

Provincial Exam Preparation Guide

List of Terms to Know for the Exam

A

- Accent** – the emphasis or stress placed on a certain syllable in a foot of poetry.
- Allegory** – a method of representation in which a person, abstract idea, or event stands for itself **and** for something else.
- Alliteration** – the repetition of initial consonant sounds.
- Allusion** – in a work of literature, is a brief reference, explicit or indirect, to a person, place, event or to another literary work or passage. The writer expects the reader to recognise the reference. Generally, there are four types of allusion; **historical** (he met his Waterloo), **mythological** (to have an Achilles’ heel), **literary** (Steinbeck’s title *Of Mice and Men*), and **Biblical** (a „Daniel came to judgement“).
- Analogy** – a partial similarity of features on which a comparison may be based. Metaphors, similes and personification are forms of analogy
- Anecdote** – in writing, an anecdote is a short narrative episode, usually included to introduce a subject or to make a point.
- Anthem** – a hymn of praise, patriotism, or devotion.
- Antihero** – a character who lacks the qualities needed for heroism. He/she is not noble in life or mind and does not have an attitude marked by high purpose or lofty aims.
- Antagonist** – the antagonist is the major character or force that opposes the protagonist
- Anticlimax** – this is an event or conclusion that is an abrupt shift from the important to the comical or trivial.
- Antithesis** – a figure of speech in which contrary ideas are expressed in a balanced phrase: “Man proposes, God disposes”.
- Apostrophe** – a figure of speech in which a person not present or a personified non-human object is addressed (spoken to). An apostrophe contains an Old English “thou”, “thy”, or “thee” and has within it an exclamation mark. For example, Shakespeare’s Hamlet has the following apostrophe: “Frailty, thy name is woman!”
- Archaism** – from the earlier times; no longer in use. A word or expression no longer in general use. e.g. “Me thinks” is an archaism meaning it seems to me.
- Argument** – a form of prose in which the writer’s purpose is to influence the reader to accept a particular side of a debatable issue. It is one of the four basic forms of prose, the other being exposition, narration and description.
- Aside** – a stage convention used to indicate words spoken by a character but heard only by the audience and not by other characters on stage.
- Assonance** – the repetition of internal vowel sounds in words.
- Atmosphere** – the atmosphere is the prevailing feeling that is created in a story. The atmosphere usually sets up the reader’s expectations about the ending or outcome of the plot. Atmosphere is usually created through the dialogue and the imagery.
- Audience** – in writing, the particular individual or group that a work seems to address or appeal to.

B

- Balance** – in a sentence, the balancing of clauses that are similar in structure. This rhetorical device is usually used to emphasize contrasting or similar ideas.
- Ballad** – a narrative song handed down in oral tradition, or a written poem that imitates the traditional ballad, essentially narrating a story in poetic form.

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- **Blank Verse** – poetry that lacks rhyme but has a very specific meter or rhythm called iambic pentameter. It has a special name because it is the principal English meter, including the tragedies of Shakespeare.

C

- **Cacophony** – a discordant mixture of harsh, unpleasant sounds.
- **Cadence** – the rhythmic flow, or sequence of sounds in writing and speaking. Cadence suggests the particular rhythm of prose and free verse. It is a convenient overall term to designate the measured repetition of emphasis and accent in writing, which is not altogether metrical (as in poetry).
- **Carpe Diem** – a Latin phrase meaning „seize the day.“ The speaker in a carpe diem poem emphasises that life is short and time is fleeting, and therefore urges making the most of present pleasures.
- **Cause-Effect** – a type of prose that has as its purpose to show cause-effect relationship between ideas or events.
- **Character** - this is a term used to describe the fictional persons who carry out the action a story. It also refers to the personality and moral attitudes of a fictional person. Characters may be classified as any of the following:
 - **Dynamic/Developing Character:** this character, often the protagonist, undergoes a significant, lasting change, usually in his or her outlook on life.
 - **Static Character:** this is a character that does not change in the course of a story. Often protagonists who are static characters fail to achieve their goals or are defeated by their unwillingness to change or adapt.
 - **Round Character:** a round character is a realistic character having several sides to his/her nature
 - **Flat Character:** this is a limited character; usually a minor character who has only one apparent quality.
 - **Stock Character:** the stereotyped figure who has occurred so often in fiction that his/her nature is immediately known.
 - e.g. the strong, silent sheriff, the brilliant detective, the mad scientist
 - **Character Foil:** a character foil is a character whose behaviour, attitudes and opinions are in contrast to those of the protagonist. He/she helps the reader to understand better the character of the protagonist.
- **Characterization** – this is a method of presenting the special qualities or features of a character in a literary work.
 - *direct characterization:* this is character revelation through the author’s or narrator’s comments
 - *indirect characterization:* this is character revelation through what the character says, does, thinks, and how he reacts. The reader is left to infer from these details what the character is like.
- **Character Sketch** – a description of a character’s moral and personality qualities, written in paragraph form and with specific examples and quotations from the story. It does not normally describe the character’s physical appearance or dress.

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- Chorus** – a group of singers and dancers who participate in dramatic performances and comment on the deeds of characters and interpret the significance of events for the audience.
- Chronological** – organized according to time; in order of occurrence.
- Cliché** – a trite or overused expression or idea. i.e. cold as ice.
- Coherence** – a basic principal of writing that asserts that the parts of an essay must relate to each other clearly and logically. Coherence differs from unity in that unity refers to each part relating to the central theme or idea.
- Coincidence** – relying on chance or coincidence too heavily can result in plot manipulation, giving the story a turn unjustified by the situation or the characters involved.
- Colloquial Language** – suited to spoken language or to informal writing, unique expressions which cannot often be literally translated. i.e. He really ticks me off. This is accepted in informal conversation but not in formal writing. Falls between proper English and slang.
- Comic Relief** – a humorous scene, incident, or remark within an essentially serious or even tragic drama. It evokes laughter as a release from the tension of the serious action and follows scenes of intense emotion.
- Concealment** – this is a dramatic convention that allows a character to be seen by the audience, but he remains hidden from fellow actors. This convention shows the differing perceptions of the various actors.
- Confidant or Confidante** – a trusted friend of the protagonist who shares his or her thoughts, feelings and intentions.
- Conflict** – see Plot.
- Connotation** – the emotional suggestions attached to words beyond their strict definition.
- Consonance** – the repetitions of internal consonant sounds in words.
- Contrast or Juxtaposition** – refers to the overlap or mixing of opposite or different situations, characters, settings, moods, or points of view in order to clarify meaning, purpose, or character, or to heighten certain moods, especially humour, horror, and suspense.
- Couplet** – two lines, one following the other, which rhyme.

D

- Denotation** – the dictionary meaning of words.
- Denouement** – see Plot
- Dialect** – a form of speech characteristic of a particular geographic region, social class, or a people.
- Dialogue** – a conversation including two or more characters in a story is a dialogue. Often used to reveal character and conflict.
- Diction** – a style of speaking or writing resulting from a *deliberate choice and arrangement of words in a story*. Each writer uses diction appropriate to his or her purpose, subject, story type, characters, and style.
- Dilemma** – a situation in which a character must make a difficult choice between two disagreeable, undesirable, or unfavourable alternatives. Dilemma is one method by which an author can generate suspense in a story.
- Dissonance** – a harsh, disagreeable combination of sounds.

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- **Double Rhyme** – a rhyme of two syllables; the second is unstressed, such as in „motion notion“. An example of double rhyme appears in these lines by Ogden Nash: “Candy is dandy, but liquor is quicker.”
- **Dramatic Conventions** – these are techniques that substitute for reality. These techniques give the audience information they could not glean from a straightforward presentation of action. Conventions must be realistic enough that the audience can experience “that willing suspension of disbelief” as essential to drama. (See concealment, soliloquy and aside).
- **Dramatic Monologue** – a poetic form in which a single character, speaking to a silent listener at a critical moment, reveals both a dramatic situation and his/her own character.
- **Dramatic Purpose** – playwrights have a specific intention with every action they portray, such as to entertain, enlighten, develop theme, reveal character. In well-written plays, everything has a purpose.
- **Dynamic Character** – see character.

E

- **Elegy** – a mournful, melancholy poem, especially a song of lament for the dead.
- **End Rhyme** – rhyme which comes at the ends of lines.
- **Endings** – the resolutions of stories may be classified as follows:
 - **Happy Ending** – The protagonist is successful in achieving his/her goals.
 - **Sad Ending** – the protagonist is unsuccessful in achieving his/her goals and might be destroyed emotionally, financially or physically.
 - **Indeterminate Ending** – A story ending in which there is no clear outcome or result.
 - **Surprise Ending** – This is the sudden twist in the direction of a story, producing a conclusion which surprises the reader and often the story’s characters as well. This ending is foreshadowed by unanticipated.
 - **Full Circle** – this is the type of story which begins and ends in the same situation or place.
- **Epic** – a lengthy, narrative poem in which action, characters and language are on a heroic level and style is exalted and even majestic.
- **Epigram** – a witty, ingenious and pointed saying that is expressed tersely.
- **Epiphany** – a moment of significant realization which happens to the main character, usually at the end of the story.
- **Epitaph** – a brief poem or other form of writing praising a deceased person; a commemorative inscription on a tomb or monument.
- **Episode** – an incident or single set of events within the main plot of the story.
- **Escapist Fiction** – this refers to a type of fiction which is designed to help the reader „escape“ the daily cares and problems of reality. Escapist fiction has lively, melodramatic plots and stereotyped or flat characters, and requires limited involvement on the part of the reader. Most commercial science fiction, westerns and romances would fall into the category of escapist fiction. See also interpretive fiction.
- **Eulogy** – a speech in praise of someone who died.
- **Euphemism** – the substitution of a mild, indirect, or vague term for a harsh or offensive reality. e.g. Using “He passed away” instead of “he died”.
- **Exposition** – see Plot.

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- **Extended Metaphor** – this is an implied comparison between two things which are essentially not alike. These points of comparison are continued throughout the selection so that the comparison becomes an analogy. (see also analogy.)

F

- **Fable** – a short narrative making a point and often employing animal characters that act like human beings.
- **Falling Action** – see Plot.
- **Fantasy** – a highly exaggerated or improbable story. As a rule, events, characters and settings in a fantasy would not be possible or found in real life.
- **Faulty Logic** – doesn't follow a logical sequence.
- **Feminine Rhyme** – a rhyme extending over two or more syllables, in which stressed rhyming syllables, as in „sister“ and „blister“.
- **Figurative Language** – language used in such a way as to force words out of their literal meanings and, by emphasising their connotations, to bring new insight and feeling to the subject desired. (i.e. figures of speech, such as simile, metaphor and personification).
- **Fiction** – any narrative which is imagined and invented rather than historically or factually true. It includes novels as well as short stories.
- **Flashback** – a plot device which shifts the story from the present to the past, usually done in order to illustrate an important point or to reveal a change in character.
- **Flat Character** – see Character.
- **Foot** – a group of syllables constituting a metrical unit of verse, a set pattern of stressed and unstressed sounds.
- **Foreshadowing** – gives a hint of what is to happen later in the story. It prepares the reader for the climax, the resolution and for changes, or lack of changes, in character's attitudes.
- **Free Verse** – verse that lacks regular meter and line length but relies upon natural rhythms. Free verse is “free” from fixed metrical patterns, but does reveal the cadences that result from alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables.

H

- **Haiku** – a form of Japanese verse containing three lines.
- **Hero or Heroine** – the principal male or female character in a story who possesses heroic qualities or virtues. The terms “hero” and “heroine” are *not* interchangeable with the more general term “protagonist”.
- **Hyperbole** – this is exaggeration in the service of truth. This is also called an overstatement. If you say, “I'm starved” you do not literally expect to be believed; you are merely adding emphasis to what you really mean.

I

- **Imagery** – language which appeals to the senses and creates a mental image. It is something seen in the “mind's eye”. Visual imagery is the most common, but an image may also represent a sound, a smell, a taste or a tactile experience, such as cold, hunger, etc.

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- **Images** – images are concrete details and figures of speech that help the reader to form vivid sense impressions of what is being described.
- **Imperfect Rhyme** – resemblance in the sound of words that is not exact, as in „move“ and „love“.
- **Inference** – a conclusion drawn from facts that have been presented or statements that have been made.
- **Internal Rhyme** – rhyme which comes within lines.
- **Interpretive Fiction** – This refers to stories which have meaningful, usually realistic plots, conflicts, settings and characters. Interpretive fiction is usually serious in tone and is designed to “interpret” or make the reader more aware of, some aspect of reality or human nature. It is instructive, unlike escapist fiction, which is designed chiefly for entertainment.
- **Irony** – a literary device which reveals concealed or contradictory meaning. There are three forms:
 - **Dramatic Irony** – this irony occurs when the author shares with the reader information not know by a character. As a result, the reader becomes aware that a character’s actions may be inappropriate for the actual circumstances, that what is to come is the reverse of what a character expect, or that a character has unknowingly made a comment which anticipates the outcome.
 - **Irony of Situation or Situational Irony** – this occurs when a set of circumstances turn out differently from what was expected or considered appropriate.
 - **Verbal Irony** – this occurs when a contrast is evident between what a character says and what that character actually means. Usually the opposite is stated for emphasis. See also sarcasm, which is not quite the same.

J

- **Jingle** – a piece of verse that repeats sounds, contains numerous rhymes and frequently is humorous, light-hearted and nonsensical.
- **Juxtaposition** – see Contrast.

L

- **Limerick** – a form or light verse, a stanza of five lines rhyming *aabba*.
- **Literal Language** – what is said is based exactly in reality without the comparisons used in figurative language.
- **Litotes** – a form of understatement in which something is affirmed by stating the negative of its opposite. Litotes, from a Greek work meaning „small“ or „plain,“ is an antonym of hyperbole. To say that a person is „no amateur“ affirms the speaker’s belief that he is a professional.
- **Local Colour** – the use of specific regional detail in order to increase atmosphere or reader interest and a sense of setting. Local colour includes descriptions of locale, dress and customs as well as dialect and ways of thinking and feeling characteristic of people in that region.
- **Lyric** – any short poem intended mainly to express a state of mind or feeling.

M

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- Masculine Rhyme** – a rhyme in polysyllabic words in which the final syllables rhyme: all monosyllabic rhyming words (such as „mouse“, „house“) represent masculine rhyme.
- Memoir** – an account of an author’s personal experiences, an autobiography.
- Metaphor** – a comparison between two things which are essentially dissimilar. The comparison is implied rather than directly stated.
- Meter** - any regular pattern of rhythm. Shakespeare wrote in iambic pentameter.
- Metonymy** – use of a closely related idea for the idea itself. “ The kettle is boiling” – really means the water in the kettle boils, not the kettle itself. “The pen is mightier than the sword” meaning words are more powerful than violence and also “the bottle” may refer to strong drink.
- Mood** – see Atmosphere.
- Moral** – the implied or stated lesson of a story is called the moral. Viewed in isolation, a moral is a relatively unimportant part of a story and should not be confused with a more significant fictional element, the theme.
- Motivation** – this is what causes a character to do what he or she does. Circumstances and temperament usually determine the actions of a character; however, characters must also have sufficient and plausible motivation in order for a reader to find a story realistic or effective.
- Mystery Story or Whodunit** – this is a suspense story which contains a crime and a solution by a detective. Good mysteries contain intrigues plots and „red herrings“ or false clues or suspects.

N

- Narrative** – this is another word for story. Narratives have the following elements: plot, conflict, characters, setting, point of view and theme. Narratives may be fictional or non-fictional, and include novels and (auto)biographies as well as short stories and anecdotes.

O

- Octave** – an eight line stanza or the first eight lines in an Italian or Petrarchan sonnet.
- Ode** – a form of lyric poem with a dignified theme that is phrased in a formal, elevated style and is usually a statement of praise for someone.
- Onomatopoeia** – the use of words which sound like what they mean. Sizzle sounds like bacon in a frying pan.
- Oxymoron** – two words placed close together that are contradictory yet have truth in them i.e. Jumbo Shrimp, pretty awful.

P

- Parable** - a usually short fictitious story that illustrates a moral attitude or a religious principle. *For example*, the father told his children a *parable* about the importance of forgiveness.
- Paradox** – this is a statement in which there is an apparent contradiction which is actually true.
- Paraphrase** – the rewording of a passage giving the meaning in another form.

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- **Parody** – a literary work that imitates the characteristic style of an author or work for comic effect or ridicule; a humorous, satirical or off-beat imitation of a person, event or serious work of literature.
- **Pathos** – this is taken from the Greek root word for suffering or deep feeling. It occurs when the audience experiences the emotions of pity, tenderness or sorrow.
- **Pentameter** – a line of five metrical feet. Pentameter, from Greek words meaning „five“ and „measure“, is more widely used in poetry in English than any other length of line.
- **Persona** – a mask or identity a writer adopts and presents as the suggested speaker in a particular work.
- **Personification** – giving the attributes of a human being to an animal, an object or an idea. It is really a subtype of metaphor, implying a comparison between two dissimilar things.
- **Plot** – The storyline or organization of incidents in a story is called the plot. It consists of episodes and conflict. Plots usually have rising and falling action. See below:
 - **Rising Action** – consists of the events preceding the climax. During this stage of the story, background information is given, conflicts are introduced, and suspense is built up. There may even be moments of crisis. Because it accomplishes so much, the rising action is always longer than the falling actions of a story.
 - **Exposition and Antecedent Action or Introduction** – the background information provided by the author to further the plot, conflict, setting and characterization is called exposition. Antecedent action is the significant action which has taken place before the story actually begins.
 - **Inciting Force or Initial Incident or Activating Circumstance** – this is the incident that initiates or begins the main conflict of the story.
 - **Complication or Conflict** – a conflict is a struggle between opposing characters or forces, usually between the protagonist and someone or something else. All conflicts are either external (physical) or internal (emotional, moral, psychological). There are three main conflicts discussed below:
 - **Person versus Environment** – this is a conflict between a character and his or her environment, whether this is nature, society or circumstances.
 - **Person versus Person** – this is a conflict between two characters. The struggle may be physical, emotional, moral or psychological
 - **Person versus Self** – the character experiences a conflict in emotion or thought.
 - **Crisis** – the crisis is a moment of intense conflict leading up to the climax.
 - **Falling Action or Conclusion** – the part of a story immediately following a climax and lasting until the end of the story is the falling action.
 - **Resolution** – the solving of all of the conflicts in the story.
 - **Denouement** – (day-NEW-mah) is a French term to describe the „unknotting“ of plot or conflict following a climax. The final episode or incident in which the unexplained facts are finally revealed. There is also an element of foreshadowing for the future, beyond the end of the story.
- **Poem** – a composition in verse that is characterized by a highly developed artistic form, the use of rhythm, and the employment of heightened language to express an imaginative interpretation of a situation or idea.
- **Poetic License** – liberty taken by a poet to produce a desired effect by deviating from conventional rules of syntax, spelling, capitalisation, punctuation and so on.

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- **Point of View** – as applied to fiction, this term describes the vantage points from which the author relates the story. There are four points of view:
 - **First Person** – features the protagonist telling his or her own story directly to the reader using the first person (I, me my, we, us, our) pronouns. This point of view tells us what the main character thinks and feels from a vantage point „inside“ the story and the protagonist him or herself.
 - **Objective** – the narrator is similar to a television camera in that he/she only reports what is seen and heard without entering the minds of characters or presenting the author’s ideas and observations.
 - **Omniscient** – this narrator reveals the minds of several or all characters, knowing and telling all from an all-seeing, God-like perspective „outside“ the story. D) **Limited Omniscient** – this refers to the main character as „he“ or „she“ and shows us only what one character thinks and feels, but from the perspective of someone „outside“ the story.
- **Prologue** – this is an introductory speech preceding the action of a play or scene.
- **Prose** – this is the language of everyday conversation and the language of paragraphs and most books. It does not have even rhythm the way much poetry does. Prose and poetry often overlap in characteristics, but prose is less controlled by obligations to patters of rhythm, free of concerns with versification, and obligated to adhere to the conventions of a sentence structure.
- **Protagonist** – The main character in a story. While some protagonists may be heroes or heroines, more typically they are like people we meet in real life: they have a mixture of characteristics, some of which may be weaknesses.
- **Pun** – this is a play on words in which a word or phrase can be taken to mean more than one thing. E.g. One berry to another; if you hadn’t been so fresh, we wouldn’t be in this jam.
- **Punster** – a person fond of making puns
- **Purpose** – the author may have one or more purposes in a piece of work, such as to inform, satirize, criticize, persuade, entertain or argue.

Q

- **Quatrain** – a stanza of four lines. The quatrain in the most common stanzaic form of poetry written in English. Shakespearean sonnets contain three quatrains and a couplet.

R

- **Refrain** – a line, or part of a line, or a group of lines which is repeated in the course of a poem, sometimes with slight changes, and usually at the end of each stanza.
- **Repetition** – the repeated use of key words, phrases, stanzas or sounds in a poem.
- **Resolution** – see Plot.
- **Rhetoric** – the art of expressing ideas effectively. Rhetoric embraces the rules of good writing and speaking, but goes beyond mere correctness by being concerned with such areas as word choice, arrangement of ideas, paragraphing and organization. It is more than expressing ideas clearly; it is the use of principles to express those ideas as

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effectively as possible. On another secondary level, rhetoric refers to writing which is intended to influence or persuade.

- **Rhyme** – similarity of sound in words. Two words rhyme when their accented vowels and all succeeding sounds are identical.
- **Rhyme Scheme** – any pattern of rhymes in poetry. Each new sound is assigned the next letter in the alphabet. The rhyme scheme for a Shakespearean sonnet is **abab cdcd efef gg**.
- **Rhythm** – a series of stressed or accented syllables in a group of words, arranged so that the reader expects a similar series to follow.
- **Rising Action** – see Plot.
- **Round Character** – see Character.

S

- **Sarcasm** – when the opposite of what is meant is stated in order to intentionally hurt someone's feelings. See also Verbal Irony.
- **Satire** – the ridicule of an idea, person, or type sometimes in order to provoke change. Satire usually mocks human vices or foibles.
- **Scene** – A unit of dramatic action in which a single point is made.
- **Science Fiction** – this is imaginative writing which speculates about the effect of technology, science and the future on human beings. Some science fiction is light and intended mostly as escapist entertainment, while another type of science fiction is more thoughtful, serious-minded and interpretive in its purpose.
- **Sentimentality** – the quality in a story which aims at drawing forth unmerited tender feeling, faked emotion.
- **Sestet** – the last six lines of an Italian sonnet; any stanza of six lines.
- **Setting** – setting is most often considered to mean **the time and place** in which a story is placed; however, equally important aspects are the **social environment** or values generally shared by the society, the **minor characters** who form a realistic backdrop with which the main characters must act and react. Finally, setting also includes **atmosphere** or mood which descriptive details create.
- **Short Story** – A brief, fictional prose narrative, usually having one main character, a single plot, a limited number of settings, a basis in truth (life-likeness), and one main effect to which every detail must contribute. It can be read in one sitting, derives its power from the fact that the writer has to select details for economy and emphasis, leaves the reader with a feeling of satisfaction and „finality“, desiring no further completion or alternative ending.
- **Simile** – a comparison between two things which are essentially dissimilar. The comparison is directly stated through words such as *like, as, than, similar to* or *resembles*.
- **Slang** – the kind of language especially occurring in casual and playful speech, often characterized by expressions which are short lived.
- **Soliloquy** – the utterance of a character who is talking to himself or herself and who is unaware of any hearers who may be present. It is used in drama to allow the audience insight into a character's innermost feeling or to give the audience essential information.

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- **Sonnet** – a fourteen-line poem following a strict rhyme scheme and meter. The Shakespearean sonnet was **rhymed abab cdcd efef gg** and used **iambic pentameter**. The Italian or Petrarchan sonnet was rhymed.
- **Stanza** – Essentially a unit of lines in a poem, identifiable by spacing.
- **Stream-of-Consciousness** – a modern technique for depicting thoughts and feeling of a character in an apparently natural way without logic or interruption. The author using stream-of-consciousness deliberately includes important details relevant to plot, character and theme in the stream-of-consciousness.
- **Style** – Style is the individual manner in which an author expresses his or her thoughts and feelings. In fiction, style is basically determined by such grammatical and sensory aspects as diction, sentences and images. Some stylistic devices are repetition, rhetorical questions, descriptive language, parallel construction, exaggeration, sentence fragments and dialogue.
- **Subject Matter** – the topic and basic ideas expressed in a work. Subject matter includes the topic, thesis, subordinate points, and supporting details. The arrangement of these ideas is embraced in the term '**structure**'.
- **Subplot** – a subplot is a minor storyline, secondary to the main plot. Subplots may be related or unrelated to the main plot.
- **Suspense** – the feeling of anxiety and uncertainty experienced by the reader about the outcome of events or the protagonist's destiny.
- **Symbol** – a symbol has two levels of meaning, a literal level and a figurative level. Characters, objects, events and settings can all be symbolic in that they represent something else beyond themselves. The dove literally is a bird, but it has come to figuratively represent peace. (symbolism)
- **Synecdoche** – the use of the part for the whole idea. "All hands on deck" really would mean all people on the ship, to the deck, not just their hands. The „Hippocratic eye“ is really a doctor; „paleface“ is a white person.

T

- **Theme** – the central idea of a story, usually implied rather than directly stated. It is the author's idea about life and can be implied or directly stated through the voice of a character or through the narrator. It should not be confused with moral or plot. A theme is traditionally stated in a sentence without reference to specific characters or events.
- **Thesis** – the main idea, position or view of the essay writer; the hypothesis at the heart of a writer's work. Sometimes, the thesis is stated explicitly, usually in the opening paragraph.
- **Tone** – tone is the author's attitude toward his/her subject or readers. It is similar to tone of voice and should not be confused with mood or atmosphere. An author's tone might be sarcastic, sincere, apologetic, humorous, bitter, analytic, reflective, nostalgic, resigned, didactic, etc.
- **Tragedy** – this is a drama that gives the audience an experience of **catharsis** or cleansing of emotions. The protagonist, a person of nobility, must make a **moral decision** that in turn influences the outcome of the drama. The protagonist usually has a serious fault, the **tragic flaw**, that leads to his/her **downfall** and death. The terror and pity felt by the audience produce catharsis, a cleansing or purifying of emotion.

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- **Tragic Hero** – a tragic hero is a person of high estate who has the potential for greatness. The person is pre-eminently virtuous and just, but his/her misfortune is brought about, in part, by an error in judgement or the Greek word hubris. The tragic hero often has a flaw in his/her character which contributes to his/her destruction. Pride to excess, the Greek work hubris, is often this flaw. The downfall of the tragic hero frequently involves the element of fate. Overall, the tragic hero has the potential for greatness; however, he does not achieve this greatness. Despite this shortcoming, the tragic hero meets his/her shortcomings with dignity. Once the tragic hero has committed himself to a course of action, there is no turning back. A chain of events occurs because of this commitment, leading to his/her final destruction. The audience feels for the tragic hero because his/her misfortune is greater than he deserves.

U

- **Understatement** – saying less than what you mean for effect. *For example*, when sitting down to a loaded dinner plate, you say, “This looks like a good bite,” you are actually stating less than the truth. *Another example* would be the following: a person holds his/her hand for a half an hour in a fire will experience a “sensation of excessive and disagreeable warmth” .
- **Unity** – a basic principle of writing which maintains that each part of a work should relate to a single purpose. In this way, the work can be said to possess unity.
- **Universality** – this is a term that means that a story is broad enough to be applied to most people at any time or place. Stories having universality reveal human nature or common truths of experience. Universality is also taken by some critics to be a criterion for measuring the worth or success of a story.

V

- **Versification** – metrical structure, the art and practice of composing verse in terms of related mechanical elements. Versification involves accent, foot, meter, rhyme, rhythm and stanza form.