**List of literary terms you need to know**

1. **Protagonist**

A protagonist is the central [character](https://literarydevices.net/character/) or leading figure in poetry, [narrative](https://literarydevices.net/narrative/), novel or any other story. A protagonist is sometimes a “[hero](https://literarydevices.net/hero/)” to the [audience](https://literarydevices.net/audience/) or readers.

1. **Antagonist**

An antagonist in literature is usually a character or a group of characters that oppose the story’s main character, who is known as the protagonist. An antagonist may also be a force or institution, such as a government, with which the protagonist must contend.

1. **Slave narrative**

The slave narrative is a genre of literature that was written mostly between the mid 1700s and the late 1800s by African slaves in America. The narratives were either written by the slaves themselves, or dictated by them to someone else who wrote their accounts. Some were even passed orally.

1. **Autobiography**

Autobiography is one type of [biography](https://literarydevices.net/biography/), which tells a life story of its author, meaning it is a written record of the author’s life. Rather than being written by somebody else, an autobiography comes through the person’s own pen, in his own words.

1. **Biography**

A biography is simply an account or detailed description about the life of a person. It entails basic facts, such as childhood, education, career, relationships, family, and death. A biography is written about someone else’s life.

1. **Metaphor**

Metaphor is a [figure of speech](https://literarydevices.net/figure-of-speech/) that makes an implicit, implied, or hidden [comparison](https://literarydevices.net/comparison/) between two things that are unrelated, but which share some common characteristics. For example, the [phrase](https://literarydevices.net/phrase/), “My brother is the black sheep of the family,” is a metaphor because he is not a sheep, nor is he black. However, we can use this comparison to describe an association of a black sheep with that person. A black sheep is an unusual [animal](https://animals.net/), which typically stays away from the herd, and the person being described shares similar characteristics.

1. **Themes**

Theme is defined as a main idea or an underlying meaning of a literary work, which may be stated directly or indirectly.

1. **Symbols**

Symbolism is the use of symbols to signify ideas and qualities, by giving them symbolic meanings that are different from their literal sense. For instance, “smile” is a symbol of friendship.

1. **Fiction**

Fiction, literature created from the imagination, not presented as fact, though it may be based on a true story or situation.

1. **Non-fiction**

Nonfiction, then, comprises of the written works based on real events. In this way, literature that is nonfiction can help us understand our world. Let's look closer at the characteristics and examples of nonfiction.

1. **Figurative language**

Figurative language uses figures of speech to be more effective, persuasive, and impactful. Figures of speech such as metaphors, similes, and allusions go beyond the literal meanings of the words to give readers new insights.

1. **Flashback**

an interruption of the chronological sequence (as of a film or literary work) of an event of earlier occurrence.

1. **Imagery**

Imagery means to use [figurative language](https://literarydevices.net/figurative-language/) to represent objects, actions, and ideas in such a way that it appeals to our physical senses. Usually it is thought that imagery makes use of particular words that create visual representation of ideas in our minds.

1. **Narrative**

Narrative is a report of related events presented to listeners or readers, in words arranged in a logical sequence. A story is taken as a synonym of narrative. A narrative, or story, is told by a narrator who may be a direct part of that experience, and he or she often shares the experience as a first-person narrator.