



Learning through Fiction

**Strategies, Activities, and Resources
for the Classroom**

2019 GED National Conference

TABLE OF CONTENTS

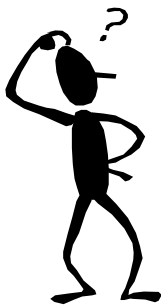
It's Allegory! It's Alliteration! It's Satire! It Looks Familiar!	3
Find the Metaphors and Similes	4
What Is a Short Story?	5
Analyzing a Short Story	6
Broken Promises	6
My Casting Sheet	8
Getting the Gist	10
Building Effective Readers	11
TIPP? It!	12
During Reading Skills	13
Post Reading Strategies	14
Elements within Literature	15
Graphic Organizers for Teaching Literature	17
A Beginning Vocabulary List of Literary Terms	22
The Elements of Figurative Language	25

© Copyright 2019 GED Testing Service LLC. All rights reserved. GED® and GED Testing Service® are registered trademarks of the American Council on Education (ACE). They may not be used or reproduced without the express written permission of ACE or GED Testing Service. The GED® and GED Testing Service® brands are administered by GED Testing Service LLC under license from the American Council on Education.

IT'S ALLEGORY! IT'S ALLITERATION! IT'S SATIRE! IT LOOKS FAMILIAR!

See if you can match the literary example with the correct term.

	1. Plot	a. Where a plot occurs.
	2. Conflict	b. The rhythm created in poetry.
	3. Tone	c. An extended metaphor.
	4. Metaphor	d. The struggle between two forces.
	5. Simile	e. Words that sound alike.
	6. Imagery	f. Words that sound like what they mean.
	7. Hyperbole	g. A general category of language meant to be taken symbolically or metaphorically.
	8. Alliteration	h. What happens in a story.
	9. Meter	i. A metaphor using like, as, than, to make the connection between two things.
	10. Assonance	j. The author's attitude or feeling.
	11. Onomatopoeia	k. A comparison between two generally unlike things.
	12. Personification	l. The repetition of beginning sounds in words.
	13. Rhyme	m. The repetition of the same or similar vowel sounds.
	14. Setting	n. Exaggeration.
	15. Figurative Language	o. Language that appeals to the senses.
	16. Allegory	p. Giving human characteristics to non-human things.



FIND THE METAPHORS AND SIMILES

Locate the metaphors and similes in the following song. Are there other literary elements as well?

"The River" by Garth Brooks

You know a dream is like a river, ever changing as it flows.

And a dreamer's just a vessel that must follow where it goes.

Trying to learn from what's behind you and never knowing what's in store
makes each day a constant battle just to stay between the shores.

And I will sail my vessel 'til the river runs dry.

Like a bird upon the wind, these waters are my sky.

I'll never reach my destination if I never try,

So I will sail my vessel 'til the river runs dry.

Too many times we stand aside and let the water slip away.

To what we put off 'til tomorrow has now become today.

So don't you sit upon the shore and say you're satisfied.

Choose to chance the rapids and dare to dance the tides.

Chorus-

There's bound to be rough waters, and I know I'll take some falls.

With the good Lord as my captain, I can make it through them all.

Chorus-

WHAT IS A SHORT STORY?

A short story is . . .



ANALYZING A SHORT STORY

BROKEN PROMISES

Lorraine M. Gregoire

"Sheesh! Give me a few points for self control!" I snapped at my cranky husband. I wanted to stop at a sporting goods store "Going Out of Business" sale we passed in the mall. "There's nothing we need", his usual grumpy male comment. "It's all overpriced junk. If they had anything good they wouldn't be going out of business."

"But, it's sporting goods", I wheedled. "Could be some good deals for the grandkids. And, you like boats and fishing stuff. I've put up with that photo of your "dream-canoe" stuck on the bathroom mirror for years now. Maybe you'd enjoy just looking around?"

"Are you crazy" his eyes got funny and he said something like. "The boat I want is the Supremo Numero-Uno blah-blah. Soon as I finish saving up 6,000 bucks for that baby I'm going to order right from the manufacturer. Custom. In silver. Yesiree. This loser store wouldn't carry something like THAT. And I'm sure not going near those sucker crowds."

"You're so darn negative and boring!" I retorted. "I happen to like crowds. They make me feel like I'm part of something. I promise I won't buy anything but I'm going to look around for fun anyways. You go for coffee and I'll meet you back here in half an hour."

"Don't make promises you can't keep, old girl." He chuckled in that self-satisfied "I'll believe it when I see it" way that always gets me riled. "I know you're going to come out of there with useless junk. You always do."

His words made me mad. How dare he accuse me of being frivolous! I prided myself on being a wise shopper. I had a darn good nose for bargains and stretched our old age pensions like nobody's business. Now I had a mad on, that's for sure. "Boy, I'll show him." I promised myself I would not buy a darn thing, no matter what. Ha! I wouldn't give Mr. Know-It-All smarty-pants reason to gloat.

I squared my chin and marched into the crowded store. Aisles and aisles of hockey equipment, basketballs, golf clubs, exercise equipment, fishing gear, boy toys galore were strung with huge blaring signs. CLOSING OUT SALE - Up to 80% OFF. NO REFUNDS.

Up and down the aisles I strolled, ducked and dodged, humming to myself and enjoying the frenetic energy and excitement of a sale.

All of a sudden, there, at the back of the store, in gleaming silver, full of lifejackets, paddles and fishing stuff, sat the exact canoe of my husband's picture. I gasped and blinked three times. Yup. It was still there. The Supremo Numero-Uno blah, blah. My heart beat wildly. I elbowed my way through the crowds, scrambled over junk in the aisles and darned near fell into the canoe looking for the price tag.

There it was - a little tattered, with the manufacturer's suggested retail price at \$6,750 plus tax crossed out and a handwritten TO CLEAR \$750 AS IS. NO RETURNS. Must be a mistake. \$6000 off? Salesman. I had to talk to a salesman.

I spotted a young fellow with a "Hi. I'm Mathew" tag trying to hide out from the mob of bargain hunters. I clutched his sleeve. "Mathew. Tell me about this El Supremo canoe. What's wrong with it? Why is it only \$750?"

"Oh. There's nothing wrong with it. It's brand new. We're closing the store is all. It's on clearance like everything else. I think that includes lifejackets, paddles and a bunch of fishing gear, too. I'll go check."

A few minutes later he came back and said, "I'm sorry ma'am. Someone made a mistake on the sale tag. It's supposed to be \$4,750 for the whole package. I just talked to my Dad who is running the close-out. He said it was worth more than \$8,000 regular price so it's still a real good deal."

I felt tears well up in my eyes. "Oh well", I said sadly. "Of course, it was too good to be true. This is exactly like my husband's dreamboat. I guess I started to dream myself when I saw that price tag. He's going to be 62 years old Friday. Had to retire early for his health. It's been hard on just the pension but the stubborn old fool has been saving \$10 every week for years to buy one just like this. Just an old man's silly dream, you know. Always said he wanted to spend his retirement out fishing in a canoe," my voice trailed off and I turned and walked away.

I was already at the mall door when Mathew caught up with me. "Do you have \$750 plus \$25 for delivery and a bit more for tax, ma'am?" I gasped. "Yes. Yes. That's about all I have," I said as I thought fleetingly about the cataract surgery I was saving up for.

"Well then, you just have your husband sitting on the front porch on Friday morning around 10 o'clock so's he can be there when my Dad and I come to unload his new boat. We'll even put a bow on it for his birthday."

I started to cry. My old hand shook and I had to squint as I wrote out my cheque. Mathew swallowed hard.

"Ma'am. There's something you should know. This store was my Grampa's. He ran it for more than 30 years. He always promised to retire one day. Said he wanted to spend time relaxing and out fishing in a canoe. He ordered this one, custom, for himself last year but, well, just never took the time off to use it."

He swallowed even harder. "My Grampa died, sudden-like, just last week. He was only 68 years old. I think he'd be mighty happy that your husband will get this here canoe. My Dad thinks so too. You just have to make sure he uses it a lot, okay? Promise?"

I handed Mathew a Kleenex and we stood there together, quietly lost in our own thoughts for a moment, blowing our noses.

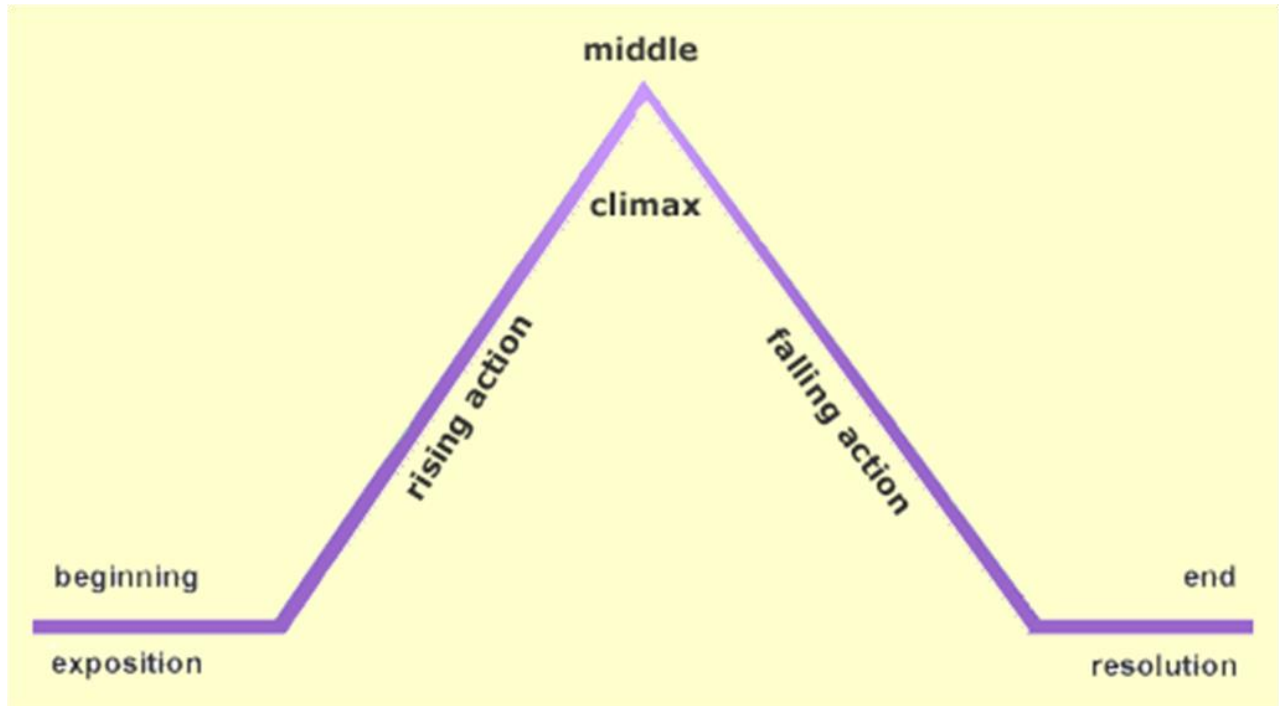
"I promise," I said as I dashed off to look for my dear sweet husband.

StoryBytes. Retrieved from the World Wide Web at: <http://www.storybytes.com/>

MY CASTING SHEET

Name of Character	Traits	Casting Choice

PLOTTING THE PLOT!



GETTING THE GIST

Name of Text

Complete the following:

Questions	Answer
Who?	
What?	
When?	
Where?	
Why?	
How?	

Write a GIST statement of 20 words or less that summarizes the text.

BUILDING EFFECTIVE READERS

Gaining Proficiency in Reading

There are a wide range of strategies that students can use to improve their comprehension skills. A major component of good reading comprehension is to have strategies or activities that students can use before they read, while they read, and to check what they have read upon completion.

The problem with most adult education students is that they just start reading and don't use any of the strategies that could help them be more effective readers. The following are a couple activities to utilize in the process of increasing reading comprehension skills, whether reading short stories, poetry, or authentic texts.

Previewing Skills

Just like in any reading process, students must learn to first preview the article or text. With the graphic-intensive texts of the GED® Tests, previewing is highly important to true comprehension. One strategy to use with students is TIPP?. This strategy requires that students skim and scan the reading material similar to the way we may look at the morning newspaper. We often decide what articles we will read after we have quickly previewed the titles, main ideas, and even the pictures or graphics. Students often just begin reading science articles rather than spending a brief time previewing so that they better understand what they will be reading.

Make sure that your students use a previewing strategy before reading in depth that:

- Activates prior knowledge
- Provides a skimming and scanning technique, such as TIPP?

TIPP?	
Title	What do the titles/subheadings and layout tell me?
Introduction	Skim this to get the main idea.
Paragraph	Read the first line of paragraphs/text boxes.
Pictures	What do the diagrams, photos, and graphs show me?
?	Can you come up with any questions?

When introducing the TIPP?, model the process for students and then have students work with you on TIPP?ing a reading sample.

TIPP? IT!

Elements	Notes
<p>T – Title</p> <p>What do the title, subheadings, and layout tell me about this text?</p>	
<p>I – Introduction</p> <p>What is included in the introduction?</p>	
<p>P – Paragraphs</p> <p>What information is included in the first sentence of each paragraph?</p>	
<p>P – Photographs</p> <p>What do the photographs, maps, charts, tables, illustrations tell me?</p>	
<p>?? – Questions</p> <p>What questions do I have about this text?</p>	

DURING READING SKILLS

The GIST Procedure (Generating Interactions between Schemata & Text)

The GIST Procedure is a strategy that can be used to improve students' abilities to comprehend the gist or main ideas of the text by answering the 5 Ws and H questions and then summarizing the passage by using the information from the 5 Ws and the H. This strategy incorporates reading and writing. Students should use their editing and revision skills for keeping their summary to twenty words or less.

Name of Text

Complete the following:

Questions	Answer
Who?	
What?	
When?	
Where?	
Why?	
How?	

Write a GIST statement of 20 words or less that summarizes the text.

POST READING STRATEGIES

Strategies, such as GIST, can also be used as post-reading strategies. It is important that students be able to summarize what they have read and incorporate additional information as needed. The following are simple formats to use when assessing a student's knowledge of reading materials. These questions can be placed on a 4x6 index card.

Who?

What?

Where?

When?

Why?

What event happened?

First

Next

Then

Last

List Five Words to Describe (Character or Subject)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

ELEMENTS WITHIN LITERATURE

Basic Components of Literature

Literature includes those written works which address in significant ways universal elements of what it means to be human. Good literature endures because it has the power to raise questions, provide fresh points of view, expand a person's understanding of his/herself and the world, and ignite the imagination.

We generally refer to the things that make up a work of literature as the work's component parts or elements. These elements include but are not limited to:

- Plot
- Character
- Setting
- Point of view
- Theme

Plot

A plot is a sequence of events, the "why" for the things that happen in the story. The plot draws the reader into the character's lives and helps the reader understand the choices that the characters make.

Plots of short stories do not always go in a straight line from the beginning to end of Plots have structure or elements that are used. These plot elements are:

- **Exposition** is the information needed to understand a story.
- **Complication** is the catalyst that begins the major conflict.
- **Climax** is the turning point in the story that occurs when characters try to resolve the complication.
- **Resolution** is the set of events that bring the story to a close.

Writers may vary the structure depending on the needs of the story. For example, a mystery writer may withhold information, the plot's exposition, until later in the story to build suspense.

Remember, it's not always a straight line from the beginning to the end of a short story. However, good stories always have all of the plot elements in them.

Characters

When reading, characters should "come alive." Memorable characters are unforgettable, even though they are fictional.

In short stories, characters are either major or minor and either static (unchanging) or dynamic (changing). The character who dominates the story is called the major or main character.

Authors provide the reader with many ways to learn about the characters, including:

- Physical traits
- Dialogue and vocal tone
- Actions
- Attire
- Opinions
- Emotional traits
- Point of View

It is important to “get a picture” of the characters in a story to better understand what is occurring and what motivates the characters to act as they do.

Setting

Setting is where and when the story occurs. The writer describes the world in which the story takes place similar to an artist painting a picture. The location of the story, as well as the time in which it occurs, is the setting.

Setting is created by language. How many or how few details is the decision of the author. Sometimes short stories require the reader to imagine the setting, creating details that the author has not provided. Discuss with students how a different setting would affect a story’s plot and characters.

Point of View

Everyone views things differently. Think about a special event. Do you remember the same things in the same way as other at the event?

In short stories, who tells the story and how it is told are critical issues for an author to decide. Depending on the point of view, the meaning of the story can change drastically. It is important to identify who is between the reader and the action of the story. That someone is telling the story from his/her point of view.

Identifying who is telling the story is an important part of analyzing a short story. There are different types of point of view.

First person – In the first-person point of view, the narrator participates in the action of the story. The character uses “I”. When reading stories in the first person, it is important to understand that the narrator may not be an objective teller of the tale.

Second person – In this point of view, the narrator uses the word “you”. This is sometimes called the objective point of view as the writer tells what happens without stating more than what can be inferred from the story’s action and dialogue. The narrator is often viewed as a detached observer.

Third person – Here the narrator does not participate in the action of the story as one of the characters. Instead, the narrator tells us how the characters feel by using “he” and “she”.

There are two types of third person point of view.

- Limited – the observer can only “see” what happens
- Omniscient – the observer knows the characters thoughts and can “see” inside their heads.

When reading, it is important to identify how point of view affects responses to the characters and whether or not what is said is trustworthy, especially if written in first person point of view.

Theme

The theme of a story is often not presented directly, but rather the reader must extract it from the characters, action, and setting. The writer communicates through the telling of the story certain underlying truths or themes.

To figure out the theme of a story:

- Check out the title. Sometimes it provides important information on the theme.
- Notice repeating patterns and symbols
- Identify allusions that are made through the story.
- Identify story details and whether or not they have greater meaning than initially thought.

Remember, determining a theme for a story never completely explains what may or may not have happened in the story. It is simply one of the elements that creates a short story.

Students should be able to talk about what literature does and means. They should be able to read a variety of literary forms and evaluate the effects of literary elements on the overall impact of a specific selection. Students should also be able to recognize the word choices, sentence patterns, and use of literary devices that show an author’s style.

GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS FOR TEACHING LITERATURE

Character Analysis Grid

Students are often asked to analyze characters when reading different types of genre. The following is a template that can be used to assist students in better identifying different aspects of a character by answering the following questions and placing them in a graphic organizer. The questions to be answered are:

- What does the character do?
- What does the character say or think?
- How do others feel about the character?
- How does the character change?
- What is the conflict that is expressed?
- What is the author’s theme or point of view?

Students can use this information to write a character analysis or to better comprehend the story through understanding specific characters.

Character Analysis Grid

1. What does the character do?

4. How does the character change?	Conflict	2. What does the character say or think?	1. What does the character do?							
3. How do others feel about the character?										

5. Author's Theme or Point of View:

Attribute Grid

Students can compare and contrast characters by using an attribute grid. The following is a sample attribute grid:

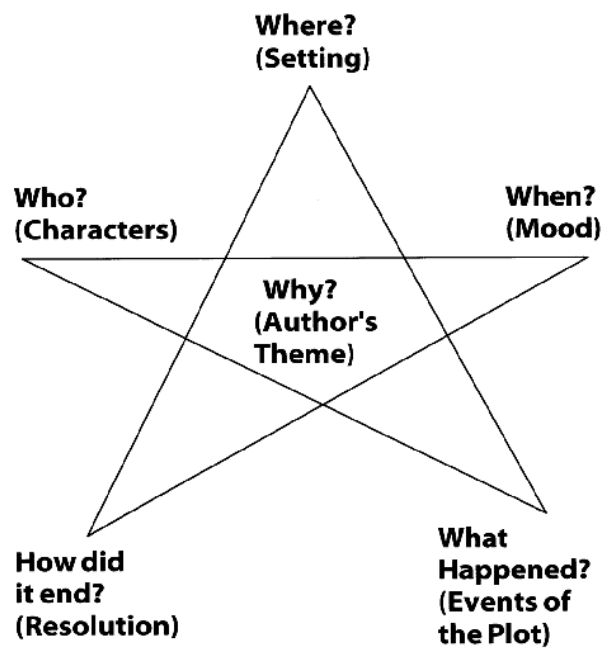
Attribute Grid

	Name 1	Name 2
Attribute 1		
Attribute 2		
Attribute 3		
Attribute 4		

Story Star

Like the GIST, the Story Star summarizes information from a reading and requires that the student identify the theme of the story

Story Star



Advanced Story Map

Students are taught to use a basic “Story Map” to map out, identify and analyze significant components of narrative text (e.g., fiction, biographies, historical accounts, etc.). Tell students that a Story Map can help them to better understand a story’s characters and events. You may wish to divide this strategy into different components. Begin by having students identify important character and their personalities and motivation. After students have mastered this task, have them identify the main problem and significant plot developments. Once this skill is understood, have students note the characters’ attempts to solve the problems. Finally have students identify the narrative’s overarching theme.

To assist students who are not motivated to use a Story Map, consider screening a video of a popular movie or television program. At key points, stop the tape and have the students complete relevant sections of the worksheet and discuss the results. A Story Map is a universal tool that can be used with any literary genre and across all types of medium.

A sample story map is located on the following page.

Advanced Story Map Worksheet

Story Name:

Question	Answer
1. Who is the central character?	
2. What is the main character like? (Describe his/her key qualities or personality traits.)	
3. Who is another character in the story?	
4. What is this other important character like?	
5. Where and when does the story take place?	
6. What is the major problem with which the main character is faced?	
7. How does the main character attempt to solve this major project?	
8. What is the twist, surprise, or unexpected development that takes place in the story?	
9. How is the problem solved or not solved?	
10. What is the theme or lesson of the story?	

A BEGINNING VOCABULARY LIST OF LITERARY TERMS

Students must understand the vocabulary of literature. The following is an introductory list of basic literary terms. Students should learn these terms, what they mean, and be able to identify them in various types of literature. As the teacher, you may wish to begin with the basics and work with students to build their understanding of the terms in relation to various literary genres such as novels, short stories, plays, poetry, biographies, and essays.

Allegory: an extended metaphor wherein the characters, events, and situations of the story can be taken on two levels: the literal level and the metaphoric/symbolic level, each thing representing something else. Example: *Animal Farm*.

Alliteration: the repetition of beginning sounds in words. Example: I rarely rush past red roses.

Allusion: an allusion is a reference to something in history, culture, or literature (especially historical). An allusion adds to the depth of our understanding. Example: She is as pretty as the Mona Lisa.

Antagonist: the force that works against the protagonist; the antagonist does not have to be a person.

Assonance: the repetition of the same or similar vowel sounds, but with different end consonants in a line, as in the words "date" and "fade." Example: The cat sat on the mat.

Apostrophe: language addressed to a person, animal, object, or other entity that is not present. Example: Walt Whitman's "To a Locomotive in the Winter."

Climax: the point in the story where the conflict is at its peak, when the conflict has reached its crisis and one of the two forces "wins."

Conflict: the struggle between two forces, one generally being the protagonist of the story. The antagonist can be the self, another person, animal, nature, technology/machine, society, or the supernatural.

Consonance: the repetition of consonant sounds at the end of words. Example: night, cat, plot.

Exposition: the background information of a story, the story before the story.

Figurative Language: a general category of language meant to be taken symbolically or metaphorically, including metaphor, simile, personification, etc.

Flashback: a strategy of plot sequencing where the author takes the reader back to events that occurred before the present time in the story.

Foreshadowing: clues in the writing that lead the reader to predict what will happen later in the story.

Hyperbole: exaggeration. The opposite of hyperbole is understatement. By using

Imagery language that appeals to the senses. It is a description that makes the reader feel he or she is "in the setting." There are six basic kinds of imagery: visual (sight), auditory (sound), olfactory (smell), gustatory (taste), tactile (touch), and kinesthetic (movement).

Irony: a discrepancy between what is said and what is meant.

Metaphor: a comparison of two generally unlike things meant to illuminate truth. Direct metaphors use "is" to make the comparison explicit. Implied metaphors suggest the comparison. Example: The book was a passport to adventure.

Meter: the rhythm created in poetry by the repetition of similar units of sound patterns (stressed and unstressed syllable combinations): iambic (U/), trochaic (/U), anapestic (UU/), dactylic (/UU), spondaic (/ /), and pyrrhic (UU).

Motif: a recurring image or idea. The repetition of the idea reinforces the value of the image or idea and usually gets the reader to think about theme.

Onomatopoeia: words that sound like what they mean. Example: "Hiss" sounds like the snake or the bees buzzed.

Personification: giving human characteristics to non-human things in order to give light to human action, emotion, ideas etc. Example: a smiling moon, a jovial sun, her stomach growled.

Plot: the events of a story or narrative with a variety of sequencing patterns. The plot is what happens in the story.

Poetry: a piece of literature written in meter; verse.

Point of View: the perspective from which a story is told.

First person point of view: the narrator, usually the protagonist, tells the story from his/her perspective using I, me, we, etc.

Second person point of view: a story told using "you," which places the reader immediately and personally into the story.

Third person omniscient point of view: the narrator uses third person pronouns (he/she/they etc.) and is God-like or all knowing (omniscient). This type of narrator is not limited by time or space.

Third person limited point of view: the narrator tells the story using third person pronouns but limits himself/herself to what one character can sense; the limitations are the same as in first person.

Protagonist: the main character of the story.

Refrain: a phrase or stanza that repeats in a ballad or song lyric; a refrain may hold the main theme or idea of the poem or song.

Resolution: the conclusion of the story, the unfolding of the theme, the "happy ending," the tying together; what occurs in the resolution depends on the kind of story and the author's purpose.

Rhythm: the regular or repetitive patterns of sounds created in language with stressed and unstressed syllables.

Rhyme: words that sound alike. There are either exact rhymes, where the end sounds of the words are identical, like lark and spark, or there are slant rhymes where the words sound similar but are not identical, like lake and lark.

Simile: a metaphor using like, as, than, or similar comparative words to make the connection between two generally unlike things. The intent of a simile is to illuminate truth. Example: She floated in like a cloud.

Suspense: the author intentionally leaves information out or doesn't answer questions that prompt the reader to wonder, often anxiously, about what will happen next. Suspense is the quality of "being on the edge of our seat" as we read to see what will happen.

Symbol/Symbolism: a person, place, thing, or idea that stands for something else. Water can symbolize purity. Light (as in sunlight) often is used to symbolize knowledge or truth.

Theme: what the author wants us to know about the general truth of the story. For example, if the story is about "love," the author probably knows something about love that he/she conveys through the story and the characters. Theme is an idea that is true for most people over time and across cultures.

Tone: The author's or poet's attitude or feeling toward a person, thing, place, event, or situation. It is also the emotional feeling in the poem/story.

THE ELEMENTS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Grammar is the structure of language. It includes the sounds, words, syntax, and semantics of language. Rhetoric is what people do with language. It includes the words that they select, how they structure phrases, and how they make things stand out and be noticed. Style is the pattern of choices that an individual makes when he/she writes. Figurative language is used purposefully to distort language to make the reader think about what the writer is trying to tell them. Figurative language is enjoyed by some people and disliked by others – usually those who just can't get past the literal meaning and use of words. These people often dislike poetry because they just can't "get" the meaning of the figurative language expressions that are used.

Figurative language is not intended to be interpreted in a literal sense. Appealing to the imagination, figurative language provides new ways of looking at the world. Figurative language compares two things that are different in enough ways so that their similarities, when pointed out, are interesting, unique, and/or surprising.

Figurative language can be 1) thought provoking constructions or 2) just shallow, clever manipulations. Those of the first type would include the more common kinds of figurative language that people know, including simile, metaphor, symbol, and irony. These can require some careful reading and, sometimes, study to get the point the writer is trying to make. The second kind of figurative language is more like the "stupid: pet tricks made famous by David Letterman. They are cute and more immediately understood, but they have little lasting effect.

Remember, figurative language is nothing more than a way to compare and contrast. When some language can't be taken literally, it forces people to compare what they have with what it might have been. Thus, we get two sets of meaning. Each form of figurative language approaches the comparison differently.

straight comparison	compare A and B
simile	A is like/as B
metaphor	A is B
symbol	A is represented by B
irony	A is not B

Adapted from English 201 – Figurative Language, Milwaukee Area Technical College. Retrieved from the World Wide Web at: <http://online.milwaukee.tec.wi.us/eng-201/figures.htm>.