

Name: _____

Date: _____

Period: _____

Literary Devices

Directions: This is the master list of literary devices employed by authors, big and small, in places around the world. Let's pretend that literature- all forms of literature- compose one big story. This one big story is the compilation of all the stories that there ever were. Every story has a foundation. So, let's pretend that literature is our neighborhood and each story is a house in our neighborhood (it's a really big neighborhood). It is a neighborhood where all the houses are unique and different. Each house has its own homeowners or renters. Each person brings to the house their own style, their own tastes, and their own way of living. The house is characterized by the people who live in it and by the style that encompasses it. (Just like books are characterized by the relationships in it, the atmosphere, and the author's creative twists). So, every house, like every story seems different... however, they are all very similar too. They are built with 2x4s and they have a foundation. They all have roofs, windows, doors, floors, etc. They all have the same basic elements, even though they might be seemingly different. They are all very similar. In our neighborhood (all literature), each house (a story in the grand story of stories) has a foundation of basic essentials. We call these basic essentials: literary devices. A literary device is a technique used by the other to create a special effect. Just like the difference between carpet and wood floors in a house. They both have a different effect on the way the house looks and the way the floor feels on our feet. Both the hard wood floor and the carpet are literary devices. They create a special effect. When we read a story, I want you to look for these literary devices. I want you to keep an eye on what the author is doing behind the words or with the words. If you learn them now, life will be easier later.

allegory: a story, play, or picture in which characters or settings are used as symbols or abstract ideas

alliteration: the repetition of the initial consonant sound in words

allusion: a reference to something literary, mythological, or historical that the author assumes the reader will recognize

assonance: the repetition of vowel sounds

atmosphere: the emotional mood created by a literary work

apostrophe: someone absent, dead, or imaginary is being spoken to as if they could reply

ballad: a type of poem that is meant to be sung and is both lyric and narrative in nature

blank verse: poetic form written in unrhymed iambic pentameter

cacophony: loud, harsh, or disagreeable sounds

caesura: a natural pause in the middle of a line

colloquial language: informal language; language that is "conversational"

consonance: the repetition of consonant sounds in the middle or at the end of words

connotation: the implications that encompass a word or text

couplet: two successive lines that rhyme with one another

denotation: the dictionary ("actual") definition of a word

diction: a writer's or speaker's choice of words

elegy: A sad or mournful poem, especially one mourning the dead

end rhyme: rhyme that occurs at the end of two or more lines of poetry

enjambment: when the writer uses line breaks meaningfully and abruptly to either emphasize a point or to create dual meanings

epiphany: a moment of sudden realization or insight

epitaph: an inscription on a tombstone or monument in memory of the person buried there

euphemism: an indirect, less offensive way of saying something that is considered unpleasant

euphony: pleasant words that are easy to articulate

foil: two characters that highlight each other by their differences

foreshadowing: the use of hints and clues to suggest what will happen later in a plot

free verse: poetic form that does not have a regular meter or rhyme scheme

hyperbole: a figure of speech that uses exaggeration to express strong emotion, make a point, or evoke humor

idiom: an accepted phrase or expression having a meaning different from the literal

imagery: when the writer or speaker uses their descriptions to access the senses of the reader or listener

internal rhyme: rhyme that occurs within a line, rather than at the end

irony: a contrast between what is expected and what actually exists or happens

juxtaposition: placing two elements side by side to present a comparison or contrast

lyric: a short poem of songlike quality

metaphor: a comparison between two unlike things

meter: a pattern of stressed/unstressed syllables in poetry

monologue: a speech made by one actor or speaker

ode: a poem usually addressed to a particular person, object or event that has stimulated deep and noble feelings in the poet

onomatopoeia: when the words sound like what they mean

oxymoron: an expression in which two words that contradict each other are joined

paradox: an apparently contradictory statement that actually contains some truth

personification: representing an abstract quality or idea as a person or creature

pun: a play on words, often achieved through the use of words with similar sounds but different meanings

repetition: when the writer or speaker knowingly repeats a word or group of words for effect

rhetorical question: a question asked for an effect, not actually requiring an answer

rhythm: when the arrangement of words creates an audible pattern or beat when read out loud

sarcasm: harsh words intended to hurt someone

satire: a literary work that ridicules or criticizes a human vice through humor or derision

simile: a figure of speech that expresses a resemblance between things of different kinds (usually formed with 'like' or 'as')

slant rhyme: two words that have some sound in common but do not rhyme exactly

sonnet: Fourteen-line poem that is usually written in iambic pentameter and has one of several rhyme schemes

stream of consciousness: a style of writing in which the author tries to reproduce the random flow of thoughts in the human mind

symbol: something that stands for or represents something else

tone: the attitude a writer takes towards a subject, character, or the reader

understatement: saying less than one means, for effect

wit: intellectually amusing language that surprises and delights