**Rhetorical Terms to Know and Use**

Establish literal meaning using the basic interrogative pronouns: who, what, when, and where; then, apply how and why questions to determine figurative, stylistic, and thematic impact.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **WHO** | + **WHAT** | **+ WHEN/WHERE** | + **HOW** | = **WHY** |
| \*Who is the piece about?  \*To whom might the characters have referred at the time of publication?  \*To whom might they apply now? | \*What is the piece about?  \*To what historic events might this plot have referred at the time of publication?  \*To what events might it apply now? | \*When and where is the piece set?  \* To what historic time and place might this setting have referred at the time of publication?  \*To what setting might it apply now? | \*How does the point of view impact meaning?  \*How does the author’s use of stylistic devices impact meaning? | \*Why might the piece’s thematic  meaning resonate with audiences at the time of publication? Why might it resonate with audiences now? |

**CHARACTERIZATION:**

* Round/ flat, dynamic/static, stock, stereotype, foil, caricature
* Protagonist, antagonist, tragic hero, antihero, noble savage
* Motivation, development
* Sobriquet, allusion, tragic flaw (*hubris*), tragic error (*hamartia*), recognition (*anagnorisis*)

**SETTING:**

* Historical, seasonal, temporal, geographical, regional, & cultural time & place
* Allusion, microcosm

**PLOT:**

* Exposition, conflict/complication, rising action, climax, anticlimax, denouement, falling action, resolution, narrative
* Foreshadowing, suspense, epiphany, catastrophe, flashback, twist of fate, reversal (*peripeteia*), *deus ex machina*, melodrama, montage,

**POINT OF VIEW:**

* 1st Person/participant narration: interior monologue, dramatic monologue, letter narration, diary narration, subjective narration (naïve or unreliable narrator), detached autobiography, memoir
* 3rd Person/observer narration: anonymous narration: limited/selective omniscient (singe, dual, or multiple character POV), omniscient
* Voice, persona, stream of consciousness

**STYLE/VOICE:**

* **Tone**: implicit & explicit, didactic, mood, wit, pedantic
* **Diction**: denotation, connotation, euphemism, pejorative, semantics, colloquial, dialect, jargon, concrete, abstract, slang, cliché, invective
* **Syntax**: simple, compound, complex, complex-compound, declarative, imperative, interrogative, exclamatory, telegraphic, medium, long and involved, loose, periodic, balanced, natural order, inverse order, split order, juxtaposition, parallel, rhetorical
* **Figures of Speech**: metaphor, simile, apostrophe, personification, synecdoche, metonymy, hyperbole, understatement (litotes & meiosis), antithesis/chiasmus, paradox, oxymoron, pun, irony (situational, verbal, & dramatic), sarcasm, allusion, analogy, aphorism
* **Imagery**: tactile, auditory, visual, olfactory, taste
* **Sound devices**: alliteration, assonance, consonance, onomatopoeia, repetition, anaphora, refrain, rhyme (perfect/exact, slant/approximate/eye, internal, masculine, feminine), rhythm, meter, enjambment, euphony, cacophony
* **Symbolism**: concrete, abstract, natural, public/conventional, contextual, motif, archetype, allegory

**THEME:**

* Literary and philosophical movements often contribute to theme: asceticism, determinism, dualism/pluralism, existentialism, fatalism, hedonism, idealism, monotheism/polytheism, naturalism, nihilism, predestination, realism, romanticism, secular humanism, solipsism
* Destiny, free will, catharsis, ambiguity

\*\*\*\*\*If any of these terms is unfamiliar, please look it up in Barnet & Cain’s *Short Guide to Writing about Literature*. There is a class set in the classroom bookcase. Please look up literary and philosophical movement terms online or in a reference dictionary.