

Act An act is a major division within a play, similar to a chapter in a book. Each act may be further divided into smaller sections, called scenes. Plays can have as many as five acts. *The Diary of Anne Frank* has two acts.

See page 486.

Adventure Story An adventure story is a literary work in which action is the main element. An adventure novel usually focuses on a main character who is on a mission and is facing many challenges and choices.

Alliteration Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words. Note the repetition of the *s* sound in these lines.

Say to them,
say to the down-keepers,
the sun-slappers,
the self-soilers,

—Gwendolyn Brooks, “Speech to the Young:
Speech to the Progress-Toward”

See page 613.

See also **Consonance**.

Allusion An allusion is a reference to a famous person, place, event, or work of literature. In “The Drummer Boy of Shiloh” by Ray Bradbury, the general makes an allusion to the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

See page 323.

Analogy An analogy is a point-by-point comparison between two things that are alike in some respect. Often, writers use analogies in nonfiction to explain unfamiliar subjects or ideas in terms of familiar ones.

See also **Extended Metaphor; Metaphor; Simile**.

Anecdote An anecdote is a brief account of an interesting incident or event that is usually intended to entertain or make a point. “Manuscript Found in an Attic” is an example of an anecdote.

See page 58.

Antagonist The antagonist is a force working against the protagonist, or main character, in a story, play, or novel. The antagonist is usually another character but can be a force of nature, society itself, or an internal force within the main character. In Yoshiko Uchida’s retelling of “The Wise Old Woman,” the cruel young lord is the antagonist.

See page 466.

See also **Protagonist**.

Assonance Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds within nonrhyming words. An example of assonance is the repetition of the short *a* sound in the following line.

It’s had tacks in it,

—Langston Hughes, “Mother to Son”

Author’s Perspective An author’s perspective is the unique combination of ideas, values, feelings, and beliefs that influences the way the writer looks at a topic. Tone, or attitude, often reveals an author’s perspective. Gary Soto writes “One Last Time” from a perspective that reflects his family’s history of working in the fields and his teenage desire for status and acceptance.

See page 817.

See also **Author’s Purpose; Tone**.

Author’s Purpose A writer usually writes for one or more of these purposes: to express thoughts or feelings, to inform or explain, to persuade, and to entertain. For example, in “The Sanctuary of School,” Lynda Barry’s purpose is to persuade Americans to support public schools.

See also **Author’s Perspective**.

Autobiography An autobiography is a writer’s account of his or her own life. In almost every case, it is told from the first-person point of view. Generally, an autobiography focuses on the most significant events and people in the writer’s life over a period of time. Barack Obama’s *Dreams from My Father* is an autobiography.

See page 831.

See also **Memoir**.

Ballad A ballad is a type of narrative poem that tells a story and was originally meant to be sung or recited. Because it tells a story, a ballad has a setting, a plot, and characters. Traditional ballads are written in four-line stanzas with regular rhythm and rhyme. Folk ballads were composed orally and handed down by word of mouth. These ballads usually tell about ordinary people who have unusual adventures or perform daring deeds. A literary ballad is a poem written by a poet in imitation of the form and content of a folk ballad. “Boots of Spanish Leather” is an example of a literary ballad.

Blank Verse Blank verse is unrhymed poetry written in iambic pentameter. That is, each line of blank verse has five pairs of syllables. In most pairs, an unstressed syllable is followed by a stressed syllable. The most versatile of poetic

forms, blank verse imitates the natural rhythms of English speech. Much of Shakespeare's drama is in blank verse.

**This day is call'd the feast of Crispian;
He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a' tiptoe when this day is named,**
—William Shakespeare, "St. Crispian's Day Speech"

Biography A biography is the true account of a person's life, written by another person. As such, biographies are usually told from a third-person point of view. The writer of a biography usually researches his or her subject in order to present accurate information. The best biographers strive for honesty and balance in their accounts of their subjects' lives. Ann Petry's *Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad* is an example of a biography.
See page 258.

Cast of Characters In the script of a play, a cast of characters is a list of all the characters in the play, usually in order of appearance. It may include a brief description of each character.

Character Characters are the people, animals, or imaginary creatures who take part in the action of a work of literature. Like real people, characters display certain qualities, or character traits, that develop and change over time, and they usually have motivations, or reasons, for their behaviors.

Main character: Main characters are the most important characters in literary works. Generally, the plot of a short story focuses on one main character, but a novel may have several main characters.

Minor characters: The less important characters in a literary work are known as minor characters. The story is not centered on them, but they help carry out the action of the story and help the reader learn more about the main character.

Dynamic character: A dynamic character is one who undergoes important changes as a plot unfolds. The changes occur because of the character's actions and experiences in the story. The changes are usually internal and may be good or bad. Main characters are usually, though not always, dynamic.

Static character: A static character is one who remains the same throughout a story. The character may experience events and have interactions with other characters, but he or she is not changed because of them.

See pages 162, 179, 189, 239.

See also **Characterization; Character Traits.**

Characterization The way a writer creates and develops characters is known as characterization. There are four basic methods of characterization:

- The writer may make direct comments about a character through the voice of the narrator.
- The writer may describe the character's physical appearance.
- The writer may present the character's own thoughts, speech, and actions.
- The writer may present thoughts, speech, and actions of other characters.

See pages 259, 283.

See also **Character; Character Traits.**

Character Traits Character traits are the qualities shown by a character. Traits may be physical (brown eyes) or expressions of personality (shyness). Writers reveal the traits of their characters through methods of characterization. Sometimes writers directly state a character's traits, but more often readers need to infer traits from a character's words, actions, thoughts, appearance, and relationships. Examples of words that describe traits include *courageous*, *humble*, *generous*, and *wild*.

Climax The climax stage is the point of greatest interest in a story or play. The climax usually occurs toward the end of a story, after the reader has understood the conflict and become emotionally involved with the characters. At the climax, the conflict is resolved and the outcome of the plot usually becomes clear. For example, in Toni Cade Bambara's story "Raymond's Run," the climax occurs when Squeaky realizes that she doesn't have to win the race to prove her running skills; she can help her brother Raymond become a great runner.

See pages 24, 32.

See also **Plot.**

Comedy A comedy is a dramatic work that is light and often humorous in tone, usually ending happily with a peaceful resolution of the main conflict.

Conflict A conflict is a struggle between opposing forces. Almost every story has a main conflict—a conflict that is the story's focus. An external conflict involves a character who struggles against a force outside him- or herself, such as nature, a physical obstacle, or another character. An internal conflict is one that occurs within a character. A cultural conflict is a struggle that arises because of differing values, customs, or circumstances between groups of people.

Examples: In O. Henry's "The Ransom of Red Chief," the kidnappers are in conflict with the boy they take captive. In Laurence Yep's memoir "The Great Rat Hunt," the young Yep is torn between wanting to prove his bravery by helping his father and wanting to avoid the rat by staying with his mother. In "Out of Bounds," Rohan's family and neighbors blame the new squatters for robberies, and Rohan's parents tell him not to make contact with the squatters.

See pages 47, 63, 119.

See also **Plot**.

Connotation A word's connotations are the ideas and feelings associated with the word, as opposed to its dictionary definition. For example, the word *mother*, in addition to its basic meaning ("a female parent"), has connotations of love, warmth, and security.

Consonance Consonance is the repetition of consonant sounds within and at the end of words, as in "lonely afternoon." Consonance is unlike rhyme in that the vowel sounds preceding or following the repeated consonant sounds differ. Consonance is often used together with alliteration, assonance, and rhyme to create a musical quality, to emphasize certain words, or to unify a poem.

See also **Alliteration**.

Couplet A couplet is a rhymed pair of lines. A couplet may be written in any rhythmic pattern.

Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity,
He's broken every human law, he breaks the law
of gravity.

—T. S. Eliot, "Macavity: The Mystery Cat"

See also **Stanza**.

Critical Essay See **Essay**.

Denotation A word's denotation is its dictionary definition.

See also **Connotation**.

Description Description is writing that helps a reader to picture events, objects, and characters. To create descriptions, writers often use imagery—words and phrases that appeal to the reader's senses.

Dialect A dialect is a form of a language that is spoken in a particular place or by a particular group of people. Dialects may feature unique pronunciations, vocabulary, and grammar. For example, in "The Treasure of Lemon Brown" by Walter Dean Myers, Lemon Brown speaks in

a dialect that reflects his background as an African-American blues musician. His dialect includes informal grammar and nonstandard word forms.

Dialogue Dialogue is written conversation between two or more characters. Writers use dialogue to bring characters to life and to give readers insights into the characters' qualities, traits, and reactions to other characters. In fiction, dialogue is usually set off with quotation marks. In drama, stories are told primarily through dialogue.

Diary A diary is a daily record of a writer's thoughts, experiences, and feelings. As such, it is a type of autobiographical writing. The terms *diary* and *journal* are often used to mean the same thing.

See page 520.

Drama A drama, or play, is a form of literature meant to be performed by actors in front of an audience. In a drama, the characters' dialogue and actions tell the story. The written form of a play is known as a script. A script usually includes dialogue, a cast of characters, and stage directions that give instructions about performing the drama. The person who writes the drama is known as the playwright or dramatist.

Dramatic Irony See **Irony**.

Dynamic Character See **Character**.

Elegy An elegy is an extended meditative poem in which the speaker reflects on death—often in tribute to a person who has died recently—or on an equally serious subject. Most elegies are written in formal, dignified language and are serious in tone.

Epic An epic is a long narrative poem on a serious subject, presented in an elevated or formal style. It traces the adventures of a great hero whose actions reflect the ideals and values of a nation or race. Epics address universal concerns, such as good and evil, life and death, and sin and redemption. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha* is an example of an epic. The poet Homer was responsible for handing down two famous epics from ancient Greece, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

Essay An essay is a short work of nonfiction that deals with a single subject. There are many types of essays. An expository essay presents or explains information and ideas. A personal essay usually reflects the writer's experiences, feelings, and personality. A persuasive essay attempts to convince the reader to adopt a certain viewpoint. A critical essay evaluates a situation or a work of art.

See pages 716, 994.

Exaggeration An extreme overstatement of an idea is called an exaggeration. It is often used for purposes of emphasis or humor. In "Pecos Bill," Mary Pope Osborne exaggerates Bill's toughness and wild behavior in order to create a humorous, memorable impression of the character.

Exposition Exposition is the first stage of a typical story plot. The exposition provides important background information and introduces the setting and the important characters. The conflict the characters face may also be introduced in the exposition, or it may be introduced later, in the rising action.

See pages 24, 33.

See also Plot.

Expository Essay See Essay.

Extended Metaphor An extended metaphor is a figure of speech that compares two essentially unlike things at some length and in several ways. It does not contain the word *like* or *as*. For example, in "O Captain! My Captain!" Walt Whitman compares Abraham Lincoln to a ship's captain and the Civil War to a ship's journey. The comparison begins in the following lines and continues throughout the poem.

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought
is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all
exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and
daring;

—Walt Whitman, "O Captain! My Captain!"

See also Metaphor.

External Conflict See Conflict.

Fable A fable is a brief tale told to illustrate a moral or teach a lesson. Often the moral of a fable appears in a distinct and memorable statement near the tale's beginning or end.

See also Moral.

Falling Action The falling action is the stage of the plot in which the story begins to draw to a close. The falling action comes after the climax and before the resolution. Events in the falling action show the results of the important decision or action that happened at the climax. Tension eases as the falling action begins; however, the final outcome of the story is not yet fully worked out at this stage.

See page 24, 33.

See also Climax; Plot.

Fantasy Fantasy is a type of fiction that is highly imaginative and portrays events, settings, or characters that are unrealistic. The setting might be a nonexistent world, the plot might involve magic or the supernatural, and the characters might have superhuman powers.

Farce Farce is a type of exaggerated comedy that features an absurd plot, ridiculous situations, and humorous dialogue. The main purpose of a farce is to keep an audience laughing. Comic devices typically used in farces include mistaken identity, wordplay (such as puns and double meanings), and exaggeration.

Fiction Fiction is prose writing that tells an imaginary story. The writer of a fictional work might invent all the events and characters or might base parts of the story on real people and events. The basic elements of fiction are plot, character, setting, and theme. Fiction includes both short stories and novels.

See also Novel; Short Story.

Figurative Language Figurative language is language that communicates meanings beyond the literal meanings of words. In figurative language, words are often used to symbolize ideas and concepts they would not otherwise be associated with. Writers use figurative language to create effects, to emphasize ideas, and to evoke emotions. Simile, metaphor, extended metaphor, hyperbole, and personification are examples of figurative language.

See pages 576, 583, 589.

See also Hyperbole; Metaphor; Onomatopoeia; Personification; Simile.

First-Person Point of View See Point of View.

Flashback In a literary work, a flashback is an interruption of the action to present events that took place at an earlier time. A flashback provides information that can help a reader better understand a character's current situation.

Example: In "Clean Sweep," Joan Bauer uses flashback to reveal what happened on the day the narrator's father died.

Foil A foil is a character who provides a striking contrast to another character. By using a foil, a writer can call attention to certain traits possessed by a main character or simply enhance a character by contrast. In Joseph Bruchac's "The Snapping Turtle" the boys at the rez provide a foil to the narrator.

Folklore The traditions, customs, and stories that are passed down within a culture are known as its folklore. Folklore includes various types of literature, such as legends, folk tales, myths, trickster tales, and fables.

See also Fable; Folk Tale; Myth.

Folk Tale A folk tale is a story that has been passed from generation to generation by word of mouth. Folk tales may be set in the distant past and involve supernatural events. The characters in them may be animals, people, or superhuman beings. "The Wise Old Woman" is an example of a folk tale.

Foreshadowing Foreshadowing occurs when a writer provides hints that suggest future events in a story. Foreshadowing creates suspense and makes readers eager to find out what will happen. For example, in W. W. Jacob's story "The Monkey's Paw," the sergeant-major's warnings about the paw foreshadow the tragedy that wishing upon it brings about.

Form The structure or organization of a work of writing is often called its form. The form of a poem includes the arrangement of its words and lines on the page.

Free Verse Free verse is poetry that does not contain regular patterns of rhythm or rhyme. The lines in free verse often flow more naturally than do rhymed, metrical lines and therefore achieve a rhythm more like that of everyday speech. Although free verse lacks conventional meter, it may contain various rhythmic and sound effects, such as repetitions of syllables or words. Free verse can be used for a variety of subjects. Billy Collins's poem "Introduction to Poetry" is an example of free verse.

See page 586.

See also **Meter**; **Rhyme**.

Genre The term *genre* refers to a category in which a work of literature is classified. The major genres in literature are fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama.

Hero A hero is a main character or protagonist in a story. In older literary works, heroes tend to be better than ordinary humans. They are typically courageous, strong, honorable, and intelligent. They are protectors of society who hold back the forces of evil and fight to make the world a better place. In modern literature, a hero may simply be the most important character in a story. Such a hero is often an ordinary person with ordinary problems.

Historical Context The historical context of a literary work refers to the social conditions that inspired or influenced its creation. To understand and appreciate certain works, the reader must relate them to particular events in history.

Example: Walt Whitman wrote his poem "O Captain! My Captain!" in 1865 in response to the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

See pages 729, 760, 855.

Historical Dramas Historical dramas are plays that take place in the past and are based on real events. In many of these plays, the characters are also based on real historical figures. The dialogue and the action, however, are mostly created by the playwright.

Historical Fiction A short story or a novel can be called historical fiction when it is set in the past and includes real places and real events of historical importance. "The Drummer Boy of Shiloh" by Ray Bradbury is an example of historical fiction.

See pages 317, 374.

Humor Humor is a quality that provokes laughter or amusement. Writers create humor through exaggeration, amusing descriptions, irony, and witty and insightful dialogue. In "Roughing It," Mark Twain uses humor to tell about his poor work habits and the job he did as a reporter.

See page 705.

Hyperbole Hyperbole is a figure of speech in which the truth is exaggerated for emphasis or humorous effect.

Idiom An idiom is an expression that has a meaning different from the meaning of its individual words. For example, "to go to the dogs" is an idiom meaning "to go to ruin."

Imagery Imagery consists of descriptive words and phrases that re-create sensory experiences for the reader. Imagery usually appeals to one or more of the five senses—sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch—to help the reader imagine exactly what is being described. Note the appeals to sight, taste, and touch in the following lines.

I say feed me.

She serves me red prickly pear on a spiked cactus.

I say tease me.

She sprinkles raindrops in my face on a sunny day.

—Pat Mora, "Mi Madre"

See pages 417, 580, 729.

Internal Conflict See **Conflict**.

Interview An interview is a conversation conducted by a writer or reporter, in which facts or statements are elicited from another person, recorded, and then broadcast or published. "Interview with a Song Catcher" is based on a conversation between Brian Handwerk and Henrietta Yurchenco.

See page 909.

Irony Irony is a special kind of contrast between appearance and reality—usually one in which reality is the opposite of what it seems. One type of irony is **situational irony**, a contrast between what a reader or character expects and what actually exists or happens. For example, in O. Henry’s “The Ransom of Red Chief,” the kidnappers pay to get rid of the boy instead of collecting a ransom for him, as they had planned. Another type of irony is **dramatic irony**, where the reader or viewer knows something that a character does not know. In the myth “Pandora’s Box,” the readers know that Zeus created Pandora and her box in order to punish Prometheus, but Epimetheus isn’t sure. **Verbal irony** exists when someone knowingly exaggerates or says one thing and means another. David Sedaris uses verbal irony in “Us and Them” when he says, “I could make friends if I wanted to. It just wasn’t the right time.” He actually means that he was unpopular.
 See pages 59, 717, 729.

Journal See *Diary*.

Legend A legend is a story handed down from the past about a specific person, usually someone of heroic accomplishments. Legends usually have some basis in historical fact.

Limerick A limerick is a short, humorous poem composed of five lines. It usually has the rhyme scheme *aabba*, created by two rhyming couplets followed by a fifth line that rhymes with the first couplet. A limerick typically has a sing-song rhythm.

Limited Point of View See *Point of View*.

Line The line is the core unit of a poem. In poetry, line length is an essential element of the poem’s meaning and rhythm. Line breaks, where a line of poetry ends, may coincide with grammatical units. However, a line break may also occur in the middle of a grammatical unit, therefore creating a meaningful pause or emphasis. Poets use a variety of line breaks to play with sense, grammar, and syntax and thereby create a wide range of effects.

Lyric Poetry A lyric poem is a short poem in which a single speaker expresses personal thoughts and feelings. Most poems other than dramatic and narrative poems are lyric poems. In ancient Greece, lyric poetry was meant to be sung. Modern lyrics are usually not intended for singing, but they are characterized by strong melodic rhythms. Lyric poetry has a variety of forms and covers many subjects, from love and death to everyday experiences. Langston Hughes’s “Mother to Son” is an example of a lyric poem.

Memoir A memoir is a form of autobiographical writing in which a writer shares his or her personal experiences and observations of significant events or people. Often informal or even intimate in tone, memoirs usually give readers insight into the impact of historical events on people’s lives. “My First Free Summer” by Julia Alvarez is a memoir.

See page 111.

See also **Autobiography**.

Metaphor A metaphor is a comparison of two things that are basically unlike but have some qualities in common. Unlike a simile, a metaphor does not contain the word *like* or *as*. In “Identity,” the speaker of the poem compares himself to a “tall, ugly weed.”

See pages 580, 583.

See also **Extended Metaphor; Figurative Language; Simile**.

Meter Meter is a regular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a poem. The meter of a poem emphasizes the musical quality of the language. Each unit of meter, known as a foot, consists of one stressed syllable and one or two unstressed syllables. In representations of meter, a stressed syllable is indicated by the symbol (´); an unstressed syllable by the symbol (˘). The four basic types of metrical feet are the iamb, an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable (˘´); the trochee, a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable (´˘); the anapest, two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed syllable (˘˘´); and the dactyl, a stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables (´˘˘). Note the following example of stressed and unstressed syllables.

By the shores of Gitche Gumee,
 By the shining Big-Sea-Water,
 Stood the wigwam of Nokomis,
 Daughter of the Moon, Nokomis.

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Song of Hiawatha*

See pages 637.

See also **Rhythm**.

Minor Character See *Character*.

Mood Mood is the feeling or atmosphere that a writer creates for the reader. Descriptive words, imagery, and figurative language all influence the mood of a work. In “The Monkey’s Paw,” W. W. Jacobs creates a mood of gloom, dread, and desperation.

See pages 312, 359.

See also **Tone**.

Moral A moral is a lesson that a story teaches. A moral is often stated at the end of a fable. Other times, the moral is implied.

See also **Fable**.

Motivation See **Character**.

Myth A myth is a traditional story, usually concerning some superhuman being or unlikely event, that was once widely believed to be true. Frequently, myths were attempts to explain natural phenomena, such as solar and lunar eclipses or the cycle of the seasons. For some peoples, myths were both a kind of science and a religion. In addition, myths served as literature and entertainment, just as they do for modern-day audiences. "Pandora's Box" is an example of a myth from ancient Greece.

See page 455.

Narrative Nonfiction Narrative nonfiction is writing that reads much like fiction, except that the characters, setting, and events are based on real life. *An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793* by Jim Murphy is an example of narrative nonfiction.

See page 938.

Narrative Poetry Poetry that tells a story is called narrative poetry. Like fiction, a narrative poem contains characters, a setting, and a plot. It might also contain such elements of poetry as rhyme, rhythm, imagery, and figurative language. "Paul Revere's Ride" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow is an example of a narrative poem.

Narrator The narrator is the voice that tells a story. Sometimes the narrator is a character in the story. At other times, the narrator is an outside voice created by the writer. The narrator is not the same as the writer. An unreliable narrator is one who tells a story or interprets events in a way that makes readers doubt what he or she is saying. An unreliable narrator is usually a character in the story. The narrator may be unreliable for a number of different reasons. For example, the narrator may not have all the facts or may be too young to understand the situation.

See also **Point of View**.

Nonfiction Nonfiction is writing that tells about real people, places, and events. Unlike fiction, nonfiction is mainly written to convey factual information. Nonfiction includes a wide range of writing—newspaper articles, letters, essays, biographies, movie reviews, speeches, true-life adventure stories, advertising, and more.

Novel A novel is a long work of fiction. Like a short story, a novel is the product of a writer's imagination. Because a novel is considerably longer than a short story, a novelist can develop the characters and story line more thoroughly.

See also **Fiction**.

Ode An ode is a type of lyric poem that deals with serious themes, such as justice, truth, or beauty. Odes appeal to both the imagination and the intellect, and many commemorate events or praise people or elements of nature. Alexander Pope's example of this poetic form is "Ode on Solitude."

Omniscient Point of View See **Point of View**.

Onomatopoeia Onomatopoeia is the use of words whose sounds echo their meanings, such as *buzz*, *whisper*, *gargle*, and *murmur*. As a literary technique, onomatopoeia goes beyond the use of simple echoing words. Skilled writers, especially poets, choose words whose sounds intensify images and suggest meaning. In the following lines, onomatopoeia helps the reader imagine the crying infant and the soothing mother.

Stilled his fretful wail by saying,
"Hush! the Naked Bear will hear thee!"
Lulled him into slumber, singing,
"Ewa-yea! my little owlet!"

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Song of Hiawatha*

Oral Literature Oral literature consists of stories that have been passed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. Oral literature includes folk tales, legends, and myths. In more recent times, some examples of oral literature have been written down or recorded so that the stories can be preserved.

Parallel Episodes Parallel episodes occur when elements of a plot are repeated several times in the course of a story. Fairy tales often employ parallel episodes, as in the examples of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" and "The Three Little Pigs." The short story "Flowers for Algernon" also contains several parallel episodes.

Personal Essay See **Essay**.

Personification The giving of human qualities to an animal, object, or idea is known as personification. In "the lesson of the moth," for example, the speaker, a cockroach, and the moth are personified. They have conversations with each other as if they were human.

See page 589.

See also **Figurative Language**.

Persuasive Essay See *Essay*.

Play See *Drama*.

Playwright See *Drama*.

Plot The series of events in a story is called the plot. The plot usually centers on a conflict, or struggle, faced by the main character. The action that the characters take to solve the problem builds toward a climax in the story. At this point, or shortly afterward, the problem is solved and the story ends. Most story plots have five stages: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.

See pages 26, 33, 47.

See also *Climax; Exposition; Falling Action; Rising Action*.

Poetry Poetry is a type of literature in which words are carefully chosen and arranged to create certain effects. Poets use a variety of sound devices, imagery, and figurative language to express emotions and ideas.

See also *Alliteration; Assonance; Ballad; Free Verse; Imagery; Meter; Narrative Poetry; Rhyme; Rhythm; Stanza*.

Point of View *Point of view* refers to the method of narration used in a short story, novel, narrative poem, or work of nonfiction. In a work told from a **first-person point of view**, the narrator is a character in the story, as in "The Tell-Tale Heart" by Edgar Allan Poe. In a work told from a **third-person point of view**, the narrative voice is outside the action, not one of the characters. If a story is told from a **third-person omniscient**, or all-knowing, point of view, as in "The Lady, or the Tiger" by Frank R. Stockton, the narrator sees into the minds of all the characters. If events are related from a **third-person limited point of view**, as in Beverly Naidoo's "Out of Bounds," the narrator tells what only one character thinks, feels, and observes.

See pages 162, 169, 223.

See also *Narrator*.

Prop The word *prop*, originally an abbreviation of the word *property*, refers to any physical object that is used in a drama. In the play *The Diary of Anne Frank*, the props include Anne's diary and Mrs. Van Daan's fur coat.

Prose The word *prose* refers to all forms of writing that are not in verse form. The term may be used to describe very different forms of writing—short stories as well as essays, for example.

Protagonist A protagonist is the main character in a story, play, or novel. The protagonist is involved in the main conflict of the story. Usually, the protagonist undergoes changes as the plot runs its course. In "Flowers for Algernon" by Daniel Keyes, Charlie is the protagonist.

Radio Play A radio play is a drama that is written specifically to be broadcast over the radio. Because the audience is not meant to see a radio play, sound effects are often used to help listeners imagine the setting and the action. The stage directions in the play's script indicate the sound effects. *The Hitchhiker* by Lucille Fletcher is an example of a radio play.

Recurring Theme See *Theme*.

Repetition Repetition is a technique in which a sound, word, phrase, or line is repeated for emphasis or unity. Repetition often helps to reinforce meaning and create an appealing rhythm. Note how the use of repetition in the following lines emphasizes the speaker's message about body and soul.

You are not your body,
you are not your bones.
What's essential about you
Is what can't be owned.

—Marilyn Nelson, "Not My Bones"

See page 625.

See also *Alliteration; Sound Devices*.

Resolution See *Falling Action*.

Rhyme Rhyme is the occurrence of similar or identical sounds at the end of two or more words, such as *suite*, *heat*, and *complete*. Rhyme that occurs within a single line of poetry is internal rhyme. Rhyme that occurs at the ends of lines of poetry is called end rhyme. End rhyme that is not exact but approximate is called slant rhyme, or off rhyme. Notice the following example of slant rhyme involving the words *sky* and *signed*.

The willow is like an etching,
Fine-lined against the sky.
The ginkgo is like a crude sketch,
Hardly worthy to be signed.

—Eve Merriam, "Simile: Willow and Ginkgo"

See pages 578, 589, 619.

Rhyme Scheme A rhyme scheme is a pattern of end rhymes in a poem. A rhyme scheme is noted by assigning a letter of the alphabet, beginning with *a*, to each line. Lines that rhyme are given the same letter. Notice the rhyme scheme of the first stanza of this poem.

There ain't no pay beneath the sun	<i>a</i>
As sweet as rest when a job's well done.	<i>a</i>
I was born to work up to my grave	<i>b</i>
But I was not born	<i>c</i>
To be a slave.	<i>b</i>

—Maya Angelou, "One More Round"

See page 619.

Rhythm Rhythm is a pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry. Poets use rhythm to bring out the musical quality of language, to emphasize ideas, and to create moods. Devices such as alliteration, rhyme, assonance, and consonance often contribute to creating rhythm.

See pages 578, 637.

See also **Meter**.

Rising Action The rising action is the stage of the plot that develops the conflict, or struggle. During this stage, events occur that make the conflict more complicated. The events in the rising action build toward a climax, or turning point.

See page 33.

See also **Plot**.

Scene In a drama, the action is often divided into acts and scenes. Each scene presents an episode of the play's plot and typically occurs at a single place and time.

See also **Act**.

Scenery Scenery is a painted backdrop or other structures used to create the setting for a play.

Science Fiction Science fiction is fiction in which a writer explores unexpected possibilities of the past or the future, using known scientific data and theories as well as his or her creative imagination. Most science fiction writers create believable worlds, although some create fantasy worlds that have familiar elements. Isaac Asimov, the author of "Hallucination," is a famous writer of science fiction.

See also **Fantasy**.

Screenplay A screenplay is a play written for film.

Script The text of a play, film, or broadcast is called a script.

Sensory Details Sensory details are words and phrases that appeal to the reader's senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. Note the use of sensory details that appeal to sight and taste in the following example.

juniper, piñon, or something
with hard, red berries in spring.
You taste them, and they are sweet
and bitter, the berries a delicacy

—Simon Ortiz, "Canyon de Chelly"

See also **Imagery**.

Setting The setting of a story, poem, or play is the time and place of the action. Sometimes the setting is clear and well-defined. At other times, it is left to the reader's imagination. Elements of setting include geographic location, historical period (past, present, or future), season, time of day, and culture.

See pages 310, 317, 333, 381.

Short Story A short story is a work of fiction that centers on a single idea and can be read in one sitting. Generally, a short story has one main conflict that involves the characters and keeps the story moving.

See also **Fiction**.

Simile A simile is a figure of speech that makes a comparison between two unlike things using the word *like* or *as*.

The willow is like a nymph with streaming hair;

—Eve Merriam, "Simile: Willow and Ginkgo"

See pages 580, 583.

See also **Figurative Language; Metaphor**.

Situational Irony See **Irony**.

Sonnet A sonnet is a poem that has a formal structure, containing 14 lines and a specific rhyme scheme and meter. A sonnet often consists of three quatrains, or four-line units, and a final couplet. The sonnet, which means "little song," can be used for a variety of subjects. John Keats's "On the Grasshopper and Cricket" is an example of a sonnet.

See also **Couplet; Rhyme Scheme**.

Sound Devices Sound devices, or uses of words for their connection to the sense of hearing, can convey meaning and mood or unify a work. Some common sound devices are **alliteration, assonance, consonance, meter, onomatopoeia, repetition, rhyme, and rhythm**. The following poem contains alliteration, repetition, assonance, consonance, rhyme, and rhythm, all of which combine to help convey both meaning and mood.

It's all I have to bring today—
 This, and my heart beside—
 This, and my heart, and all the fields—
 And all the meadows wide—
 Be sure you count—should I forget
 Some one the sum could tell—
 This, and my heart, and all the Bees
 Which in the Clover dwell.
 —Emily Dickinson, "It's all I have to bring today"

See pages 283, 578, 613, 637.

See also **Alliteration; Assonance; Consonance; Meter; Onomatopoeia; Repetition; Rhyme; Rhythm**.

Speaker In poetry, the speaker is the voice that "talks" to the reader, similar to the narrator in fiction. The speaker is not necessarily the poet. For example, in Langston Hughes's poem "Mother to Son," the speaker is an older woman, not the male poet.

See pages 417, 597.

Speech A speech is a talk or public address. The purpose of a speech may be to entertain, to explain, to persuade, to inspire, or any combination of these purposes. Chief Canasatego's speech "Educating Sons" was delivered in order to explain to the European settlers why the Iroquois were rejecting the offer of a free education.

See pages 846, 1004.

Stage Directions In the script of a play, the instructions to the actors, director, and stage crew are called the stage directions. Stage directions might suggest scenery, lighting, sound effects, and ways for actors to move and speak. Stage directions often appear in parentheses and in italic type.

See page 87.

Stanza A stanza is a group of two or more lines that form a unit in a poem. Each stanza may have the same number of lines, or the number of lines may vary. Eve Merriam's poem "Simile: Willow and Ginkgo" is divided into six stanzas.

See also **Couplet; Form; Poetry**.

Static Character See **Character**.

Stereotype In literature, characters who are defined by a single trait are known as stereotypes. Such characters do not usually demonstrate the complexities of real people. Familiar stereotypes in popular literature include the absent-minded professor and the busybody.

Structure The structure of a work of literature is the way in which it is put together. In poetry, structure involves the arrangement of words and lines to produce a desired effect. One structural unit in poetry is the stanza. In prose, structure involves the arrangement of such elements as sentences, paragraphs, and events. "The Wise Old Woman," for example, is structured around the three challenges set forth by Lord Higa.

Style A style is a manner of writing. It involves how something is said rather than what is said. For example, "New York Day Women" by Edwidge Danticat is written in a style that makes use of sentence fragments, repetition, and unusual presentation.

Subplot A subplot is an additional, or secondary, plot in a story. The subplot contains its own conflict, which is often separate from the main conflicts of the story.

See page 521.

Surprise Ending A surprise ending is an unexpected plot twist at the end of a story. The surprise may be a sudden turn in the action or a piece of information that gives a different perspective to the entire story. The short story writer O. Henry is famous for using this device.

Suspense Suspense is a feeling of growing tension and excitement felt by a reader. Suspense makes a reader curious about the outcome of a story or an event within a story. A writer creates suspense by raising questions in the reader's mind. The use of foreshadowing is one way that writers create suspense.

See page 77.

See also **Foreshadowing**.

Symbol A symbol is a person, a place, an object, or an activity that stands for something beyond itself. For example, a flag is a colored piece of cloth that stands for a country. A white dove is a bird that represents peace.

Example: In "Gil's Furniture Bought and Sold" by Sandra Cisneros, the music box represents beauty.

See pages 442, 449, 477.

Tall Tale A tall tale is a humorously exaggerated story about impossible events, often involving the supernatural abilities of the main character. Stories about folk heroes such as Pecos Bill and Paul Bunyan are typical tall tales.

Theme A theme is a message about life or human nature that the writer shares with the reader. In many cases, readers must infer what the writer's message is. One way of figuring out a theme is to apply the lessons learned by the main characters to people in real life. For example, a theme of *The Diary of Anne Frank* is that people are good at heart.

Recurring themes are themes found in a variety of works. For example, authors from different backgrounds might express similar themes having to do with the importance of family values. Universal themes are themes that are found throughout the literature of all time periods. For example, the folk tales "The Old Grandfather and His Little Grandson" and "The Wise Old Woman" both express the theme that we should treat older people with respect.

See pages 442, 455, 463, 485.

See also **Moral**.

Third-Person Point of View See **Point of View**.

Title The title of a piece of writing is the name that is attached to it. A title often refers to an important aspect of the work. For example, the title "Raymond's Run" refers to the climax of the story, when Squeaky realizes she can find fulfillment in helping her brother Raymond improve his skills.

Tone The tone of a literary work expresses the writer's attitude toward his or her subject. Words such as *angry*, *sad*, and *humorous* can be used to describe different tones. For example, the tone of Mark Twain's essay "Roughing It" is humorous.

See pages 668, 683, 735.

See also **Author's Perspective**; **Mood**.

Tragedy A tragedy is a dramatic work that presents the downfall of a dignified character or characters involved in historically or socially significant events. The events in a tragic plot are set in motion by a decision that is often an error in judgment on the part of the hero. Succeeding events are linked in a cause-and-effect relationship and lead inevitably to a disastrous conclusion, usually death. William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is a famous tragedy.

Traits See **Character Traits**.

Turning Point See **Climax**.

Understatement Understatement is a technique of creating emphasis by saying less than is actually or literally true. It is the opposite of hyperbole, or exaggeration. Understatement is often used to create a humorous effect.

Universal Theme See **Theme**.

Unreliable Narrator See **Narrator**.

Verbal Irony See **Irony**.

Voice The term *voice* refers to a writer's unique use of language that allows a reader to "hear" a human personality in the writer's work. Elements of style that contribute to a writer's voice can reveal much about the author's personality, beliefs, and attitudes.

See page 705.

Word Choice The success of any writing depends on the writer's choice of words. Words not only communicate ideas but also help describe events, characters, settings, and so on. Word choice can make a writer's work sound formal or informal, serious or humorous. A writer must choose words carefully depending on the goal of the piece of writing. For example, a writer working on a science article would probably use technical, formal words; a writer trying to establish the setting in a short story would probably use more descriptive words.

See also **Style**.

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Almanac See Reference Works.

Analogy An analogy is a comparison between two things that are alike in some way. Often, writers use analogies in nonfiction to explain an unfamiliar subject or idea by showing how it is like a familiar one.

Appeal to Authority An appeal to authority is an attempt to persuade an audience by making reference to people who are experts on a subject.

Argument An argument is speaking or writing that expresses a position on a problem and supports it with reasons and evidence. An argument often takes into account other points of view, anticipating and answering objections that opponents might raise.

See also **Claim**; **Counterargument**; **Evidence**.

Assumption An assumption is an opinion or belief that is taken for granted. It can be about a specific situation, a person, or the world in general. Assumptions are often unstated.

Author's Message An author's message is the main idea or theme of a particular work.

See also **Main Idea**; **Theme**, *Glossary of Literary Terms*, page R112.

Author's Perspective See *Glossary of Literary Terms*, page R102.

Author's Position An author's position is his or her opinion on an issue or topic.

See also **Claim**.

Author's Purpose See *Glossary of Literary Terms*, page R102.

Autobiography See *Glossary of Literary Terms*, page R102.

Bias In a piece of writing, the author's bias is the side of an issue that he or she favors. Words with extremely positive or negative connotations are often a signal of an author's bias.

Bibliography A bibliography is a list of related books and other materials used to write a text. Bibliographies can be good sources for further study on a subject.

See also **Works Consulted**.

Biography See *Glossary of Literary Terms*, page R103.

Business Correspondence Business correspondence is written business communications such as business letters, e-mails, and memos. In general, business correspondence is brief, to the point, clear, courteous, and professional.

Cause and Effect Two events are related by cause and effect when one event brings about, or causes, the other. The event that happens first is the **cause**; the one that follows is the **effect**. Cause and effect is also a way of organizing an entire piece of writing. It helps writers show the relationships between events or ideas.

See also **False Cause**, *Reading Handbook*, page R24.

Chronological Order Chronological order is the arrangement of events by their order of occurrence. This type of organization is used in fictional narratives and in historical writing, biography, and autobiography.

Claim In an argument, a claim is the writer's position on an issue or problem. Although an argument focuses on supporting one claim, a writer may make more than one claim in a text.

Clarify Clarifying is a strategy that helps readers understand or make clear what they are reading. Readers usually clarify by rereading, reading aloud, or discussing.

Classification Classification is a pattern of organization in which objects, ideas, and/or information are presented in groups, or classes, based on common characteristics.

Cliché A cliché is an overused expression. "Better late than never" and "hard as nails" are common examples. Good writers generally avoid clichés unless they are using them in dialogue to indicate something about a character's personality.

Compare and Contrast To compare and contrast is to identify the similarities and differences of two or more subjects. Compare and contrast is also a pattern of organizing an entire piece of writing.

Conclusion A conclusion is a statement of belief based on evidence, experience, and reasoning. A valid conclusion is one that logically follows from the facts or statements upon which it is based.

Connect Connecting is a reader's process of relating the content of a text to his or her own knowledge and experience.

Consumer Documents Consumer documents are printed materials that accompany products and services. They usually provide information about the use, care, operation, or assembly of the product or service they accompany. Some common consumer documents are applications, contracts, warranties, manuals, instructions, labels, brochures, and schedules.

Context Clues When you encounter an unfamiliar word, you can often use context clues to understand it. Context clues are the words or phrases surrounding the word that provide hints about the word's meaning.

Counterargument A counterargument is an argument made to oppose another argument. A good argument anticipates opposing viewpoints and provides counterarguments to disprove them.

Credibility Credibility is the believability or trustworthiness of a source and the information it provides.

Critical Review A critical review is an evaluation or critique by a reviewer, or critic. Types of reviews include film reviews, book reviews, music reviews, and art show reviews.

Database A database is a collection of information that can be quickly and easily accessed and searched and from which information can be easily retrieved. It is frequently presented in an electronic format.

Debate A debate is an organized exchange of opinions on an issue. In school settings, debate is usually a formal contest in which two opposing teams defend and attack a proposition.

See also **Argument**.

Deductive Reasoning Deductive reasoning is a way of thinking that begins with a generalization, presents a specific situation, and then moves forward with facts and evidence toward a logical conclusion. The following passage has a deductive argument embedded in it: "All students in the math class must take the quiz on Friday. Since Lana is in the class, she had better show up." This deductive argument can be broken down as follows: generalization—All students in the math class must take the quiz on Friday; specific situation—Lana is a student in the math class; conclusion—Therefore, Lana must take the math quiz.

See also **Analyzing Logic and Reasoning**, *Reading Handbook*, page R22.

Diary *See* *Glossary of Literary Terms*, page R104.

Dictionary *See* *Reference Works*.

Draw Conclusions To draw a conclusion is to make a judgment or arrive at a belief based on evidence, experience, and reasoning.

Editorial An editorial is an opinion piece that usually appears on the editorial page of a newspaper or as part of

a news broadcast. The editorial section of the newspaper presents opinions rather than objective news reports.
See also **Op/Ed Piece**.

Either/Or Fallacy An either/or fallacy is a statement that suggests that there are only two choices available in a situation when in fact there are more than two.
See also **Identifying Faulty Reasoning**, *Reading Handbook*, page R24.

Emotional Appeal An emotional appeal is a message that creates strong feelings in order to make a point. An appeal to fear is a message that taps into people's fear of losing their safety or security. An appeal to pity is a message that taps into people's sympathy and compassion for others to build support for an idea, a cause, or a proposed action. An appeal to vanity is a message that attempts to persuade by tapping into people's desire to feel good about themselves.
See also **Recognizing Persuasive Techniques**, *Reading Handbook*, page R21.

Encyclopedia *See* *Reference Works*.

Essay *See* *Glossary of Literary Terms*, page R104.

Ethical Appeal In an ethical appeal, a writer links a claim to a widely accepted value in order to gain moral support for the claim. The appeal also creates an image of the writer as a trustworthy, moral person.

See also **Recognizing Persuasive Techniques**, *Reading Handbook*, page R21.

Evaluate To evaluate is to examine something carefully and to judge its value or worth. Evaluating is an important skill. A reader can evaluate the actions of a particular character, for example. A reader can also form opinions about the value of an entire work.

Evidence Evidence is a specific piece of information that supports a claim. Evidence can take the form of a fact, a quotation, an example, a statistic, or a personal experience, among other things.

Expository Essay *See* *Essay*, *Glossary of Literary Terms*, page R104.

Fact Versus Opinion A fact is a statement that can be proved, or verified. An opinion, on the other hand, is a statement that cannot be proved because it expresses a person's beliefs, feelings, or thoughts.

See also **Generalization; Inference**.

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Fallacy A fallacy is an error of reasoning. Typically, a fallacy is based on an incorrect inference or a misuse of evidence.

See also **Either/Or Fallacy**; **Logical Appeal**; **Overgeneralization**.

See also **Identifying Faulty Reasoning**, *Reading Handbook*, page R24.

Faulty Reasoning See **Fallacy**.

Feature Article A feature article is an article in a newspaper or magazine about a topic of human interest or lifestyles.

Generalization A generalization is a broad statement about a class or category of people, ideas, or things based on a study of, or a belief about, only some of its members.

See also **Overgeneralization**; **Stereotyping**.

Government Publications Government publications are documents produced by government organizations. Pamphlets, brochures, and reports are just some of the many forms these publications take. Government publications can be good resources for a wide variety of topics.

Graphic Aid A graphic aid is a visual tool that is printed, handwritten, or drawn. Charts, diagrams, graphs, photographs, and maps are examples of graphic aids.

See also **Graphic Aids**, *Reading Handbook*, page R4.

Graphic Organizer A graphic organizer is a “word picture”—a visual illustration of a verbal statement—that helps a reader understand a text. Charts, tables, webs, and diagrams can all be graphic organizers. Graphic organizers and graphic aids can look the same. However, graphic organizers and graphic aids do differ in how they are used. Graphic aids help deliver important information to students using a text. Graphic organizers are actually created by students themselves. They help students understand the text or organize information.

Historical Document Historical documents are writings that have played a significant role in human events. The Declaration of Independence, for example, is a historical document.

How-To Book A how-to book explains how to do something—usually an activity, a sport, or a household project.

Implied Main Idea See **Main Idea**.

Index The index of a book is an alphabetized list of important topics covered in the book and the page numbers on which they can be found. An index can be used to quickly find specific information about a topic.

Inductive Reasoning Inductive reasoning is the process of logical reasoning that starts with observations, examples, and facts and moves on to a general conclusion or principle.

See also **Analyzing Logic and Reasoning**, *Reading Handbook*, page R22.

Inference An inference is a logical guess that is made based on facts and one’s own knowledge and experience.

Informational Text Informational text is writing that provides factual information. It often explains an idea or teaches a process. Examples include news reports, science textbooks, software instructions, and lab reports.

Internet The Internet is a global, interconnected system of computer networks that allows for communication through e-mail, listservs, and the World Wide Web. The Internet connects computers and computer users throughout the world.

Journal A journal is a periodical publication issued by a legal, medical, or other professional organization. The term may also be used to refer to a diary or daily record.

Loaded Language Loaded language consists of words with strongly positive or negative connotations, intended to influence a reader’s or listener’s attitude.

Logical Appeal A logical appeal is a way of writing or speaking that relies on logic and facts. It appeals to people’s reasoning or intellect rather than to their values or emotions. Flawed logical appeals—that is, errors in reasoning—are called logical fallacies.

See also **Fallacy**.

Logical Argument A logical argument is an argument in which the logical relationship between the support and claim is sound.

Main Idea The main idea is the central or most important idea about a topic that a writer or speaker conveys. It can be the central idea of an entire work or of just a paragraph. Often, the main idea of a paragraph is expressed in a topic sentence. However, a main idea may just be implied, or suggested, by details. A main idea is typically supported by details.

Make Inferences See **Inference**.

Monitor Monitoring is the strategy of checking your comprehension as you read and modifying the strategies you are using to suit your needs. Monitoring often includes the following strategies: questioning, clarifying, visualizing, predicting, connecting, and rereading.

Narrative Nonfiction See *Glossary of Literary Terms*, page R108.

News Article A news article is writing that reports on a recent event. In newspapers, news articles are usually brief and to the point, presenting the most important facts first, followed by more detailed information.

Nonfiction See *Glossary of Literary Terms*, page R108.

Op/Ed Piece An op/ed piece is an opinion piece that typically appears opposite ("op") the editorial page of a newspaper. Unlike editorials, op/ed pieces are written and submitted by readers.

Organization See *Pattern of Organization*.

Overgeneralization An overgeneralization is a generalization that is too broad. You can often recognize overgeneralizations by the appearance of words and phrases such as *all*, *everyone*, *every time*, *any*, *anything*, *no one*, or *none*. An example is "None of the city's workers really cares about keeping the environment clean." In all probability, there are many exceptions. The writer can't possibly know the feelings of every city worker.

See also **Identifying Faulty Reasoning**, *Reading Handbook*, page R24.

Overview An overview is a short summary of a story, a speech, or an essay.

Paraphrase Paraphrasing is the restating of information in one's own words.

See also **Summarize**.

Pattern of Organization The term *pattern of organization* refers to the way ideas and information are arranged and organized. Patterns of organization include cause and effect, chronological, compare and contrast, classification, and problem-solution, among others.

See also **Cause and Effect**; **Chronological Order**; **Classification**; **Compare and Contrast**; **Problem-Solution Order**; **Sequential Order**.

See also **Reading Informational Texts: Patterns of Organization**, *Reading Handbook*, page R8.

Periodical A periodical is a magazine or other publication that is issued on a regular basis.

Personal Essay See *Essay*, *Glossary of Literary Terms*, page R104.

Persuasion Persuasion is the art of swaying others' feelings, beliefs, or actions. Persuasion normally appeals to both the mind and the emotions of the reader.

See also **Appeal to Authority**; **Emotional Appeal**; **Ethical Appeal**; **Loaded Language**; **Logical Appeal**.

See also **Recognizing Persuasive Techniques**, *Reading Handbook*, page R21.

Predict Predicting is a reading strategy that involves using text clues to make a reasonable guess about what will happen next in a story.

Primary Source See **Source**.

Prior Knowledge Prior knowledge is the knowledge a reader already possesses about a topic. This information might come from personal experiences, expert accounts, books, films, or other sources.

Problem-Solution Order Problem-solution order is a pattern of organization in which a problem is stated and analyzed and then one or more solutions are proposed and examined.

Propaganda Propaganda is any form of communication that is so distorted that it conveys false or misleading information to advance a specific belief or cause.

Public Document Public documents are documents that were written for the public to provide information that is of public interest or concern. They include government documents, speeches, signs, and rules and regulations.

See also **Government Publications**.

Reference Works Reference works are sources that contain facts and background information on a wide range of subjects. Most reference works are good sources of reliable information because they have been reviewed by experts. The following are some common reference works: encyclopedias, dictionaries, thesauri, almanacs, atlases, and directories.

Review See **Critical Review**.

Rhetorical Question Rhetorical questions are those that have such obvious answers that they do not require a reply. Writers often use them to suggest that their claim is so obvious that everyone should agree with it.

Scanning Scanning is the process used to search through a text for a particular fact or piece of information. When you scan, you sweep your eyes across a page, looking for key words that may lead you to the information you want.

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Scope Scope refers to a work's focus. For example, an article about Austin, Texas, that focuses on the city's history, economy, and residents has a broad scope. An article that focuses only on the restaurants in Austin has a narrower scope.

Secondary Source See *Source*.

Sequential Order Sequential order is a pattern of organization that shows the order of steps or stages in a process.

Setting a Purpose The process of establishing specific reasons for reading a text is called setting a purpose. Readers can look at a text's title, headings, and illustrations to guess what it might be about. They can then use these guesses to figure out what they want to learn from reading the text.

Sidebar A sidebar is additional information set in a box alongside or within a news or feature article. Popular magazines often make use of sidebars.

Signal Words In a text, signal words are words and phrases that help show how events or ideas are related. Some common examples of signal words are *and*, *but*, *however*, *nevertheless*, *therefore*, and *in addition*.

Source A source is anything that supplies information. **Primary sources** are materials created by people who witnessed or took part in the event they supply information about. Letters, diaries, autobiographies, and eyewitness accounts are primary sources. **Secondary sources** are those made by people who were not directly involved in the event or even present when it occurred. Encyclopedias, textbooks, biographies, and most news articles are examples of secondary sources.

Speech See *Glossary of Literary Terms*, page R111.

Stereotyping Stereotyping is a dangerous type of overgeneralization. It can lead to unfair judgments of people based on their ethnic background, beliefs, practices, or physical appearance.

Summarize To summarize is to briefly retell the main ideas of a piece of writing in one's own words. See also *Paraphrase*.

Support Support is any information that helps to prove a claim.

Supporting Detail See *Main Idea*.

Synthesize To synthesize information means to take individual pieces of information and combine them in order to gain a better understanding of a subject.

Text Feature Text features are elements of a text, such as boldface type, headings, and subheadings, that help organize and call attention to important information. Italic type, bulleted or numbered lists, sidebars, and graphic aids such as charts, tables, timelines, illustrations, and photographs are also considered text features.

See also *Understanding Text Features*, *Reading Handbook*, page R3.

Thesaurus See *Reference Works*.

Thesis Statement A thesis statement is the main proposition that a writer attempts to support in a piece of writing.

Topic Sentence The topic sentence of a paragraph states the paragraph's main idea. All other sentences in the paragraph provide supporting details.

Treatment The way a topic is handled in a work is referred to as its treatment. Treatment includes the form the writing takes as well as the writer's purpose and tone.

Visualize Visualizing is the process of forming a mental picture based on written or spoken information.

Web Site A Web site is a collection of "pages" on the World Wide Web that is usually devoted to one specific subject. Pages are linked together and accessed by clicking hyperlinks or menus, which send the user from page to page within a Web site. Web sites are created by companies, organizations, educational institutions, branches of the government, the military, and individuals.

Workplace Document Workplace documents are materials that are produced or used within a work setting, usually to aid in the functioning of the workplace. They include job applications, office memos, training manuals, job descriptions, and sales reports.

Works Cited The term *works cited* refers to a list of all the works a writer has referred to in his or her text. This list often includes not only books and articles but also Internet sources.

Works Consulted The term *works consulted* refers to a list of all the works a writer consulted in order to create his or her text. It is not limited just to those works cited in the text. See also *Bibliography*.