Colormarking Literary Terms Handout

Features

• Setting: the time and place of a story or play
• Conflict: a struggle or clash between opposing characters or forces - the four main types of conflict include: man vs. man, man vs. self, man vs. nature, man vs. society
• Motif: a prominent feature or element of a written work; a repeated symbol or theme or a central or dominant feature
• Diction: the author's choice of words
• Detail: facts, observations, reasons, and examples that a writer uses to develop a subject
• Figurative Language: any language that is not used in a literal (meaning exactly what it says) way; a way of saying one thing and meaning another (more than what it says on the surface)
• Simile: a figure of speech that makes a comparison between two unlike things, using an explicit word such as "like", "as", "resembles", or "than" – "That test was like getting hit by a bus." (While metaphors just imply the comparison, similes state it directly with comparison words.)
• Metaphor: a comparison between two unlike things, in which one thing becomes another thing without the use of the words "like", "as", etc. – "He's a beast on the court." (While similes state the comparison directly, metaphors just imply it.)
• Personification: a special kind of metaphor that gives human qualities to something which is not human, such as an animal, object, or idea - "The tree sighed sadly in the cold breeze."
• Hyperbole: (pronounced High - pe - bow -lee) is an exaggeration that is based on truth meant to add interest, humor, or emphasis - "Coach had us run a million miles today at practice."
• Symbol: something that stands for itself and for something beyond itself as well a lion may symbolize courage or nobility, a ring symbolizes a promise
• Oxymoron: a figure of speech in which words of opposite meaning are used together "Jumbo shrimp", "soft rock", "expect the unexpected", "small crowd"
• Syntax: the way that words and phrases are arranged in sentences – including choices of word order, sentence length, layout, and punctuation
• Foreshadowing: the use of indirect clues to hint at events that will occur later in the plot
• Suspense: the uncertainty or anxiety that the author wants the reader to feel about what is going to happen next in a story
• Flashback: a scene on a movie, play, short story, novel, or narrative poem that interrupts the present action of the plot to “flash backward” to an earlier time
• Point of View: the viewpoint from which the writer has chosen to tell a story
• Onomatopoeia: (pronounced on – oh – ma – toe – pee – ah) the use of a word whose sound imitates or suggests its meaning – "BAM! " "meow" "ker-plunk!"
• Alliteration: the repetition of the same consonant sounds in words that are close together in a poem, or the repetition of consonant sounds that are very similar – "big bad Brutus the bully"
• Allusion: a reference to a statement, person, place, events or thing that is known from literature, history, religion, sports, myth, politics, science, or pop culture
Effects

- Verbal irony: a type of irony - saying the opposite of what you mean (something like sarcasm, except that sarcasm is meant to hurt - verbal irony doesn't have to be meanspirited) "Jules cried out in frustration, 'I just love doing four hours of homework every night!'"
- Situational Irony: a type of irony - when events convey a reality different from and usually opposite to what is expected or appears to be true – a professional pickpocket has his own pocket picked just as he was in the act of picking someone else's pocket
- Dramatic Irony: a type of irony - when the audience or the reader knows something important that a character in a play or story does not know
- Imagery: language that appeals to the senses; these words and phrases, called images, help a reader mentally experience what the characters in the literary selection are experiencing by capturing what we see, hear, smell, touch, and taste
- Tone: the attitude that an author takes toward the audience, the subject matter, or the character; tone is the complex feeling that the writer creates for the reader
- Characterization: the process of revealing the personality of a character through situations, dialogue, choices the character makes, etc.
- Theme: a broad idea in a story, or a message or lesson expressed by a work. This message is usually about life, society, or human nature. Themes explore timeless and universal ideas.