

English 9

Fiction Terms

Antagonist

An antagonist is a character who opposes the main character. In the classic style of story wherein the action consists of a hero fighting a villain, the two can be regarded as protagonist and antagonist, respectively.

Example. The antagonist in *The Outsiders* can be seen as Bob in the Socs.

Protagonist

A protagonist is the main character (the central or primary personal figure) of a narrative, around whom the events of the narrative's plot revolve and with whom the audience is intended to share the most empathy.

Example. The Protagonist in *The Outsiders* can be seen as Ponyboy Curtis.

Character

A character is the representation of a person in a narrative or dramatic work of art (such as a novel, play, or film).

Example. Ponyboy, Sodapop, Darry, Dally, etc.

Round Character

Round characters have complex qualities and undergo development, sometimes sufficiently to surprise the reader.

Example. Johnny Cade in *The Outsiders* is a round character.

Static Character

Static characters are two-dimensional in that they are relatively uncomplicated and do not change throughout the course of a work.

Example. An example of a static character is Homer Simpson. He does not undergo major change to his character.

Stereotyped Character

Stereotyped characters are characters that become types rather than characters, and live up to popular standards and expectations.

Example. Girl Next Door, Mean Step-Mother, Town Bully, Dumb Cheerleader, etc.

Dynamic Character

A dynamic character undergoes some kind of change because of the action in the plot.

Example. Adam in *The War Between the Classes* is a dynamic character.

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Flat Character

A flat character embodies one or two qualities, ideas, or traits that can be readily described in a brief summary. They are not psychologically complex characters and therefore are readily accessible to readers. Some flat characters are recognized as stereotype characters.

Example. The character Fortunato in Edgar Allan Poe's *The Cask of Amontillado*.

Foil

A foil is a character in a work whose behavior and values contrast with those of another character in order to highlight the distinctive temperament of that character (usually the protagonist).

Example. In Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Mercutio is often interpreted as the comic foil to Romeo.

Direct Presentation

In direct presentation, authors present straight out, by exposition or analysis, what a character is like, or has someone else in the story tell what he/she is like.

Example. In Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, direct presentation is used to illustrate Romeo's love-sickness and preoccupation with Rosaline. We know he is swooning over her before we even meet his character.

Indirect Presentation

In indirect presentation, the author shows us the character in action and readers infer what he is like from what he/she thinks, says, or does.

Example. In the short story *Joy Riding*, we learn of the main character's dislike of piano and apparent fragility by how he is able or unable to interact with his piano music and the activities around him.

Dialogue

Dialogue is the verbal exchanges between characters. Dialogue makes the characters seem real to the reader or audience by revealing firsthand their thoughts, responses, and emotional states.

Example.

Lisa had just gotten out of the car and was heading around the corner of the garage when she ran into Brian. "Geez, you startled me. I wasn't expecting you here." His face looked sort of pale and pinched. He's found out, she thought. I finally broke it off, but I was too late.

He said, "It's been a real day for expectations. Where were you? I've been waiting here for an hour. You didn't leave a note or---"

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Fiction Terms

The previous definitions constitute the terms related to fiction that are examinable in English 9.

These definitions were gathered from public domain content at wikipedia.org, dictionary.com, for students in the Saint Thomas Aquinas High School English Department.

Fiction is a literary work based on the imagination and not necessarily on fact. The terms on this list apply mostly to the study of short stories and novels, but could also be used in connection to non-fiction, biography, narrative poetry, and drama.

These terms were learned in English 8. They are examinable in English 9.

Chronological order

Climax

Conflict (internal, external)

Exposition

Falling Action

Flashback

Foreshadowing

Plot

Resolution

Rising action

Setting

Suspense