**Common Literary Elements and Techniques**

**Plot -** the series of related events that make up a story

* **Exposition** – beginning/introduction to a story
* **Rising action** – events building suspense or emotion
* **Climax -** the most emotional or suspenseful moment in the story
* **Falling action** – after the climax, events begin to conclude
* **resolution -** when the characters problems are solved and the story ends

**Setting -** the time and place in which the events of a work of literature take place

**Theme -** the truth about life revealed in a work of literature

**Point of view -** the vantage point at which a story is told

* **First Person** – using “I”, told from narrator’s point of view
* **Second person** – using “you”, not common
* **Third person –** using “he” and “him”, narrator is not a character

**Character -** a person or animal who takes part in the action of a story, play, or other literary work

* **Static character -** one who does not change much in the course of a work
* **Dynamic character -** changes as a result of the story's events
* **Protagonist -** the main character in a work of literature
* **Antagonist -** the character in a work of literature that opposes the protagonist

**Indirect characterization -** revealing the personality of a character by words of a character, description of the character's thoughts and feelings

**Direct characterization -** when the writer directly tells the reader a description of a character's looks and clothing, or that the character is amusing brave, or lonesome, or specifically the build or height or age of a character

**Motivation -** any force that drives or moves the character to behave in a particular way

**Conflict -** a struggle or clash between opposing characters or forces

* **Internal conflict -** takes place within a character's mind
* **External conflict -** character struggles against some outside force
* **Character vs character -** one character is in conflict with another character; external
* **Character vs nature -** character in conflict with a natural force; external
* **Character vs self -** character has to make a decision; internal

**Foreshadowing -** the use of hints and clues to suggest what will happen later in a plot

**Symbol -** Person, place, thing, or event that stands for itself and for something beyond itself as well.

**Metaphor -** an imaginative comparison between two unlike things in which one thing is said to be another thing

**Simile -** a comparison between two unlike things using a word such as like, as, then, or resembles

**Personification -** a figure of speech in which a nonhuman or nonliving thing or quality is talked about as if it were human or alive

**Flashback -** an interruption in the action of a plot to tell what happened at an earlier time

**Onomatopoeia -** the use of words whose sounds echo their sense (boom, pow, zap)

**Allusion -** a reference to a statement, person, place, or an event from literature, history, religion, mythology, politics, sports, or science

**Dialect -** a way of speaking that is characteristic of a particular region or group of people

**Alliteration -** the repetition of the same or very similar consonant sounds in words that are close together

**Suspense -** the uncertainty or anxiety you feel about what will happen next in a story

**Imagery -** language that appeals to the senses