

Glossary of Literary & Nonfiction Terms

Act An act is a major division within a play, similar to a chapter in a book. Each act may be further divided into smaller sections, called scenes. Plays can have as many as five acts, as in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Neil Simon's *The Sneezes* is a one-act play.

Allegory An allegory is a work with two levels of meaning—a literal one and a symbolic one. In such a work, most of the characters, objects, settings, and events represent abstract qualities. Personification is often used in traditional allegories. As in a fable or a parable, the purpose of an allegory may be to convey truths about life, to teach religious or moral lessons, or to criticize social institutions.

Alliteration Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words. Note the repetition of the *d* sound in these lines.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there
wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to
dream before
—Edgar Allan Poe, “The Raven”

See pages 145, 742, 875.
See also **Consonance**.

Allusion An allusion is an indirect reference to a famous person, place, event, or literary work. The title of Maya Angelou's autobiography *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* is an allusion to the poem “Sympathy” by Paul Laurence Dunbar.

See pages 265, 668, 925, 1029, 1196.

Analogy An analogy is a point-by-point comparison between two things that are alike in some respect. Often, writers use analogies in nonfiction to explain unfamiliar subjects or ideas in terms of familiar ones.

See also **Extended Metaphor**; **Metaphor**; **Simile**.

Antagonist An antagonist is a principal character or force in opposition to a **protagonist**, or main character. The antagonist is usually another character but sometimes can be a force of nature, a set of circumstances, some aspect of society, or a force within the protagonist. In “The Most Dangerous Game,” General Zaroff is the antagonist.
See pages 398, 1026.

Archetype An archetype is a pattern in literature that is found in a variety of works from different cultures throughout the ages. An archetype can be a plot, a character, an image, or a setting. For example, the association of death

and rebirth with winter and spring is an archetype common to many cultures.

Argumentative Essay See **Essay**.

Aside In drama, an aside is a short speech directed to the audience, or another character, that is not heard by the other characters on stage. In Act Four, Scene 1, of *Romeo and Juliet*, Paris is urging that his marriage to Juliet take place soon. Friar Laurence expresses his uneasiness in an aside.

Friar Laurence [aside]. I would I knew not why it
should be slowed.—
Look, sir, here comes the lady toward my cell.
—William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*

See pages 1035, 1114.
See also **Soliloquy**.

Assonance Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds within nonrhyming words. An example of assonance is the repetition of the *u* sound in the following line.

Only their usual maneuvers, dear
—W. H. Auden, “O What Is That Sound”

Author's Perspective An author's perspective, or point of view, is a unique combination of ideas, values, feelings, and beliefs that influences the way the writer looks at a topic. **Tone**, or attitude, often reveals an author's perspective. Julia Alvarez in “Daughter of Invention” writes from a perspective that reflects her feelings about being an immigrant in America.

See pages 389, 493, 554, 613.
See also **Author's Purpose**; **Tone**.

Author's Purpose A writer usually writes for one or more of these purposes: to express thoughts or feelings, to inform or explain, to persuade, to entertain. For example, Pat Mora's purposes for writing “A Voice” are to express her feelings and to explain.

See pages 127, 552, 591, 605.
See also **Author's Perspective**.

Autobiography An autobiography is a writer's account of his or her own life. In almost every case, it is told from the first-person point of view. Generally, an autobiography focuses on the most significant events and people in the writer's life over a period of time. Richard Wright's *Black Boy* is an autobiography. Shorter autobiographical narratives include **journals**, **diaries**, and **letters**. An **autobiographical**

essay, another type of short autobiographical work, focuses on a single person or event in the writer's life.

See pages 9, 117, 255.
See also **Memoir**.

Ballad A ballad is a type of narrative poem that tells a story and was originally meant to be sung or recited. Because it tells a story, a ballad has a setting, a plot, and characters. **Traditional ballads** are written in four-line stanzas with regular rhythm and rhyme. **Folk ballads** were composed orally and handed down by word of mouth. These ballads usually tell about ordinary people who have unusual adventures or perform daring deeds. A **literary ballad** is a poem written by a poet in imitation of the form and content of a folk ballad. “O What Is That Sound” is an example of a literary ballad.

Biography A biography is the true account of a person's life, written by another person. As such, a biography is usually told from a third-person point of view. The writer of a biography usually researches his or her subject in order to present accurate information. The best biographers strive for honesty and balance in their accounts of their subjects' lives.

Blank Verse Blank verse is unrhymed poetry written in **iambic pentameter**. That is, each line of blank verse has five pairs of syllables. In most pairs, an unstressed syllable is followed by a stressed syllable. The most versatile of poetic forms, blank verse imitates the natural rhythms of English speech. Much of Shakespeare's drama is in blank verse.

But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?
It is the East, and Juliet is the sun!
—William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*

See also **Iambic Pentameter**.

Cast of Characters In the script of a play, a cast of characters is a list of all the characters in the play, usually in order of appearance. It may include a brief description of each character.

Central Idea See **Theme**.

Character Characters are the individuals who participate in the action of a literary work. Like real people, characters display certain qualities, or **character traits**; they develop and change over time; and they usually have **motivations**, or reasons, for their behaviors. Complex characters can have multiple or conflicting motivations.

Main characters: Main characters are the most important characters in literary works. Generally, the

plot of a short story focuses on one main character, but a novel may have several main characters.

Minor characters: The less prominent characters in a literary work are known as minor characters. Minor characters support the plot. The story is not centered on them, but they help carry out the action of the story and help the reader learn more about the main character.

Dynamic character: A dynamic character is one who undergoes important changes as a plot unfolds. The changes occur because of his or her actions and experiences in the story. The change is usually internal and may be good or bad. Main characters are usually, though not always, dynamic.

Static character: A static character is one who remains the same throughout a story. The character may experience events and have interactions with other characters, but he or she is not changed because of them.

Round character: A round character is one who is complex and highly developed, having a variety of traits and different sides to his or her personality. Some of the traits may create conflict in the character. Round characters tend to display strengths, weaknesses, and a full range of emotions. The writer provides enough detail for the reader to understand their feelings and emotions.

Flat character: A flat character is one who is not highly developed. A flat character is a one-sided character: he or she usually has one outstanding trait, characteristic, or role. Flat characters exist mainly to advance the plot, and they display only the traits needed for their limited roles. Minor characters are usually flat characters.

See pages 85, 202, 223, 251.
See also **Characterization**.

Characterization The way a writer creates and develops characters' personalities is known as characterization. There are four basic methods of characterization:

- The writer may make direct comments about a character's personality or nature through the voice of the narrator.
- The writer may describe the character's physical appearance.
- The writer may present the character's own thoughts, speech, and actions.
- The writer may present pertinent thoughts, speech, and actions of other characters.

See pages 204, 255, 293.
See also **Character**.

Chorus In early Greek tragedy, the chorus commented on the actions of the characters in a drama. In some Elizabethan plays, such as Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*,

the role of the chorus is taken 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 summarize events.

Climax In a plot, the climax is the point of maximum interest or tension. Usually the climax is a turning point in the story, which occurs after the reader has understood the **conflict** and become emotionally involved with the characters. The climax sometimes, but not always, points to the **resolution** of the conflict. In "American History" by Judith Ortiz Cofer, the climax occurs when Elena encounters Eugene's mother at the door of Eugene's house.

See pages 452, 964.

See also **Plot**.

Comedy A comedy is a dramatic work that is light and often humorous in tone, usually ending happily with a peaceful resolution of the main conflict. A comedy differs from a farce by having a more believable plot, more realistic characters, and less boisterous behavior.

Comic Relief Comic relief consists of humorous scenes, incidents, or speeches that are included in a serious drama to provide a reduction in emotional intensity. Because comic relief breaks the tension, it allows an audience to prepare emotionally for events to come. Shakespeare often uses this device in his tragedies.

Example: In many of Shakespeare's plays, a scene involving a fool, or bawdy interplay among common folks or between a servant and his or her master, provides comic relief. Comic relief in *Romeo and Juliet* is provided by the nurse in Act Two, Scene 5, when she returns to Juliet after learning the wedding plans from Romeo. Although Juliet is anxious to hear of the plans, which the audience already knows, the nurse deliberately withholds the information until the end of the scene.

Complex Character See **Character**.

Complication A complication is an additional factor or problem introduced into the rising action of a story to make the conflict more difficult. Often, a plot complication makes it seem as though the main character is getting farther away from the thing he or she wants.

Conflict A conflict is a struggle between opposing forces. Almost every story has a main conflict—a conflict that is the story's focus. An **external conflict** involves a character pitted against an outside force, such as nature, a physical obstacle, or another character. An **internal conflict** is one that occurs within a character.

Examples: In "The Most Dangerous Game" by Richard Connell, Rainsford is in conflict with General Zaroff. In Doris

Lessing's "Through the Tunnel," Jerry is torn between the safety of familiar beach surroundings and the challenge of swimming through the tunnel.

See pages 28, 59, 60, 356, 837.

See also **Plot**.

Connotation A connotation is an attitude or a feeling associated with a word, in contrast to the word's **denotation**, which is its literal, or dictionary, meaning. The connotations of a word may be positive or negative. For example, *enthusiastic* has positive associations, while *rowdy* has negative ones. Connotations of words can have an important influence on style and meaning and are particularly important in poetry.

Consonance Consonance is the repetition of consonant sounds within and at the end of words, as in "lonely afternoon." Consonance is unlike rhyme in that the vowel sounds preceding or following the repeated consonant sounds differ. Consonance is often used together with **alliteration**, **assonance**, and **rhyme** to create a musical quality, to emphasize certain words, or to unify a poem.

See also **Alliteration**.

Couplet A couplet is a rhymed pair of lines. A couplet may be written in any rhythmic pattern.

From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
—Robert Frost, "Fire and Ice"

See also **Stanza**.

Critical Essay See **Essay**.

Denotation See **Connotation**.

Dénouement See **Falling Action**.

Dialect A dialect is a form of language that is spoken in a particular geographic area or by a particular social or ethnic group. A group's dialect is reflected in its pronunciations, vocabulary, expressions, and grammatical structures. Writers use dialects to capture the flavors of locales and to bring characters to life, re-creating the way they actually speak. In "Two Kinds" by Amy Tan, the narrator's mother uses grammatical constructions that are not common in English and therefore speaks a kind of dialect.

"Who ask you be genius?" she shouted. "Only ask you be your best. For your sake. You think I want you be genius?"

—Amy Tan, "Two Kinds"

Dialogue Dialogue is written conversation between two or more characters. Writers use dialogue to bring characters to life and to give readers insights into the characters' qualities, traits, and reactions to other characters. Realistic, well-paced dialogue also advances the plot of a narrative. In fiction, dialogue is usually set off with quotation marks. In drama, stories are told primarily through dialogue. Playwrights use stage directions to indicate how they intend the dialogue to be interpreted by actors.

Diary A diary is a daily record of a writer's thoughts, experiences, and feelings. As such, it is a type of autobiographical writing. The terms *diary* and *journal* are often used synonymously.

Diction A writer's or speaker's choice of words and way of arranging the words in sentences is called diction. Diction can be broadly characterized as formal or informal. It can also be described as technical or common, abstract or concrete, and literal or figurative. A writer for *Scientific American* would use a more formal, more technical, and possibly more abstract diction than would a writer for the science section of a local newspaper.

See pages 559, 757.

See also **Style**.

Drama Drama is literature in which plots and characters are developed through dialogue and action; in other words, it is literature in play form. Drama is meant to be performed. Stage plays, radio plays, movies, and television programs are types of drama. Most plays are divided into acts, with each act having an emotional peak, or climax. Certain modern plays, such as *The Sneezes*, have only one act. Most plays contain stage directions, which describe settings, lighting, sound effects, the movements and emotions of actors, and the ways in which dialogue should be spoken.

Dramatic Irony See **Irony**.

Dramatic Monologue A dramatic monologue is 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 *As You Like It*, is a dramatic monologue.

See page 792.

See also **Lyric Poetry**; **Soliloquy**.

Dynamic Character See **Character**.

Elegy An elegy is an extended meditative poem in which the speaker reflects on death—often in tribute to a person who has died recently—or on an equally serious subject. Most elegies are written in formal, dignified language and are serious in tone.

Epic An epic is a long narrative poem on a serious subject, presented in an elevated or formal style. It traces the adventures of a great hero whose actions reflect the ideals and values of a nation or race. Epics address universal concerns, such as good and evil, life and death, and sin and redemption. The *Odyssey* is an epic.

Epic Hero An epic hero is 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 and display great courage and superhuman strength.

See page 1194.

Epic Simile An epic simile (also called a Homeric simile) is a long, elaborate comparison that often continues for a number of lines.

Just as a farmer's hunger grows, behind
the bolted plow and share, all day afield,
drawn by his team of winedark oxen: sundown
is benison for him, sending him homeward
stiff in the knees from weariness, to dine;
just so the light on the sea rim gladdened
Odysseus.

—Homer, *Odyssey*

See page 1196.

See also **Simile**.

Epilogue An epilogue is a short addition at the end of a literary work, often dealing with the future of the characters. The concluding speech by Prince Escalus in *Romeo and Juliet* serves as an epilogue.

Epithet An epithet is a brief phrase that points out traits associated with a particular person or thing. In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus is often called "the master strategist."

See page 1196.

Essay An essay is a short work of nonfiction that deals with a single subject. Some essays are **formal**—that is, tightly structured and written in an impersonal style. Others are **informal**, with a looser structure and a more personal style.

Generally, an **informative** or **expository essay** presents or explains information and ideas. A **personal essay** is typically an informal essay in which the writer expresses his or her thoughts and feelings about a subject, focusing on the meaning of events and issues in his or her own life. In a **reflective essay**, the author makes a connection between a personal observation or experience and a universal idea, such as love, courage, or freedom. A **critical essay** evaluates a situation, a course of action, or a work of art. In an **argumentative** or **persuasive essay**, the author attempts to convince readers to adopt a certain viewpoint or to take a particular stand.

See pages 8, 492, 558, 568, 854, 860.

Exposition Exposition is the first stage of a plot in a typical story. The exposition provides important background information and introduces the setting and the important characters. The conflict the characters face may also be introduced in the exposition, or it may be introduced later, in the rising action.

See page 28.

See also **Plot**.

Expository Essay See **Essay**.

Extended Metaphor An extended metaphor is a figure of speech that compares two essentially unlike things at some length and in several ways. It does not contain the word *like* or *as*. For example, in "The Seven Ages of Man" by William Shakespeare, an extended metaphor compares the world to a stage.

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players
—William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*

See also **Metaphor**.

External Conflict See **Conflict**.

Fable A fable is a brief tale told to illustrate a moral or teach a lesson. Often the moral of a fable appears in a distinct and memorable statement near the tale's beginning or end. "The Princess and the Tin Box" by James Thurber is a humorous fable.

See also **Moral**.

Falling Action In a plot, the falling action follows the climax and shows the results of the important action that happened at the climax. Tension eases as the falling action begins; however, the final outcome of the story is not yet fully worked out at this stage. Events in the falling action

lead to the **resolution**, or **dénouement**, of the plot. In "American History" by Judith Ortiz Cofer, the falling action begins when the narrator turns away from the door of Eugene's house.

See page 28.

See also **Climax**; **Plot**.

Fantasy Fantasy is a type of fiction that is highly imaginative and portrays events, settings, or characters that are unrealistic. The setting might be a nonexistent world, the plot might involve magic or the supernatural, and the characters might employ superhuman powers.

Farce Farce is a type of exaggerated comedy that features an absurd plot, ridiculous situations, and humorous dialogue. The main purpose of a farce is to keep an audience laughing. The characters are usually stereotypes, or simplified examples of individual traits or qualities. Comic devices typically used in farces include mistaken identity, deception, physical comedy, wordplay—such as puns and double meanings—and exaggeration.

Fiction Fiction is prose writing that consists of imaginary elements. Although fiction can be inspired by actual events and real people, it usually springs from writers' imaginations. The basic elements of fiction are plot, character, setting, and theme. The novel and short story are forms of fiction.

See also **Character**; **Novel**; **Plot**; **Setting**; **Short Story**; **Theme**.

Figurative Language Figurative language is language that communicates meanings beyond the literal meanings of words. In figurative language, words are often used to symbolize ideas and concepts they would not otherwise be associated with. Writers use figurative language to create effects, to emphasize ideas, and to evoke emotions. Simile, metaphor, extended metaphor, hyperbole, and personification are examples of figurative language.

See pages 775, 869, 1087.

See also **Hyperbole**; **Metaphor**; **Onomatopoeia**; **Personification**; **Simile**.

First-Person Point of View See **Point of View**.

Flashback A flashback is an account of a conversation, an episode, or an event that happened before the beginning of a story. Often, a flashback interrupts the chronological flow of a story to give the reader information needed to understand a character's present situation. Flashbacks also help create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

Example: In "Where Have You Gone, Charming Billy?" Tim O'Brien uses flashbacks to help capture the thought process

of the main character as he copes with the realities of his wartime experience, increasing the story's level of tension.

Foil A foil is a character who provides a striking contrast to another character. By using a foil, a writer can call attention to certain traits possessed by a main character or simply enhance a character by contrast. In Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Mercutio serves as a foil to Romeo.

Foreshadowing Foreshadowing is a writer's use of hints or clues to suggest events that will occur later in a story. The hints and clues might be included in a character's dialogue or behavior, or they might be included in details of description. Foreshadowing creates suspense, mystery, and surprise, and makes readers eager to find out what will happen. For example, in Stephen King's teleplay *Sorry, Right Number*, the opening camera close-up and the first line of dialogue seem to hint that the telephone and Bill's health will be important in the play.

Form *Form* refers to the principles of arrangement in a poem—the ways in which lines are organized. Form in poetry includes the following elements: the length of lines, the placement of lines, and the grouping of lines into stanzas.

See also **Stanza**.

Free Verse Free verse is poetry that does not contain regular patterns of rhythm or rhyme. The lines in free verse often flow more naturally than do rhymed, metrical lines and thus achieve a rhythm more like that of everyday speech. Although free verse lacks conventional meter, it may contain various rhythmic and sound effects, such as repetitions of syllables or words. Free verse can be used for a variety of subjects. Billy Collins's poem "Today" is an example of free verse.

See pages 741, 875.

See also **Meter**; **Rhyme**.

Genre The term *genre* refers to a category in which a work of literature is classified. The major genres in literature are fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama.

Haiku Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry in which 17 syllables are arranged in three lines of 5, 7, and 5 syllables. The rules of haiku are strict. In addition to the syllabic count, the poet must create a clear picture that will evoke a strong emotional response in the reader. Nature is a particularly important source of inspiration for Japanese haiku poets, and details from nature are often the subjects of their poems.

Harvest moon—
walking around the pond
all night long.

—Bashō

Hero A hero is a main character or protagonist in a story. In older literary works, heroes tend to be better than ordinary humans. They are typically courageous, strong, honorable, and intelligent. They are protectors of society who hold back the forces of evil and fight to make the world a better place. In modern literature, a hero may simply be the most important character in a story. Such a hero is often an ordinary person with ordinary problems.

Historical Fiction A short story or novel can be classified as historical fiction when the settings and details of the plot include real places and real events of historical importance. Historical figures may appear as major or minor characters, as Napoleon does in Leo Tolstoy's classic novel *War and Peace*. In historical fiction, the setting generally influences the plot in important ways.

Horror Fiction Horror fiction contains strange, mysterious, violent, and often supernatural events that create suspense and terror in the reader. Edgar Allan Poe and Stephen King are famous authors of horror fiction.

Humor In literature, there are three basic types of humor, all of which may involve exaggeration or irony. **Humor of situation** arises out of the plot of a work. It usually involves exaggerated events or situational irony, which arises when something happens that is different from what was expected. **Humor of character** is often based on exaggerated personalities or on characters' failure to recognize their own flaws, a form of dramatic irony. **Humor of language** may include sarcasm, exaggeration, puns, or verbal irony, in which what is said is not what is meant.

See page 853.

See also **Irony**.

Hyperbole Hyperbole is a figure of speech in which the truth is exaggerated for emphasis or humorous effect.

Iambic Pentameter Iambic pentameter is a metrical pattern of five feet, or units, each of which is made up of two syllables, the first unstressed and the second stressed. Iambic pentameter is the most common meter used in English poetry; it is the meter used in blank verse and in the sonnet. The following lines are examples of iambic pentameter.

My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
—William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*

See pages 797, 1028.

See also **Blank Verse**; **Sonnet**.

Idiom An idiom is a common figure of speech whose meaning is different from the literal meaning of its words. For example, the phrase “raining cats and dogs” does not literally mean that cats and dogs are falling from the sky; the expression means “raining heavily.”

Imagery Imagery consists of descriptive words and phrases that re-create 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 a Rose Garden” by Donald Justice helps the reader to see Death, who wears a black coat, black gloves, and a black hat. Truman Capote uses vivid imagery appealing to multiple senses in order to re-create the childhood of the narrator in “A Christmas Memory.”

See pages 151, 291, 332, 337, 407, 749.

Informative Essay See **Essay**.

Internal Conflict See **Conflict**.

Interview An interview is a conversation conducted by a writer or reporter, in which facts or statements are elicited from another person, recorded, and then broadcast or published. “Tim O’Brien: The Naked Soldier” is an example of an interview.

See page 836.

Irony Irony is a special kind of contrast between appearance and reality—usually one in which reality is the opposite of what it seems. One type of irony is **situational irony**, a contrast between what a reader or character expects and what actually exists or happens. The unexpected twist in the outcome of “The Gift of the Magi” by O. Henry is an example of situational irony. Another type of irony is **dramatic irony**, where the reader or viewer knows something that a character does not know. **Verbal irony** exists when someone knowingly exaggerates or says one thing and means another.

See pages 101, 858, 889.

Journal See **Diary**.

Limited Point of View See **Point of View**.

Line The line is the core unit of a poem. In poetry, line length is an essential element of the poem’s meaning and rhythm. **Line breaks**, where a line of poetry ends, may coincide with grammatical units. However, a line break may also occur in the middle of a grammatical or syntactical unit, creating a meaningful pause or emphasis. Poets use

a variety of line breaks to play with sense, grammar, and syntax and thereby create a wide range of effects.

Literary Criticism See **Text Criticism**.

Literary Nonfiction Literary nonfiction is nonfiction that is recognized as being of artistic value or that is about literature. Autobiographies, biographies, essays, and eloquent speeches typically fall into this category.

Lyric Poetry A lyric poem is a short poem in which a single speaker expresses personal thoughts and feelings. Most poems other than dramatic and narrative poems are lyric poems. In ancient Greece, lyric poetry was meant to be sung. Modern lyrics are usually not intended for singing, but they are characterized by strong melodic rhythms. Lyric poetry has a variety of forms and covers many subjects, from love and death to everyday experiences. Langston Hughes’s “Theme for English B” and Pat Mora’s “A Voice” are examples of lyric poems.

Memoir A memoir is a form of autobiographical writing in which a writer shares his or her personal experiences and observations of significant events or people. Often informal or even intimate in tone, memoirs usually give readers insight into the impact of historical events on people’s lives. *Angela’s Ashes* by Frank McCourt is a memoir.

See pages 171, 925.

See also **Autobiography**.

Metaphor A metaphor is a figure of speech that makes a comparison between two things that are basically unlike but have something in common. Unlike similes, metaphors do not contain the word *like* or *as*. In “Ode to My Socks,” Pablo Neruda uses metaphors to compare his socks to multiple objects, including “two long sharks of lapis blue.”

See also **Extended Metaphor**; **Figurative Language**; **Simile**.

Meter Meter is a regular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a poem. The meter of a poem emphasizes the musical quality of the language. Each unit of meter, known as a **foot**, consists of one stressed syllable and one or two unstressed syllables. In representations of meter, a stressed syllable is indicated by the symbol **˘**; an unstressed syllable, by the symbol **˘**. The four basic types of metrical feet are the **iamb**, an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable (**˘˘**); the **trochee**, a stressed syllable

followed by an unstressed syllable (**˘˘**); the **anapest**, two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed syllable (**˘˘˘**); and the **dactyl**, a stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables (**˘˘˘**).

See pages 743, 793.

See also **Rhythm**.

Mise en Scène *Mise en scène* is a term from the French that refers to the various physical aspects of a dramatic presentation, such as lighting, costumes, scenery, makeup, and props.

Mood In a literary work, mood is the feeling or atmosphere that a writer creates for the reader. Descriptive words, imagery, and figurative language contribute to the mood of a work, as do the sound and rhythm of the language used. In “The Cask of Amontillado,” Edgar Allan Poe creates a mood of dread and horror.

See pages 332, 371, 389.

See also **Tone**.

Moral A moral is a lesson taught in a literary work, such as a fable. For example, the moral “Do not count your chickens before they are hatched” teaches that one should not count on one’s fortunes or blessings until they appear. In James Thurber’s “The Princess and the Tin Box,” the moral, like the fable itself, is satirical.

See also **Fable**.

Motivation See **Character**.

Myth A myth is a traditional story, usually concerning some superhuman being or unlikely event, that was once widely believed to be true. Frequently, myths were attempts to explain natural phenomena, such as solar and lunar eclipses or the cycle of the seasons. For some peoples, myths were both a kind of science and a religion. In addition, myths served as literature and entertainment, just as they do for modern-day audiences.

Greek mythology forms much of the background in Homer’s *Odyssey*. For example, the myth of the judgment of Paris describes events that led to the Trojan War. The goddesses Athena, Hera, and Aphrodite asked a mortal—Paris—to decide which of them was the most beautiful. Paris chose Aphrodite and was rewarded by her with Helen, wife of the Greek king Menelaus.

Narrative Nonfiction Narrative nonfiction is writing that reads much like fiction, except that the characters, setting, and plot are real rather than imaginary. Its purpose is usually to entertain or to express opinions or feelings. Narrative

nonfiction includes, but is not limited to, autobiographies, biographies, memoirs, diaries, and journals. *Seabiscuit* by Laura Hillenbrand is an example of narrative nonfiction.

See page 128.

Narrative Poetry Narrative poetry tells a story or recounts events. Like a short story or a novel, a narrative poem has the following elements: plot, characters, setting, and theme. “The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe is a narrative poem.

Narrator The narrator of a story is the character or voice that relates the story’s events to the reader.

See also **Persona**; **Point of View**.

Nonfiction Nonfiction is writing that tells about real people, places, and events. Unlike fiction, nonfiction is mainly written to convey factual information, although writers of nonfiction shape information in accordance with their own purposes and attitudes. Nonfiction can be a good source of information, but readers frequently have to examine it carefully in order to detect biases, notice gaps in the information provided, and identify errors in logic. Nonfiction includes a diverse range of writing—newspaper articles, letters, essays, biographies, movie reviews, speeches, true-life adventure stories, advertising, and more.

Novel A novel is an extended work of fiction. Like a short story, a novel is essentially the product of a writer’s imagination. Because a novel is considerably longer than a short story, a novelist can develop a wider range of characters and a more complex plot.

Example: In John Knowles’s novel *A Separate Peace*, Gene’s character develops as he struggles with guilt that resulted from the “accident” that crippled Phineas.

Novella A novella is a work of fiction that is longer than a short story but shorter than a novel. A novella differs from a novel in that it concentrates on a limited cast of characters, a relatively short time span, and a single chain of events. The novella is an attempt to combine the compression of the short story with the development of the novel.

Ode An ode is a complex lyric poem that develops a serious and dignified theme. Odes appeal to both the imagination and the intellect, and many commemorate events or praise people or elements of nature.

Omniscient Point of View See **Point of View**.

Onomatopoeia Onomatopoeia is the use of words whose sounds echo their meanings, such as *buzz*, *whisper*, *gargle*, and *murmur*. Onomatopoeia as a literary technique goes

beyond the use of simple echoic words, however. Skilled writers, especially poets, choose words whose sounds intensify images and suggest meanings.

Oxymoron An oxymoron is a special kind of concise paradox that brings together two contradictory terms. In *Romeo and Juliet*, each of the phrases “brawling love,” “loving hate,” “bright smoke,” and “feather of lead” is an oxymoron.

Paradox A paradox is a seemingly contradictory or absurd statement that may nonetheless suggest an important truth.

Parallelism Parallelism is the use of similar grammatical constructions to express ideas that are related or equal in importance.

Go back to Mississippi. Go back to Alabama. Go back to South Carolina. Go back to Georgia. Go back to Louisiana. Go back to the slums and ghettos of our Northern cities. . . .

—Martin Luther King Jr., “I Have a Dream”

Parallel Plot A parallel plot is a particular type of plot in which two stories of equal importance are told simultaneously. The story moves back and forth between the two plots.

Parody A parody is an imitation of another work, a type of literature, or a writer’s style, usually for the purpose of poking fun. It may serve as an element of a larger work or be a complete work in itself. The purpose of parody may be to ridicule through broad humor, deploying such techniques as exaggeration or the use of inappropriate subject matter. Such techniques may even provide insights into the original work. “The Princess and the Tin Box” by James Thurber is a parody of the typical moralistic fairy tale.

Persona A persona is a voice that a writer assumes in a particular work. A persona is like a mask worn by the writer, separating his or her identity from that of the speaker or the narrator. It is the persona’s voice—not the writer’s voice—that narrates a story or speaks in a poem.

See also **Narrator; Speaker**.

Personal Essay See **Essay**.

Personification Personification is a figure of speech in which human qualities are given to an object, animal, or idea. In “Incident in a Rose Garden” by Donald Justice, death is personified as someone who wears black and grins. In the following line by Shakespeare, morning and night are personified.

The grey-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night
—William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*

See pages 744, 775.

See also **Figurative Language**.

Persuasive Essay See **Essay**.

Play See **Drama**.

Plot The sequence of events in a story is called the plot. A plot focuses on a central **conflict** or problem faced by the main character. The actions that the characters take to resolve the conflict build toward a climax. In general, it is not long after this point that the conflict is resolved and the story ends. A plot typically develops in five stages: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.

See pages 28, 85.

See also **Climax; Exposition; Falling Action; Rising Action**.

Poetry Poetry is a type of literature in which words are carefully chosen and arranged to create certain effects. Poets use a variety of sound devices, imagery, and figurative language to express emotions and ideas.
See also **Alliteration; Assonance; Ballad; Free Verse; Imagery; Meter; Rhyme; Rhythm; Stanza**.

Point of View *Point of view* refers to the method of narration used in a short story, novel, narrative poem, or work of nonfiction. In a work told from a **first-person** point of view, the narrator is a character in the story, as in “The Cask of Amontillado” by Edgar Allan Poe. In a work told from a **third-person** point of view, the narrative voice is outside the action, not one of the characters. If a story is told from a **third-person omniscient**, or all-knowing, point of view, as in “The Gift of the Magi” by O. Henry, the narrator sees into the minds of all the characters. If events are related from a **third-person limited** point of view, as in Doris Lessing’s “Through the Tunnel,” the narrator tells what only one character thinks, feels, and observes.

See pages 202, 209.

See also **Narrator**.

Prologue A prologue is an introductory scene in a drama. Some Elizabethan plays include prologues that comment on the theme or moral point that will be revealed in the play. The prologue is a feature of all Greek drama.

Prop The word *prop*, originally an abbreviation of the word *property*, refers to any physical object that is used in a drama. In the teleplay *Sorry, Right Number*, a telephone is an important prop.

Prose Generally, *prose* refers to all forms of written or spoken expression that are not in verse. The term, therefore, may be used to describe very different forms of writing—short stories as well as essays, for example.

Protagonist A protagonist is the main character in a work of literature—the character who is involved in the central conflict of the story. Usually, the protagonist changes after the central conflict reaches a climax. He or she may be a hero and is usually the one with whom the audience tends to identify. In Judith Ortiz Cofer’s “American History,” Elena is the protagonist as well as the narrator.

Pun A pun is a joke that comes from a play on words. It can make use of a word’s multiple meanings or of a word’s sound. In *Romeo and Juliet*, when Mercutio is fatally wounded, he says, “Ask for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a grave man,” with a pun on the word *grave*, meaning both “solemn” and “a tomb.”

Quatrain A quatrain is a four-line stanza, or group of lines, in poetry. The most common stanza in English poetry, the quatrain can have a variety of meters and rhyme schemes.

Realistic Fiction Realistic fiction is fiction that is a truthful imitation of ordinary life. “Through the Tunnel” by Doris Lessing and “A Christmas Memory” by Truman Capote are examples of realistic fiction.

Recurring Theme See **Theme**.

Reflective Essay See **Essay**.

Refrain A refrain is one or more lines repeated in each stanza of a poem.

See also **Stanza**.

Repetition Repetition is a technique in which a sound, word, phrase, or line is repeated for emphasis or unity. Repetition often helps to reinforce meaning and create an appealing rhythm. The term includes specific devices associated with both prose and poetry, such as alliteration and parallelism.

See pages 742, 787.

See also **Alliteration; Parallelism; Sound Devices**.

Resolution See **Falling Action**.

Rhetorical Devices Rhetorical devices are techniques writers use to enhance their arguments and communicate more effectively. Rhetorical devices include **analogy**, **parallelism**, **rhetorical questions**, and **repetition**.

See also **Analogy; Repetition; Rhetorical Questions**, *Glossary of Reading and Informational Terms*, page R119.

Rhyme Rhyme is the occurrence of similar or identical sounds at the end of two or more words, such as *suite*, *heat*, and *complete*. Rhyme that occurs within a single line of poetry is **internal rhyme**. Rhyme that occurs at the ends of lines of poetry is called **end rhyme**. End rhyme that is not exact but approximate is called **slant rhyme**, or **off rhyme**. Notice the following example of slant rhyme involving the words *care* and *dear*.

O haven’t they stopped for the doctor’s care,
Haven’t they reined their horses, their horses?
Why, they are none of them wounded, dear.
None of these forces.
—W. H. Auden, “O What Is That Sound”

See pages 742, 788, 869.

Rhyme Scheme A rhyme scheme is a pattern of end rhymes in a poem. A rhyme scheme is noted by assigning a letter of the alphabet, beginning with *a*, to each line. Lines that rhyme are given the same letter. Notice the rhyme scheme of the first stanza of this famous poem.

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, *a*
And sorry I could not travel both *b*
And be one traveler, long I stood *a*
And looked down one as far as I could *a*
To where it bent in the undergrowth *b*
—Robert Frost, “The Road Not Taken”

See page 742.

Rhythm Rhythm is a pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry. Poets use rhythm to bring out the musical quality of language, to emphasize ideas, to create moods, to unify works, and to heighten emotional responses. Devices such as alliteration, rhyme, assonance, consonance, and parallelism often contribute to creating rhythm.

See pages 742, 869.

See also **Meter**.

Rising Action Rising action is the stage in a plot in which the conflict develops and story events build toward a climax. During this stage, complications arise that make the conflict more intense. Tension grows as the characters struggle to resolve the conflict.

See page 28.

See also **Plot**.

Sarcasm Sarcasm is a kind of particularly cutting irony. Generally, sarcasm is the taunting use of praise to mean its opposite—that is, to insult someone or something.

Satire Satire is a literary technique in which ideas, customs, behaviors, or institutions are ridiculed for the purpose of improving society. Satire may be gently witty, mildly abrasive, or bitterly critical, and it often involves the use of irony and exaggeration to force readers to see something in a critical light.

Scansion Scansion is the notation of stressed and unstressed syllables in poetry. A stressed syllable is indicated by the symbol σ ; an unstressed syllable, by the symbol $\cup$. Using scansion can help you determine the rhythm and meter of a poem.

See page 742.

See also **Meter**.

Scene In drama, the action is often divided into acts and scenes. Each scene presents an episode of the play's plot and typically occurs at a single place and time.

See also **Act**.

Scenery Scenery is a painted backdrop or other structures used to create the setting for a play.

Science Fiction Science fiction is fiction in which a writer explores unexpected possibilities of the past or the future, using known scientific data and theories as well as his or her creative imagination. Most science fiction writers create believable worlds, although some create fantasy worlds that have familiar elements. Ray Bradbury, the author of "A Sound of Thunder," is a famous writer of science fiction.

See also **Fantasy**.

Screenplay A screenplay is a play written for film.

Script The text of a play, film, or broadcast is called a script.

Sensory Details Sensory details are words and phrases that appeal to the reader's senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. For example, the sensory detail "a fine film of rain" appeals to the senses of sight and touch. Sensory details stimulate the reader to create images in his or her mind.

See also **Imagery**.

Setting Setting is the time and place of the action of a story. Some stories, such as "The Open Window" by Saki, have only minimal descriptions of setting. In other works, such as Eugenia Collier's "Marigolds" and Edgar Allan Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado," settings are described in detail and become major contributors to the stories' overall effect.

See pages 330, 337, 389.

See also **Fiction**.

Short Story A short story is a work of fiction that centers on a single idea and can be read in one sitting. Generally, a short story has one main conflict that involves the characters, keeps the story moving, and stimulates readers' interest.

See also **Fiction**.

I am offering this poem to you,
since I have nothing else to give.
Keep it like a warm coat
When winter comes to cover you
—Jimmy Santiago Baca, "I Am Offering This Poem"

Simile A simile is a figure of speech that makes a comparison between two unlike things, using the word *like* or *as*.

See pages 744, 775.

See also **Epic Simile**; **Figurative Language**; **Metaphor**.

Situational Irony See **Irony**.

Soliloquy In drama, a soliloquy is a speech in which a character speaks his or her thoughts aloud. Generally, the character is on the stage alone, not speaking to other characters and perhaps not even consciously addressing an audience. At the beginning of Act Two, Scene 3, of *Romeo and Juliet*, Friar Laurence has a long soliloquy. Shakespeare makes use of soliloquies in many of his plays.

See also **Aside**; **Dramatic Monologue**.

Sonnet A sonnet is a lyric poem of 14 lines, commonly written in **iambic pentameter**. Sonnets are often classified as Petrarchan or Shakespearean. The Shakespearean, or Elizabethan, sonnet consists of three quatrains, or four-line units, and a final couplet. The typical rhyme scheme is *abab cdcd efef gg*.

See also **Iambic Pentameter**; **Rhyme Scheme**.

Sound Devices Sound devices, or uses of words for their auditory effect, can convey meaning and mood or unify a work. Some common sound devices are **alliteration**, **assonance**, **consonance**, **meter**, **onomatopoeia**, **repetition**, **rhyme**, and **rhythm**. The following lines contain alliteration, repetition, assonance, consonance, rhyme, and rhythm, all of which combine to help convey both meaning and mood.

O what is that sound which so thrills the ear
Down in the valley drumming, drumming;
Only the scarlet soldiers, dear,
The soldiers coming.
—W. H. Auden, "O What Is That Sound"

See pages 145, 787.

See also **Alliteration**; **Assonance**; **Consonance**; **Meter**; **Onomatopoeia**; **Repetition**; **Rhyme**; **Rhythm**.

Speaker In poetry the speaker is the voice that "talks" to the reader, similar to the narrator in fiction. The speaker is not necessarily the poet. For example, in Pat Mora's "A Voice," the experiences related may or may not have happened to the poet.

See pages 287, 745, 787.

See also **Persona**.

Speech A speech is a talk or public address. The purpose of a speech may be to entertain, to explain, to present a claim, to inspire, or any combination of these aims. "I Have a Dream" by Martin Luther King Jr. was written and delivered in order to inspire an audience.

See pages 660, 670.

Stage Directions A play typically includes instructions called stage directions, which are usually printed in italic type. They serve as a guide to directors, set and lighting designers, performers, and readers. When stage directions appear within passages of dialogue, parentheses are usually used to set them off from the words spoken by characters.

Jeff gets up, walks to the window, and looks out into the dark. He's really upset. Dennis and Connie, in the grand tradition of older brothers and sisters, are delighted to see it.
—Stephen King, *Sorry, Right Number*

See pages 7, 156, 1030.

Stanza A stanza is a group of two or more lines that form a unit in a poem. A stanza is comparable to a paragraph in prose. Each stanza may have the same number of lines, or the number of lines may vary. "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost is divided into four stanzas.

See also **Couplet**; **Form**; **Poetry**; **Quatrain**.

Static Character See **Character**.

Stereotype In literature, a simplified or stock character who conforms to a fixed pattern or is defined by a single trait is known as a stereotype. Such a character does not usually demonstrate the complexity of a real person. Familiar stereotypes in popular literature include the absent-minded professor and the busybody.

Stream of Consciousness Stream of consciousness is a literary technique developed by modern writers, in which thoughts, feelings, moods, perceptions, and memories are presented as they randomly flow through a character's mind.

Structure Structure is the way in which the parts of a work of literature are put together. In poetry, structure involves the arrangement of words and lines to produce a desired effect. A common structural unit in poetry is the stanza, of which there are numerous types. In prose, structure is the arrangement of larger units or parts of a work. Paragraphs, for example, are basic units in prose, as are chapters in novels and acts in plays. The structure of a poem, short story, novel, play, or nonfictional work usually emphasizes certain important aspects of content.

See also **Act**; **Stanza**.

Style Style is the particular way in which a work of literature is written—not *what* is said but *how* it is said. It is the writer's unique way of communicating ideas. Many elements contribute to style, including word choice, sentence structure and length, tone, figurative language, and point of view. A literary style may be described in a variety of ways, such as formal, informal, journalistic, conversational, wordy, ornate, poetic, or dynamic.

Surprise Ending A surprise ending is an unexpected plot twist at the end of a story. The surprise may be a sudden turn in the action or a piece of information that gives a different perspective to the entire story. O. Henry is famous for using this device, as exemplified in his story "The Gift of the Magi."

See pages 102, 152.

Suspense Suspense is the excitement or tension that readers feel as they wait to find out how a story ends or a conflict is resolved. Writers create suspense by raising questions in readers' minds about what might happen next. The use of **foreshadowing** and **flashback** are two ways in which writers create suspense.

See page 113.

See also **Foreshadowing**; **Flashback**.

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Symbol A symbol is a person, a place, an object, or an activity that stands for something beyond itself. For example, a flag is a colored piece of cloth that stands for a country. A white dove is a bird that represents peace.

Example: In "Through the Tunnel" by Doris Lessing, the rocky bay represents challenge, danger, and adulthood; the beach represents safety and Jerry's childhood.

See pages 351, 355, 434, 461, 941.

Tall Tale A tall tale is a humorously exaggerated story about impossible events, often involving the supernatural abilities of the main character. Stories about folk heroes such as Pecos Bill and Paul Bunyan are typical tall tales.

Teleplay A teleplay is a play written for television. In a teleplay, scenes can change quickly and dramatically. The camera can focus the viewer's attention on specific actions. The camera directions in teleplays are much like the stage directions in stage plays.

See page 155.

Text Criticism Text criticism is writing in which literary works, including their various elements, are analyzed, interpreted, evaluated, or compared.

Theme A theme, or central idea, is an underlying message about life or human nature that a writer wants the reader to understand. It is a perception about life or human nature that the writer shares with the reader. In most cases, themes are not stated directly but must be inferred. A theme may imply how a person should live but should not be confused with a **moral**. The theme of "The Scarlet Ibis" by James Hurst might be expressed as "Pride, love, and cruelty are often intermingled in human relationships."

Recurring themes are themes found in a variety of works. For example, authors from varying backgrounds might convey similar themes having to do with the importance of family values. **Universal themes** are themes that are found throughout the literature of all time periods. For example, the *Odyssey* and *The Lord of the Rings* both contain a universal theme relating to the hero's search for truth, goodness, and honor.

See pages 113, 434, 501.

See also **Moral**.

Third-Person Point of View See **Point of View**.

Tone Tone is the attitude a writer takes toward a subject. Unlike mood, which is intended to shape the reader's emotional response, tone reflects the feelings of the writer. A writer communicates tone through choice of

words and details. Tone may often be described by a single word, such as *serious, humorous, formal, informal, somber, sarcastic, playful, ironic, bitter, or objective*. For example, the tone of "Grape Sherbet" by Rita Dove might be described as tender and loving, whereas the tone of Mary Oliver's essay "A Few Words" might be described as persistent and somewhat angry.

See pages 569, 605, 822, 860.

See also **Author's Perspective; Mood**.

Tragedy A tragedy is a dramatic work that presents the downfall of a dignified character (**tragic hero**) or characters who are involved in historically or socially significant events. The events in a tragic plot are set in motion by a decision that is often an error in judgment (**tragic flaw**) on the part of the hero. Succeeding events are linked in a cause-and-effect relationship and lead inevitably to a disastrous conclusion, usually death. Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is a tragedy.

Tragic Flaw See **Tragedy**.

Tragic Hero See **Tragedy**.

Traits See **Character**.

Turning Point See **Climax**.

Understatement Understatement is a technique of creating emphasis by saying less than is actually or literally true. It is the opposite of **hyperbole**, or exaggeration. One of the primary devices of irony, understatement can be used to develop a humorous effect, to create satire, or to achieve a restrained tone.

See also **Hyperbole; Irony**.

Universal Theme See **Theme**.

Verbal Irony See **Irony**.

Voice Voice is a writer's unique use of language that allows a reader to "hear" a human personality in the writer's work. Elements of style that contribute to a writer's voice include sentence structure, **diction**, and **tone**. Voice can reveal much about the author's personality, beliefs, and attitudes.

See pages 879, 951.

Word Choice See **Diction**.

Almanac See **Reference Works**.

Analogy See *Glossary of Literary and Nonfiction Terms*, page R102.

Argument An argument is speech or writing that presents a claim about an issue or problem and supports it with reasons and evidence. An argument often takes into account other points of view, anticipating and answering objections that opponents of the position might raise.

See also **Claim; Counterargument; Evidence**.

Assumption An assumption is an opinion or belief that is taken for granted. It can be about a specific situation, a person, or the world in general. Assumptions are often unstated.

Author's Message An author's message is the main idea or theme of a particular work.

See also **Main Idea; Theme**, *Glossary of Literary and Nonfiction Terms*, page R114.

Author's Perspective See *Glossary of Literary and Nonfiction Terms*, page R102.

Author's Position An author's position is his or her opinion on an issue or topic.

See also **Claim**.

Author's Purpose See *Glossary of Literary and Nonfiction Terms*, page R102.

Autobiography See *Glossary of Literary and Nonfiction Terms*, page R102.

Bias Bias is an inclination toward a particular judgment on a topic or issue. A writer often reveals a strongly positive or strongly negative opinion by presenting only one way of looking at an issue or by heavily weighting the evidence. Words with intensely positive or negative connotations are often a signal of a writer's bias.

Bibliography A bibliography is a list of books and other materials related to the topic of a text. Bibliographies can be good sources of works for further study on a subject. See also **Works Consulted**.

Biography See *Glossary of Literary and Nonfiction Terms*, page R103.

Business Correspondence Business correspondence includes all written business communications, such as business letters, e-mails, and memos. In general, business correspondence is brief, to the point, clear, courteous, and professional.

Cause and Effect A cause is an event or action that directly results in another event or action. An effect is the direct or logical outcome of an event or action. Basic **cause-and-effect relationships** include a single cause with a single effect, one cause with multiple effects, multiple causes with a single effect, and a chain of causes and effects. The concept of cause and effect also provides a way of organizing a piece of writing. It helps a writer show the relationships between events or ideas.

See also **False Cause**, *Reading Handbook*, page R24.

Central Idea See **Main Idea**.

Chronological Order Chronological order is the arrangement of events in their order of occurrence. This type of organization is used in both fictional narratives and in historical writing, biography, and autobiography.

Claim In an argument, a claim is the writer's position on an issue or problem. Although an argument focuses on supporting one claim, a writer may make more than one claim in a work.

See also **Argument; Thesis Statement**.

Clarify Clarifying is a reading strategy that helps a reader to understand or make clear what he or she is reading. Readers usually clarify by rereading, reading aloud, or discussing.

Classification Classification is a pattern of organization in which objects, ideas, or information is presented in groups, or classes, based on common characteristics.

Cliché A cliché is an overused expression. "Better late than never" and "hard as nails" are common examples. Good writers generally avoid clichés unless they are using them in dialogue to indicate something about characters' personalities.

Compare and Contrast To compare and contrast is to identify similarities and differences in two or more subjects. Compare-and-contrast organization can be used to structure a piece of writing, serving as a framework for analyzing the similarities and differences in two or more subjects.

Conclusion A conclusion is a statement of belief based on evidence, experience, and reasoning. A **valid conclusion** is a conclusion that logically follows from the facts or statements upon which it is based. A **deductive conclusion** is one that follows from a particular generalization or premise. An **inductive conclusion** is a broad conclusion or generalization that is reached by arguing from specific facts and examples.

Connect Connecting is a reader's process of relating the content of a text to his or her own knowledge and experience.