

Name _____

Date _____

Important Other _____

Period _____

KEY LITERARY TERMS

During the course of the year you will need to reference this list of significant literary definitions as we analyze short stories, novels, plays, poems, and essays.

THE ASSIGNMENT: Read the literary definitions carefully, and then put each into your own words on the lines below. You may only put one word on each line, so you must choose words carefully to capture the main idea of the definition. Review the examples below.

Samples:

Figurative Language: Authors use figurative language to create fresh and original descriptions. Figurative expressions, while not literally true, help readers picture ordinary things in new ways. A few examples are: metaphor, personification, and simile.

In my own words: Brings writing alive

Sequence: The order in which events occur or ideas are presented. Usually events are told by the author in chronological order.

In my own words: Order of plot

Suspense: A feeling of growing tension and excitement felt by the reader.

In my own words: Edge of seat

Alliteration: Repetition of sound or letter at the beginning of words.

In my own words: _____

Antagonist: The force working against the main character in a story. It can be another character, something in the environment, or it can be a force within the main character.

In my own words: _____

Cause and effect: Two events are related as cause and effect when one event brings about the other. The event that happens first is the cause; the one that follows is the effect.

In my own words: _____

Characterization: Characterization includes all the techniques writers use to create and develop characters. There are four basic methods of developing a character: 1) presenting character's words and actions, 2) presenting character's thoughts, 3) describing the character's appearance, and 4) showing what others think about the character.

In my own words: _____

Climax: In the plot of a story or play, the climax (or turning point) is the point of maximum interest. At the climax, the conflict is resolved and the outcome of the plot becomes clear.

In my own words: _____

Conflict: Conflict is a struggle between two opposing forces. In an external conflict a character struggles against another character or against some outside force. Internal conflict, on the other hand, is a struggle that is within a character.

In my own words: _____

Dynamic: A type of characterization where a character changes or grows during the story, so they are somewhat different at the end.

In my own words: _____

Exposition: a fancy word for the beginning of the story- where the author "sets the stage"- in this part, the situation of the characters in the story is explained and it leads up to the further development of the plot- the point of view and the setting (the where and the when) is also explained.

In my own words: _____



Falling Action: events that happen after the climax - usually wrap up the story and lead to the conclusion- sometimes the falling action is almost non-existent because the conclusion occurs immediately after the climax.

In my own words: _____

First Person: The point of view when the story is told by someone who identifies himself as "I," and may or may not be a character in the story (but usually is) -allows you to know the mind of that one character but no others.

In my own words: _____

Flashback: In a literary work, a flashback is an interruption of the action to present a scene that took place at an earlier time.

In my own words: _____

Flat: A type of characterization. Characters who are one dimensional, i.e. the good guy is always the hero and the bad guy is always the villain.

In my own words: _____

Foil: A character who provides a striking contrast to a main character is called a foil. The foil helps make the main character's qualities apparent to the reader.

In my own words: _____

Foreshadowing: Foreshadowing occurs when a writer provides hints that suggest future events in a story.

In my own words: _____

Hyperbole: An author's use of exaggeration or overstatement for emphasis.

In my own words: _____

Imagery: Imagery consists of words and phrases that appeal to readers' senses. Writers use sensory details to help readers imagine how things look, feel, smell, sound, and taste.

In my own words: _____

Inference: An inference is a logical guess or conclusion based on evidence.

In my own words: _____

Irony: Irony is a contrast between what is expected and what actually exists or happens.

In my own words: _____

Metaphor: A comparison of two things that have some quality in common. Doesn't use like or as.

In my own words: _____

Mood: The general atmosphere created by the author's words. It is the feeling **the reader gets** from reading those words. It may be the same, or it may change from situation to situation.

In my own words: _____

Motivation: The reason why he or she acts, feels, or thinks in a certain way.

In my own words: _____

Onomatopoeia: Use of words whose sound suggests their meaning - like buzz, snap, and pop!

In my own words: _____

Plot: A story's plot is the sequence of related events that make up the story. In a typical plot, an exposition introduces the characters and establishes the main conflict. Complications arise as the characters try to resolve the conflict. Eventually, the plot builds towards a climax, the point of greatest interest or suspense. In the resolution- the final stage of the plot- loose ends are tied up and the story is brought to a close.

In my own words: _____

Point of view: Every story is told from a particular point of view, or perspective. It is the perspective or angle from which the story is being told. There are three main types: first person, third person limited, and third person omniscient.

In my own words: _____

Protagonist: The protagonist is the main character in a story, novel, drama, or other literary work, the character that the reader or audience empathizes with. The character the story revolves around. Usually a "good" character, but not always.

In my own words: _____

Resolution: The point of closure- also called the conclusion or denouement- when the conflict is worked out- the end.

In my own words: _____



Rising Action: the series of action, or complications, that sets up the conflict for the main character of the story- in this part of the story tension builds, and the story works its way up to the climax.

In my own words: _____

Round: type of characterization when a character is complex. Characters that have many sides to them-good, bad, everything.

In my own words: _____

Setting: The setting of a story, poem, or play is the time and place of the action. Elements of setting may include geographic location, historical period (past, present, future), the season of the year, the time of day, and beliefs, customs and standards of society. The influence of setting on characters' decisions and actions may vary from work to work.

In my own words: _____

Simile: Comparison of two unlike things that have some quality in common. It uses like or as.

In my own words: _____

Static: a type of characterization where a character does not change at all during the story.

In my own words: _____



Symbol: A symbol is a person, a place, an object, or an action that stands for something beyond itself. The bald eagle, for example, is a symbol for the United States.

In my own words: _____

Theme: Message about human life or human nature that is conveyed by a literary work. A work usually has more than one theme. It is the story's central concept, or the controlling idea. The theme will make a statement about life, the human character, or can be a moral or lesson from the author.

In my own words: _____

Third Person LIMITED: The point of view when the story is told by someone who is not a character in the story and identifies the characters as "he," "she," or "them"- you don't find out anything more than can be seen, heard or know by an observer. Your information is limited.

In my own words: _____

Third Person OMNISCIENT: The point of view when the story is told by someone who is not a character in the story but can know everything about every character in the story- what they think, what they feel, as well as what they see and hear. The narrator is "all knowing."

In my own words: _____

Tone: The author's attitude toward the writing (his characters, the situation) and the readers. A work of writing can have more than one tone. An example of tone could be both serious and humorous. Tone is set by the setting, choice of vocabulary and other details.

In my own words: _____