

Literary Terms Every 8th Grader Needs to Know Before Going to High School
You need to know the definition of and be able to identify each literary term

1. Protagonist: The leading character or a major character in a drama, movie, novel, or other fictional text
2. Antagonist: A person who actively opposes or is hostile to someone or something
3. Secondary characters: any character that is not a main character
4. Character
 - a. Dynamic character: a literary or dramatic character who undergoes an important inner change
 - b. Static character: a literary or dramatic character who undergoes little or no inner change
5. Irony: the contrast between what is and what should be
 - a. Dramatic Irony: the audience knows or understands something that the character or characters do not.
 - b. Situational Irony: the result of an action is the reverse of what is expected. The reader is just as surprised as the characters.
 - c. Verbal Irony: the contrast is between the literal meaning of what is said and what is meant. Also known as sarcasm.
6. Personification: inanimate objects take on human characteristics
7. Anthropomorphism: giving animals human qualities
8. Metaphor: comparing two unlike things
9. Simile: comparing two unlike things using "like" or "as"
10. Imagery: the picture that forms in the reader's mind as they read

11. Internal Characterization: the characteristics one cannot see, things like personality
12. External Characterization: the characteristics one can see
13. Allusion: making a reference to literature, art, history, or pop culture
14. Biblical Allusion: a reference to a character or story in the Bible
15. Plot: the main events of the story
16. Setting: the time and the place of the story
17. Exposition: contains the characters and setting
18. Climax: the turning point
19. Rising Action: the part of the story that builds interest
20. Falling Action: the part of the story that brings it to a close
21. Points of view
 - a. 1st person: the story is told from the point of view of one of the characters, uses I
 - b. 2nd person: the narrator addresses the reader, uses you
 - c. 3rd person: the narrator is not part of the story and does not know what the characters think and feel, uses he, she, they, them
 - d. 3rd person limited: the narrator is outside the story but reveals the thoughts of only one character
 - e. 3rd person omniscient: the narrator is outside the story and knows all the characters thoughts, feelings, why they act the way they do, can reveal any or all events
22. Denouement: the "tying together" of the plot
23. Resolution: the end of the story
24. Oxymoron: combining two things that do not go together

25. Idiom: an expression that has a figurative meaning that is completely different from its literal meaning
26. Symbolism: when something or someone represents something or someone else
27. Conflict: the struggle between two opposing forces that lies at the center of a plot in a story or a drama
28. Internal Conflict: a conflict that exists within a character torn between opposing feelings or goals
29. External Conflict: a conflict that exists when a character struggles against some outside force
30. Types of Conflict
- a. man vs. man
 - b. man vs. nature
 - c. man vs. society
 - d. man vs. self
31. Flashback: an interruption in the chronological narrative that tells about something in detail as it occurred that happened before that point in the story or before the story began
32. Foreshadowing: the use of clues by the author to prepare readers and build suspense by providing hints of what is to come
33. Catastrophe: when everything falls apart at the end of the story
34. Cliffhanger: a story that doesn't have a true ending, but leaves the reader waiting for more
35. Stereotype: traits, characteristics, and mannerisms supposedly shared by all members of a group
36. Theme: the main idea the author tries to get across to the reader
37. Universal: relating equally to everyone

38.Mood: the feeling of a piece of literature

39.Author's purpose: the reason the author wrote the story/piece of writing

40.Genre: type of literature

41.Parody: a humorous imitation of a serious piece of literature or writing

42.Narrator: the person telling the story

43. Hyperbole: figure of speech in which exaggeration is used to express strong emotion, make a point, or create humor