9th LITERARY TERMS

IMAGERY- the sensory details appealing to the five senses (taste, touch, smell, hearing, and sight). For example, “The cool evening breeze tasted sweet with honeysuckle.”

Types of imagery:
- Visual: appeals to or represents the sense of sight
- Tactile/Kinesthetic: appeals to or represents the sense of touch
- Auditory: appeals to or represents the sense of sound
- Gustatory: appeals to or represents the sense of taste
- Olfactory: appeals to or represents the sense of smell

INFERENECe- a judgment based on reasoning rather than on direct or explicit statement.

PLOT- a series of related events which bring about the resolution of some conflict or problem.

EXPOSITION, RISING ACTION, CLIMAX, RESOLUTION/DENOUEMENT- stages of development within a story, novel, or play.

SETTING- the time and place in which the events of a narrative occur.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE- descriptions or comparisons using the following techniques:
- **Simile**- a comparison between two different things using “like” or “as”. For example, “Jim runs around the track like a scared jackrabbit.”
- **Metaphor**- an implied comparison between two different things. (Does NOT use “like” or “as”) For example, “The summer is a dark, blue hammock slung between the white pillars of the day.”
- **Personification**- a figure of speech in which human characteristics are assigned to nonhuman things. For example, “The fierce wind yelled its fury throughout the night.”
- **Pathetic Fallacy**- a form of personification giving human traits to nature: cruel sea, howling wind, dancing water.

ALLUSION- a literary reference to a familiar person, place, thing, or event.

HYPERBOLE- an exaggeration or overstatement.

THEME- the main idea or underlying meaning of a literary work. A theme may be directly stated, but is more often implied.
CHARACTERIZATION - the methods an author uses to develop the qualities and personalities of characters in a story. An author may describe directly or reveal them through the character’s actions, speech, thoughts, and/or reactions from others.

- **Round character**: Round characters develop and grow as the story progresses. Also known as *three-dimensional* or *dynamic*.

- **Flat character**: A flat character generally does not develop throughout the course of the story. Also known as *two-dimensional* or *static*.

- **Stock character**: Stock characters are stereotypes, pulled off the shelf. (For example, the evil stepmother or the jock)

PROTAGONIST - the main character who holds the main focus of the story. There can be more than one protagonist in the story.

ANTAGONIST - a rival or adversary that attempts to work against the protagonist. There can be more than one protagonist in the story.

TONE - an author’s attitude toward his/her subject matter. It could be reverent, serious, humorous, sad, etc.

MOOD - the climate of feeling within a literary work. The author’s choice of setting, objects, details, images, and words all contribute in creating a specific mood.

CONFLICT - the problem, issue, or struggle in a story that triggers the action:
  - Internal - conflict inside the character
  - External - conflict outside of the character

TYPES OF CONFLICTS
- **Individual vs. Self** - a character has a problem deciding what to do in a certain situation.-internal
- **Individual vs. Individual** one character in a story has a problem with one or more of the other characters.-external
- **Individual vs. Society** - a character in a story has a problem with some element of society: the school, the law, the accepted way of doing things.-external
- **Individual vs. Nature** - a character has a problem with the environment: heat, cold, a tornado, an avalanche, or any other element of nature.-external
- **Individual vs. Fate** - a character must battle what seems to be an uncontrollable problem. Whenever the conflict is an unbelievable or strange coincidence, it can be attributed to fate.
FORESHADOWING- the use of “hints” of events to come.

IRONY- is the contrast between what appears to be and what really is. There are three forms of irony:

- **Verbal Irony**- the art of using words to say one thing and mean another. Its purpose, however, is not to deceive but to make clear. For example, “At the end of 6th period, tired and bored by the assignment, Ted states, “I’m not sure I can handle all this excitement!”
- **Dramatic Irony**- is when the spectator or reader knows more about the true state of affairs in a story than the characters do. For example, in *Romeo and Juliet* only Friar Lawrence, the nurse, and the reader/spectators know about R & J’s secret marriage.
- **Situational Irony**- a contrast between what is expected or intended and what actually occurs, like cheesy horror movies.

POINT OF VIEW- the author’s choice of narrator for a story.

- **1st person**- a person in the story who can reveal only his or her thoughts and/or information that has been directly received from other characters.
- **3rd person omniscient**- an outsider who presents an all-knowing point of view.
- 3rd person limited-an outsider who presents a point of view limited to special knowledge of one of the characters
- **2nd person**-The narrator tells the story to another person, addressed as “you” (note: this p.o.v. is rarely used)

SATIRE- literature that blends ironic humor and wit with criticism for the purpose of ridiculing folly, vice, stupidity – the whole range of human mistakes – in individuals and institutions.

FOIL- a character who parallels the main character, but is used to show contrast between the two characters.

RHETORIC- the art of speaking or writing effectively.

SYMBOL- a word, phrase, or object in a work of literature which signifies something beyond itself.

EPIPHANY- a sudden perception (moment of understanding) that causes a character to change or act in a certain way

**Challenge literary terms:**

For those students who have mastered the 9th grade literary terms, here are some new terms…
Extended metaphor: a detailed and complex metaphor that extends over a long section of a work.

in media res: “in the midst of things”; refers to opening a story in the middle of the action, necessitating filling in past details by exposition or flashback.

litotes: a figure of speech that emphasizes its subject by conscious understatement. An example from common speech is to say “Not bad” as a form of high praise.

motif: a recurrent device, formula, or situation.

paradox: a statement that seems contradictory but may actually be true.

unreliable narrator: a speaker or voice whose vision or version of the details of a story are consciously or unconsciously deceiving.

[note: the above definitions of literary terms are from The Norton Introduction to Literature, 7th edition]

metonymy: a figure of speech that takes the place of the name of a thing with the name of something else with which it is closely associated. For example, “The pen is mightier than the sword” (“Pen” takes the place of “the written word”; “Sword” takes the place of “violence”).

synecdoche: a figure of speech in which a part is made to represent the whole or vice versa, as in Cleveland won by six runs (meaning “Cleveland's baseball team”).