

Eighth Grade Literary Terms

	Term	Definition	Example
1	allusion	an explicit or implicit reference, in a work of literature, to a person, place, or event, or to another literary work or passage	
2	antagonist	character or force in direct conflict with the protagonist	
3	author's purpose	the author's reason for creating a work; to persuade, inform, explain, entertain or reveal an important truth (think P.I.E.E.)	
4	characters- dynamic or round/static or flat	dynamic/round is a major character in a work of fiction who encounters conflict and is changed by it- tend to be fully developed; static/flat- minor characters in a work of fiction who do not undergo substantial change or growth in course of the story	
5	climax/turning point	high point of interest or suspense and action in the story; the point that is most critical to the main character or conflict of the story	
6	connotation	the emotional association suggested by the primary meaning of a word, which affects its interpretations, things suggested by a word apart from the thing it explicitly names or describes	
7	denotation	the objective meaning of a word independent of other associations the word calls to mind	
8	dialect	regional differences in oral speech	
9	epilogue	an afterward or concluding section usually about the future of the characters	
10	exposition	the first part of a plot that explains, informs, or presents information; where the author establishes the setting, introduces the main characters and the basic situation	
11	external conflict	the main character struggles with another person or with an outside force (man vs man, man vs. nature, man vs society, man vs fate)	
12	falling action	part of the story which follows the climax and leads to the resolution	
13	flashback	a section of the story that interrupts the sequence of events to relate an event from an earlier time; used to give additional information to the reader to help him/her understand the story better	
14	foreshadowing	the writer's hints and clues that suggests events that may still occur	
15	inference	to "take out of" or to draw a conclusion based on that which is implied; a conclusion or opinion that draws on known facts, evidence, or intuition to fill in missing information	
16	inner voice	what you say or think to yourself as you internally interpret the story or play	
17	internal conflict	a self imposed challenge; the main character struggles with opposing ideas or feelings within his or her own mind; usually involves decision making (man vs. himself)	

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18	jargon	a language/words/expressions specific to a specific group	
19	metacognition	a self -awareness of how a person thinks; thinking about how you think	
20	mood	the atmosphere or feel of the story, it may be serious, humorous, satiric; the overall feeling you get when reading a story	
21	narrator	person or character telling the story	
22	plot	a sequence of related events that make up a story	
23	point of view- limited/omniscient	how the author chooses to tell the story- 1st person- told by one of the characters, 3rd person- not a character in the story; limited- narrator is telling from a single person perspective, omniscient- narrator sees into the minds of all characters and includes most	
24	prologue	a preface or introduction to the story, the author's setting forth of the meaning or purpose	
25	propaganda	information, ideas, or rumors deliberately spread widely to help or harm a person, group, movement, institution, or nation	
26	protagonist	a main character of the story (often the hero)	
27	resolution/denouement (pronounced day-new- ma)	the end of the central story or play; a satisfying conclusion to the story (open or closed)	
28	rising action	events from a story preceding the climax where various problems arise; the explanation and complications that lead to the climax	
29	setting	time and place in which the action of the story takes place	
30	stereotype	a character that fits a standardized mental picture of what members of a certain group are like	
31	style	the way an author puts the words together to create a story using a combination of literary elements to create something unique and personal, it affects how we read and respond to a story	
32	suspense	mental uncertainty, excitement as to the outcome	
33	symbol	a person, place, or object that has meaning in itself, but suggests other meanings as well; a concrete object used to represent an abstract idea/concept	
34	theme	the main idea or message of the story that the author wants the reader to know; universal truth	
35	tone	the author's attitude toward the subject, reader, or character; could be light-hearted, distant, humorous, creepy, mysterious	
36	irony	when the outcome or action is unexpected or opposite of what you would expect	