

theme, thesis, main idea, moral

Theme: A central idea, primary action, or abstract concept that is made concrete through representation in person, action, and image. No proper theme is simply a subject or an activity. Like a thesis, theme implies a subject and predicate of some kind - not just vice for instance, but some such proposition as, "Vice seems more interesting than virtue but turns out to be destructive." Sometimes the theme is directly stated in the work, and sometimes it is given indirectly. There may be more than one theme in a given work.

Thesis: An attitude or position taken by a writer or speaker with the purpose of proving or supporting it. Also used for the paper written in support of the thesis.

Main idea: In informational or expository writing, the most important thought or overall position. The main idea or thesis of a piece, written in sentence form, is supported by details and explanation.

Moral: The lesson taught in a work such as a fable; a simple type of theme. For example, 'Do not count your chickens before they are hatched' teaches that one should not number one's fortunes or blessings until they appear.

character, protagonist, dialect, dialogue, interior monologue

Character

Character: A person who takes part in the action of a story, novel or play. Sometimes characters can be animals or imaginary creatures, such as beings from another planet or even inanimate objects, personified.

Protagonist

The protagonist is the main character in a script, novel, or traditional literature story.

Four Methods an Author Uses to Craft a Character:

There are four basic methods:

- a. A writer may describe a character's physical appearance.
- b. A character's nature may be revealed through his/her own speech, thoughts, feelings, or actions.
- c. The speech, thoughts, feelings or actions of other character's can be used to develop a character.
- d. The narrator can make direct comments about a character.

Dialect

A dialect is a particular variety of language spoken in one place by a distinct group of people. A dialect reflects the colloquialisms, grammatical constructions, distinctive vocabulary, and pronunciations that are typical of a region. At times writers use dialect to establish or emphasize character development and/or settings.

Dialogue

Dialogue is conversation between two or more people that advances the action, is consistent with the character of the speakers, and serves to give relief from passages essentially descriptive or expository.

Interior Monologue

A character is thinking, or wondering, or making sense of a situation within his or her own mind. This is an extended expression of thought, but it is not spoken out loud.

imagery, mood, setting, tone

Imagery: Words and phrases that create vivid sensory experiences for the reader. Most images are visual, but imagery may also appeal to the senses of smell, hearing, taste, or touch.

Mood: The feeling or atmosphere (setting) the writer creates for the reader. The use of connotation, details, dialogue, imagery, figurative language, foreshadowing, setting, and rhythm can help establish mood.

Setting: The time and place of the action in a story, play, poem.

Tone: An expression of a writer's attitude toward a subject. Unlike mood, which is intended to shape the reader's emotional response, tone reflects the feelings of the writer. Tone can be serious, humorous, sarcastic, playful, ironic, bitter, objective, ...

symbol, irony

Symbol: A person place or thing that represents something beyond itself. Symbols can succinctly communicate complicated, emotionally rich ideas. (ex: heart = love, flag = courage)

Irony: A literary term referring to how a person, situation, statement, or circumstance is not as it would actually seem. Many times it is the exact opposite of what it appears to be.

figurative language, metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, allusion, anachronism

Figurative Language: Language that communicates ideas beyond the ordinary or literal meaning of the words. For example, the use of simile, metaphor, personification, and/or hyperbole.

Metaphor: A figure of speech that makes a comparison between two things that are different but do have something in common. For example, in the evening of life.

Simile: A comparison of two unlike things in which a word of comparison (often like or as) is used. For example, 'She stood in front of the alter, shaking like a freshly caught trout.'

Personification: A form of metaphor in which language relating to human action, motivation, and emotion is used to refer to non-human agents or objects or abstract concepts. For example, The weather is smiling on us today. or Love is blind.

Hyperbole: An intentional exaggeration for emphasis or comic effect.

Understatement: A technique of creating emphasis by saying less than is actually or literally true. Understatement is the opposite of hyperbole or exaggeration, and can be used to create humor as well as biting satire.

Allusion: Reference to something specific without actually calling it by name; for example, "I haven't eaten since yesterday, and I cannot wait for lunch." The person is alluding to the fact that they are hungry.

Anachronism: a historical reference that is inaccurate to the specific time of the setting of the story; for example, in the legend, Mulan, cricket pretends to type the note to the general. The setting of Mulan is ancient China. Typewriters did not exist during that time period.

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