

Literary Devices & Elements: A Cheat Sheet

WRITING STRATEGY	DEFINITION
Characterization	<p>The means by which writers reveal character (personality, actions, appearance, thoughts).</p> <p>A quality that a character exhibits is called a character trait. This trait can be indicated by the character's statements, actions, or thoughts.</p> <p>Characters that change are described as being “round”</p> <p>Characters that do not change are described as being “static” or “flat”</p>
Conflict	<p>A central problem around which a story revolves.</p> <p>(1) INTERNAL CONFLICT: Person vs. Self</p> <p>(2) EXTERNAL CONFLICT: Person vs. Person</p> <p>(3) EXTERNAL CONFLICT: Person vs. Thing (Nature, Machine, Society)</p>
Imagery	<p>This is a set of mental pictures or images. It is the use of vivid or figurative language to represent objects, actions, or ideas. To make an imaginary world seem real, an author often makes use of words and phrases that appeal to the senses. These words and phrases, called images, help a reader mentally experience what the characters in the literary selection are actually experiencing. A well-written description should arouse a particular response or emotion in the reader's imagination. Sensory imagery is developed using the five senses: sight, sounds, taste, touch and smell.</p> <p>For example: The hot July sun beat relentlessly down, casting an orange glare over the farm buildings, the fields, the pond. Even the usually cool green willows bordering the pond hung wilted and dry. Our sun-baked backs ached for relief. We quickly pulled off our sweaty clothes and plunged into the pond, but the tepid water only stifled us and we soon climbed onto the brown, dusty bank. Our parched throats longed for something cool--a strawberry ice, a tall frosted glass of lemonade.</p>

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Irony	<p>This is the difference or gap between what is said and what is actually meant in a text.</p> <p>The 3 forms of irony are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Verbal irony: This is when a character or narrator says something but means exactly the opposite. An example might be, "Boy, she is really pretty" said about a muddy puppy with burs in her fur.-Situational irony: This is the difference between what appears to be and what actually is true. It is often demonstrated by an actual result being different than what is expected. For example, a story's main character could find the bad guy & bring him to justice, but walk out of the police station and be killed by a train.-Dramatic irony: This occurs when the reader/observer knows something that the character in a film or written text does not know. For instance, a woman might think that her husband has forgotten her birthday, but the reader/audience knows that he has really bought her a diamond ring that is hidden in her dessert at dinner.
Mood	<p>Mood happens when authors use descriptive words/adjectives to create a certain feeling or mood in the reader of the story; it's what the reader feels towards the subject of a story.</p> <p>Examples of mood might be: ominous, happy, depressing, exciting, and jubilant among many more.</p> <p>Mood is the general feeling or atmosphere that a piece of writing creates within the reader. Mood is produced most effectively through the use of setting, theme, voice and tone.</p>

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Point-of-View	<p>The voice telling the story is the narrator. Point of view refers to the voice in which the story is told. It is the set of eyes the author uses to let the reader see the action unfold. The three points of view or voices follow:</p> <p>First-Person – “I, we, & us” With the use of first person, the narrator is an actual character in the story. His or her knowledge is, therefore, limited to that one person’s perspective.</p> <p>Third-Person – When writing in third person, the narrator uses names of characters & pronouns like “he, him, she, her, they, & them.” If the narrator relates thoughts of only one character in the story, it is third person limited, as in limited to the knowledge of the thought process for that one character. In a third person omniscient point of view, the narrator knows and relates not only action of all characters in the story, but of each character’s thoughts as well, thus the term omniscient or all knowing.</p> <p>Second-Person – A narrator using second person is rather rare. The pronoun “you” is used in this type of writing. An example follows: “You feel the salt air on your skin. You feel alone and isolated on the beach; yet, you feel deep inside of yourself that you are not alone.”</p>
Setting	<p>The time and place in which a story takes place.</p> <p>Details of a setting include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Time/Historical Period: the general period of the plot and the main location of the story-Physical Features: what the place/location of the setting looks like physically-Geographic Location: the actual location of the place
Symbolism	<p>This occurs when something specific is used to represent something abstract. Example: Moaning wind representing loneliness</p> <p>What concrete, specific objects have been used to represent abstract ideas? What colors, names, settings, recurring objects have been referred to? What ideas do these represent?</p>

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Tone	Tone is the attitude that the author conveys about his/her subject through his/her choice of words. Examples of tone follow: serious / light-hearted / bitter / angry / ironic / sarcastic