

English/Language Arts Glossary: Grades 9-12

TERM	DEFINITION
Act	Major unit of action in a play, similar to a chapter in a book. Depending on their length, plays, such as Shakespeare's <i>Romeo & Juliet</i> , can have as many as 5 acts. Susan Glaspell's book <i>Trifles</i> is a one act play.
Action	The series of related incidences or occurrences in a story or play.
Active voice	The verb form in which the subject performs the action expressed in the verb; the subject acts. <i>Ex: He hit the ball.</i>
Affix	A bound (nonword) morpheme that changes the meaning or the function of a root or stem to which it is attached. <i>Ex: prefix "ad" and suffix "ing" in "adjoining."</i>
Allegory	Work of literature in which people, objects, and events stand for abstract qualities. <i>Ex: Bird may represent freedom.</i>
Alliteration	The repetition of the same sound at the beginning of two or more words immediately succeeding each other or at short intervals. <i>Ex: Silver sweet the sounds.</i>
Allusion	A reference to a historical person or event or to a literary work or figure that is well-known enough to be recognized by a well-read person.
Analogy	A comparison between two different things to highlight some similarity.
Analyze	To consider all parts and details of a subject to discover essential features or meanings.
Anaphora	Repetition of a word or words at the beginning of successive lines, clauses, or sentences.
Anecdote	A short narrative usually consisting of a single incident or episode; often humorous, it can be real or fictional.
Annotated bibliography	The inclusion of additional comments in the works listed in a standard bibliography.
Antagonist	A character of force who directly opposes the main character in a story.
Antecedent	A word, phrase, or clause to which a following pronoun refers. <i>Ex: Iris tried, but she couldn't find the book. (Iris is the antecedent.)</i>
Anticlimax	A break in the climactic order of events, making the effect of the climax less intense.
Antithesis	Words, phrases, clauses, or sentence set in deliberate contrast to one another.
Aphorism	A brief statement, usually one sentence long, that expresses a general principle or truth about life.
Apostrophe	A direct address to an absent person or thing as if it were present or alive.
Appeal to authority	In persuasion, when the writer appeals to experts in a field or (manipulatively) to authoritative figures in other fields.

Appeal to emotion	In persuasion, when the writer appeals to the readers emotions to convince them of his/her opinion. Often used without supporting facts in order to manipulate the audience. Also called and appeal to pathos.
Appeal to pity (pathos)	In persuasion, an appeal to emotion, in this case trying to convince by manipulating the audience feelings of pity or guilt.
Appeal to reason (logos)	In persuasion, an appeal to logic and or reason, using verifiable examples and logical reasoning to convince one's audience.
Appeal to character (ethos)	In persuasion, using one's credentials, reputation, understanding of the opposition and concessions to the opposition to show that one is ethical and to be trusted.
Appositive	A word or phrase that restates or modifies an immediately preceding noun.
Archetype	The original pattern or model of which all things of the same type are representations or copies; a universal example.
Archetypal criticism	Literary criticism of archetypes used in literature.
Aside	A few words or a short passage spoken in an undertone or directly to the audience in drama (characters onstage are deaf to this).
Assessment	The act or process of gathering data to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of student learning, as by observation, testing, etc.
Assonance	The effect created when words of the same vowel sound are used in close proximity (but the consonants are different). <i>Ex: Sinking as the light wind lives or dies.</i>
Atmosphere	The overall mood or emotion that contributes to the effect the author wishes to achieve.
Audience	Person or persons who are intended to read a piece of writing, which determines its form, style, tone, and details.
Author's purpose	This may be to entertain, inform, express opinions, or persuade the reader.
Author's perspective	An author's beliefs and attitudes as expressed in his or her writing. These beliefs may be influenced by the author's political views, ethnic background, economic position, education or religion.
Autobiography	The story of a person's life told by himself.
Ballad	A song or song-like poem that tells a story.
Bandwagon	A popular party or cause that attracts growing support; a current trend.
Baseword	A word to which affixes may be added to create related words.
Bibliography	An alphabetical list of references or sources consulted by a writer.
Bildungsroman	A study of the maturation of a youthful character.
Biography	The story of a person's life written by someone else.
Blank verse	The most common meter of unrhymed poetry with five iambic feet per line.

Body paragraph	One of many middle paragraphs in an essay. Each paragraph develops a point that works to support the thesis.
Caesura	A pause or division of a line of Anglo-Saxon poetry into two parts, with each part having accented syllables.
Cause and effect	This type of writing explains why something happened, why certain conditions exist, or what resulted from an action or a condition. It can explain a character's actions, the progress of disease, or the outcome of war.
Character	A person represented in a narrative or drama.
Character development	The process by which the character is introduced, revealed, and changed in a story. <i>Static</i> characters undergo little change, whereas <i>dynamic</i> characters change meaningfully.
Characterization	Techniques that writers use to develop characters directly or indirectly: (a) physical appearance; (b) character's own speech, thoughts, feelings, or actions; (c) the speech, thoughts, feelings and actions of other characters; and (d) direct comments made about the character by the author.
Chorus	In early Greek tragedy, the chorus commented on the actions in the drama. In Elizabethan plays, such as <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , the role of the chorus is spoken by a single actor who serves as a narrator and speaks the lines in the prologue (and sometimes in an epilogue). The chorus serves to foreshadow or to summarize events.
Cliché	An overused expression that has lost its freshness, force, and appeal.
Climax	In dramatic or narrative literature, the moment when the interest and emotional intensity reach their highest point. The moment is also called the turning point, since it usually determines how the conflict of the story will be resolved.
Cloze procedure	An assignment in which students find the correct terms omitted in a sentence or passage.
Clustering	A content field technique or strategy to help students freely associate ideas in their experience with a keyword proposed by the teacher, thus forming a group of related concepts; a teaching process of relating a target word to a set of synonyms and other word associations.
Colloquial English	The casual, informal language of ordinary native speakers.
Comedy	Dramatic work that is often light and humorous in tone, usually ending happily with the peaceful resolution of the main conflict.
Comic relief	Humorous scene, incident, or speech that is included in a serious drama to provide respite from emotional intensity. Because it breaks the tension, comic relief allows an audience to prepare emotionally for events to come. The sharp contrasts afforded by comic relief may intensify the themes of a literary work.

Coming-of-age story	The main character is an adolescent in the process of growing up who faces conflicts, makes difficult decisions, and gains new awareness of self and others.
Commentary	An opinion or comment about something; not concrete detail. Synonyms include insight, analysis, interpretation, inference, personal response, feelings, evaluation, explication, reflection, and thoughts.
Compare	To show how two things are similar as well as different; include details and examples.
Compound sentence	A sentence of two or more coordinated independent clauses. <i>Ex: George talked and Mary listened.</i>
Conceit	A type of extended metaphor that parallels two essentially dissimilar things on several points; it is usually elaborate and formal.
Concluding sentence	The last sentence in a body paragraph. It is usually commentary, does not repeat key words, and gives a finished feel to the paragraph.
Conclusion	The last paragraph in an essay. It sums up ideas and reflects on what is discussed in the essay in words different from those in the thesis.
Concrete details	The specific details that form the basis for body paragraphs. Synonyms include facts, specifics, examples, descriptions, illustrations, support, proof, evidence, quotations, paraphrasing, plot references, and anecdotal references.
Concrete image	A literal representation of a sensory experience or an object that can be known by more than one of the senses.
Conflict	The struggle between two opposing forces, ideas, or significant characters that forms the basis of the plot of a story or play. <i>External conflict</i> is the struggle between a significant character and an outside force (man vs. man, man vs. nature, and man vs. society). <i>Internal conflict</i> is the struggle that occurs within the heart and mind of a significant character (man vs. himself).
Connotation	An association or additional meaning that a word, image, or phrase may carry, beyond its literal reference or dictionary definition.
Consonance	The repetition of consonant sounds within and at the ends of words. <i>Ex: lonely afternoon.</i>
Contrast	To show how two things are different; include examples or details.
Couplet	A rhymed pair of lines. A heroic couplet has two rhyming lines written in iambic pentameter.
Critical Essay	Evaluates a situation, a course of action or a work of art.
Critique	To point out both the good and bad points in a text.
Declarative sentence	A sentence that makes a statement.
Define	To give an accurate meaning of a term with enough detail to show that you really understand it.
Denotation	The literal or dictionary definition of a word.

Dénouement	The final outcome of the main dramatic event in a literary work, similar to the resolution.
Describe	To write about the subject so that the reader can easily visualize it; tell how it looks or happened, including how, who, where, when, and why.
Description	One of the four traditional types of writing, it is meant to give a verbal picture of the character and event, including the setting. Sensory imagery, figurative language, and precise, vivid diction are descriptive techniques for effective description.
Diagram	To make a drawing of something (such as a sentence) and label its parts.
Dialect	A regional variety of language differing from the standard language by variations of accent, grammar, or vocabulary.
Dialogue	A conversation between two or more characters in a short story, novel, play, poem, or work of nonfiction. It may be used to reveal character and character relationships, to show conflicts between characters, to give background information, or to advance the story.
Diary	A diary is a writer's personal day-to-day account of his or her experiences and impressions. Most diaries are private and not intended to be shared. Some, however, have been published because they are well written and provide useful perspectives on historical events or on the everyday life of particular areas. Anne Frank's <i>The Diary of a Young Girl</i> is an example of a famous diary. Though Elie Weisel's <i>Night</i> is actually a memoir, its day-to-day retellings of what happened in the concentration camp make it sound like a diary.
Diction	Word choice or vocabulary.
Discuss	To give a complete or detailed answer, including important characteristics and main points.
Drama	A composition in verse or prose, usually for theatrical performance, that portrays characters through stories involving conflicts in which emotions are expressed through dialogue and action.
Dramatic irony	Where the reader or viewer knows something that a character does not know. For example, Susan Glaspell's play <i>Trifles</i> , the audience knows that Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale have discovered evidence leading to a motive for crime, and therefore the guilty person, while the men in the play are still clueless.
Dramatic monologue	A lyric poem in which a speaker addresses a silent or absent listener in a moment of high intensity or deep emotion, as if engaged in private conversation. The speaker proceeds without interruption or argument, and the effect on the reader is that of hearing just one side of a conversation. This technique allows the poet to focus on the feelings, personality, and motivations of the speaker. The poem known as "The Seven Ages of Man," spoken by Jaques (a character in Shakespeare's play <i>As You Like It</i>), is a dramatic monologue.

Elegy	An extended meditative poem in which the speaker reflects upon death (often in tribute to someone who has died) or an equally serious subject.
Encode	To change a message into, as encode oral language into writing, encode an idea into words, etc.
Enumerate	To count off or list examples, reasons, or effects one by one.
Epic	A long narrative poem composed in an elevated style recounting the trials and adventures of a hero and his fateful exchanges with the gods or God.
Epic hero	A larger-than-life figure who embodies the ideals of a nation or race. Epic heroes take part in dangerous adventures and accomplish great deeds. Many undertake long, difficult journeys, displaying great courage and superhuman strength. Odysseus is an epic hero.
Epic simile	An epic simile (also called a Homeric simile) is a long, elaborate comparison that often continues for a number of lines.
Epilogue	A short addition at the end of a literary work, often dealing with the future characters. The concluding speech by Prince Escalus in <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> serves as an epilogue.
Epigram	Originally from ancient Greece, this is a short poem or saying that is characterized by conciseness, balance, clarity, and wit.
Episode	An incident, or series of incidents, that is complete in itself and is also part of the total action of a story or play. In a play, a change of episode occurs every time a major character enters or leaves the stage.
Epitaph	An inscription on a tomb or monument to honor the memory of a deceased person, or a verse that commemorates someone who has died.
Epithet	A word or phrase preceding or following a name which serves to describe the character. <i>Ex: Alexander the Great.</i>
Essay	A piece of expository writing guided by a thesis that expresses an author's thoughts about a subject (i.e., persuasive, expository, narrative, description). Synonym: composition.
Etymology	The history of words; the study of the history of words.
Evaluate	The give an opinion on the value of the subject, discuss its good and bad points, strengths and weaknesses.
Exclamatory sentence	A sentence that makes a vehement statement or conveys strong or sudden emotion.
Explain	To give the meaning of something; give facts and details that make the idea easy to understand.
Exposition	One of the four traditional forms of composition in speech and writing. It is intended to set forth or explain.
Expressive writing	Highly personal writing, such as in diaries, personal letters, and autobiographies.
Extended metaphor	A figure of speech comparing two essentially unlike things at some length and in several ways (without using <i>like</i> or <i>as</i>). <i>Ex: the poem "Metaphor" by Eve Merriam compares each day in one's life to a new sheet of paper.</i>

Fable	Narration demonstrating a useful truth or moral, especially one in which animals speak as humans; legendary, supernatural tale.
Factual prose	A combination of fact and fiction in prose to such a degree that the reader has difficulty classifying a selection as definitely one or the other (also called <i>creative nonfiction</i>).
Fairy tale	A story, usually for children, about fairies or other magical creatures.
Falling action	In a plot structure, the falling action, sometimes called the resolution , occurs after the climax of a story. The conflict is usually resolved at this time, and any loose ends of the story are tied up. In "American History" by Judith Ortiz Cofer, the falling action begins when the narrator turns away from the door of Eugene's house.
False causality	A false cause: just because an action happens just before another action does not mean it caused the second action. Also called post hoc fallacy.
Fantasy	Fiction with strange or otherworldly settings or characters; fiction that invites suspension of reality.
Farce	A type of comedy featuring exaggerated (often stereotypical) character types in ludicrous and improbable situations.
Fiction	A narrative literary work that is a product of human imagination and is not necessarily based on fact. The writer shapes his or her narrative to capture the reader's interest and to achieve desired effects. The two major types of fiction are novels and short stories. The basic elements of fiction are character, setting, plot and theme.
Fiction in verse	Full-length novels with plot, subplot(s), theme(s), major and minor characters, in which the narrative is presented in (usually blank) verse form.
Figurative language	Any language which deviates from the literal language so as to furnish novel effects or fresh insights into the subject being discussed. The most common figures of speech are simile, metaphor, personification, and hyperbole.
Final draft	The final version of an essay.
First draft	The first version of an essay, also called the rough draft.
First person	A passage or story written from the point of view of the main character.
First person point of view	A story told from the first person point of view has a narrator who is a character in the story and uses the pronouns I, me and my.
Flashback	An interruption in the action of a story, play, or work of nonfiction to show an episode that happened at an earlier time. It is usually used to provide background information necessary to an understanding of the characters in a plot.
Fluency	The clear/easy written or spoken expression of ideas; freedom from word-identification problems that might hinder silent reading comprehension or the expression of ideas orally.

Foil	A character in a work of literature whose physical or psychological qualities contrast strongly with, and therefore highlight, the corresponding qualities of another character.
Folklore	The songs, stories, myths, and proverbs of a people as handed down by word of mouth (oral tradition).
Folk tale	A short, simple story that is handed down, usually by word of mouth, from generation to generation (including legends, fairy tales, myths, and fables).
Footnote	A note of reference, explanation, or comment placed below the text on a printed page.
Foreshadowing	The arrangement of important clues in a play or story to prepare the reader for the events which will occur later in a narrative.
Form	A way of arranging words on a page: the length and placement of lines and the grouping of lines (free verse, sonnet, etc); also used to identify genre (short story, poetry, etc.)
Frame story	When a story is told within a narrative setting or frame, hence creating a story within a story. This storytelling technique has been used for more than 1,000 years and was employed in famous works such as <i>One Thousand and One Arabian Nights</i> and Chaucer's <i>The Canterbury Tales</i> .
Free verse	Poetry that does not contain a regular rhyme or meter. The lines often flow more naturally than in traditional verse and thus achieve a rhythm more like everyday human speech. Much of 20 th -century poetry is written in free verse.
Functional writing	Writing with a primarily practical purpose, including letter and resume writing. Demonstrates a grasp of the form/style distinctions between friendly, formal, and business communication.
Genre	A term for different kinds of literary work. <i>Ex: epic, novel, drama, etc.</i>
Haiku	Form of Japanese poetry that has the qualities of precision, economy, and delicacy. Nature is usually the subject, and the poem is arranged in 3 lines of 5, 7, and 5 syllables.
Hero	The protagonist who is the central character in a work of fiction, drama, or epic poetry. A tragic hero is dignified or noble and has some sort of defect (tragic flaw) that leads to his downfall.
Historical fiction	A story with fictional characters and events in a historical setting.
Horror	Fiction containing strange, mysterious, violent, and often supernatural events that create suspense, terror and dread in both the characters and the reader. Edgar Allen Poe and Stephen King are famous authors of horror fiction.
Humor	Humor of situation involves exaggerated events or situational irony; humor of character is based on exaggerated personalities of characters; humor of language may include sarcasm, exaggeration, puns, or verbal irony.

Hyperbole	Overstatement or exaggeration used to emphasize a point; tool of irony.
Iambic pentameter	A metrical line of five feet, or units, each made up of two syllables (first unstressed and second stressed).
Idiom	Use of words peculiar to a particular language.
Illustrate	To make the point or idea clear by giving examples.
Imagery	Consists of descriptive words and phrases that recreate sensory experiences for the reader, Imagery usually appeals to one or more of the five senses-sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch – to help the reader imagine exactly what is being described. The imagery in the poem “Incident in the Rose Garden” by Donald Justice helps the reader to see Death, wearing a black coat, black gloves, and a black hat. In the story “To Build a Fire” by Jack London, the description of a fire snapping, crackling, and dancing appeals to the sense of sights, and hearing. Concrete details that appeal to the senses to arouse emotion in the reader.
Imperative sentence	Sentence that expresses a command or request.
In media res	Latin term that refers to the narrative tactic of beginning the story midway in the events it depicts before explaining the context and preceding actions.
Inference	Reasonable and intelligent conclusion drawn from hints provided by an author.
Informative Article	An informative article gives five facts about a specific subject. This type of writing is primarily found in newspapers, magazines, textbooks, anthologies, encyclopedias, and reference books.
Internal rhyme	Rhyming words within a line of poetry.
Interpret	To bring out the meaning, clarify and make explicit. This usually involves judgment or evaluation.
Interrogative sentence	Sentence that asks a question or makes an inquiry.
Interview	An interview is a conversation such as that conducted by a writer or reporter, in which facts or statements are elicited from another, recorded, then broadcast or published.
Introduction	The first paragraph in an essay. The paragraph must contain a thesis statement.
Irony	The contrast between what is expected, or appears to be, and what actually is: (a) <i>situational irony</i> -the contrast between what a character or reader thinks will happen and what actually happens; (b) <i>verbal irony</i> -to say one thing, when the exact opposite is intended, sarcasm; (c) <i>dramatic irony</i> is based on the difference between the way events work out and what is expected to happen or the contrast between what the character knows and what the audience knows; (d) the contrast between the nature of a subject and the language used to describe it.
Justify	To give good reasons to support a decision, action, event, or claim.

Kenning	Metaphorical compound words or phrases substituted for simple nouns in Anglo-Saxon poetry.
Legend	A story, sometimes of a narrative or folk hero, that has a basis in fact but includes imaginative material.
Levels of diction	The level of formality in word choice. The least formal is colloquial English (slang), followed by general English and then formal English.
Literary analysis	The study of a literary work by a critic, student, or scholar and the careful, detailed reading and report thereof.
Literary criticism	The analysis and judgment of works of literature.
Loaded language	Words with strong connotations or emotional connections; mostly used in persuasive writing.
Local color	A story that deliberately depicts characters typical only in the region where the story takes place. It uses dialect and describes the habits of people and features of their life peculiar to that region.
Lyric	A short poem in which a single speaker expresses thoughts and feelings in intensely emotional language. Most poems, other than dramatic monologues or narrative poems, are lyrics.
Magical Realism	Magical realism is a literary genre, or type of literature, that combines fantastic or magical events with realistic happenings in a matter of fact way to delight or surprise the reader.
Main idea	The gist of a passage; a central thought; the chief topic of a passage expressed or implied in a word or phrase; the topic sentence of a paragraph.
Media sources	The means of communication, especially of mass communication, such as books, newspapers, magazines, radio, television, movies, recordings.
Memoir	A form of autobiographical writing in which a person recalls significant events in his life. Although basically personal, memoirs may deal with newsworthy events having significance beyond the confines of the writer's life. Memoirs often include the writers' feelings and opinions of historical events, giving the reader insight into the impact of history on people's lives.
Metacognition	An awareness and knowledge of one's mental processes such that one can monitor, regulate, and direct them to a desired end, self-mediation.
Metaphor	A figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness between them. <i>Ex: He was drowning in money.</i>
Metaphysical poetry	Style of poetry written by 17 th -century poets who approached topics such as religion, death, and even love by analyzing them logically and philosophically.
Meter	Repetition of a regular rhythmic unit in a line of poetry. Each unit is a foot, with one stressed syllable and either one or two unstressed syllables. The basic types of metrical feet are the iamb (unstressed, stressed), trochee (stressed, unstressed), anapest (2 unstressed, stressed), and dactyl (stressed, 2

	unstressed); the number of metrical feet in a line can be monometer, dimeter, trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter, etc.
Monologue	An extended speech by one person directly addressing the audience or another character.
Mood	A state of mind or feeling created by a literary work.
Moral	The lesson to be learned from a literary work.
Motif	A recurring element, such as an image, theme, or type of incident.
Motivation	The values, desires, or beliefs which can cause a character to act as he does.
Mystery	Fiction dealing with the solution of a crime or the unraveling of secrets.
Myth/ Mythology	A legend or traditional narrative, often based in part on historical events or the action of gods, that reveals human behavior and natural phenomena through the use of symbolism.
Narrative device	A strategy used to develop a story, such as dialogue, description, or plot development.
Narrative nonfiction	Factual information presented in the format of a story.
Narrative Poem	Poems that tell stories.
Narrator	The narrator is the character or voice that relates the story's events to the reader.
Nonfiction	Informational text dealing with noninvented, nonimagined subjects.
Nonverbal	A nonlanguage communication, such as noise, gesture, or facial expression.
Novel	An extended work of fictional prose narrative.
Ode	An exalted, complex lyric that develops a serious and dignified theme, appealing to the imagination and the intellect.
Onomatopoeia	Term used to describe words whose pronunciations suggest their meanings. <i>Ex: buzz, zip, moo.</i>
Organizational pattern	The manner in which an essay is organized (e.g., general to specific).
Outline	An organized listing of the important points of a subject.
Oxymoron	A figure of speech that combines two apparently contradictory elements. <i>Ex: wise fool.</i>
Parable	A brief narrative that teaches a moral.
Paradox	A statement that seems to contradict itself but may nevertheless suggest an important truth.
Parallelism	The phrasing of language so as to balance ideas of equal importance. It may apply to phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or longer passages. The use of similar grammatical structures, sentence patterns, or figures of speech to express ideas that are equal or similar.
Paraphrase	To express in other words the meaning of something spoken or written.

Parody	A mocking imitation of a literary work or style, usually for comic purposes.
Passive voice	A verb form in which the subject of the verb is the receiver of some action or state indicated by the verb. <i>Ex: He was hit by the ball.</i>
Pastoral	A poem presenting shepherds in rural settings, usually in an idealized manner.
Peer response/edit	Written responses and reactions to a partner's paper.
Personal Essay	Personal Essay- A short work of nonfiction that expresses a writer's thoughts, feelings, and opinions about a subject.
Personification	A figure of speech that gives human qualities to abstract ideas, animals, and inanimate objects.
Persuade	To give good reasons to get someone to either do or believe something; try to appeal to the reader's feelings and mind.
Persuasion	One of the four traditional forms of composition in speech and writing, it is meant to move the reader by argument or entreaty to a belief or position.
Picaresque	A narrative, usually told in the first-person voice, that presents the life and adventures of a likeable rogue.
Plot	The significant pattern of action in a short story, novel, or play. The plot usually involves one or more conflicts, which may be external or internal.
Plot structure	1. Exposition/introduction: first part of a story that establishes the characters, conflicts, situation, style, genre, etc. 2. Rising Action: sequence of minor conflicts, incidents, or occurrences that lead to the major conflict or climax. 3. Climax: Decisive moment in the conflict; moment of highest interest, often called the crisis or turning point. 4. Falling action: the complications of the rising action are untangled, leading to the resolution. 5. Resolution/conclusion: the outcome of the plot, the way the author ends the conflict
Poem	An arrangement of words, sometimes with rhyme, to express an idea or emotion.
Poetry	Verse and rhythmic writing with imagery that evokes emotional responses.
Point of view	The author's choice of a narrator for his story. In first person, the narrator is a character in the story who can reveal only his own thoughts and feelings and what he sees and is told by other characters. In third person limited, the narrator is an outsider who can only report what he sees and hears. In third person omniscient, the narrator is an all-knowing outsider who can enter the minds of one or all of the characters.
Prefix	An affix attached before a base word.
Prewriting	The initial creative stage of writing, prior to drafting, in which the writer formulates ideas, gathers information, and considers ways in which to organize the information.

Primary source	Those that offer direct, firsthand knowledge (e.g., diary, memoir, personal history). They reveal the beliefs of motives of people involved in a historic event.
Props	Physical objects that are used in establishing the setting of a stage production.
Prose	All forms of written or spoken expression that are organized and lack regular rhythmic patterns.
Prosody	The study of metrical and rhythmic structures in poetry and prose.
Protagonist	The main character or hero in a story.
Prove	To show that something is true by giving facts or logical reasons.
Proverb	A short, pithy saying in frequent and widespread use that expresses a basic truth or practical precept.
Pun	A play on words wherein a word is used to convey two meanings at the same time.
Quatrain	A four-line stanza.
Realism	A manner of writing in which things are presented as they actually exist in real life without romantic or idealistic coloring. The characters are usually of the middle or working class; unexceptional people who live through ordinary experiences, but who may, under special circumstances, display heroism.
Realistic fiction	A type of fiction that creates a truthful imitation of ordinary life.
Refrain	A phrase repeated at intervals throughout a poem.
Regionalism	The literary representation of a specific locale that incorporates the particulars of geography, customs, history, folklore, and speech into the work.
Relate	To show how things are alike or connected.
Repetition	The recurrence of words, phrases, or lines for a purpose.
Resolution	The tangles of a plot are untied and mysteries are solved. Also known as the denouement.
Respond	To state an overall reaction to the content of a text or portion of a text, then support one's individual opinions with specific reasons and examples, making sure to refer back to the text.
Response to literature	An interpretation of a literary selection.
Rhetoric	The art of effective expression and the persuasive use of language.
Rhetorical question	A question to which no answer is expected because the answer is obvious. Often used in persuasive writing.
Rhyme	The similarity of sound between two words. (There are several kinds of rhyme: end rhyme occurs at the end of a line; internal rhyme occurs within a line; slant/approximate rhyme with words that almost rhyme, like care and dear.
Rhyme scheme	Using letters of the alphabet to represent alternating end rhymes of poems: <i>star</i> (a) <i>are</i> (a) <i>high</i> (b) <i>sky</i> (b).

Rhythm	The pattern of flow or sound created by the arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry.
Rime	An archaic spelling of rhyme. A vowel and any of the following consonants of a syllable. <i>Ex: "ook" in Book or brook.</i>
Rising action	As a story begins, its plot moves forward and a conflict is introduced. Complications arise, causing difficulties for the main characters.
Romance	An imaginative adventure concerning nobles, gallant love, chivalric code of honor, daring deeds, and supernatural events.
Root word	The meaningful base form of a complex word after all affixes are removed.
Sarcasm	The making of remarks intended to mock the person referred to; a form of verbal irony, expressing sneering, personal disapproval in the guise of praise.
Satire	A literary work in which the author ridicules the vices and follies of mankind, usually for the purpose of producing some change in attitude or action. Also, the use of wit, exaggeration, and ridicule to present a serious criticism of individual, customs, or social and political institutions.
Scansion	The analysis of lines of poetry to identify their metrical pattern.
Scene	In drama, the action is often divided into acts and scenes. Each new scene in a play indicates a different time and place.
Science fiction	A story based on the impact of actual, imagined, or potential science, usually set in the future or on other planets.
Semantics	The study of meaning in language, as the analysis of the meanings of words, phrases, sentences, discourse, and whole texts.
Setting	The time and place in which the events of a narrative occur. Setting also includes any elements of a story that result from the place or time (such as weather, historical events, or the kinds of environment in which the characters live; it may emphasize the mood of a character or have important effects upon actions of characters; it may be introduced at the start of a story, or it may be suggested through scattered details.
Short story	A prose fiction narrative with one plot, few characters, and a simple setting; can easily be read in one sitting.
Simile	A figure of speech in which the comparison is expressed using <i>like</i> or <i>as</i> . In "Incident in a Rose Garden" by Donald Justice, the line "Dressed like a Spanish waiter" contains a simile.
Soliloquy	A moment when a character is alone and speaks his or her thoughts aloud in drama.
Sonnet	A lyric poem consisting of 14 lines, generally written in iambic pentameter. In English, the two basic kinds of sonnets are the Italian/Petrarchan and the Elizabethan/Shakespearean.
Sound devices	The use of words for their auditory effect, can convey meaning and mood or unify a work. Common sound devices are alliteration, assonance, consonance, onomatopoeia, repetition and rhyme.

Speaker	The speaker of a poem, like the narrator of a story, is the voice that talks to the reader.
Specify	To say or communicate exactly what you think or need.
Speech	A public address or discourse.
Stage directions	A play normally includes a set of instructions often printed in italics at the beginning of a play and at the beginning of acts and scenes. They guide the director, set and lighting designers, performers, and readers. When used to explain how actors should move and speak, they are separated from the dialogue by parentheses.
Stanza	A group of lines of verse arranged and repeated according to a fixed plan.
State	To give the main points in clear, brief form.
Stereotype	A character who fits a set form and lacks individual characteristics.
Stream of consciousness	A technique developed by modernist writers to present the flow of a character's seemingly unconnected thoughts, responses, and sensations.
Style	The distinctive uses and forms of language in a literary work. Style, in a sense, expresses the writer's personality and way of thinking. A good style is one which is both suited to the subject matter and at the same time expresses the individual personality of the writer or speaker. Style is the sum of diction, imagery, syntax, grammar, punctuation, and figurative language.
Suffix	An affix attached to the end of a base, root, or stem that changes the meaning or grammatical function of the word.
Summarize	To briefly cover the main points; use a paragraph form and don't include any personal opinions about the content.
Surprise ending	An unexpected plot twist at the end of a story.
Suspense	An anxious uncertainty about what is going to happen, especially to those characters with whom we have established bonds of sympathy.
Symbol	A person, place, event, or object that has a meaning itself but suggests other meanings as well.
Synecdoche	A figure of speech in which the name of a part is used to refer to a whole. <i>Ex: Wheels for automobile.</i>
Synopsis	A brief summary or outline of a story.
Syntax	The study of how sentences are formed and of the grammatical uses that govern their formation; the pattern or structure of word order in sentences, clauses, and phrases. Understanding syntactical patterns is critical for comprehension of higher level texts as well as for good writing.
Tall tale	A humorous story with blatant exaggerations and swaggering heroes who do the impossible with nonchalance.
Textual evidence	A quotation, example, or a paraphrase from a text used to support a thesis or opinion.

Theme	A topic of discussion or writing; a major idea or proposition broad enough to cover the entire scope of a literary or other work of art; theme may be stated or implicit, but clues to it may be found in the ideas that are given special prominence or tend to recur.
Thesis statement	The basic argument advanced by a speaker or writer who then attempts to prove it; the subject or major argument of a speech or composition.
Third-person point of view	Events are revealed by a narrator who is outside of the action, not a character writing the story (first-person). Third-person limited relates events through the eyes of one character. Third-person omniscient (all-knowing) can reveal events through more than one character. Third-person objective relies on actions and imagery not thoughts, feelings, or opinions to create an unbiased view.
Title	The title introduces the piece and usually reveals something important about the subject or theme, sometimes directly, sometimes figuratively.
Tone	The feeling conveyed by the way the author writes about his subject; what corresponds in a literary work to the tone of voice a speaker uses. It results from the author's attitude toward his subject and the kind of approach toward his material he has decided upon, and sometimes from his attitude toward his reader.
Topic	The general category or class of ideas, often stated in a word or phrase, to which the ideas of the passage as a whole belong.
Topic sentence	The sentence in a paragraph that is intended to express the main idea of the paragraph.
Tragedy	The representation of serious actions which lead to a disastrous end for the protagonist in a story or play.
Tragic flaw	A fatal weakness or ignorance in the protagonist that brings him to his downfall.
Trickster tale	A folk tale about an animal or person who engages in trickery, violence, or magic.
True life adventure	A type of nonfiction found in popular magazines and books. <i>The Perfect Storm</i> by Sebastian Junger is a true-life adventure.
Understatement	A description of a person, an event, or an idea from a perspective that greatly plays down the importance of the subject, often to add humor/satire or to make a point ironically. <i>Ex: Hillerman's "The Great Taos Bank Robbery": "The reader might well pause here and recollect that it is traditional among robbers to steal robbers to steal escape vehicles, not to borrow them from friends."</i>
Voice	A syntactic pattern that indicates the verb-subject relationship; the principal voices in English and many other languages are active and passive. A writer's unique use of language that allows a reader to "hear" a human personality in his or her writing. A writer's distinct use of diction, syntax, and other literary devices help to define his/her voice.

