

MENU OF LITERARY ELEMENTS (IN ALL FICTIONAL NARRATIVES AND SOME POEMS)

Central Theme – the whole text boiled down to one sentence. What is the author essentially saying?

Additional Themes – prominent and/or recurring topics, such as *love, sacrifice, forgiveness, death, hope*

Plot – the elemental map of action or order of events which might include certain devices such as foreshadowing, flashback and flashforward

Setting – the time and place of key events

Point of View – the perspective from which the narrator narrates (or, if it's a poem, the speaker speaks) the narration (not the dialogue). **First Person** with the pronoun "I;" **Third Person** with the pronouns "he" and "she" – **Third Person Objective**: only words and actions, no thoughts or feelings of any of the characters; **Third Person Limited**: thoughts and feelings of only the protagonist; **Third Person Omniscient**: an all-knowing narrator who knows and shares ALL the characters' thoughts and feelings

Characterization – the collection of characters used to tell the story. Are they colorful? Are they distinct? How are they related to one another, and how do their relationships help further the story?

Dialogue – the way the dialogue shows the characters' personalities and hence serves the story

Diction – the author's word choice – how specific words and their denotations and connotations affect the reader and hence the story. Also, are there lots of double entendres (words with two meanings)?

Tone – the author's attitude

Rhythm or Meter – the cadence of the piece. How does it flow, and did the author purposefully employ an official meter, such as iambic pentameter or anapestic tetrameter or one of the myriad others?

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Figurative Language – simile, metaphor, alliteration, idiom, oxymoron, puns, personification and more

Symbolism – when a concrete object represents a larger more complex object or an abstract idea

Irony – when there is a surprising, 180-degree turn of events (**situational irony**); when the reader knows something that the characters don't (**dramatic irony**); and when the narrator and/or characters are sarcastic (**verbal irony**)

Paradox – when two opposing notions are both true, for example *war prevents peace, yet war sometimes creates peace, and we are the meanest to those we love the most*

Sensory Details – detailed, scientifically precise descriptions of places, people or things so that all readers are likely to see the same images in their minds

Imagery – chunks of words that evoke images and/or other sensory responses in the reader. Each reader might see or feel something different

Repetition – when words, phrases or ideas are repeated for either style or meaning

Allusion – indirect references to commonly understood concepts, historical events or texts

Anaphora – when the beginning portion of a clause is repeated as in "I have a dream...I have a dream..."

Others