

M1: Twenty-One Important Literary Terms to Know

	Term	Definition
1.	Setting	Where a story or scene takes place. Ex. Forest, castle, cave, diner, house, etc.
2.	Protagonist	The character who is struggling against something or someone. Ex. Harry Potter, Katniss
3.	Antagonist	The character or thing causing problems. Ex. Voldemort, a snowstorm, Nazi.
4.	Conflict	This is the struggle between characters. The main conflict is between protagonist and antagonist.
5.	Plot	This is the structure of the action in a story. Not all stories have a plot or a clear one.
6.	Narrator	The person telling a story. Not the author.
7.	Point of view	The way the narrator tells the story. First person, second person, or third person. There can also be limited omniscient or fully omniscient narration. Ex: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First person – “I heard a sound then ran to the door” • Second person – “You slowly crept to the edge of the room.” • Third person – “Alex was frozen with fear as he thought of the coming attack.”
8.	Foreshadowing	Presenting information or objects with little explanation but giving more explanation later in the scene or story. Ex: The wizard placed the glowing wand on the table then began discussing the matter of food with the elves.
9.	Irony	The appearance of something or some situation does not match reality. Ex. A person in a meeting thinks he has presented a great idea, but behind his back people are laughing.
10.	Analogy	comparison of two things. Similarities. Ex. Teaching a class is like sailing a ship.
11.	Simile	Showing a direct comparison. Ex. My hands are as cold as ice.
12.	Metaphor	Showing indirect comparison. Ex. My heart is broken. Her bank job was killing her.

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13.	Personification	Human qualities on inanimate objects. Ex. The shadows embraced me.
14.	Symbolism	An object that has meaning of something else. Ex. The letter was a symbol of her devotion to him.
15.	Literal	Actual meaning.
16.	Figurative	Poetic meaning.
17.	Hyperbole	An exaggeration used for poetic emphasis. Ex: My head is about to explode with pain.
18.	Exposition	Establishing place and characters. The first part of a story.
19.	Rising Action	Increase of tension (conflict) in the story.
20.	Climax	The point in a story when conflict is highest. Some decision must be made.
21.	Falling Action (Denouement)	The conclusion of the story. Matters are resolved or accepted.