**tone** – the attitude of an author toward the subject that he/she is writing about.

**character** - refers to what someone is like – what their qualities are  
(Someone’s character refers to their character traits.)

**narrative poetry** - poetry that tells a story

**subject** - what the story or poem is about (the topic)