

A STUDENT'S GLOSSARY OF LITERARY TERMS

Accumulation:

The enumeration of words (attributes) having a similar meaning. "The process is wasteful, dangerous, messy, and sometimes tragic."

Acronym:

A single word, formed from the initial letters of other words (NATO = North Atlantic Treaty Organization)

Act:

The act is the major division of a *drama/play*, often divided further into *scenes*.

Acting time:

The acting time is the time from the beginning to the end of an episode or episodes in a *fictional text*. The relationship between acting time and *narrating time/reading time* depends on the *mode of presentation*.

Action:

The action of a *story* is a series of events usually arranged so as to have three recognizable parts:

1. the beginning (*introduction, exposition*),
2. the middle (*rising action, complication; crisis, climax, turning-point; falling action*)
3. and the end (*dénouement or solution, catastrophe, resolution*).

In contrast to real life, action in *fiction* is ordered; it "imitates in words a sequence of human activities, with a power to affect our opinions and emotions in a certain way". It is the basic principle in all *fiction* and arouses the reader's interest: it makes him eager to learn what is going to happen and/or how the problems faced by the *characters* are going to be solved. Action produces *tension, suspense* or surprise.

Allegory:

The allegory appears in *fictional texts* in which ideas are personified and a story is told to express some general truth.

Examples: Truth, Vice, Virtue, Justice.

Alliteration:

An alliteration is a *repetition* of sounds (consonants) at the beginning of neighbouring words or of stressed syllables within such words, e.g. "fingers the small size of small spades." Purpose: rhythm and stress.

Allusion:

An allusion is a direct or indirect reference to some well-known historical person or event, saying, proverb, line or sentence from a work of literature.

Anachronism:

An error in chronology: placing an event, item or expression in the wrong period. Shakespeare referred to a cannon in *King John*, a play set in time long before those weapons were used in England, and he placed a clock in *Julius Caesar*.

Anagram:

A word or phrase formed by the transposition of letters in another word. Samuel Butler's novel *Erewhon* derives its title from the word *nowhere*.

Anaphora:

The anaphora is a *repetition* of the same word or words at the beginning of neighbouring sentences, *lines, stanzas*, etc.

And she forgot the stars, the moon, and sun,
And she forgot the blue above the trees, ...

Anticlimax:

This is a stylistic device which involves a humorous descent from something serious or dignified to something frivolous or trivial.

Antithesis:

A figure of speech in which opposing or contrasting ideas are balanced against each other in grammatically parallel syntax.

Archaism:

The use of an old or obsolete word: *albeit* (though), *quoth he* (said he).

Aside:

In a play, words spoken by an actor which the other persons on stage are not supposed to hear.

Assonance:

The assonance is a *repetition* of similar vowel sounds within stressed syllables of neighbouring words, e.g. "on the ole with owhere to o."

Asyndeton:

A condensed expression in which words or phrases are presented in series, separated by commas only: Caesar: *Veni, vidi, vici* (I came, I saw, I conquered).

Atmosphere:

Atmosphere is a feeling or mood created by a writer or speaker to evoke the reader's or listener's emotions. It may be, for example, pleasant or gloomy, peaceful or violent.

Attitudinal adverb:

It is an adverb expressing a writer's or speaker's attitude towards his or her *topic*, e.g. "certainly", "honestly", "obviously", "simply".

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Author (omniscient):

An omniscient author is capable of seeing, knowing, and telling whatever he wishes. He is free to move his *characters* in time and place, to describe the physical *action* and private thoughts of *characters*, to comment on what happens and to make clear the *theme* of his *story* in whatever way he chooses (cf. *point of view*).

Ballad:

Originally a song accompanied by a dance. Later the name was applied to a narrative poem. Ballads, passed down by word of mouth, were direct and simple, with romantic, historical or supernatural setting. The literary ballad is a poem with the rhyme scheme *abcb*.

Blank verse:

Unrhymed lines of mostly 10 syllables each; especially the *iambic pentameter*. Shakespeare chiefly used blank verse in his dramas.

Caesura:

The break or pause between words within a metrical foot; a pause in a line of verse generally near the middle.

Caricature:

One-sided over-emphasis of certain traits of *character*, used to mock or criticize.

Character:

In a *fictional text*, person developed through *action*, *description*, language and way of speaking.

1. *flat character*: Term coined by E.M. Forster; a *flat character* is not fully developed, it lacks complexity, and may be referred to a *type* or a *caricature*.
2. *round character*: a person in a work of fiction who is so fully described as to be recognizable, understandable, and individually different from all others appearing in the book.

Characterization:

There are several different ways of presenting a *character* in *fiction* or *drama*:

1. *Explicit presentation*: Here the *omniscient author* describes the outward appearance and the psychological nature of a *character*. If a *character's* thoughts and/or his feelings are described we speak of *introspection*.
2. *Implicit presentation*: A *character* is presented in terms of his or her environment. If a person lives in strange surroundings he is assumed to be strange himself. Since the author does not tell us explicitly, the reader is expected to draw his own conclusions.
3. *Dramatic presentation*: A *character* is presented through *action*, interaction or *dialogue*. Here, too, the *author* seems to have withdrawn from the scene and the reader (or audience) must form their own impressions.

Cartoon:

A cartoon is a drawing, usually in a newspaper or magazine and often with a comment (or caption) underneath it, which is funny and/or makes a political point or criticism.

Chiasmus:

A figure of speech by which contrasted terms are arranged crosswise, the word order in the first phrase is reversed in the second:

Example: Flowers are lovely, love is flowerlike.
 As fast as idylls seduce visitors, visitors reduce idylls.

Chronological order:

Simple temporal order in which the *action* is presented in sequence, i.e. as it actually occurred or is supposed to have occurred.

Climactic order:

Way of structuring a text according to the importance of its items, leading to a *climax*.

Climax:

Structural element of a text, the moment when the *conflict* is most intense. In *fictional texts*, the climax follows the *rising action* and precedes the *turning-point*.

Cliff-hanger:

A melodramatic adventure serial (in magazines or films) in which each instalment ends in *suspense*.

Cloak-and-dagger:

A *play* or *novel* that deals with espionage or intrigue and is highly dramatic and romantic. Duma's *The Three Musketeers* is a famous example.

Comedy:

Kind of *drama* which deals with a light *topic* or a more serious *topic* in an amusing way. By using comic elements, the author wants to entertain and sometimes criticize.

Comic relief:

A comic, diverting element in a serious literary work, especially in a *play*, which relieves the *tension*, and also by contrast, heightens the significance of the tragic *theme*.

Examples: the gravedigger scene in *Hamlet* and the episode of the drunken porter in *Macbeth*.

Comic strip:

A comic strip is a sequence of drawings or cartoons that tell a story and have dialogue printed in balloons. Comic strips are often serialised in newspapers.

Comment:

Non-fictional text form in which the writer or speaker deals with one or more *topics* and offers his or her own judgement in order to convince the reader or listener.

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Complication:

The interplay between *character* and event which builds up a *tension* in the *character* and develops a problem out of the original situation given in a piece of *fiction*.

Conflict:

All fiction involves, at one level or another, conflict. A *character* struggles against a certain environment or against others (*external conflict*), or he is engaged in a struggle with himself (*internal conflict*). One important approach to the right understanding of any *story* is to determine the nature of the conflict involved and the pattern which the opposing forces assume.

Connotation:

Additional meaning of a word beyond its dictionary definition (*Denotation*).

Contrast:

Bringing together of opposing views in order to emphasize their differences or create tension.

Examples: Paradise' loss is our gain.
It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.

Counterplot:

(Also called *subplot*) a secondary *theme* in a *play* or *novel* used as a variation of the principal *theme* or in contrast to it.

Couplet:

A couplet consists of two consecutive lines of verse rhyming together, usually in the same metre.

Example: Cassius: And after this let Caesar seat him sure;
 For we will shake him or worse days endure. (*Julius Caesar*, I, 3)

Crisis:

The highest point of the complication in the *action*, when forces and counter forces have met and the direction which the *action* must now take is determined (cf. *turning-point*). In strict terminology, crisis refers only to structural and *plot* elements, whereas *climax* refers to the highest point of reader/audience interest.

Denotation:

Actual meaning of a word as defined in a dictionary (*Connotation*).

Dénouement:

(*Solution*) structural element of *fictional texts* in which the *conflict* is solved.

Description:

The form of discourse in which the author tells the reader what a person, a place, or an object looks like. The writer tries to evoke an *image* in the reader's mind similar to the in his/her own mind. A text of this nature is called a *descriptive text*.

Dialectical order:

A way of structuring a text by opening with the statement of an idea/action (= *thesis*), following by its opposite (= *antithesis*) and solving the *conflict* between the two in a compromise (= *synthesis*). It is frequently used in *argumentative texts*.

Diary:

A personal record of facts and experiences, kept daily or at frequent intervals, usually for private use.

Didactic:

Intended to teach a lesson.

Documentary fiction:

A narrative build around a particular period or event in history or the present. In this type of writing there are no fictional *characters* and the aim is to bring the event or period to life for the reader.

Drama (dramatic):

Piece of *fiction*, also called *play*, presenting a *conflict* and. It is usually written for performance on stage, in films or on TV. The *drama* usually falls into the following categories: play, comedy, tragedy. (Cf. *act*, *scene*, *stage direction*).

Dramatic irony:

This is the device of putting into the speaker's mouth words which have for the audience a meaning not intended by the speaker.

Example from *Macbeth*: the drunken porter jestingly talks of being the porter at Hell's gate.

Editorial or leader:

A newspaper article which is a comment on an event that the readers are already fully informed about. It is often written by one of the top editors of a paper and reflects the policy of the paper. The writer's name is not mentioned. American and British papers reserve one or two inside pages for editorials and often print letters from readers beside them.

Elegy:

A mournful, melancholy *poem*, especially a funeral song or a lament for the dead.

Ellipsis:

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Shortening of sentences by dropping a word or words (often verbs) which can be understood from the context. Purpose: focus the reader's attention.

Example: "'Been to the cinema lately?' he asked"

Emotive (language):

Using words or expressions which have particular *connotations* in order to appeal to the reader's or listener's emotions and influence him or her in some way.

Enjambment:

Running on of a syntactical unit beyond the end of a *line* of a *poem*, also called *run-on line*.

Entrance:

In *drama*, the coming of a *character* onto the stage. The opposite is *exit*.

Epic:

A lengthy narrative *poem* in which *action*, *characters*, and language are on a heroic level; the *style* is exalted and even majestic.

Examples: Homer's *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, Milton's *Paradise Lost* and *Beowulf*.

Epigram:

A witty, ingenious, and pointed saying that is expressed tersely. *Aphorism* is a related form.

Examples: "I would live to study and not study to live." (F. Bacon), and "I can resist everything except temptation." (O. Wilde)

Essay:

A text form in which the writer expresses his personal views on some *topic* in an artistic way. Essays can be *descriptive*, *narrative*, *argumentative*, *satiric*, *biographical*, *critical*, or *historical*. There are many possible varieties, from the serious to the light-hearted and entertaining.

Euphemism:

Stylistic device used to hide the true nature of something unpleasant by expressing it in a more pleasant, less direct way.

Examples: "he passed away" instead of "he died", or "mental home" instead of "madhouse".

Exaggeration:

Exaggeration means a strong overstatement, often used with an amusing effect (cf. *understatement*).

Exit:

In *drama*, a *character's* leaving the stage (cf. *entrance*).

Exposition:

It has to fulfil several requirements - to set the *action* going, suggest the *theme*, sketch the *background*, introduce the *main characters* and their problems, arouse *suspense*. Generally speaking, it sets forth the prerequisites from which the *story* will develop. –

The process of giving the reader necessary information concerning the *characters* and events existing before the *action* proper of a *story*, *drama* or *novel* begins.

Expressionism:

Expressionism in modern literature can be referred to as any deliberate distortion of reality. In drama it applies to a style of play-writing emphasising emotional and symbolic or abstract representations of reality. In novels or short stories it involves the presentation of an objective outer world through intensified impressions and moods of characters.

Examples: E. O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*, T. Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*, A. Miller's *The Death of a Salesman*.

Eye rhyme:

Two words which, from the spelling, look as though they should *rhyme*, but which actually do not.

Examples: move – love; have – grave; stood – blood.

Fable:

Usually short *fictional narrative*, commonly employing personified animals that represent human types. It is an *allegorical text* form with a clear didactic function that is either implicitly expressed throughout the action or stated explicitly in the form of a *moral*.

Falling action:

Structural element of a *fictional text*, marked by a reduction of the *suspense*. It usually follows the *turning-point* and precedes the *solution/dénouement*.

Feature story:

Variant of the text form *report*. Though based on facts, it does not emphasize generally newsworthy events, but rather an individual case and so it appeals to the emotions and arouses human interest. Feature story writers do not only give an account of an event but generally also provide background and supplementary information. The feature story is often written in an emotional, personal or humorous way.

Figurative (meaning):

meaning of a word that goes beyond its usual definition(s) and transfers the word from its normal context to a new one. Examples of figurative use of language are *metaphors*, *similes* and *symbols*.

Flashback:

A passage in the *narrative* which breaks the chronological sequence of events to deal with earlier events, i.e. dream, dialogue, or memory.

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Focus:

The center around which the material of an imaginative work of art is concentrated. The focus may be primarily upon *character*, upon an idea, upon a *setting*, or the like.

Foot (feet):

Unit of stressed and unstressed syllables within a *line* of a *poem* (cf. *metre*).

Forms of discourse:

Any piece of writing can be classified according to the writer's main purpose. These types of writing are called forms of discourse. The five major forms of discourse are *description*, *exposition*, *narration*, *argument* or *persuasion*, and *instruction*.

Frame story:

A *story* within a *story*.

Free verse:

Form of a *poem* whose structure is not established by *rhyme* and a regular *metre*, but, for example, by *repetition*, *rhythm* and sound elements such as *alliteration* and *assonance*.

Historical fiction:

A narrative form which attempts to re-create past events and includes both fictional elements (imaginary *characters* and situations) and non-fictional or historical elements (historical *characters*, factual *documentation*). In this type of fiction the story element is important too.

Hyperbole:

Obvious and deliberate exaggeration, for the purpose of emphasis. It is not meant to be taken literally, but is used figuratively to create humor or emphasis, e.g. "I've told you a thousand times not to do that."

Iambus:

A metrical foot of two syllables, the first unaccented, the second accented | ∪ — |

Example: To be, or not to be – that is the question. (*Hamlet*)

Idiom (idiomatic speech):

A group of words which has a special meaning that cannot be literally translated into another language.

Example: "Hold the line, please." In German: "Bleiben Sie bitte am Apparat."

Image (imagery):

Basically the term denotes the *images* employed in a literary work (or any other text). A general definition is: a picture in words which often strongly appeals to the senses. Specific devices are *symbol*, *simile* and *metaphor*.

Initiation:

1. The act of initiation or the fact of being initiated; formal introduction or initial ceremony into some office, into society, etc., or the participation in some principles or observances; hence, instruction in the elements of any subject or practice.
2. *Initiation story*: the account of a boy's/girl's becoming a man/woman as he/she moves from innocence and ignorance - through a difficult process of acquiring knowledge of the world - to the practical but somewhat disillusioning wisdom of adulthood.
3. The first existential ordeal, *crisis* or encounter with the experience in the life of a youth. Its ideal aim is knowledge, recognition and confirmation in the world, to which the *actions* of the initiate, however painful, must tend. It is, quite simply, the viable mode of confronting adult realities.
4. An *initiation story* may be said to show its young *protagonist* experiencing a significant change of knowledge about the world of himself, or a change of *character*, or of both, and this change must point or lead him toward an adult world. It may or may not contain some form of ritual, but it should give some evidence that the change is at least likely to have permanent effects.
5. *Initiation stories* obviously center on a variety of experiences and the initiations vary in effect. It will be useful, therefore, to divide initiations into types according to their power and effect (*tentative*, *incomplete* and *decisive initiation*).

Instruction:

It is the form of discourse in which the writer tries to teach people something, usually by telling them what to do or how to do something. A text of this nature is called an *instructive text*.

Interior monologue:

A form of presentation which reveals the feelings, thoughts and recollections of a *character* without the intervention of the *narrator*. The reader directly "overhears" the thoughts flowing through the character's mind. Sometimes the term *stream of consciousness* is used synonymously.

Interview:

Special kind of *dialogue*, usually prepared in advance and later edited for publication or broadcast.

Irony:

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A statement expressing the opposite of what is really meant, whereby the reader or listener is expected to realize the true meaning.

Example: "Lovely weather, isn't it?" said A to B, while a thunderstorm was tearing his umbrella to pieces.

Jargon:

Technical expressions used among themselves by members of a particular profession or social group (sports, truckers, youth groups).

Keyword outline:

Text form belonging to the *expository* text type, a systematic, condensed arrangement of important information from a text. It contains the main ideas of a paragraph or group of paragraphs, their supporting ideas and often important details, visually structured according to their relative importance.

Layout:

Choice of print and general arrangement of written and/or pictorial material on a page of a book, magazine, newspaper, etc. The layout determines the readability and attractiveness of the printed matter.

Leading article:

Variant of the text type *comment*, usually written by the chief editor of a newspaper or magazine to state a particular opinion on some *topic* of current importance. The views expressed are generally *representative* of the political and social tendency of the publication as a whole. Also known as *editorial*.

Letter to the editor:

Variant text form of the text type *comment*, a letter written by a reader of a newspaper or magazine to its editor in order to express a personal opinion on some *topic* of general interest or to react to an article which appeared in that newspaper or magazine, usually with the intention of having the letter published.

Line:

In a *poem*, structural unit, usually classified by the number of *feet* it contains (cf. *metre*, *stanza*).

Listing order:

Way of structuring a text by enumerating its items, not necessarily according to their importance, often achieved by numbering the items or by introducing them with adverbs like "first", "then", "finally".

Literal (meaning):

Meaning of a word as defined in a dictionary (cf. *figurative*).

Litotes:

An ironically moderate speech. Sometimes a rhetorical understatement in which a negative is substituted for the positive remark.

Example: "not bad" instead of "quite good".

Metaphor:

Element of *imagery*, the linking of two seemingly unlike things with one another in the form of an implicit comparison, thus suggesting some kind of identity, e.g. "the snow of his hair." Such *figures of speech* can be found in poetic language as well as in everyday language to create a dramatic effect.

In everyday language one is no longer aware of the metaphorical quality because of too frequent use. Those expressions are called *dead metaphors* (e.g. "bottle-neck, leg of a table, foot of a mountain" etc.). In poetic language metaphorical expressions achieve a special effect: "The road was a ribbon of moonlight."

Metre:

Regular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables within a *line* of a *poem*.

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------|---|
| 1. iambic foot | u - | The curfew tolls the knell of parting day. |
| 2. trochaic foot | - u | There they are, my fifty men and women. |
| 3. anapaestic foot | u u - | The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold. |
| 4. dactylic foot | - u u | Eve, with her basket, was deep in the bells and grass. |

Mode of presentation:

Basically there are two different ways of *narrating a story*. The author may tell his story in a very detailed fashion so that the reader has the feeling of participating in the *action*. That is called *scenic presentation*. The use of *dialogue* is a typical feature of scenic presentation. - If the author merely gives a selected *summary* of what happens within a certain period we call this mode *panoramic presentation*.

| | | |
|--------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Other terms: | <i>scenic presentation</i> | - <i>scene</i> |
| | - <i>showing</i> | |
| | <i>panoramic presentation</i> | - <i>summary</i> |
| | - <i>telling</i> . | |

Monologue (interior):

See: *interior monologue* and *stream of consciousness*.

Moral:

Lesson taught by a text with a didactic function, either expressed explicitly in a final statement or implied by the *action* of the *story* (cf. *fable*, *parable*).

Narrating time:

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Time it takes to relate a particular event or series of events in a narrative text, nearly the same as *reading time*. The relationship between narrating time/reading time and acting time is dependent on the *mode of presentation*.

Narrator: cf. *point of view*

Naturalism:

In literature, an attempt to achieve fidelity to nature by rejecting idealized descriptions of life. Naturalistic writers believe that man's existence is shaped by heredity and environment. Novels and plays emphasize man's animality and his brutal struggle for survival. Writers: Th. Dreiser, E. O'Neill, F. Norris, St. Crane.

News story:

Non-fictional variant of the text form *report*, based on facts, but enriched by background information and story-like elements. If the writer of a news story brings in a great deal of subjective statements and interpretation, it is called an *interpretive news story*.

Non-fiction (non-fictional):

Category of texts in which the writer or speaker refers only to persons and places that really exist and to events that do or did take place. Common examples of non-fiction are *comments* and *reports*.

Novel:

Long and complex fictional *narrative* written in prose.

Ode:

Originally, an ode was a poem meant to be sung, but its meaning has been altered to apply to a lyric poem with a dignified theme, written in a formal, elevated style. Examples: Shelley: *Ode to the West Wind*, and Gray's *The Progress of Poesy*.

Onomatopoeia:

The formation of words from sounds which seem to suggest and reinforce the meaning. *Onomatopoeia* is often used in imitation of natural sounds: *bang, hiss, swish, buzz*.

Open ending:

Structural element of fictional texts, the opposite of *solution* or *dénouement*. In a story with an open ending the *conflict* is not solved: the final interpretation is left up to the reader or audience.

Oral history:

A specific method of historiography (historical research and writing). A broad range of people are interviewed on how they experienced a certain period, historical development or event in

their daily lives. Their reports – often recorded – are edited and more or less directly presented in print or on tape.

Oxymoron:

A figure of speech in which two contradictory words are combined to produce a rhetorical effect:

Examples:

"eloquent silence"

Be fare thee well, most foul, most fair! farewell,

Thou pure impiety and impious purity! (Shakespeare, *Much Ado About*

Nothing)

Parable:

Usually a short fictional *narrative* with a didactic function, telling the story of some event in order to make a general statement about human behaviour. This *moral* is not always stated explicitly; the reader or listener is expected to draw a parallel between the story and his/her own experience. The parable is an *allegorical* text form that presents human types.

Paradox:

A statement that seems at first to be in itself contradictory, even senseless, but reveals some hidden truth on second thought.

Parallelism:

Repetition of the same or similar syntactical form in different sentences or parts of sentences (cf. *anaphora*).

Parody:

Fictional text which imitates the form and language of a well-known piece of writing while changing its *tone* and context. It may be simply designed to ridicule the original or it may offer serious, valuable criticism of it.

Personification:

(The personification; to personify s.th.)

It is the technique of representing animals, plants, objects, the forces of nature or abstract ideas as if they were human beings and possessed human qualities.

Play: see *Drama*

Plot:

In fictional texts, the structure of the *action* as a set of events connected by cause and effect and centered around one or more *conflicts*. Plot is typically composed of the following elements, usually in this order: *exposition, rising action, climax, turning-point, falling action, solution/dénouement* or *open ending*.

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The structure of an action with its particular order and arrangement of facts. E.M. Forster in *Aspects of the Novel* tries to differentiate between plot and *story* as the constituents of an action: "We have defined a story as a narrative of events arranged in their time-sequence. A plot is also a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality. 'The king died and then the queen died,' is a story. 'The king died, and then the queen died of grief,' is a plot. (*Aspects*, p. 93.)

Poem:

Fictional text structured by *lines*, often arranged in *stanzas*, employing such elements as *metre*, *rhyme*, *alliteration* and *assonance*, as well as *imagery* and words rich in *connotations*.

Point of view:

The author who writes a story is always omniscient. He may choose to reveal his omniscience (unlimited knowledge), reduce it, or give it up completely. *Author* and *narrator* are not identical. The *author* is the writer, the "real man" with a personal biography, who remains outside the story. The *narrator* is always a figure within the *story*, where he can adopt various roles.

1. *Neutral omniscience*: The narrative is told in the third person. The prevailing characteristic is that the narrator knows everything about his characters, their thoughts, feelings, perceptions. The reader has access to all possible kinds of information.
2. *Selective omniscience*: The third-person narrator deliberately limits his total omniscience and restricts himself to the viewpoint of one or several (multiple selective omniscience) characters in the narrative. In the latter case he may shift from the viewpoint of one character to that of another (shifting point of view).
3. *Observer-narrator*: The narrator confines himself to the role of an observer, who tells only those things that can be perceived from the outside. He has no access to the thoughts of other characters.
4. *As witness*: The author hands his job of story-telling completely over to another mediator. The "I" as witness is a character in his own right within the story. The natural consequence of this narrative form is that the witness has no more than ordinary access to the mental state of others.
5. *Narrator as protagonist*: The main character tells his own story in the first person. He is limited almost entirely to his own thoughts, feelings and perceptions.
6. *Withdrawal of author and character*: The total elimination of the narrator. The story comes directly through the minds of the characters. The aim is to dramatize mental states. (Cf. *stream of consciousness*).
7. *The dramatic mode*: Having eliminated the author, and then the narrator, we are now ready to dispose of mental states altogether. The information available to the reader in the dramatic mode is limited largely to what the characters do and say, the "point of view" being comparable to that of a camera. The characters' appearance and the setting may be supplied by the author as in the stage directions of a play (cf. scenic presentation).

Protagonists:

The main *character* of a *novel*, *story* or *drama*.

Pun:

Play on words, using either different meanings of the same word or the different meanings of words having the same or similar sounds.

Realism:

1. A theory of writing in which the familiar ordinary aspects of life are depicted in a matter-of-fact manner designed to reflect life as it actually is.
2. Treatment of subject matter in a way that presents careful descriptions of everyday life, often the lives of so-called middle or lower-class people (cf. *naturalism*).

Register:

A variety of language used for a specific purpose, as opposed to dialect (which varies by speakers).

Registers may be defined by reference to subject matter (field of discourse, e.g. the *jargon* of sport), to medium (mode of discourse, e.g. printed material, *letter*, message on tape, etc.), or to level of formality (manner of discourse, e.g. formal, casual, familiar, etc.).

Repetition:

Repeated use of particular sounds, syllables, words, phrases, sentences etc., as a means of structuring a text (cf. *alliteration*, *anaphora*, *assonance*, *parallelism*).

Representation:

Someone is a member of a certain group and speaks on its behalf.

Examples are:

1. She represented her fellow-workers at the conference.
2. Does Mr. Parker still represent Worcester in Parliament?
3. "No taxation without representation!" (Catchword during the American Revolution)
4. House of Representatives
5. Phonetic symbols [sainz] (here: signs) represent sounds.

Report:

Non-fictional, journalistic text form belonging to the text type *narration*, often told in the past tense. It provides factual answers to the questions "who?", "what?", "when?", "where?" and "why?", the so-called "five w's". These facts are verifiable, i.e. they can be checked on by the reader or listener.

Rhetoric:

The act of using language for persuasion in speaking or writing, especially in oratory. The writer or speaker can use various rhetorical or stylistic devices to achieve the desired effects. These include: *alliteration*, *allusion*, *anticlimax*, *antithesis*, *hyperbole*, *paradox*, *parallelism*, *pun*.

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Rhetorical Question:

Question to which the answer is obvious and therefore not expected. It forces the reader or listener to think in a certain direction and is characteristic of the *persuasive style*.

Rhyme:

Identity of sounds between two words, extending from the last stressed syllable to the end of the words. If this occurs at the end of two or more *lines* of a *poem*, we speak of *end rhyme*; if within a *line*, it is known as *internal rhyme*.

Rhyme scheme:

Arrangement of *rhymes* in a *poem*, described by using the letters of the alphabet.

Rhythm (rhythmic):

Natural flow of speech in its sequence of stressed and unstressed syllables. In a *poem*, rhythm is often in conflict with the *metre*.

Rising action:

Structural element of fictional texts, marked by an increase in *suspense* and an intensifying of the *conflict*. It usually follows the *exposition* and precedes the *climax*.

Sarcasm:

Sarcasm means a bitter or aggressive remark used to express disapproval or mockery (cf. *irony*, *satire*).

Satire:

A satire (satirical text) is a fictional text intended to criticize certain conditions, events or people by making them ridiculous, often by using *humour*, *irony*, *exaggeration* and *sarcasm*.

Scene:

Subdivision of an *act* of a *drama*, usually established by a unity of time, place and action (Aristotle), often marked by the *entrance* and *exit* of one or more *characters*.

Science fiction:

Stories and novels dealing, usually in a fanciful way, with scientific innovations such as space travel, robots, genetic manipulation, etc. Some SF novels also deal with sociological and philosophical problems. Forerunners of this genre are Utopian novels of former centuries.

Among the classic SF writers are Jules Verne and H.G. Wells; prominent modern authors include Isaac Asimov, Ray Bradbury, R.A. Heinlein, James Blish, Kurt Vonnegut, and Arthur C. Clarke.

Setting:

Place, time and circumstances in which the *action* takes place.

Short Story:

A brief *narrative* written in prose, shorter than a *novel*. The short story often deals with one main event and with the development of one *character*. While a short story is less complex and detailed than most *novels*, it is more likely to produce "a certain unique and single effect" (Edgar Allan Poe) in the reader. A *conflict* is frequently at the centre of the story. There is usually a *dramatic development* comprising several stages: an opening situation (*exposition*), a developing *conflict* (*rising action*), a point where the *conflict* is most intense (*climax*), and the *falling action* bringing about success or failure for the *protagonist*.

Simile:

Element of *imagery*; connecting and comparing two things of different classes or categories by "as" or "like" to increase vividness and expression. An explicit comparison on the basis of a resemblance in one or several aspects: "his hair was like snow".

Slang:

A variety of familiar and colloquial speech, often new, picturesque, and striking, sometimes even vulgar; not yet fully recognized and accepted by the community as a permanent part of the common language.

Examples: "buck" – "dollar"; "gimme" – "give (it to) me"; "black maria – police van"

Solecism:

Incorrect use of grammar to characterize a person or create the feeling of closeness.

Example: "… he don't care much for music ..."
"I'm the one [who] takes Mom grocery shopping."

Solution:

Structural element of a fictional text in which the *conflict* is resolved (cf. *dénouement*, *open ending*, *plot*).

Sonnet:

Poem consisting of fourteen *lines* (often: *iambic pentameter*), each usually containing five *feet*, with a fixed *rhyme scheme* (often: abab/cdcd/efefgg), often divided into an *octave* (eight lines) and a *sestet* (six lines). Famous sonnet writers were Shakespeare and Milton.

Speaker:

The speaker is the voice speaking to us in a poem. Even when the personal pronoun "I" is used in a poem, we cannot assume that the speaker is identical with the poet. As a rule we should treat the speaker as a character invented by the poet. The speaker is also sometimes called "persona".

Speech:

Verbal text form, a talk or address delivered to an audience, usually in *formal style*.

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Stage direction:

Author's notes in a *drama* on how it is to be performed, often with important details about the *setting*, the *characters'* appearances, *actions*, movements, gestures, ways of speaking and attitudes, thus providing *explicit* as well as *implicit characterization*.

Stanza:

Group of *lines* in a *poem* (cf. *rhyme scheme*). In some poems, (especially in traditional ones), each stanza has the same pattern. A two line stanza is called a *couplet*, a stanza of four lines is known as a *quatrain*.

Stream of consciousness:

We may define stream-of-consciousness *fiction* as a type of *fiction* in which the basic emphasis is placed on the exploration of a *character's* consciousness for the purpose of revealing his mental nature. The important characteristics of the movement of consciousness is its ability to move freely in time and space, imitating the psychological principle of free association, controlled by memory, senses, imagination. There are two basic techniques used in presenting stream of consciousness: *reported thought* and *interior monologue*.

1. *Reported thought* (also: *indirect interior monologue* or *substitutionary narration*): a presentation of thoughts, feelings, perceptions which contains elements of both direct speech and reported speech. Typical features are the third person point of view, the past tense group (as in reported speech) and the omission of introductory clauses such as "he said", "she thought", etc.
2. *Interior monologue* (also: *direct interior monologue*): the type of monologue which presents consciousness directly to the reader. There is complete or near-complete disappearance of the author from the page. It is in the first person, the tense is as mind dictates.

Summary:

Text form belonging to the text type *exposition*, a short continuous text presenting the most important information from some other text. Although formulated in the summary writer's own words - sometimes on the basis of a *keyword outline* of the original text - it does not contain his or her personal opinions or interpretations.

Suspense:

Feeling of *tension* or expectation aroused in the reader or audience about the further development of the *characters*, *conflict* and *plot*.

Style:

A writer's characteristic use of language. Style includes:

- * arrangement of ideas
- * choice of vocabulary

- * sentence structure and variety
- * imagery
- * appropriate diction or register
- * rhythm
- * repetition
- * tone etc.

1. *Formal style*: Language used to address educated readers or listeners not known very closely by the writer or speaker. Formal style shows detachment and respect. Typical of it are a non-personal *point of view*, the use of precise and frequently difficult vocabulary, full forms and often long, complex sentences.
2. *Informal style*: Language used to address readers or listeners with whom the writer or speaker feels comfortable. Informal style is characteristic of relaxed, personal and subjective communication. Typical of it are a personal *point of view*, the use of fairly simple, even slangy vocabulary, short forms, uncomplicated sentence patterns, ellipsis and fillers.
3. *Neutral style*: Language distinguished by a choice of words and sentence structures common to all text forms and appropriate to any situation.
4. *Persuasive style*: The persuasive style uses language intended to convince or persuade the reader or listener. Characteristic elements are *attitudinal* and *intensifying adverbs* and *rhetorical questions*. Persuasive style is used in the text type *argumentation* and in subjective forms of the text type *instruction* such as advertisements.

Symbol (symbolic):

A symbol is an object, *character*, or incident which stands for something else or suggests something greater than itself, e.g. an idea or a quality. It establishes at least two levels of meaning, the concrete and the spiritual one (cf. *figurative meaning*). Examples are:

1. apple symbol of (physical) love and fertility
2. book symbol of wisdom and knowledge; in Islamic countries also symbol of fate
3. dove symbol of peace
4. fountain connected with (deep) water -> deep secrets, knowledge, wisdom; but also purification
5. owl symbol of wisdom, science and knowledge
6. ring symbol of eternity (without beginning and end - cf. circle); symbol of marital unity, loyalty and membership of a certain group
7. rose symbol of love, but also of discreteness and secrecy

Synecdoche:

A part of something represents the whole to focus the attention.

Example: Two legs good – four wheels better.

Tautology:

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An unnecessary accumulation of words of the same or similar meaning. It is a fault of style or a figure that is employed deliberately. *Pleonasm* is often used synonymously.

Technical vocabulary:

Words and expressions from a special field of knowledge, frequent in *technical description*, used for the sake of clarity and precision due to their lack of *connotation*.

Text form:

Realization of one of the five *text types* in actual texts, e.g. as *poems, short stories, novels, reports, comments*. Though most text forms contain elements of several text types, one of them is usually dominant.

Text Types:

Classification of texts according to five different models based on the writer's intentions.

1. *The argumentative text type*: The argumentative text type deals with controversial matter and expresses a clear opinion. *Comments, interviews, leading articles, letters to the editor* and pieces of *criticism* are common argumentative text forms.
2. *The descriptive text type*: The descriptive text type presents the physical characteristics of living beings, objects and/or processes. The presentation can be either based on exact observation and objective information (= *technical description*), or it can give a suggestive mental picture based on the writer's subjective impressions (= *impressionistic description*).
3. *The instructive text type*: The instructive text type aims at influencing the reader's or listener's behaviour by advising or instructing him or her. Characteristic of instruction is the use of commands or recommendations and the present tense group of verbs. Rules and regulations are common text forms belonging to the type instruction.
4. *The expository text type*: In the expository text type the writer or speaker analyses and explains some relatively complex matter, mostly in an objective and precise way. Dictionary definitions, entries in reference books, *keyword outlines* and *summaries* are common text forms belonging to the type.
5. *The narrative type of texts*: cf. The narrative text type presents *actions* or events in some kind of temporal order. *Novels, short stories* and *reports* are common text forms belonging to the text type narration.

Theme:

Central *topic* or idea of a text, holding all its elements together and giving them meaning.

Time-scheme:

In any piece of *fiction* there are two different kinds of "time" to be distinguished. *Reading time* is the time it takes to read a story or book which is dependent on the extent of a narrative (number of pages). *Acting time* is the time-span of the events of a *story*. The German literary terms are "*Erzählzeit*" and "*erzählte Zeit*".

Tone:

Writer's or speaker's attitude towards his/her *theme, character(s)* and especially towards the reader or listener, as reflected in the text. Tone can, for example, be serious or playful, humorous or solemn, arrogant or modest, emotional, ironical, critical, sympathetic (cf. *atmosphere*).

Topical order:

Way of structuring a text according to its main *topics*, often also subtopics, following logical steps or categories.

Turning-point:

Structural element of a *fictional text*, marking a change in the *conflict* or *suspense*. It usually follows the *climax* and precedes the *falling action*.

Type:

Character in a *fictional text* who is not fully developed, but one-sided, representing a group of people or some human trait.

Understatement:

Statement that is deliberately weak, putting less emphasis or importance on something than it deserves, often used as a form of *irony* (cf. *exaggeration*).

Utopia (utopian):

Fictional text dealing with an ideal society, place or world. If this society is a negative one, we usually call it an *anti-utopia*.