

Literary Elements and Techniques Cheat Sheet

Characterization: the methods an author uses to develop the qualities and personalities of persons in a story. Characterization can involve developing a variety of aspects of a character, such as appearance, age, gender, educational level, vocation or occupation, financial status, marital status, social status, hobbies, religious beliefs, ambitions or motivations.

Climax: the turning point of action, the moment when interest and intensity have reached their peak.

Conflict: the "problem" in the story, which triggers the action.

- Man vs. Man
- Man vs. Society
- Man vs. Himself
- Man vs. Nature
- Man vs. Fate (God)

Dialogue: the written conversation between two or more characters.

Foreshadowing: a suggestion of what is to come later in a work by giving hints and clues.

Genre: refers to the form or type of a particular piece of literature.

Imagery: this is used to describe the words or phrases which bring forth a certain picture or image in the mind of the reader. Imagery appeals to the senses- what can be seen, heard, felt, etc.

Irony: the difference between what appears to be and what really is.

Mood: the feeling or atmosphere the writer creates for the reader.

Plot: It is the action of the story. A series of related events selected by the author to present and bring about the resolution of some conflict or problem.

Point of View: the author's choice of narrator for the story.

- First Person: the narrator is a character in the story who can reveal only his own thoughts or feelings ("I" is used).
- Third Person: the narrator is all-knowing. ("You," "He," "She")

Repetition: the repeating of a word or phrase within literature to create a rhythm or make a point.

Setting: the time and place in which the action of a literary work takes place.

Suspense: Writers often "hook" readers by creating a sense of excitement, tension, dread, or fear about what will happen next.

Symbol: something concrete, like an object, person, place or action that stands for something more abstract, like an idea, a feeling, or emotion.

Theme: main idea or message in a work of literature. This message is usually about life, society or human nature

Tone: the attitude a writer takes toward a subject.