**5V – Literary Terms**

*Use the grid below to test your knowledge on the literary terms of last year.*

*Fill in the relevant information for the book(s) you are reading this year.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Title |  |
| Escapist/Formulaic or Imaginative fiction? |  |
| Plot |  |
| Setting (time & place) |  |
| Theme(s) |  |
| Genre |  |
| Tension |  |
| Climax |  |
| Point of view |  |
| Characterisation |  |
| Symbolism |  |
| Irony  |  |
| Protagonist/antagonist |  |
| Conflict (internal – external) |  |

Literature Course

**Title**

* Titles state a story’s theme, they reinforce a work’s central ideas
* Point to a key aspect of a story, emphasis to draw attention to a key concept
* Highlight a story’s irony , meaning the opposite of what is stated or suggested

**Setting**

* Location, where the events in a story take place
* Time, when the events of the story take place
* Culture, reflecting the social milieu in which the charaters act out of the events of the story including
* Religious values
* Social mores
* Political beliefs
* Philosophical outlook
* Physical surroundings, the outward environment or physical landmarks surrounding the events of a story

Purpose of setting is to establish three basic elements

* Mood , an atmosphere readers almost feel
* Motivation, characters and their actions can be influenced by the choice of setting
* Theme, (central ideas of a story) often **reflected** in a work’s setting

**Plot**

Classic plot structure

Exposition, background information, usually in the beginning.

Rising action, series of events involving conflict, which creates tension and suspense.

Climax, the peak of tension a turning point in the action.

Denouement, the conflict finds resolution.

Conclusion, a warp-up sometimes epilogue.



Chronology is the timeline of a story’s events

Linear time events move from past to present

Non-linear time, forward and backward movement of time (flashbacks)

Nonconventional



*Conflict*

Internal conflict, a struggle within a character. Psychological, emotional or spiritual turmoil.

External conflict, pits characters against:

* Other characters
* The community, its people, ideals or traditions
* Nations or other political structures
* Nature

*Revelation*

* Exposition, providing background information, usually in the beginning
* Flashbacks, providing background information. Different from exposition in that they take the form of an actual re-enactment of events, come from characters dreams, reveries or memories.
* Foreshadowing, an event or piece of dialog that hints at what is to come.
* Suspended revelation, authors withhold information to create suspense and surprise. Mystery plots are based on this technique.

**Character**

Learn about character

* Speech, what characters say reveals a lot about them
* Actions, focussing on critical moments in characters’ lives, the reader needs to interpret how they respond to those moments
* Appearance, their attire, hair, physical stature, physical condition
* Background and history, characters are shaped by their backgrounds, take in account their gender, race, family, social-economic class and religion.
* What others say about them, can be a valuable source of information

How do readers learn about characters

Direct, a narrator tells us directly about a character’s internal and external make up. The narrator may perch inside a character’s mind outside or both

Indirect, no narrator reader access characters externally, we know them only from their word actions or what other characters say about them.

Characters are made convincing by being consistent in behaviour and motivations. And cohesive in overall psychological makeup. Even erratic behaving characters should be cohesive (whole).

*Character development*

* Round characters, fully developed emotionally and psychological complex.
* Flat characters, one dimensional, little or no emotional or psychological depth.
* Stock characters, stereotypes even caricatures, no development.

The reader talks about a character in two ways

* As real people
* As fictional creations

**Viewpoint**

The story is being filtered by the narrators; view of reality, bias or prejudice and knowledge of events.

The narrator is telling the story, the reader knows only as much as the narrator knows or tells.

*The narrator 3rd person,* is external to the story, standing outside of the events and characters.

* Omniscient narrator, all knowing. Reveals the actions and thoughts of all characters.
* Limited omniscient narrator, limited of knowledge. Reveals the actions and thoughts of inly primary characters.
* Objective narrator, impersonal. Reveals only the characters’ actions and speech, not their inner thoughts.

*The narrator 1st person*, is the ‘’I’’ of the story. A character in the story who recounts the events from his or her perspective. Can be unreliable or even manipulative.

**Symbolism**

Symbols allow us to convey powerful words without using words. Symbols are fluid, their meaning can change over time, situation, culture or geography. They are used to; reinforce and enlarge meaning and to help to write economically.

* Symbols—objects, people, and events that stand for something other than themselves.
* Conventional—found in daily life.
* Literary—suggestive, fluid, not absolute.
* Archetype—age-old universal patterns.
* Allegory—absolute, one-to-one correspondence, connected with religious works.

**Irony**

Irony is the opposite of what is expected or intended. Authors use irony to:

* Create a degree of realism
* Add depth to their portrayal of life
* Create humor

The 4 uses of irony

* Verbal irony, what’s said is not what’s meant.
* Situational irony, what happens is the opposite of what’s expected or desired.
* Dramatic irony, reader knows things the characters do not.
* Cosmic irony, bad things happen to good people.

**Themes**

Theme is a story’s central idea(s). To get ot a story’s central idea start paying attention to:

* title and setting
* repetition of words, phrases, actions. They’re often repeated pointing to their importance and leading to thematic clues.
* characters who change or grow

Many stories have multiple themes. Not every story has a theme: horror, detective, and adventure-thriller stories may not have themes. A theme can oversimplify. Discerning its themes enlarges our understanding of a work but doesn't capture the totality of its richness and complexity.

#### Elements of Story or Fiction - character, setting, plot, point of view, style, tone, theme

Elements of fiction and elements of story in general can be used by the reader to increase their enjoyment and understanding of different literary pieces. Once students are aware that all stories have elements of character, setting, plot, theme, point of view, style, and tone; they can be encouraged to ask themselves to identify the characteristics of each for a particular story. The more familiar they become with the different kinds of elements the better they will understand and critically analyze stories.

### Character

Character is the mental, emotional, and social qualities to distinguish one entity from another (people, animals, spirits, automatons, pieces of furniture, and other animated objects).

Character development is the change that a character undergoes from the beginning of a story to the end. Young children can note this.

**Characters are developed by**

Actions: In Charlottes' Web, Templeton, creeps up cautiously to the goslings, keeping close to the wall. Later he grins when Wilbur falls trying to spin a web. At the fair he bites Wilbur's tail as hard as he possibly can. His actions portray him as sneaky, ill-tempered, and pleased at others' discomfort.

Speech: In Charlottes' Web, Templeton after Wilbur asks him to play, frolic or have fun, replies, "...I never do those things if I can avoid them... I prefer to spend my time eating, gnawing, spying, and hiding... I am a glutton not a merry-maker. Right now I am on my way to your trough to eat your breakfast, since you haven't got sense enough to eat it yourself"

Appearance: In Charlottes' Web ,Templeton after his night at the fair returns swollen to double his usual size. He agrees to fetch the egg sac so that he may eat first every day and grow fatter and bigger than any other known rat.

Other character's comments: Other characters' comments help form judgment of the characters by supporting other characters' actions speech, appearance, and author's comments.

Author's comments: The wording the author uses in the narrative adds to characterization. In Charlottes' Web, White describes Templeton ...had no morals, no conscience, no scruples, no consideration, no decency, no milk of rodent kindness, no compunction, no higher feeling, no friendliness, no anything. He would kill a gosling if he could get away with it. These statements certainly develop character.

Unity of character and action: the character must be credible. If the character changes then the change must be shaped by events which the author is obligated to explain how they impacted to create the character's change. Stories with main character change: Meg; A Wrinkle in Time, Claudia; From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*,* the Duck; The Ugly Duckling, Wilbur; Charlotte's Web and Jess; Bridge To Terabithia.

**Types of characters**

Round characters are those the reader/listener/viewer gets to know well. They have a variety of traits that make them believable. Central characters are well developed in good literature. Meg, Claudia, Duck, Wilbur, and Jess are the central character, or protagonist (hero or heroine).

Flat characters are less well developed and have fewer or limited traits or belong to a group, class, or stereotype. Fern in Charlotte's Web. A character foil are minor characters whose traits contrast with a main character. The lamb is young and naive as Wilbur, but she is smug instead of humble.

Anthropomorphic characterization is the characterization of animals, inanimate objects, or natural phenomena as people. Skilled authors can use this to create fantasy even from stuffed toys (Winnie-the-Pooh). The characterizing of inanimate objects from tiny soldiers to trees and so on is represented in Andersen's works and the ballet The Nutcracker.

Animal characters in realism are best when the animals act only like animals as in The Incredible Journey.

**Character Change**

Dynamic characters are rounded characters that change. Wilbur as the panicky child. "I can't be quiet," screamed Wilbur, racing up and down. "I don't want to die. It is true... Charlotte. Is it true they are going to kill me when the cold weather comes? Later: "Listen to me? ... Charlotte ... has only a short time to live. She cannot accompany us home, because of her condition. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that I take her egg sac with me. I can't reach it, and I can't climb. You are the only one that can get it. There's not a second to be lost... Please, please, please, Templeton, climb up and get the egg sac. This desperate plea does not come from personal need. Further, he tells Templeton to "stop acting like a spoiled child.", and he who once planned his day around his slops offers Templeton to eat first and take his choice of all the yummies. Other dynamic characters are Meg in A Wrinkle in Time*,*Jess in Bridge to Terabithia*, and*Claudia in From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*.*

Static (stock) characters are round or flat characters that do not change during the story. Charlotte is the same wise and selfless character at the end of the story as at the beginning. Folktales, fairytales, and other types use static and flat characters whose actions are predictable, so the listener or reader is free to concentrate on the action and theme as it moves along toward an often times universal discovery.

### Plot

Plot is the order in which things move and happen in a story.

Chronological order is when a story relates events in the order in which they happened.

Flashback is when the story moves back in time. Jean George, Julie of the Wolves or dreams in Maurice Sendak's Where the Wild Things Are*.*Dreams are easier for children to understand because of their experience with them. Flashbacks are more problematic.

*Conflicts*occur when the protagonist struggles against an antagonist (villain that goes against the protagonist), or opposing force. Conflict and order make plot. The author creates the conflict by describing one of the following types of interactions.

Person-against-self: Tom Sawyer's fear of Injun Joe and guilt, can't sleep, fear of talking in sleep, ties mouth shut, struggle with moral responsibility even in the face of danger. A Wizard of Earthsea*,*Ursula K. Le Guin. Ged struggles against the flaws in himself, as the shadow, must make himself whole. "a man who, knows his whole true self cannot be used or possessed by any owner other than himself. He will now live his life for its own sake, not for hatred, pain, ruin, or the darkness of evil.

Person-against-person: Meg and IT in A Wrinkle in Time, Michael and his mother in The Hundred Penny Box by Sharon Bell Mathis, Little Red Riding Hood and The Three Little Pigs Vs. the wolves.

Person-against-society: Child will probably call it "will Wilbur live?", but it is really Wilbur Vs. dinner table, Wilbur Vs. good business. Kit Vs. the Puritans in The Witch of Blackbird Pond by Elizabeth George Speare.

Person-against-nature: Julie in Julie of the Wolves by Jean George. Karana in Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell.

***Pattern of action***

Rising action builds during the story and reaches a peak at the end. The Borrowers by Mary Norton.

Suspense is what makes us read on. Charlotte's Web: Wilbur's fate. Will he live? Will Charlotte run out of words? Is Templeton too selfish to help? Will Wilbur win at the fair? Can Charlotte go? Lose to Uncle? New category? Dead pig! Templeton bites tail...

Cliffhanger: Trouble River by Betsy Byars, The Borrowers by Mary Norton, and the High King by Lloyd Alexander.

Foreshadowing is the planting of clues to indicate the outcome of the story. Not all readers will be alert to these. Some may notice them subconsciously and describe their inferences as guesses or feelings. Charlotte's Web: When we first meet Charlotte we are told that she eats living things and the friendship looks questionable. But White adds that "she had a kind heart, and she was to prove loyal and true to the very end. A prophetic statement. Another clue is when Charlotte assures Wilbur, after he learns of the slaughter, with, "I am going to save you."

Sensationalism: the thrilling and the startling. Achieved at the expense of the character and the idea. A writer must be careful with sensationalism, so as not to weaken the character or theme, to balance suspense over action, and then hint at the outcome, as not to overpower small children but provide relief as needed.

Climax: The peak and turning point of the conflict, the point at which we know the outcome of the action. Children call it the most exciting part. In Charlotte's Webwhen the pig survives. The Borrowers when the boy ventilates the fumigation. A Wrinkle in Time when Meg discovers what she has that IT does not.

Resolution is the falling action after the climax. When the reader is assured that all is well and will continue to be, so the plot has a closed ending. If the reader is left to draw their own conclusions about the final plot then the ending is open. Many adults as well as children are disturbed by open endings.

Coincidence: events that happen by mere chance. The Incredible Journey has some coincidental events that remove credibility from the plot. First, a handwritten note blows into the fire and leaves the housekeeper baffled. She therefore does not know that the two dogs and cat have struck out on their own, and does not search for them. Later a crumbling beavers' dam gives way at just the right moment to sweep the frightened cat downstream. Later a boy hunting for the first time with his own rifle saves the cat from a lynx with one remarkable shot.

Sentimentality is a natural concern or emotion for another person. The way a soap opera or a tear-jerker plays on its viewers.

**Types of plots**

Progressive plots have a central climax followed by denouement (the final part of a play, film, or narrative in which the strands of the plot are drawn together and matters are explained or resolved.). Charlotte's Web and A Wrinkle in Time are examples.

### *Setting*

Setting includes time and place.

Backdrop setting is when the setting is unimportant for the story and the story could take place in any setting. Winnie-the-Pooh by A. A. Milne is an example of a story in which could happen in any setting.

Integral setting is when the action, character, or theme are influenced by the time and place, setting. Controlling setting controls characters. If you confine a character to a certain setting it defines the character. Characters, given these circumstances, in this time and place, behave in this way. *The Tail of Peter Rabbit*is an example of how the setting is an integral part of Peter's behavior. *Charlotte's Web*is another example of an integral setting.

Functions of setting: The Witch of Blackbird Pond by Elizabeth Speare creates a setting of Puritanical austerity: hand-rubbed copper, indicating hard work, the heavy fortress-like door, the dim little mirror, the severe wooden bench, the unpainted Meeting House, the whipping post, the pillory, and the stocks. The tasks of a typical day performed by Kit: mixing soap with a stick, the lye fumes stinging her eyes, tiring muscles, with one of the easiest tasks: making corn pudding, which keeps her over a smoky fire with burning and watering eyes. A frightening and uncompromising environment compared to her carefree Barbados upbringing.

### Theme

Theme is the main idea that weaves the story together, the why, the underlying ideas of what happens in the piece of literature, often a statement about society or human nature.

Explicit theme is when the writer states the theme openly and clearly. Charlotte's Web: friendship. Primary explicit themes are common in children's literature, as the author wants to be sure the reader finds it.

Implicit themes are implied themes. Charlotte's Web: If two such unlikely animals as a spider and pig can be friends, then so can we. Even a Tempelton can be a friend to a degree. Friendship is giving of ones self, as Wilbur did for the egg sac and devotion to the babies. Best friends can do no wrong. Friendship is reciprocal.

Multiple and secondary themes: Since a story speaks to us on our own individual level of varying experiences, many individual themes will be obtained from a good piece of literature. Charlotte's Web secondary themes could include: People don't give credit where credit is due, Youth and innocence have a unique value, Be what you are, There is beauty in all things, Nature is a miracle, Life is continuous.

### Point of view

Point of view is determined by the authors' descriptions of characters, setting, and events told to the reader throughout the story.

First-person is told with I, as in Island of the Blue Dolphins*,*A Ring of Endless Light*;*Madeleine L'Engle*,*Dear Mr. Hensha*w,*Huckleberry Finn, Kidnapped, Treasure Island, It's Like This Cat, Pigman and The Slave Dancer*.*The first person point of view may present difficulties for small children, because they are learning their own "I" identity, and may have trouble identifying with the strange "I" of the story.

Telling a story from one character also limits the amount of information available to the reader, requiring the reader to add information. Small children may lack enough experience to do this. However, Dr. Seuss wrote several successful books in first person: If I ran the Zoo, And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street*,*and May I Bring a Friend*?*.

Omniscient**:**third person (he, she, they) is all-knowing in every detail of action, thought, and feeling (conscious or unconscious) Charlotte's Web.

Sometimes the author uses limited omniscient point of view (when only a select amount of characters are presented omnisciently), Little House stories where Laura's actions and thoughts are told but not other characters. Laura's understanding of Santa Claus. "Santa Claus did not give grown people presents, but that was not because they had not been good... It was because they were grown up, and grown people must give each other presents.

### Style

Style is how the author says something, the choice of words and the use of language, sentence construction, imagery... not what the author says. It adds significance and impact to the author's writing.

Exposition: narrator or third person passages to provide background information to explain story events.

Dialogue between characters.

Vocabulary words used. Two kinds of words are combined to add meaning: connotation and denotation:

Connotation is the associative or emotional meaning of a word.
Denotation is the dictionary meaning of a word.

Sentence structure

Imagery words used to create mental sensory impressions (sights, sounds, textures, smells, and tastes). It creates setting, establishes mood, or describes characters.

Figurative language is language used in a non literal context to add intensity of meaning.

Figure of speech is an expression used in a non literal context to add intensity of meaning.

Personification is a figure of speech that gives human qualities to inanimate objects, nonhuman organisms, or abstractions.

Simile is a figure of speech that makes comparisons using like and as and occasionally than. That describe something in a manner that communicates a deeper understanding with economy of words or beyond a physical or direct description.

Metaphor is a figure of speech that transfers an idea associated with one word to another word.

Hyperbole is a figure of speech that exaggerates or uses an extravagant statement.

Understatement is the opposite of hyperbole.

Allusion is a figure of speech that refers to something in our common understanding, our past or our literature. Allusion is difficult for children since it relies on background information which they often lack.

Symbol is a person, object, situation, or action that operates on two levels of meaning, the literal and the figurative or suggestive. Dove: peace, flag: nationality of a country, handshake or gift: friendship.

Puns or wordplay

***Devices of sound***

Onomatopoeia is when a word sounds like what it represents.

Alliteration is repetition of initial consonants

Assonance is repetition of similar vowel sounds.

Consonance is the close repetition of consonant sounds.

Rhythm or in music meter, in prose cadence. Rhythm in Greek means flow. Reading aloud is the best test. Often used in picture books, Millions of Cat*,*by Wanda Gag and Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak.

### Tone

Tone tells us the author feels about his or her subject. Words express the writer's attitude toward his or her work, subject, and readers. Without vocal inflection to help convey tone, the writer must choose words with great care. We often describe a writer's tone but are not aware of how we discovered the tone. It sort of creeps into our consciousness. Tone can be serious, humorous, satirical, passionate, sensitive, zealous, indifferent, caring, caustic...