

## List of Definitions

Here is a master list of the literary terms from this resource and their definitions. It can be used as a quick resource in the event that you need to design quizzes or prepare for the AP Lit exam.

**Alliteration** - The repetition of initial consonant sounds in adjacent words.

**Allusion** - An allusion is a reference to something outside a text. This can be a reference to an event or person from history, history, mythology, pop culture, or something else.

**Assonance** - The repetition of vowel sounds in adjacent words.

**Caesura** - Caesura refers to a pause within a line of poetry, indicated by punctuation.

**Catharsis** - The cleansing or purging of emotion in or caused by a literary work.

**Closed Form Poetry** – Poetry that sticks to predictable patterns and structures.

**Connotation** - Connotations are the associated feelings or ideas that a particular word evokes.

**Diction** - Diction refers to the author's choice of words. To analyze diction, you want to use precise adjectives to clarify what *type* of diction the author uses.

**Dramatic Irony** - When the reader or audience member knows something that a character does not.

**Dynamic Character** – A dynamic character undergoes a significant character change throughout a narrative.

**Enjambment** - Enjambment occurs when a line of poetry continues onto the next line without any punctuation.

**Epiphany** - An epiphany refers to a sudden realization or discovery of the truth or meaning of things.

**Flashback** – A flashback is a scene that interrupts the established linear narrative of a text. Flashbacks often introduce character backgrounds and other important details for a text.

**Foil** – A foil is a character who contrasts with the protagonist. While foils share some similarities, they have a major contrast, from which we can learn about the protagonist.

**Hyperbole** - Hyperbole is the use of extravagant exaggeration for a figurative effect.

**Imagery** - Imagery refers to the sensory images contained in or evoked by a text. It can be figurative or directly described.

**In Medias Res** - *In medias res* is Latin for "in the midst of things." It refers to a narrative that starts in the middle of the plot as opposed to its exposition.

**Juxtaposition** - Juxtaposition is the act of contrasting two objects or images side by side and studying the effects of this contrast.

**Metaphor** - A metaphor is a subtle or implied comparison between two unlike things.

**Narrator** - The narrator is the voice or persona telling a story.

**Open Form Poetry** - Open form poetry does not follow expected or predictable patterns.

**Paradox** - A paradox is a statement that contradicts itself, or that must be both true and untrue at the same time.

**Personification** - Personification is the act of giving human qualities to a non-human object, emotion, or entity.

**Perspective** - Perspective is how narrators, characters, or speakers understand their circumstances, and is informed by background, personality traits, biases, and relationships.

**Point of View** - Point of view refers to the perspective used in a text, which affects how a story is told.

**Setting** – Setting includes the time and place of a story, but it can also include the historical and cultural background of a text.

**Simile** - A simile is a direct comparison between two unlike things. You can spot it by the use of words "like," "as," "than," or "resembles."

**Situational Irony** - Situational irony occurs when the expected action is turned on its head and the opposite happens instead.

**Static Character** – A static character remains unchanged throughout the course of a narrative.

**Symbol** - A tangible object that represents something intangible or abstract.

**Syntax** - Syntax refers to the arrangement of words in a line of poetry or in a sentence of prose.

The following words are also defined within the notes, although they do not have isolated lessons devoted to them:

**1<sup>st</sup> Person POV** – The narrator is a character in the story and uses "I" and "my" language. We see their thoughts and feelings.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Person POV** - The narrator speaks directly to the reader and gives directions. There is little focus on the narrator.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Person Limited POV** – The narrator is outside of the story but has insight into a main character, presenting their thoughts and feelings.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Person Omniscient POV** - The narrator is outside of the story and has insight into multiple characters' thoughts and feelings.

**Archetype** - An archetype is a commonly used character type, which often acts as a symbol.

**Dialect** - Dialect is a change of diction to reflect a character's particular place of origin or community of origin

**Conceit**- A startling or extended metaphor is stretched over several lines or an entire work.

**Free Verse** - Poems that do not have any organizational patterns are written in free verse.

**Implied Metaphor** - An implied metaphor is not as directly stated as a regular metaphor.

**Line** - Each poem is constructed in lines. The poet decides when to move onto the next line and closed form poems are often very constricting in these choices.

**Meter** - A pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables. Regular meter makes a poem sound more rhythmic.

**Rhyme** - When a vowel and consonant sound is repeated in different words (ex: end and bend). Many closed form poems use rhyme in alternating lines.

**Speaker** – The voice in a poem; the equivalent of a narrator in poetry.

**Stanza** - A group of lines in a poem. Closed form poems often organize stanzas by rhyme.

**Understatement** – A remark that deliberately minimizes in a figurative way.

