

English 10

Fiction Terms

Atmosphere

The atmosphere is the prevailing feeling that is created in a piece of writing. The atmosphere usually sets up the reader's expectations about the ending or outcome of the plot. Atmosphere is usually created through the dialogue and the imagery.

Example. The overall atmosphere in *Harry Potter* can be seen as suspenseful.

Narration

The act or process of telling the particulars of a story is referred to as narration. More narrowly defined, narration is the fiction-writing mode whereby the narrator communicates directly to the reader.

Example. Holden Caulfield is the character created in *The Catcher and the Rye* to narrate the story.

Narrator

The narrator is the voice of the person telling the story, not to be confused with the author's voice.

Example. Ponyboy narrates *The Outsiders*.

Drama

Drama is derived from the Greek word "dram," meaning "to do" or "to perform." The term drama may refer to a single play, a group of plays ("Jacobean drama"), or to all plays. Drama is designed for performance in a theater; actors take on the roles of characters, perform indicated actions, and speak the dialogue written in the script. "Play" is a general term for a work of dramatic literature, and a playwright writes plays.

Example. *Romeo and Juliet* is a Drama.

Comedy

Comedy is a work intended to interest, involve, and amuse the reader or audience, in which no terrible disaster occurs and that ends happily for the main characters. High comedy refers to verbal wit, such as puns, whereas low comedy is generally associated with physical action and is less intellectual. Romantic comedy involves a love affair that meets with various obstacles but overcomes them to end in a blissful union.

Example. Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a romantic comedy.

Tragedy

A tragedy is a story that presents courageous individuals who confront powerful forces within or outside themselves with a dignity that reveals the breadth and depth of the human spirit in the face of failure, defeat, and even death. Tragedies recount an individual's downfall; they usually begin high and end low.

Example. Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is an example of a tragedy.

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Point of View (POV)

Point of View refers to who tells us a story and how it is told. What we know and how we feel about the events in a work are shaped by the author's choice of point of view. The teller of the story, the narrator, inevitably affects our understanding of the characters' actions by filtering what is told through his or her own perspective. The various points of view that writers draw upon can be grouped into the following categories:

- **First Person POV**

First Person POV is when the "I" in the story presents the point of view of only one character. The reader is restricted to the perceptions, thoughts, and feelings of that single character. First-person narrators can play either a major or a minor role in the story they are telling.

Example. In Melville's *Bartleby, the Scrivener*, the lawyer is the first-person narrator.

- **Omniscient POV**

Omniscient POV is an all-knowing perspective where the narrator who is not a character in the story and who can move from place to place and pass back and forth through time, can also slip into and out of character's thoughts and feelings as no human being possibly could in real life. Omniscient narrators can report the thoughts and feelings of the characters, as well as their words and actions. It is a third person perspective, often referred to as the God POV.

Example. JRR Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is in Omniscient POV.

- **Limited Omniscient POV**

Limited Omniscience is when an author restricts a narrator to the single perspective of either a major or minor character, not all of them (as it is in the God POV above). The way people, places, and events appear to that character is the way they appear to the reader. Sometimes a limited omniscient narrator can see into more than one character, particularly in a work that focuses on two characters alternately from one chapter to the next, but their knowledge is still "limited" regarding all characters in the story. Short stories, however, are frequently limited to a single character's point of view. It is a third person perspective.

Example. The *Harry Potter* books, with a few exceptions, are conveyed through Limited Omniscient POV – Harry's.

- **Objective POV**

Objective keeps a camera's view, showing the action but not the thoughts.

Example. As seen in third person dialogue.
"She ordered asparagus soup. John smiled. 'Do you remember?' he asked."

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Fiction Terms

The above definitions constitute the terms related to fiction that are examinable in English 10.

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.

Exposition

Suspense

Climax

Antagonist

Conflict (internal, external)

Character

Falling Action

Direct Presentation

Flashback

Dynamic Character

Foreshadowing

Flat Character

Plot

Foil

Resolution

Indirect Presentation

Rising action

Protagonist

Setting

Dialogue

The above list constitutes the terms related to fiction that are have been covered in high school English and are included in the list of examinable terms for the English 10 Provincial Exam.