**Middle School Literary Terms**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **WORD** | **DEFINITION** |
| allusion | A figure of speech that refers to a well-known object or thing. |
| antagonist | The villain of the story. |
| biography | A form of non-fiction in which a writer tells the life story of another person. |
| character trait  (characterization) | The quality of the character; what the character is like. |
| climax | The highest point of action, often the turning point |
| conflict (internal/external) | An **external conflict** is against opposing forces or characters,  **Internal conflict** happens in the mind. |
| description | The kinds of writing that creates a clear image of something, usually by using details that appeal to one or more of our senses. |
| dialogue | Speech between characters. |
| direct characterization | The writer directly states the character's traits or characteristics. |
| dramatic irony | When a character or speaker says or does something that has  different meaning from what he or she thinks it means, though the audience and   other characters understand the full implications: e.g., Anne Frank looks forward to  growing up, but we, as readers, know that it will never be. |
| dynamic character | A character who changes over a course of story. |
| end rhyme | The rhyme that occurs at the end of the rhyme. |
| essay | A short piece of writing usually told by the author. |
| fable | A brief story, usually with animal characters, that teaches a lesson or a moral. |
| fiction | Writing that tells about imaginary characters and events. |
| figure of speech | A word or phrase that describes one thing in terms of something else that's different from it. |
| flashback | The sudden moment when memories come back to a character. |
| foreshadowing | The use of clues to suggest events that will happen later in the story. |
| free-verse | Poetry that has irregular lines and may or ma not rhyme. |
| generalization | A vague or indefinite statement that is made to cover many cases. Example, “All human beings hope for something” |
| imagery | The words or phrases a writer uses that appeal to the senses. |
| indirect characterization | The writer allows the reader to draw his/her conclusions as to what the character is like, based on the appearances, words, actions, and interactions with other characters. |
| inference | A conclusion drawn by the reader based on available information. |
| mood | The character's attitude and emotions. |
| moral | A lesson taught by a literary work. |
| motivation | A reason that explains or partially explains a character’s thoughts, feelings, actions or speech. |
| narrative | Writing or speech that tells a story. |
| narrator | The speaker or character who is telling the story. |
| non-fiction | Writing that tells about real people, places, objects, or events. |
| novella | A piece of writing that has more depth then a short story, but is smaller than a novel. |
| objective details | Details that are factual and true to life. |
| parable | A short tale that illustrates a universal truth, a belief, that appeals to all people of all civilizations. |
| paradox | Occurs when the elements of a statement contradict each other. Although the statement may appear illogical, impossible, or absurd, it turns out to have a coherent meaning that reveals a hidden truth: e.g., “Much madness id divinest sense.” |
| plot | What happens in a story. |
| point of view | When a character sees something from their perspective.  1st- The events are told by a character in the story.  3rd- The events are told by someone outside the story. |
| protagonist | The hero or usually main character of the story. |
| repetition | The repeated use of words or phrases in order to emphasize a point. |
| resolution | The events that occur in the falling action of a story’s plot. |
| rhetoric | The art of using words to persuade in writing or speaking |
| rhyme | The accented vowel sounds of all sounds following them are separated. |
| rhyme scheme | Patterns of rhymes in a poem. |
| satire | A literary work in which human vice or folly is attacked through irony, derision, or wit. |
| setting | The time and place where the story happens. |
| situational irony | When a situation turns out differently from what one would normally expect; often the twist is oddly appropriate: e.g., a deep sea diver drowning in a bathtub is ironic. |
| short story | A small piece of writing that has little depth. |
| speaker | The imaginary voice assumed by the writer of a poem, the one describing the events in a poem. |
| static character | A character who does NOT undergo a change over the course of a story. |
| stanza | A group of lines in a poem. |
| subject | What the story or poem is about (the topic) |
| subjective details | Details that reveal the author’s feelings, attitudes, or judgements. |
| suspense | The anxiety that we feel about what will happen next in a story. |
| symbol | Any object, person, place, or action that has both a meaning in itself and that stands for something larger than itself, such as a quality, attitude, belief, or value: e.g., a tortoise represents slow but steady progress. |
| theme | The central message of a literary work. It is expressed as a sentence or general statement about life or human nature. A literary work can have more than one theme, and most themes are not directly stated but are implied: e.g., pride often precedes a fall. |
| tone | The writer’s or speaker’s attitude toward a subject, character, or audience; it is conveyed through the author’s choice of words (diction) and details. Tone can be serious, humorous, sarcastic, indignant, etc. |
| verbal irony | When a speaker or narrator says one thing while meaning the opposite; sarcasm is a form or verbal irony: e.g., “It is easy to stop smoking. I’ve done it many times.” |