

Examinable Terms and Devices in Literature – English 9/10

Alliteration: Repetition of initial sounds

Allusion: A reference in one literary work to a character or theme in another literary work

Antagonist: A person in opposition to the protagonist

Aside: When a character makes a speech that is heard by the audience but not the other characters

Atmosphere: The mood that is established in a literary work

Ballad: A story in poetic form, often about tragic love and usually sung

Bias: Bias occurs when an author prejudices the audience in favour of one side of an issue by not covering the topic fairly.

Blank Verse: A poem written in unrhymed iambic pentameter.

Character: A person, or any thing presented as a person, e. g., a spirit, object, animal, or natural force, in a literary work.

Chronological Order: The order in which events happen in time.

Cliché: A type of figurative language containing an overused expression or a saying that is no longer considered original. (ex. quiet as a mouse.)

Climax: That point of greatest emotional intensity, interest, or suspense in a story

Comedy: A literary work that is amusing and ends happily

Colloquial: Refers to a type of informal diction that reflects casual, conversational language and often includes slang expressions

Compare: Identify similarities

Conflict: The tension or problem in the story; a struggle between opposing forces (ex. man vs. man, man vs. society). Can be internal or external.

Connotation: The idea and feeling associated with a word as opposed to its dictionary definition

Contrast: The process of pointing out differences between things

Denotation: The dictionary meaning of a word

Description: Any careful detailing of a person, place, thing, or event.

Dialogue: The conversation between characters in a story.

Direct Presentation: The writer tells readers what kind of personality the character possesses rather than allowing the character to show his or her personality and allow readers to draw their own conclusions.

Drama: A form of literature meant to be performed by actors before an audience

Dynamic character: A character that is changed by the events of the story

Exposition: The kind of writing that is intending primarily to present information; also, the portion of a literary work occurring at the beginning of a piece and functioning to introduce main characters and conflicts as well as provide any necessary background information.

Falling action: All of the action in a play that follows the turning point. The falling action leads to the resolution or conclusion of the play.

Figurative Language: Language that is not intended to be interpreted in a literal sense. Figurative language always makes use of a comparison between different things.

First person point of view: A character in the story is telling the story

Flashback: A scene in a short story, novel, play, or narrative poem that interrupts the action to show an event that happened at an earlier time.

Flat character: A character that is two-dimensional and not fully developed

Foil: A character that sets off another character by contrast. For example, having an angry character talking to a happy one.

Foreshadowing: The use of hints or clues in a narrative to suggest what action is to come; helps to build suspense in a story because it suggests what is about to happen.

Free Verse: Unrhymed Poetry with lines of varying lengths, and containing no specific metrical pattern.

Genre: A type or category of literature (ex. fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and drama)

Hyperbole: A figure of speech in which the truth is exaggerated for emphasis or humorous effect

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

Indirect presentation: The writer presents the character in action, allowing the reader to draw his or her own conclusions about the personality of that character.

Irony: A contrast between what is expected and what actually exists or happens. There are two types: 1) verbal irony, in which a writer or speaker says one thing and means something entirely different; and 2) dramatic irony in which a reader or audience member perceives something that a character in the story does not

Jargon: Jargon refers to words and phrases developed by a particular group to fit their own needs, which other people understand. (ex. medical terms)

Limited Omniscient point of view: Third person narrator who gives the reader access to the thoughts and feelings of one character, usually the protagonist

Lyric: A short poem wherein the poet expresses an emotion or illuminates some life principle

Metaphor: A comparison between two dissimilar objects. The comparison won't use any signal words, such as *like* or *as*.

Mood: The feeling that a literary work conveys to readers

Narration: The kind of writing or speaking that tells a story

Narrative: Poetry that tells a story

Narrator: One who tells a story.

Objective point of view: The third person narrator relates only what we can see and hear, *without* giving access to the thoughts and feelings of any of the characters.

Omniscient point of view: Third person narrator who tells everything that everyone says and does as well as what they think and feel.

Onomatopoeia: The use of words whose sound suggest their meaning (ex. buzz, bang, hiss).

Paradox: A statement that seems to contradict itself but is, nevertheless, true

Personification: A figure of speech where animals, ideas or inanimate objects are given human characteristics

Persuasion; persuasive: The type of speaking or writing that is intended to make its audience adopt a certain opinion or pursue an action or do both.

Plot: The sequence of events in a literary work; usually consists of exposition, complication (rising action), crisis, climax, falling action, and resolution.

Point of View: The narrative voice that the author creates to tell the story.

Propaganda: Text that uses false or misleading information to present a slanted point of view.

Protagonist: The hero or central character of a literary work

Refrain: Repetition in literature of one or more lines at regular intervals; sometimes called the chorus.

Resolution: The final stage in the plot where all the loose ends are tied up

Rhyme: The repetition of sounds in two or more words or phrases that usually appear close to each other in a poem. For example: river/shiver, song/long, leap/deep.

Rhyme scheme: The pattern of end rhymes in a poem

Rhythm: The arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables into a pattern

Rising Action: Those events in a play that lead to a turning point in the action

Round character: A character who is three-dimensional and multi-faceted

Sarcasm: The use of praise to mock someone or something; the use of mockery or verbal irony

Satire: A literary technique in which ideas or customs are ridiculed for the purpose of improving society

Setting: The time, place, physical details, and circumstances in which a story occurs.

Simile: A comparison between two otherwise unlike objects or ideas using the words "like" or "as."

Slang: The use of highly informal words and expressions that are not considered standard in the speaker's dialect or language.

Sonnet: A lyric poem of fourteen lines whose rhyme scheme is fixed. There are two styles: Italian and English

Speaker: The voice that talks to the reader in a poem, as the narrator does in a work of fiction.

Stanza: An arrangement or group of lines forming a unit of division of a poem

Static character: A character that remains the same throughout a story

Stereotyped character: A character that possesses one or two easily recognized and identified traits, which enable the observer to accurately predict behaviour and personality, i.e., the dumb blonde, and the scarred villain

Style: How a writer says something; many elements contribute to style, including word choice, sentence length, tone and figurative language

Suspense: A feeling of growing tension and excitement; raising questions in readers' minds about what might happen

Symbol; symbolism: A device in literature where an object represents an idea (ex. a dove may represent peace. The dove can be seen and peace cannot.)

Theme: The general meaning or insight of a literary work.

Tone: The speaker's attitude toward his or her subject matter; created through the choice of words and details

Tragedy: A literary work in which the central character meets an unhappy or disastrous end.

Understatement: A type of verbal irony whereby the speaker says less than what he or she means