Literary Term Notes

1. Cliché: overused word, expression, or situation

Example: slipping on a banana peel, Hallmark movie

1. Bildungsroman: coming of age story, a story growth

Example: Harry Potter, Ugly Duckling

1. Aphorism: wise statement of truth

Example: “a penny saved is a penny earned”

1. Verisimilitude: the appearance of being true or real
2. Analogy: comparing two things

Example: buttery fly coming from a cocoon = growing up

1. Protagonist: the main character of a story, who changes the most

Example: Harry Potter,

1. Symbolism: object represents an idea

Example: <3 = love, 50 star = 50 states

1. Avant-garde: innovative or ahead of its time

Example: Lady Gaga’s dresses,

Hint: advanced

1. Denotation: dictionary or literal definition of a word

Thin, scrawny, slim, bony = underweight

1. Connotation: underlying meaning or emotional attachment associated with a word

Example: thin ☺ scrawny ☹

1. Euphemism: polite expressions to say unpleasant topics

Example tossing instead of throwing up, passed instead of died

1. Plot: storyline

Example: exposition, rising action, climax, resolution

1. Invective: attacks, insults or denounces a person
2. Catharsis: relief of emotions by watching and/or reading something

Example: watch a sad movie after a bad day

1. Understatement: making something seem less than it actually is

Example: The Holocaust was pretty bad

1. Ambiguity: the meaning of a word or phrase is uncertain and has more than one meaning

Example: The girl washed the dog wearing the pink shirt

1. Jargon: vocabulary specific to a certain group

Example: sports vocabulary

1. Allusion: figure of speech that refers to well known person, event , situation

Example: He’s a real Romeo!

1. Stream of consciousness: a person’s thoughts and reactions as they come to mind

Example: I’m hungry teacher writing words

1. Pun: play on words

Example: This is punny

1. Characterization:the way an author describes the personality of characters

Example: speech, actions, appearance,

1. Imagery: creating a mental picture by using the 5 senses

Example: the white glistening snow fell softly…

1. Foreshadowing: a clue that signals of an event in the future

Example: stop sign,

1. Irony: opposite than was is expected

Example: firetruck catching on fire,

1. Satire: humorous mocking art than makes a comment on society

Example: SNL

1. Personification: giving human characteristics to non human things

Example: the trees are dancing

1. Onomatopoeia: formation of words from the sounds they make

Example: pow, bark, boom

1. Hyperbole: exaggeration to create effect

Example: I’m so hungry that I could eat a cow

1. Parallel structure: repeated phrases or clause structure
2. Antagonist: the character to creates conflict for the protagonist
3. Paradox: contradiction that on closer examination contains truth

Example: War is peace

1. Oxymoron: two contradictory words placed next to each other
2. Alliteration: repeated consonants in sequence or phrase

Example: Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled

1. Assonance: repeated vowels

Example: The rain in Spain falls mainly

1. Simile: comparing two things using “like” or “as”

Example: School is like prison