**Glossary of Literary Terms and Elements**

**Allegory-** A narrative that serves as an extended metaphor

**Alliteration-** Repetition of initial or first consonant sounds in a series of words

**Allusion-** A reference to a well known person, place, event, literary work, or work of art, included in order to bring added meaning to a work of literature

**Antagonist**- The character or force at odds with the protagonist (aka: the bad guy)

**Archetype-** A very typical example of a character or element of a narrative or poem seen repeated over the ages in a variety of different contexts

**Assonance**- Repetition of vowel sounds within a series of words

**Blank Verse-** Unrhymed, yet metered poetry

**Characterization-** The process by which an author creates memorable characters by *directly* or *indirectly* revealing the character’s **thoughts**, **words**, **actions**, **appearance**, and **effect on others**

**Conflict-** The struggle between opposing forces in a work of literature written out in its most basic terms as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ vs. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Internal Conflict-** Conflict existing within a single character

**External Conflict-** Conflict existing between two or more characters or forces

**Consonance-** Repetition of consonant sounds within a series of words. Alliteration is a form of consonance focusing on the first accented syllable while consonance represents repetition anywhere.

**Context-** The set of circumstances or facts surrounding a particular event, situation, etc.

**Dialect**- Speech patterns and pronunciations that are indicative of a particular geographical or social background

**Dialogue-** Conversation between characters, spoken parts of a work of drama

**Diction-** The choice of words used by a writer with a specific purpose in mind

**Dynamic Character**- A character who undergoes a change within a narrative

**Figurative Language-** Representative, or symbolic language used to present ideas in vivid and imaginative ways

**Metaphor-** A comparison of two different things to create an effect

**Simile-** A comparison of two different things using like or as to create an effect

**Hyperbole**- An exaggeration to create an effect

**Personification-** Giving human qualities to non-human things

**Flashback**- A scene within a story that interrupts the sequence of events to relate events that occurred in the past

**Flat Character**-A one-sided, often stereotypical character that does not undergo changes

**Free Verse-** Poetry that does not rhyme or have a regular meter, though may not be entirely free of structure or rhythm.

**Foreshadowing**- Clues that hint at what might happen later in a story’s plot line

**Genre-** An established type or category of literature or art

**Irony**- Amusing or interesting contradictions

**Verbal irony**- When a character says or writes something but means another, usually the

opposite of the literal meaning (e.g., sarcasm)

**Dramatic irony-** When the significance of a character’s words or actions are clear to the

audience but not to the characters him/herself

**Situational Irony-** When the opposite of what is expected occurs or is said

**Juxtaposition-** Placing persons, places or things close together or side by side, to create an effect

**Literary Present Tense**- When writing *about* literature, writers refer to the characters and their actions in the present tense

**Meter-** The rhythmical pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in poetry

**Mood-** The emotional response or feeling a work of literature attempts to conjure up in the reader

**Motivation**- The reason that explains a character’s thoughts, words, actions, etc.

**Narrator**- The speaker or character who tells a story

**Onomatopoeia-** Words used to imitate sounds

**Paradox-** The use of concepts or ideas contradictory to one another, yet, when placed together hold significant and insightful meaning and value

**Parallel Structure-** Use of the same pattern of words to show that two or more ideas have the same level of importance, also creating a rhythm in its repetition

**Persuasive Techniques-** Established by Greek Philosopher, Aristotle, these rhetorical devices use credibility, logic and emotion to influence and appeal to an audience.

**Ethos-** The author establishes his or her credibility and legitimacy to appeal to the reader

**Logos-** The author uses logic and reason to appeal to the reader

**Pathos-** The author uses emotion and/or passion to appeal to the reader

**Plot-** The series of events in a work of literature, a standard plot has several key steps

**Exposition**- The story’s opening where basic information is given regarding the

characters and setting

**Rising Action-** Conflict is introduced and developed, tension builds

**Climax**- The high point in action, the story’s turning point

**Falling Action-** The events following the climax, prior to the resolution

**Resolution-** The final step in a plot line where loose ends are wrapped up, questions are answered, issues are settled -- or perhaps not

**Point of View-** The perspective or vantage point from which a story is told

**First Person-** Told by a character within the story from his or her perspective

**Third Person Limited**- Told by an outside narrator, focusing on the experiences and thinking of one particular character

**Third Person Omniscient**- Told by an outside, all-knowing narrator who has access to all characters’ internal thoughts

**Protagonist**- The main character around whom the story revolves (aka: the good guy)

**Repetition-** The use, more than once, of a word or language element in order to create an effect

**Rhyme-** Repetition of sounds at the end of words, used to create musicality and rhythm

**Rhyme Scheme**- A regular pattern of rhyme within a poem

**Rhythm-** The pattern of sounds made by varying the stressed and unstressed syllables in poetry

**Round Character-** A fully developed, complex and dynamic character with depth and a range of traits

**Sensory Imagery-** Descriptive writing that s(t)imulates any of the five senses (showing not telling)

**Setting**-The time, place, date, lighting, clothing, weather, culture, technology used to establish the story’s backdrop

**Stage Directions-** Notes included in a drama (shown in italics, within brackets) instructing actors, directors, stage hands, sound and visual effects technicians as to the details needed to properly perform the play as intended by the playwright

**Stanza-** A group of lines within a poem, similar to how a paragraph works in prose writing

**Suspense**- The feeling of tension or uncertainty developed within a story

**Symbol-** A word or object that stands for another word or object

**Synthesis**- The combination of different ideas and information, sometimes from different sources, to create a new understanding/conclusion

**Theme-** The underlying abstract idea made concrete through representation in person, action and image – the author’s message woven throughout a work of literature

**Thesis-** An assertion or claim proposed and supported with evidence and argument.

**Tone**- The overall attitude the author takes toward the work of literature, not necessarily what is said, but how it is said

**Unreliable Narrator-** A narrator who gives his or her own understanding of a story, instead of the interpretation the author wishes the audience to obtain