

Glossary

acronym A word formed from the initial letter or letters of each word in a set of words (e.g., NATO, radar).

allegory A metaphorical narrative in prose or verse in which fictional figures and actions usually represent truths or generalizations about human existence.

alliteration The repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words (for example, *winter wind*).

analogy A method of explaining something unfamiliar by using a comparison of similar, more familiar things; a form of reasoning in which one thing is inferred to be similar to another thing in a certain respect, on the basis of the known similarity between the things in other respects (for example, part to whole, synonym and antonym, degree, or cause and effect).

anecdote A brief narrative of an interesting, unusual, or biographical event often used to illustrate a point.

antonym A word opposite in meaning to another word (for example, *good* and *bad*).

appeal to authority Calling on an individual or other source as an expert to give credence to an argument made by an author of a work.

appeal to emotion Building an argument using expressive language or other devices instead of presenting evidence.

appeal to reason Calling on a reader's ability to think in a rational way in order to cause a change in his or her thoughts.

assonance The close repetition of middle vowel sounds (for example, *stony* and *holy*).

bait and switch A tactic in which a customer is attracted by the advertisement of a low-priced item but is then encouraged to buy a higher-priced one.

bandwagon A fallacy in which one is attracted to a popular party, faction, or cause that attracts growing support; following the crowd rather than using evidence to justify a conclusion.

bias An inclination of temperament or outlook; a personal and sometimes unreasoned judgment.

blend To combine the sounds represented by two or more letters to pronounce a word such as /gr/ in grow; to combine two or more words creating a new word such as brunch (breakfast plus lunch).

cause and effect An organizational structure of text in which there is a description of events and their causes or consequences. Often, a single cause will have more than one effect, and a single event may have more than one cause.

characterization The method an author uses to create the appearance and personality of imaginary characters in a piece of fiction; often developed by describing a character's physical appearance, by revealing a character's nature through the character's speech, thoughts, feelings, or actions, by using the speech, thoughts, feelings, or actions of other characters, and by using direct comments from the narrator.

chronological An organizational structure of text in which events are placed in the order they occur in time.

comparison and contrast An organizational structure of text based on a description of similarities and differences among two or more things.

comprehension The process in which a reader constructs meaning through interaction with text; accurately understanding what is written or said.

concrete image Words that induce readers to call up "pictures" in their minds by appealing to their senses of taste, smell, hearing, touch, and sight.

conflict The struggle between opposing forces that brings about the action within a story or drama; can be internal (within a character) or external (between a character and an outside force).

connotation The attitudes and feelings associated with a word as opposed to a word's literal meaning.

consonance The repetition of identical consonant sounds before or after differing vowel sounds (for example, *stoke* and *luck*).

construct meaning The process of understanding what is read through the interaction with text.

consumer documents Nonfiction works such as warranties, product information, and instructional materials designed to help one with daily tasks.

context clues Information a reader may obtain from a text that helps confirm the meaning of a word or group of words.

counterargument A point or statement in opposition to the argument being made.

credibility The quality or state of offering reasonable grounds for being believed.

cutaway A drawing or model of something with part of its outside removed to give a view of the inside.

decode To analyze spoken or graphic symbols of a familiar language to ascertain their intended meaning.

definitional footnote A reference, explanation, or comment usually placed below the text on a printed page.

denotation The literal or "dictionary" meaning of a word.

description One of the four traditional forms of composition in speech and writing that gives a verbal picture of a character and an event, including the setting in which they occur.

dialect A form of language as it is spoken in a particular geographic area or by a particular social or ethnic group.

dialogue A conversation between two or more characters in a work that gives insight into the characters themselves.

dynamic character A character who undergoes a change during the course of a story.

evaluative question A question that asks the responder to make a judgment.

explicit Fully or clearly expressed; definite.

fable A story intended to enforce a useful truth, especially one in which animals speak and act like human beings.

fallacy A typical error in reasoning that arises commonly in ordinary discourse and renders unsound the argument in which it appears.

figurative language Language enriched by word images and figures of speech.

figurative meaning A symbolic interpretation of written work.

first-person narration Narration in which the point of view is that of the main character.

flashback The technique of stopping the chronological action in a story and shifting to an earlier period to introduce additional information.

flat character A character with only one outstanding trait or feature.

focus The center of interest or attention; the main idea.

foreshadowing Giving clues to coming events in a narrative.

format The shape, size and general makeup (as of something printed).

functional documents Works of nonfiction such as how-to books, technical manuals, and instructions.

genre An established class or category of artistic composition or literature (such as poetry, drama or novel).

glittering generalities A propaganda technique in which words have different positive meanings for individual subjects but are linked to highly valued concepts.

graphic organizer A method of organization of information that incorporates diagrams or other pictorial devices.

hyperbole A figure of speech which uses a deliberate exaggeration (for example, I have told you a *million* times).

hypothesize To make an assertion about something assumed but not positively known.

idiom A figure of speech that is not meant to be taken literally (for example, *it rained cats and dogs.*)

imagery Words and phrases that create vivid sensory experiences for a reader.

implicit To be assumed but not directly expressed.

inference A general conclusion drawn from information that is given.

inferential question A question that asks a responder to draw a conclusion.

informational documents Works of nonfiction such as transcripts, reports or journals.

irony The recognition of the difference between reality and appearance; includes *situational irony*, in which there is a contrast between what is intended or expected and what actually occurs; *verbal irony*, in which there is a contrast between what is said and what is actually meant; and *dramatic irony*, in which words or actions are understood by the audience but not by characters.

language The systematic use of sounds, signs and symbols as a method of communication; in writing, the choice of words used to convey meaning.

limited point of view The vantage point in which a narrator tells the story in the third person but often confines himself or herself to what is experienced, thought, and felt by a single or limited number of characters.

literal meaning The actual meaning of a word or a phrase.

literary element A component of a piece of literature such as plot or setting in a story.

main idea The gist of a passage; the central thought; the chief topic of a passage expressed or implied in a word or phrase; the topic sentence of a paragraph; a statement in sentence form that gives the stated or implied major topic of a passage and the specific way the passage is limited in content or reference.

media Means of communication, especially of mass communication, such as books, newspapers, magazines, radio, television, motion pictures, and recordings.

metaphor A figure of speech in which an implied comparison is made between two unlike things (e.g., he's a tiger).

monologue An extended speech in a drama or a narrative that is presented by one character.

mood The feeling or atmosphere that a writer creates for a reader; a reflection of an author's attitude toward a subject or theme.

narrative One of the four traditional forms of composition in speech and writing which tells a story or gives an account of something, dealing with sequences of events and experiences, though not necessarily in strict order.

omniscient point of view The vantage point in which a narrator is removed from the story and knows everything that needs to be known.

onomatopoeia Words whose sound imitates their suggested meaning (for example, *buzz*, *hiss* and *clang*).

open-ended question A type of question intended to produce a free response rather than a direct or one-word response.

parody A literary or musical work in which the style of an author or work is closely imitated for comic effect or in ridicule.

persona A voice or character representing a speaker or narrator of a literary work.

personification A figure of speech in which human qualities are attributed to animals, inanimate objects or ideas (for example, *a happy house*).

persuasive One of the four traditional forms of composition in speech and writing which moves the reader by argument or entreaty to a belief or position.

persuasive technique A method used in speaking or writing to get an audience to agree with the speaker or writer's point of view.

plot The careful sequencing of events in a story generally built around a conflict. Stages of plot include exposition (background), rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.

point of view The perspective or attitude of a narrator of a piece of literature.

prefix An affix attached before a base word or root, such as *re-* in *reprint*.

primary source Firsthand information, such as an eyewitness account.

prior knowledge Knowing that stems from previous experience. *Note:* Prior knowledge is a key component of schema theories of reading comprehension in spite of the redundancy inherent in the term.

problem-solution An organizational structure of text that is similar to cause and effect, except that outcomes are a result or solution of a perceived need or problem.

propaganda The spreading of ideas, information, or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, cause or person.

public documents Nonfiction materials such as newspapers, editorials, and speeches.

reliability Suitable or fit to be relied on; trustworthy.

resolution The point in a literary work at which the chief dramatic complication is resolved.

rhetorical device A method used in writing or speaking in which language is used to influence or persuade an audience.

root word In a complex word, the meaningful base form after all affixes are removed, such as *read* in *unreadable*.

round character A character who is complex and multidimensional.

rubric An authoritative set of rules which can be used as a means of evaluation.

satire A literary technique in which ideas, customs, behaviors, or institutions are ridiculed for the purpose of improving society.

scope The extent of an author's treatment of a subject.

secondary source A source that is reporting on or analyzing information from another source.

sensory details Details that appeal to reader's sense of sight, hearing, smell, touch, or taste.

sequencing The arrangement in which things follow in a logical order or a recurrent pattern.

setting The time and place of the action of a literary work.

sidebar Supplementary information that is printed alongside the main text.

simile A figure of speech in which a comparison is made between two unlike things using the words like or as (for example, *she's as sly as a fox*).

skim and scan To examine or read something quickly, but selectively, for a particular purpose.

soliloquy A speech, usually given alone on stage, in which a character speaks aloud his or her thoughts.

static character A character who does not change during a story.

stereotyping A standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment.

style An author's distinctive manner of expression.

subplot The secondary action of a story that reinforces or contrasts with the main plot.

suffix An affix attached to the end of a base word root, such as *-ment* in *requirement*.

symbol A concrete thing used to suggest something larger and more abstract.

synonym One of two or more words in a language that have similar meanings (for example, *answer* and *respond*).

synthesizing question A question that asks a responder to combine separate elements into one concept.

testimonial A propaganda technique based on quotations or endorsements from famous people, in or out of context, that attempts to connect a famous or respectable person with a product or item.

text features Organizers of written materials such as indexes, prefaces, appendixes, definitional footnotes, sidebars, tables of contents, illustrations, or photographs.

text structure An author's method of organizing a text, (such as sequencing, compare and contrast, cause and effect or problem-solution).

theme A topic of discussion or writing; a major idea broad enough to cover the entire scope of a literary work. *Note:* A theme may be stated or implied, but clues to it may be found in the ideas that are given special prominence or tend to recur in a work.

thesis The basic argument advanced by a speaker or writer who then attempts to prove it; the subject or major argument.

third-person narration Narration in which the point of view is that of someone outside the story who refers to all characters by name or as "he," "she," and "they."

tone The reflection of an author's attitude toward his or her subject.

topic The general category or class of ideas, often stated in a word or phrase, to which the ideas of a passage as a whole belong.

topic sentence A sentence intended to express the main idea in a paragraph or passage.

transfer A persuasive technique in which a product is associated with something attractive or respectable.

transitions Words and phrases that help explain relationships between sentences and allow a reader or writer to move from one idea to another.

validity A truthful or factual condition; a logical argument; the evidence that the inferences drawn from test results are accurate.

Venn diagram A mapping technique using overlapping circles showing features either unique or common to two or more concepts.

viewpoint The stance or vantage point from which a story is narrated.

visual aid An instructional device, such as a chart, map, diagram, cutaway or overlay, that helps a reader to comprehend information.

word families Groups of words with clear relationships (for example, *specify*, *specifies*, and *specification*).

word origins The history or etymology of words; the meanings of roots and affixes.

workplace documents Job-related nonfiction materials such as memoranda, meeting minutes and travel schedules.