

Narrative

Academic Vocabulary List



Terms	Definitions
audience	Your audience is anyone who might read your essay. You should assume that the reader has limited knowledge of the topic, so explain all ideas completely and clearly.
character	A character is anyone who takes place in the action of a story. "Flat" characters are simple, while "round" characters are complex and go through significant changes in the story.
characterization	Characterization means the way an author describes how a character looks, speaks, feels, and behaves, through direct or indirect descriptions.
climax	The climax is the turning point of the story where the main conflict is resolved and a major change occurs for the main character.
conflict	Conflict happens when there is a struggle between two opposing things, like two people on opposite sides of an argument, or a character struggling over a difficult decision.
dialect	Dialect is the use of words and phrases that are particular to a specific region or social group.
dialogue	Dialogue is a conversation between characters in a story, or the thoughts of a character spoken to the audience, that you surround with quotation marks.
exposition	The exposition is the introduction to a story, where the author provides background information about the characters and setting.
external conflict	An external conflict is when a character struggles against an outside force. This outside force could be another character (this is called a man vs. man conflict), the society or community in which the character lives (man vs. society), or a natural disaster like a tornado or earthquake (man vs. nature).
falling action	The falling action reveals the effects of the climax, showing how things have changed for the characters involved.
figurative language	Figurative language is when a writer uses words or expressions that are not meant to be understood literally.
first-person point of view/narrator	In the first-person point of view, the narrator is a character involved in the action of the story. The narrator uses first-person pronouns (i.e., I, me, my, we, our) when describing the narrative's events.
flash-forward	A flash-forward is when the current action of the story is paused in order to reveal events that may happen in the future. These events often emphasize the impact of a character's decisions or actions, or have some significance to the narrative's main plot.

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flashback	A flashback is when the action of the story is interrupted in order to reveal important events that happened at an earlier time.
foreshadowing	Foreshadowing is when an author gives the reader hints about events that may happen later in the story.
formal	Formal writing means that you speak to the reader in an academic way, using the third-person point of view, vocabulary specific to the topic, and a serious tone.
imagery/sensory language	Imagery and sensory language are the use of descriptions that appeal to the reader's senses in order to create vivid experiences through the text.
informal	Informal writing is the way you speak to your friends; it is casual and conversational, and not appropriate for academic writing.
internal conflict	An internal conflict exists within the mind of a character; perhaps the character has a difficult decision to make, or is struggling with powerful emotions. This type of conflict is referred to as "man vs. self."
limited narration	If the narrator is limited, he does not have knowledge of things that happen in the story when he is not present. Likewise, the reader does not learn of these things until the narrator does, often resulting in surprising revelations for both.
literal language	Literal language is when the words a writer uses mean exactly what they say.
metaphor	A metaphor is a figure of speech that makes a direct comparison between two typically unlike things, without the use of linking phrases.
mood	The mood of a story is the atmosphere or feeling the author creates, through descriptions of the setting and characters and the pacing of events.
narration	Narration is the explanation of the events of the story as told by the narrator, rather than the dialogue that is spoken by the characters within the story, describing their personal feelings and actions.
narrative	A narrative is another word for a story, whether it is one with fictional characters and events or the retelling of a true experience for the author.
narrative techniques	Narrative techniques are the ways an author reveals key elements of a story; common techniques include pacing, characterization, flashbacks, and foreshadowing.
narrator	The narrator is the character who is telling the story; the narrator's knowledge of events can be limited or all-knowing.

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objective	Writing that is objective is free from bias or emotions; it presents the facts about a topic, or a perspective on an issue, with valid evidence and fair reasoning.
omniscient narration	If the narrator is omniscient, she knows everything that every character is thinking, feeling, and doing at all times. She may choose to share that information with the reader, resulting in the reader knowing things that perhaps some characters do not.
pace	Pace means the speed of the story, how fast or slowly events and information are revealed.
personal narrative	A personal narrative is when you retell a true story that happened to you.
personification	Personification is a type of figurative language in which a writer gives human characteristics to nonhuman things.
plot	The plot of a story is the sequence of events that make up the narrative.
point of view	Point of view is the perspective of the narrator telling the story. The story can be told from the perspective of a character or from a narrator who is not involved in the action of the story.
resolution	The resolution typically provides the final outcomes of the story and settles any unanswered questions for the reader.
rising action	The rising action is a series of related events that build toward a climax and resolution of the main conflict of the story.
sentence structure	Sentence structure is the way you present your ideas in a sentence; sentences can be short and simple or long and compound or complex.
setting	The setting is a story's environment, which includes the place and time in which a story is set.
simile	A simile is a figure of speech that makes a comparison between two typically unlike things, using the linking phrases "like" or "as."
style	In writing, style is the way you use words to affect the reader; this may include word choice, sentence structure, or figurative language to create imagery, mood, or meaning in the text.
symbol	A symbol can be an object or action that represents something deeper than what it appears to be.
third-person point of view/ narrator	A third-person narrator is not involved in the action of the story. The narrator uses third-person pronouns (i.e., he, she, they) when describing the narrative's events.

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tone	Tone is the perspective, attitude, or emotion the writer has about the topic, revealed through his or her choices in language.
transition/transitional phrase	A transition is a word or phrase that helps the reader see the connection between your ideas and how they relate to one another.
vocabulary	Vocabulary means the words you use to express your ideas; using specific vocabulary helps the reader to better understand your ideas.
voice	Your voice as a writer is the way you express yourself; your tone and style contribute to your voice.
word choice	Word choice means the vocabulary you use to express your ideas.

