

## 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Literary Terms

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**Allegory:** a story in which characters, events, and places stand for ideas, qualities, or other events. The overall purpose is to teach a moral lesson.

**Alliteration:** the repetition of the same consonant sound at the beginning of a word.  
Example: the repetition of b sounds in Keats's "beaded bubbles winking at the brim" ("Ode to a Nightingale") or Coleridge's "five miles meandering in a mazy motion" ("Kubla Khan").

**Allusion:** a reference to a well-known character, place, or situation from history, music, art, or another work of literature. The writer assumes the reader will recognize the reference.

**Ambiguity:** (1) a statement, which has two or more possible meanings; (2) a statement whose meaning is unclear.

**Analogy:** a comparison that shows similarities between two things that are otherwise unlike.  
Example: the analogy between the heart and a pump.

**Analyze:** to examine critically, carefully, and in detail

**Anaphora:** the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses or lines.

**Anecdote:** a short written or oral story of an event from a person's life. Often used to support opinions, clarify ideas, grab reader's attention, or entertain.

**Antagonist:** a character or force that goes against the main character (protagonist) and tries to stop him/her from achieving their goal.

**Argument:** a statement, reason, or fact for or against a point. Persuasive writing in which logic or reason is used to influence a reader's ideas or actions.

**Aside:** a character in a play makes a short speech, which is heard by the audience but not by other characters. The speaker does this by turning to one side, away from the action in the play.

**Assonance:** the repetition of vowel sounds, please-niece-ski-tree.

**Audience:** person reading or viewing the story or writing.

**Autobiography:** the story of a person's life written by himself or herself.

**Ballad:** a relatively short narrative poem, written to be sung, with a simple and dramatic action. The ballads tell of love, death, the supernatural, or a combination of these.

**Biography:** the story of a person's life written by someone other than the subject of the work.

**Blank Verse:** a poem written in unrhymed iambic pentameter.

**Cacophony/Euphony:** *Cacophony* is an unpleasant combination of sounds. *Euphony*, the opposite, is a pleasant combination of sounds. These sound effects can be used intentionally to create an effect, or they may appear unintentionally.

**Characterization:** the way an author presents characters. 1. *Direct or Explicit:* a character is described by the author or the narrator  
2. *Indirect or Implicit,* a character's traits are revealed by thoughts, actions, dialogue, or appearance.

**Chronological Order:** time order.

**Cliché:** an overused phrase.

**Climax:** turning point in the story. Determines the outcome of the conflict.

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**Comedy:** a type of drama that is humorous and typically has a happy ending.

**Compare:** to determine similarities between two elements.

**Consonance:** the repetition of consonant sounds, typically within or at the end of words that do not rhyme or have similar vowel sounds.  
Example: horror-hearer.

**Conflict:** conflict occurs when some person or force in the play opposes the protagonist.

**External Conflict:** a character struggles against an outside force.

Man vs. Man  
Man vs. Nature  
Man vs. Society

**Internal Conflict:** a character struggles against himself

Man vs. Himself

**Connotation:** the emotional response suggested by a word.

**Contrast:** two determine differences between two elements

**Couplet:** a stanza of two lines, usually rhyming.

**Denotation:** the “dictionary” definition of a word.

**Descriptive Paragraph:** writing that shows what a thing looks like, sounds like, smells like, and feels like, with many details.

**Dialect:** a variation of language by one group in one place.

**Denouement:** the unraveling and resolution of a problem in a story.

**Dialogue:** conversation between two or more people.

**Diction:** author’s choice of words.  
Example: slaughter vs. kill

**Dramatic Monologue:** a long speech given by a character in a play who is having a conversation with other characters

**Drama:** a play or story that is written to be acted out in front of an audience.

**Dramatic Irony:** the audience or reader knows information that other characters do not know

**Dynamic Character:** a character that changes throughout the story

**Essay:** writing that attempts to explain something from a personal point of view.

**Euphemism:** the substitution of a mild word or phrase for a word that would be considered undesirable because it is too direct, unpleasant, or offensive.

**Evaluate:** forming a personal judgment about an idea’s or a literary work’s value

**Exposition:** an author’s introduction of the characters, setting, and situation at the beginning of a story, novel, or play.

**Fable:** a brief tale designed to illustrate a moral lesson. Often the characters are animals as in the fables of Aesop.

**Falling Action:** the falling action is the series of Events that take place after the climax showing the results of the conflict.

**Fiction:** prose narrative based on imagination, usually the novel or the short story.

**Figurative Language:** words that mean more than their individual meanings and express truth beyond the literal level

**Figure of Speech:** an example of figurative language that states something that is not literally true in order to create an effect.

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**Flashback:** an interruption in the chronological order of a narrative to describe an earlier event.

**Foil:** a character opposite in personality to another character in the story. There is a strong contrast between the two characters' strengths and weaknesses.

**Foreboding:** hint that something bad will happen

**Foot:** the basic unit in the measurement of rhythm in poetry

**Foreshadowing:** an author's use of clues to prepare readers for events that will happen later in the story

**Free Verse:** unrhymed poetry with lines of varying lengths, and containing no specific metrical pattern

**Genre:** a category or type of literature.  
Example: tragedy, epic, comedy, novel, essay, biography, lyric poem

**Haiku:** Japanese poem, which consists of three lines: five syllables in the first and third lines, and seven syllables in the second line.

**Hyperbole:** a figure of speech that uses overstatement or exaggeration

**Iamb:** an iamb is a foot of meter. A foot has two syllables—one unstressed syllable followed by one stressed syllable.

**Imagery:** a word or group of words in a literary work, which appeal to one or more of the senses: sight, taste, touch, hearing, and smell

**Inference:** a judgment based on reasoning rather than on direct or explicit statement (reading between the lines).

**Irony:** a contrast or discrepancy between what is expected and what actually happens

**Lead:** the beginning or introduction of a piece of writing. The lead establishes the direction your writing will take and grabs the reader's attention.

**Local Color:** the use of specific details to re-create the language, customs, geography, and habits of a particular area

**Metaphor:** a figure of speech wherein a comparison is made between two unlike quantities without the use of the words "like" or "as."

**Mood:** the emotions that a reader feels while reading or viewing a literary work

**Motif:** a significant word, phrase, image, description, idea, or other element that is repeated throughout a literary work and is related to the theme

**Narrative Poem:** a poem, which tells a story.

**Narrative:** writing or speech that tells a story

**Nonfiction:** literature about real people, places, and events

**Novel:** a book-length fictional prose narrative

**Ode:** a poem in praise of something divine or expressing some noble idea.

**Onomatopoeia:** a literary device wherein the sound of a word echoes the sound it represents.

**Oxymoron:** a combination of contradictory terms. Example: jumbo shrimp

**Paradox:** a situation or a statement that seems to contradict itself, but on closer inspection, does not.

**Parallel Structure/Parallelism:** the repetition of a series of words, phrases, or sentences that have similar grammatical structure

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**Parody:** a humorous imitation of a literary work that aims to point out the work's shortcomings

**Personification:** a figure of speech in which something nonhuman is given human characteristics.

**Plot:** the structure of a story. The sequence in which the author arranges events in a story. (See diagram at end of packet.)

**Point-of-View:** the perspective from which the story is told.

- **First Person narrator** or "I."
- **Omniscient narrator** knows everything, may reveal the motivations, thoughts and feelings of the characters, and gives the reader information.
- **Limited-omniscient narrator**, the material is presented from the point of view of a character, in third person.
- **Objective narrator** presents the action and the characters' speech, without comment or emotion. The reader has to interpret them and uncover their meaning.

**Protagonist:** the hero or central character of a literary work.

**Pun:** a play on words wherein a word is used to convey two meanings at the same time.

**Repetition:** the reoccurrence of sounds, words, phrases, lines, or stanzas in a speech or literary work

**Resolution:** the part of a story or drama which occurs after the climax and which establishes a new norm, a new state of affairs-the way things are going to be from then on.

**Rhyme:** in poetry, a pattern of repeated sounds.

**Rhyme Scheme:** the pattern of rhymed words in a stanza or generalized throughout a poem, expressed in alphabetic terms.

**Rhythm:** recurrences of stressed and unstressed syllables at equal intervals, similar to meter.

**Rising Action:** the part of a drama, which begins with the exposition and sets the stage for the climax.

**Sarcasm:** *see verbal irony*

**Satire:** a piece of literature designed to ridicule the subject of the work.

**Setting:** the time and place in which a story unfolds.

**Short Story:** a short fictional narrative.

**Simile:** a figure of speech which takes the form of a comparison between two unlike quantities for which a basis for comparison can be found, and which uses the words "like", "as", or "*than*" in the comparison.

**Situational Irony:** the outcome of a situation is the opposite of what is expected

**Soliloquy:** in drama, a moment when a character is alone and speaks his or her thoughts aloud. In the line "To be, or not to be, that is the question:"

**Sonnet:** a lyric poem of fourteen lines whose rhyme scheme is fixed. ABABCDCDEFEFGG

**Stanza:** a major subdivision in a poem.

**Static Character:** a character who remains the same throughout the narrative

**Stereotype:** a generalization about a group of people that is made without regard for individual differences (usually a flat character)

**Style:** the expressive qualities that distinguish an author's work, including word choice, sentence structure, and figures of speech

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**Suspense:** a feeling of curiosity, uncertainty, or even dread about what is going to happen in a story

**Symbol/Symbolism:** any person, animal, place, object, or event that exists on a literal level within a work but also represents something on a figurative level. Something that stands for something else.

Example: the American flag symbolizes freedom

**Theme:** the main idea or message of a story, poem, novel, or play often expressed as a general statement about life.

**Tone:** tone expresses the author's attitude toward his or her subject.

**Tragedy:** according to A. C. Bradley, a tragedy is a type of drama, which is pre-eminently the story of one person, the hero. "Romeo and Juliet" and "Antony and Cleopatra" depart from this, however, and we may view both characters in each play as one protagonist. The story depicts the trouble part of the hero's life in which a total reversal of fortune comes upon a person who formerly stood in high degree, apparently secure, sometimes even happy.

**Transitions:** connecting words needed between paragraphs in writing.

**Understatement:** a statement, which lessens or minimizes the importance of what is meant.

**Verbal Irony:** a person says one thing and means another (sarcasm)

### **Plot Structure Diagram**

