**English 11 Literary Terms for Short Stories and Novel Studies**

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| **Term** | **Definition** |
| **character** | A person or animal in a story. |
| characteristics / traits | Things that make a character special or different. |
| characterization\* |  |
| protagonist | The main character in a story, usually a good person. |
| hero | A character in a story who does great things. |
| antagonist | A character who works against the protagonist. |
| static character | A character who does not seem to change. |
| dynamic character | A character who changes. |
| flat character | A character with very few character traits. |
| round character | A character with many character traits. |
| stereotyped character | A character who has traits, which are often associated with a group of people. |
| stock character\* | A kind of character whom appears in many stories and always has the same traits. |
| character foil | When the writer puts two characters with opposite traits together in the same story. |
| compare | When a writer talks about how two things are similar. |
| contrast | When a writer only talks about how two things are different. |
| **conflict** | A problem. |
| internal conflict | When a character is dealing with a problem inside his or her own mind. |
| external conflict | When a character has a problem with another person, society, or thing. |
| **genre** | A kind of story |
| fable | A short story, often with animals as characters, which teaches clear lessons. |

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| **Term** | **Definition** |
| legend\* | An old famous, traditional story that may have happened in real history, but cannot be confirmed. Legends tend to be based on heroic characters. |
| myth\* | An old, famous, traditional story with gods and monsters. A myth usually serves to convey symbolic meanings and cultural relevance. |
| mystery\* | Where a detective, either an amateur or a professional, solves a crime or a series of crimes. |
| fantasy\* | Writing with a plot that cannot occur in the real world. |
| **narrative** | A story. |
| narration | How a story is told. |
| narrator | The character who tells the story. |
| **point of view** | How a writer chooses to narrate a story. |
| first person point of view | When the narrator is a character in the story. |
| third person point of view | When the narrator is a character outside the story. |
| third person  omniscient point of view | When the narrator is a character outside the story AND the narrator knows everything about everyone. |
| third person limited omniscient point of view | When the narrator is a character outside the story BUT the narrator focuses on the story of only one character. |
| objective point of view | When the narrator uses words which give no opinions about the plot or characters. |
| subjective point of view\* | When the narrator uses words that state his/her opinions about the plot or characters. |
| **plot** | The events that happen in a story. |
| exposition / introduction | The first part of the plot, which tends to introduce characters, settings and background information. |
| rising action | The second part of a story after the exposition, which tends to introduce the conflict and essential information that allows the character to understand the conflict. |
| climax | The third part of a story; usually the most interesting part o the plot. |
| falling action | The fourth part of the plot after the climax, when many problems begin to be solved, order is restored. |
| resolution / denouement | The end of a story, when the problems are resolved, there is a sense of reconciliation and happiness. |
| anti-climax\* | When an exciting plot finishes with a disappointing or boring ending. |

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| **Term** | **Definition** |
| indeterminate ending\* | An ending that is open to interpretation to the reader. |
| surprise ending\* | An unexpected turn of events in a story or movie’s plot. |
| **presentation** | How a narrator presents a story and characters. |
| indirect presentation\* | When a narrator does not directly tell you about a plot or a character’s traits. |
| direct presentation\* | When a narrator directly tells you about a plot or a character’s traits. |
| description\* | When a narrator gives details about something. |
| dialogue | When a narrator gives the spoken words of other characters. |
| **setting** | The time and place of a story. |
| chronological order | What the writer tells a story by following a normal timeline. |
| flashback | When the writer tells a story by going backward and forward in time. |
| foreshadowing | When a narrator gives clues early in the story about what will happen later in the story. |
| **style\*** | A group of techniques, which a writer uses in his or her writing that makes him/her different from other writers. |
| stylistic technique\* | A special thing which a writer does in his or writing. |
| atmosphere\* | The feeling or emotion of a story. |
| voice\* | The writing style of an author. |
| active voice\* | When a sentence has a subject that does an action. |
| passive voice\* | When a sentence does not have a subject. |
| dialect\* | When the writer uses local language or words. |
| historical reference\* | When a narrator talks about a true event in history. |
| suspense | When you don’t know what will happen in a plot. |
| satire\* | When a writer makes fun of something by imitating it. |

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| **Term** | **Definition** |
| **theme** | The main ideas or lessons of a story, poem, or article. |
| epiphany\* | The moment in a story when a character learns an important lesson. |
| allegory\* | A story that can be interpreted or reveal a hidden meaning, typically a moral or political one. |
| epic\* | A story about a hero or about exciting events or adventures. |
| **irony** | When there is a strange or funny difference between what people think is happening, and what is truly happening. |
| dramatic irony | When the words and actions of the characters have a different meaning for the reader than they do for the characters. |
| verbal irony | When a person says or writes one thing and means another, or uses words to convey a meaning that is the opposite of the literal meaning. |
| situational irony | A situation in which actions have an effect that is opposite from what was intended, so that the outcome is contrary to what was expected. |