

Nutshell Glossary of English 12 Provincial Exam Terms

ACTIVE VOICE – a sentence is written so that the subject is an actor of the verb – for example, ‘The cat ate the mouse.’ The cat is the subject and the cat is doing the action. See also *passive voice*.

ALLEGORY – a story in which the literal meaning represents another level of meaning. It is a form of an extended metaphor, in which objects, persons, and actions are associated with the meanings that lie outside the narrative itself. The underlying meaning has moral, social, religious, or political significance, and characters are often personifications of abstract ideas such as charity, greed or envy. Thus, an allegory is a story with two meanings: a literal meaning and a symbolic meaning.

ALLITERATION – the repetition of identical consonant sounds at the beginning of closely associated words. ex. Peter Piper picked...

ALLUSION – a brief direct or indirect reference to a person, event, place (real or fictitious), or to a work of art or fiction which the author hopes/assumes the reader will recognize. Allusion is most typically a casual reference to a famous historical or literary figure or event. Most allusions expand or develop a significant idea, impression, or mood in the story.

ANALOGY – comparison of two things made to explain something unfamiliar through its similarities to something familiar; similes & metaphors are types of analogies.

ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE – informal account of evidence from anecdote or hearsay.

ANTAGONIST – a character or force in conflict with the main character (AKA the protagonist). Can be a character or something in the protagonist’s setting (ex. animal, weather, other people’s beliefs, prejudice) which causes turmoil.

ANTI-CLIMAX – a sudden shift from relatively serious mood to more comic or trivial.

ANTITHESIS – a contrast, usually expressed with parallel sentence construction. For example, “to err is human; to forgive, divine.”

APOSTROPHE – a statement, question, or request addressed to an inanimate object or concept or to a nonexistent or absent person; ex. = a poet asking the muses for inspiration; “Oh, Canada, our home and native land”; or “Death, be not proud.”

ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY – takes a particular position of a topic and defends it

ARCHAIC LANGUAGE – words or phrases that are no longer commonly used. For example, using ‘thou’ instead of ‘you’.

ASIDE – comment made by a stage performer that is intended to be heard by the audience but supposedly not by other characters

ASSONANCE – the repetition of identical vowel sounds in different, closely associated words. For example, “in Xanadu did Kubla Khan...”

ATMOSPHERE – mood or feeling created by a literary work, often through description; ex. suspense, fear, joy. See also *tone* and *mood*.

AUDIENCE – the person or persons for whom a text is written or a play is performed. It is important to know the audience for whom you are writing and to write with the tone, diction and style appropriate for that group.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY – narrative in which an individual tells his or her story

BALLAD – a story/poem told in song, usually by an impersonal narrator and in a condensed form. Ballads are commonly written using a ballad stanza.

BALLAD STANZA – a quatrain of alternating four and three stress lines, usually rhyming ABCB. For example, “All in a hot and copper sky/The bloody Sun, at noon,/ Right up above the mast did stand,/No bigger than the Moon.”

BIAS – a preference or an inclination, especially one that inhibits impartial judgment

BIOGRAPHY – narrative that tells a person’s life story

BLANK VERSE – poetry written in unrhymed lines of iambic pentameter

CACOPHONY – harsh, discordant sounds placed together for effect. Opposite of euphony. For example, “The clatter of crashing vied for my attention.”

CARICATURE – a portrait that exaggerates or distorts basic features of a person for effect. Used often in editorial cartoons for humour or to create a quick characterization.

CASE STUDY – method of qualitative research where one examines a small, select instance or event in-depth

CATASTROPHE – in drama, particularly tragedy, the concluding action following the climax that contains the resolution of the plot.

CAUSE AND EFFECT – the reason something happened is the ‘cause’; the something that happened is the ‘effect’; for example, the motorcycle sped through the intersection and hit a car; therefore, cause = speeding motorcycle, effect = hit car

CHARACTER – refers to both a fictional person in a story and the moral, temperamental, and behavioural qualities of that fictional person. The qualities of a character are generally revealed through dialogue, action, and description. Characters may be classified as flat or round, stereotyped or realistic, static or dynamic depending on their function within the story. Sometimes characters are used to advance the plot (ex. Little Red Riding Hood’s mother suggests she go to grandmother’s house), to add to the understanding of the setting (ex. use of dialects or local slang), to develop the main character’s personality through their interactions, to act as a foil (see character foil), or to develop a theme (ex. the cats in Pinocchio that lead him astray represent the temptations we all face.)

CHARACTERIZATION – methods a writer uses to develop and reveal the personality of the character. Especially attained by description of the character’s actions, gestures, and general demeanour. It is either revealed directly (through author comments) and/or indirectly (through the character’s speech, thought, or action.)

CHARACTER FOIL – a character who is used to contrast opposing traits with another character so that the reader better understands the personality and motivation of the protagonist. By being so villainous, foils are used to make the protagonist seem heroic by contrast. For example, the ugly stepsister’s are foils to Cinderella and their differences emphasize Cinderella’s sweetness and virtue.

CHORUS – in ancient Greek drama, a group of actors who commented on and interpreted the unfolding action of the stage; in poetry, a repeated refrain

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER – organizing events by time, often earliest to latest.

There are no flashbacks or jumping around in time.

CLICHÉ – a metaphor or expression that is overused. Ex: “he is as strong as a bull.”

CLIMACTIC ORDER – organizing ideas by order of importance, often from least important to most important

CLIMAX – the moment in a play, novel, short story, or narrative poem where the conflict reaches its point of greatest intensity and is thereafter resolved. It is also the peak of emotional response from a reader or spectator and also the turning point of the action and of the protagonist’s fortunes.

COLLOQUIALISM – a word or phrase that is acceptable in casual conversation but not

in formal, written communication; more acceptable than slang.

COLLOQUIAL LANGUAGE – informal or conversational style

COMEDY – depicts humorous plots whereby the protagonist is faced with a light-hearted challenge and in the end overcomes it and the story or play ends happily.

COMIC RELIEF – the use of humour to lighten the mood of a serious or tragic story, especially in plays. Example: the gravediggers in Hamlet

COMPARE AND CONTRAST – analyze a topic by looking at how they are alike (a comparison) and how they are different (a contrast)

COMPARISON – see *compare and contrast*

CONFLICT – the struggle between opposing characters or forces (i.e. the protagonist versus antagonist.) Ex. character versus his/her environment (nature, society, or circumstance); character versus character (physical, emotional, or psychological); character versus self (emotions, thoughts).

CONNOTATION – emotional associations and overtones related to a word. Ex. a person who is underweight might be described as slight or scrawny. Slight has a fairly positive emotional connotation, while scrawny has a negative connotation.

CONSONANCE – the repetition of similar consonant sounds at the ends of closely associated syllables or words. For example, gored/bored, given/heaven.

CONTRAST – see also *juxtaposition*; refers to the difference, especially a striking one, between two things being compared. It may involve situations, characters, settings, moods, or points of view. Used to clarify meaning, purpose, or character, or to heighten certain moods (especially humour, horror, and suspense).

COUPLET – two successive lines of verse that rhyme and are usually of equal length. For example, “I think it is time/ you learned to rhyme.”

DENOTATION – the literal meaning of a word as seen in dictionary definitions

DENOUEMENT – (pronounced day-new-mahn) AKA *resolution* or *falling action*; follows the climax and is part of the falling action; comes from the French word for “unknotting” and refers to the “unknotting” of the plot or conflict.

DESCRIPTIVE ESSAY – portrays people, places, things, moments and theories with enough vivid detail to help the reader create a mental picture of what is being written about; it captures a moment in time rather than telling a story.

DIALECT – a manner of speaking or variation on a language particular to an individual, a people, a social class, a geographic region or a country.

DIALOGUE – conversation between characters in a drama or story.

DIARY – a personal written record of daily events and thoughts.

DICTION – vocabulary chosen by the writer. Can reflect the level of education of the speaker, the attitude of the speaker, & can influence mood with connotation.

DIDACTIC – intended to teach a lesson, especially a moral one.

DILEMMA – a choice between two equally unfavourable options. Posing a dilemma is one way an author generates conflict and suspense in a story.

DIRECT PRESENTATION – the speaker is telling us about the character. For example, “Jody is a shy girl.” See also *indirect presentation*.

DISSONANCE – combination of harsh or jarring sounds, especially in poetry

DRAMA – broad genre that includes a variety of forms from tragedy to comedy; a work that treats serious subjects and themes but doesn’t aim at the splendour of tragedy.

DRAMATIC IRONY – (aka structural irony) a dramatic situation in which the audience knows something the character does not. ex. The audience knows that Juliet has taken a drug to fake death but Romeo assumes she's dead and kills himself to join her.

DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE: A type of poem in which a speaker addresses a silent listener. As readers, we overhear the speaker in a dramatic monologue.

Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess" is an example wherein the duke, speaking to a non-responding representative of the family of a prospective new duchess, reveals not only the reasons for his disapproval of the behaviour of his former duchess, but aspects of his own personality as well.

DRAMATIC FORM – A method for the expression of dramatic meaning (e.g., improvisation, tableau, role, dance drama, Readers Theatre, mask, mime, puppetry, script work, audiovisual)

DYNAMIC CHARACTER – Basically, a round character. The term is used to contrast against static characters who do not change.

EDITORIAL – statement/article that expresses an opinion rather than just reporting facts

ELEGY – a solemn poem that mourns the death of a person or the passing of an era.

EMOTIONAL APPEAL – writing that persuades the audience by arousing emotions

EPIC – long, narrative poem about the adventures of a hero of great historic or legendary importance; setting is vast and the action is often given cosmic significance through the intervention of supernatural forces such as gods, angels, or demons; and use elaborate metaphors and allusions to enhance the symbolic importance of a hero's adventures. Ex: Homer's Odyssey

EPILOGUE - a short speech (often in verse) addressed directly to the audience by an actor at the end of a play

EPIPHANY – an instant of significant revelation or insight in which a character suddenly recognizes a previously unknown truth.

EPIGRAM – a saying that makes the speaker's point quickly and concisely

EPITAPH – inscription on a monument or tombstone about the person buried there.

EUPHEMISM – mild expression used to describe an otherwise offensive word or topic.
For example, dying can be euphemistically described as "passing away", "going to a better place", or "leaving us."

EUPHONY – musical/pleasant sounds placed together for effect. Opposite cacophony.

EXPERT TESTIMONY – providing evidence from an expert, who by virtue of education, profession, or experience, is believed to have a special knowledge

EXPOSITION – in essays, systematic explanation of a specific topic; in fiction, the beginning of the story where the characters and conflict are introduced

EXPOSITORY ESSAY – a piece of non-fiction containing one main idea (thesis statement) usually expressed in the first paragraph (the introduction), a number of paragraphs (forming the body of the essay) which explore or support the main idea, and a concluding paragraph (called a conclusion) which summarizes or emphasizes the ideas presented in the body.

EXTENDED METAPHOR – a metaphor that develops through a poem and that involves several points of comparison

EXTERNAL CONFLICT – see *conflict*; examples = character versus environment or character versus character

FABLE – narrative intended to convey a moral; animals or inanimate objects with human characteristics often serve as characters

FALLING ACTION – AKA *denouement* or *resolution* ; the part of a plot that falls after the climax, in which the complications of the rising action are untangled.

FANTASY – highly exaggerated or improbable story; has fantastic events, characters, and/or settings not found in real life. For example, wizards, castles, dragons, fairies, unicorns. Used often to reveal truths about the human experience.

FARCE – a type of comedy characterized by broad humour, outlandish incidents, and often vulgar subject matter

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE – use of figures of speech in writing to attain a special effect. Usually used in poetry but can be sparingly found in prose.

FIRST PERSON POINT OF VIEW – story generally told by one of the characters who is referred to as “I”; reader generally sees everything through that character’s eyes; *can be* used as an omniscient narrator.

FLASHBACK – shift in the story to events that took place earlier, needed to fill in background details, illustrate an important point or aid in characterization.

FLAT CHARACTER – usually a minor character with only one apparent quality; does not change or develop through narrative; used for specific purpose (ex. to develop the protagonist’s character.)

FOIL – see *character foil*

FORESHADOWING – hints or warns of events to happen later in the story; prepares reader for the climax, the denouement, and any changes in character.

FORM – general term referring to way in which a story is put together (i.e. its shape or structure); sometimes called “how” of story & includes both technique & style.

FORMAL ESSAY – essay that follows a prescribed path of introduction, body paragraphs (at least 3), and a conclusion

FORMAL LANGUAGE – writing that does not include idioms, slang, colloquialisms, etc. and that restricts the use of contractions. See also *informal language*

FRAME STORY - The result of inserting one or more small stories within the body of a larger story that encompasses the smaller ones.

FREE VERSE – poetry with neither rhyme nor rhythm and meter

GENRE – “type” or “kind” as in ‘what kind of novel do you like?’

GRAPHIC TEXT – use of pictures to help tell a story; for example, cartoons or manga

HERO – protagonist who possesses heroic qualities such as courage, or virtues (ex. honesty.) A TRAGIC HERO is usually born into some nobility, but due to a tragic flaw, make a serious error in judgment, and eventually fall from esteem. He/she will meet death with honour. Hero is *not* interchangeable with protagonist.

HISTORICAL REFERENCE – allusion to a historical event for explanation or effect

HYPERBOLE – deliberate overstatement or exaggeration to achieve emphasis. For example, “I’ve told you a million times to close that door!”

IAMBIC PENTAMETER – a line composed of five iambic feet (i.e. five pairs of stressed and unstressed syllables. Ex. “In fair Verona, where we lay our scene”

IDIOM – an expression that makes sense as a whole phrase but loses its meaning when each word is defined; example = ‘a piece of cake’ means something easily done in the phrase, but loses meaning when looked at word by word

IMAGE – concrete details which use the five senses and figures of speech that help the reader form vivid impressions of the subject of the writing

IMAGERY – the pattern of images in a single piece of writing; often the images allude

to more that the surface idea and create meaning through metaphor.

INDETERMINATE ENDING – story ending with no clear outcome/resolved conflict

INDIRECT PRESENTATION – the speaker is showing the character’s actions, or words, through dialogue or another character’s dialogue.

INFORMAL ESSAY – written mainly for enjoyment, not information or persuasion; a relaxed expression of opinion, observation, humour with a strong structure

INFORMAL LANGUAGE – conversational style which uses idioms, colloquialisms, slang, etc. and freely uses contractions. See also *formal language*

INTERIOR MONOLOGUE – narrative technique in which characters’ thoughts are revealed in a way that appears to be uncontrolled by the author; portrays emotional experiences as they occur at both conscious & unconscious level

INTERNAL CONFLICT – See *conflict*; example = character versus self

INTERNAL RHYME – rhyming of words within a line of poetry. For example, “the sails at *noon* left off their *tune*”

IRONY – involves contrast between two elements so that the appearance of things differs from reality (in terms of meaning, situation, or action); and provides depth of meaning and impact. This basic definition of irony is specifically called ‘*situational irony*.’ Examples: composer Beethoven’s deafness; a doctor’s appointment being cancelled because the doctor is sick; “They couldn’t hit an elephant at this distance,” were nearly the very last words of American Civil War General John Sedgwick. See also *dramatic irony* and *sarcasm (verbal irony)*.

JARGON – specialized language found in a particular subject. Ex. sports, reporters, military or doctors have their own particular lingo for aspects of their professions.

JUXTAPOSITION – contrasts of characters or events in which positioning is important. Often with plot juxtapositions, because the two events occur (nearly) one after another, the second may seem better or worse. The reader is already in an emotional state after the first event and is, therefore, vulnerable to more intense feelings with the second event. For example, two contrasting characters are placed side by side in a story – the evil stepmother may seem more evil when presented alongside the innocent child – or, shortly after a favourite character is killed, the antagonist begins to torture another character.

LEGEND – narrative of human actions that are perceived to take place within human history and within the realm of ‘possibility’ (including events like miracles). For example, Atlantis, King Arthur, the Holy Grail. Legends that have been transformed beyond the realm of possibility become *fables*.

LIMITED OMNISCIENT POINT OF VIEW – the third person (pronouns = he, she) narrator who reveals the thoughts and feelings of only one character

LITERAL LANGUAGE – without exaggeration, embellishment, or figurative language

LYRIC – relatively short non-narrative poem in which the first-person speaker expresses thoughts and feelings, not necessarily those of the poet

MELODRAMA – the typical plot is a conflict between characters who personify extreme good and evil; usually end happily and emphasize sensationalism; often using stereotypical characters in simplistic conflicts

METAPHOR – direct comparison between objects. For example, ‘his words were a knife that cut me deeply’ or ‘anger is a caged beast.’

METRE – when poetry is read aloud, there is often a recognizable flow of rising and

falling sounds. This varying pattern of stressed syllables alternating with syllables or less stress is what makes up a poem's metre. Each unit of stress and unstressed syllables is called a "foot."

MONOLOGUE – a speech spoken entirely by one person.

MOOD – words and details that create a feeling in the reader. Atmosphere and mood are the same thing. Mood is the prevailing feeling of the scene; it sets up expectations in the reader about the outcome of the episode. It is created by description, diction, imagery, and sometimes dialogue.

MOTIF – repeated element in literature

MYSTERY – genre in which the plot is centred on an unsolved crime. The ending usually involves an unravelling of the plot and ultimately solves the mystery.

Examples = Sherlock Holmes, Agatha Christie, Tom Clancy

MYTH – a traditional story that is closely associated with a particular culture or group of people which usually communicates the beliefs and values of that culture

NARRATIVE – a story; has a plot, conflict, characters, setting, and point of view. May be fictional or non-fictional and include novels, autobiographies, and biographies, as well as short stories and anecdotes.

NARRATION – story telling, which is different from pure description or explanation.

NARRATOR – storyteller or speaker of the poem or novel; can be a character or, if omniscient or objective, a speaker (not to be confused with the author.)

OBJECTIVE (LANGUAGE TONE, ETC.) – neutral (doesn't use "I"), fact based

OBJECTIVE POINT OF VIEW – the third person narrator who reveals none of the thoughts and feelings of the characters but records details of the story as a video camera would, devoid of thoughts or emotions beyond the observable.

OCTAVE – eight line stanza

ODE – long lyric poem that praises a person or thing

OMNISCIENT POINT OF VIEW – means 'all-seeing'; the third person narrator who can reveal the thoughts and feelings of several characters

ONOMATOPOEIA – a word whose sound suggests its meaning. For example, the bee buzzes, or plop, smash, bang.

OXYMORON – phrases with an inherent contradiction. For example, living dead.

PARADOX – statement that first appears to be contradictory but actually states a truth; example = history teaches us that we learn nothing from history.

PARALLELISM – method of comparison of two ideas in which each is developed in the same grammatical structure; For example, "Have you ever thought of what it is like to fly, to hope, to dream?"

PARODY – imitation of either formal or thematic elements of one work in another for humorous purposes. Do not confuse with satire.

PASSIVE VOICE – a sentence that is written so that the subject is not the one doing the action – for example, 'The mouse was eaten by the cat.' The mouse is the subject but it is not doing the action, the cat is. See also *active voice*.

PASTORAL – literary composition on a rural theme; characters and language of nobility are often placed in simple settings or characters are shepherds in a country setting

PATHOS – see *emotional appeal*

PERSONAL ESSAY – focuses on the writer as subject

PERSONIFICATION – inanimate or non-human thing given human characteristics.

Ex. "The tree branches waved and the leaves laughed."

PERSUASIVE ESSAY – uses persuasive techniques to prove the writer's thesis

PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUE – method of trying to influence an idea, attitude, or action by rational and symbolic means; ex.:, advertising, sales, editorials

PLOT – storyline or organization of events or episodes within a story; a conventional plot has rising action, a climax, and a falling action

POINT OF VIEW – perspective from which a story is seen or told. Point of view establishes the relationship among author, reader and characters. See also *first person*, *limited omniscient*, and *omniscient points of view*.

PRO AND CON ARGUMENT – line of reasoning that looks at the positives and the negatives of a subject

PROLOGUE – an introductory section of a literary work; often contains information establishing the situation of the characters or presents information about the setting, time period, or action

PROPAGANDA – specific type of message presentation directly aimed at influencing the opinions of people, rather than impartially informing; often associated with war to persuade people to believe in 'the right' cause

PROTAGONIST – main character of the story with whom the reader generally sympathizes. For example, Little Red Riding Hood

PROVERB – a brief, sage saying that expresses a truth about life in a striking manner; example, 'forgive and forget' or 'when the cat's away, the mice will play'

PUN – play on words where multiple meanings are deliberately suggested. For example, "If you have sticky buns, you shouldn't put pants on."

PURPOSE – main effect the author hopes to achieve. Ex. entertainment, thought, enlightenment, action, demonstrating something about life or human nature. May include theme, but should not simply be equated with story's main idea.

QUATRAIN – a four-line stanza

QUESTION AND ANSWER – assessment style where questions are posed and students demonstrate knowledge through their answers OR a rhetorical style in which a writer posed questions and provides answers as a means to convey information

REFRAIN – phrase repeated at intervals throughout a poem; may appear at the end of each stanza or at less regular intervals; may be altered slightly at each appearance

REPETITION – words repeated for emphasis

RESEARCH – active, diligent, systematic process of inquiry aimed at discovering, interpreting, and revising facts

RESOLUTION – see denouement above

RHETORICAL QUESTION – a question that implies that the answer is obvious = the kind of question that doesn't need to actually be answered.

RHYME – sound effect created when the sounds at the ends of words are repeated. For example, ant/slant, dime/chime, given/driven

RHYME SCHEME – pattern of rhymed words at the end of lines of a poem. Each new rhyme is assigned a letter, beginning with 'a'. For example, an 'ABCB' rhyme

scheme:	Roses are red	a
	Violets are blue	b
	Sugar is sweet	c
	And so are you	b

RHYTHM – shifts in beat, speed, or loudness or the pitch in a line of poetry

RISING ACTION – events of a dramatic or narrative plot leading up to the climax; during this stage, background information is given, characters and conflicts are established, and suspense is built up; there may be moments of crisis within rising action before climax.

ROUND CHARACTER – often the protagonist; undergoes significant, lasting change, usually in his or her outlook on life.

SARCASM – (aka verbal irony) sneering, jesting, or mocking a person, situation or thing; often used in a humorous or ironic manner and is expressed through vocal intonations such as over-emphasizing the actual statement

SATIRE – the literary art of diminishing a person or topic or human quality by making it appear ridiculous; often includes irony or sarcasm; often used to promote change; and usually targets human vices and foibles.

SESTET – six-line stanza

SETTING – time and place of a story.

SIMILE – outright comparison using “like”, “as” or “as if” For example, ‘the raindrops sparkled like diamonds on the widow pane’ or my soul is like a soaring swift.’

SLANG – words what tare used popularly, or in a particular class of society, but are not generally acknowledged as correct English. Slang is sometimes vulgar. For example, calling someone an “airhead” is slang for stupid.

SOLILOQUY – a monologue in drama used to give the audience information and to develop the speaker’s character; typically a projection of the speaker’s innermost thoughts; usually delivered while the speaker is alone on stage; example: Hamlet’s ‘to be or not to be’ speech in Act 3, Scene 1.

SONNET – a 14-line, tightly crafted lyric poem that focuses on a specific theme; usually written in iambic pentameter.

SPEAKER – imaginary voice taken on by a poet or a writer that tells you the story.

STANZA – group of lines of verse in a poem that form a unit. Stanzas are named according to the number of lines in them (ex. couplet, quatrain, sestet, octave)

STATISTICAL EVIDENCE – gathering facts or statistics as evidence for argument

STATIC CHARACTER – basically, a flat character. The term is used to show contrast with a dynamic character, who is well-developed and changes fundamentally.

STEREOTYPE – any fixed pattern of plot or character. Stereotyped characters are ones that we are immediately familiar with because we’ve seen them before (ex. smooth talking politicians, absent minded professors, dreary librarians, hard-boiled detective); are predictable, one-dimensional; can sometimes symbolize characteristics of a whole group in society; often used in satire to poke fun at ideas, people, or institutions in society.

STOCK/STEREOTYPED CHARACTER – see *stereotype*

STORY WITHIN A STORY - one story is told during the action of another story

STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS – modern narrative technique which attempts to depict the uninterrupted and frequently illogical flow of thoughts and feelings through a character’s mind.

STYLE – a distinctive way in which a writer uses language (both choice and

arrangement of words); can be formal or familiar, plain or pretentious. In fiction, style is basically determined by such grammatical and sensory aspects as diction, sentences, and images.

STYLISTIC TECHNIQUE – any form used to communicate your information (ex. tone, alliteration, diction, voice)

SUBJECTIVE (LANGUAGE TONE, ETC.) – opinion based, less formal than objective

SURPRISE ENDING – sudden twist in the direction of a story, producing a resolution which surprises the reader and often the story's character as well

SUSPENSE – reader's state of anxiety, excitement and anticipation regarding an outcome, such as the ending of a mystery novel

SYMBOL – an object that represents or stands in for a more abstract idea; characters, objects, events, settings can all be symbolic; ex. the eagle = independence, freedom; the dove = peace; white = peace, purity, or surrender

SYMBOLISM – the use of an object to represent another; for example, a flag representing a nation or an empty cupboard suggesting poverty, despair.

THEME – central idea or purpose of the story, usually implied rather than directly stated; usually gives insight into human nature or human experience; do not confuse it with the moral or the plot

THESIS – summarizes main ideas of writing; often one or two sentences that sum up the point you intend to make; often can be the topic sentence of an essay

THESIS STATEMENT – one sentence in an essay that declares what the main idea (thesis) of the essay will be; usually in the introduction of the essay

THIRD PERSON POINT OF VIEW – the speaker is a character outside of the main action of the story; the main character is spoken of as he/she; speaker may have unlimited or limited knowledge about the characters in the story

TONE – reveals the writer's attitude toward the readers or toward the subject; may represent any human emotional attitude from joyous to angry to melancholy to distant to detached, etc.

TRAGEDY – a noble, courageous hero of excellent character who, because of a tragic character flaw, brings ruin upon him or herself; treats subjects in a dignified and serious manner, using poetic language to evoke pity and fear and bring about a purging of emotions (catharsis).

UNDERSTATEMENT – a statement that lessens or minimizes the importance of what is meant. Ex. If you were in the desert and it was 45°C, you might say, "It's rather warm outside today."

VOICE – "sound" of the characters, narrators, etc. Connected to tone and point of view.

WIT – intellectual humour, based on manipulation of concepts, typically in conversation and spontaneously, since wit carries connotation of speed of thought. "The Simpsons" defined wit as "nothing more than an incisive observation, humorously phrased and delivered with impeccable timing."