**FORMAL ELEMENTS OF FICTION**

**Genre:**  A category of literature identified by form, content and style.

Three main genres: **prose** (novel, novella, short story, journal, letters),

**poetry**, **drama**.

Subgenres or genres within genres (graphic novel, young adult literature)

**Plot:**  The sequence of events that make up a story, how the story develops.

Five main elements:

* + - **Exposition** = the introduction of characters, setting and conflict.
    - **Rising Action** = character in crisis, events begin to unfold.
    - **Climax** = the peak of the story, a major event occurs, **epiphany**.
    - **Falling Action** = the story begins to slow down, working towards the end.
    - **Resolution / *Denouement*** = issues resolved, story ends.

Open-ended, linear or circular, primary (main) vs. secondary, parallel.

**Subject** = the explicit events and descriptions / **Theme** = (implicit) ideas, the point.

**Character:**  Major characters

**Protagonist** (around who or which the story revolves and unfolds)

**Antagonist** (who or which causes the problem/conflict for protagonist)

Minor characters

**Static** (unchanging) or **dynamic**, **flat** (one or two traits, usually either positive or negative) or **round** (many different traits), **foil** (bearing opposite traits from those of another character, meant to highlight the other's positive or negative side), **stock** (stereotypical).

**Point of View:** The narrator of a story, whether the author or a character (participant), or passive spectator/observer.

Narrator's "knowledge may vary in gradations from total **omniscience** (all-knowing) to almost total ignorance" (Kennedy).

Narrator-as-participant writing in the 1st person.

Narrator-as-non-participant writing in the 3rd person.

Objective point of view = events are described from the outside, without entering the minds of any of the characters. (omniscient or limited omniscient)

**Foreshadowing** = clues or hints about events which occur later in the narrative. creates suspense and allows the reader to anticipate the behavior of characters or the turn of events.

**Tone:** the "feeling" conveyed, the style, or “voice” of writing – formality, dialect.

Ironic, dark, humorous, serious, emotional, objective, formal or informal.

**Diction** = word choice and phrasing, sentence structures used (formal, colloquial, slang, dialect).

**Imagery:** (Figurative and metaphoric) language used to create images in the readers' minds, or improve the readers' experience through the senses.

Five types of Imagery

* + - **Visual**: describes what we see (colors, shapes, patterns and size).
    - **Auditory:** describes what we hear (music, noises, silence).
    - **Olfactory:** describes what we smell (fragrances or odours)
    - **Gustatory:** describes what we taste (sweetness, sourness, spiciness etc.)
    - **Tactile:** describes what we feel or touch (temperature, texture, touch).

**Figures of Speech:** a word or phrase using language that has a meaning other than its normal definition.

Relying on implied or suggested meaning.

Expressed through **Rhetorical Devices** (=linguistic techniques intended to generate emotion, beauty, spiritual significance and, predominantly, persuasion) or more general forms (sarcasm).

**Allegory** = a story within a story; a "surface" story with a story hidden underneath (commonly related to religion, politics, morality).

**Alliteration** = repetition of the same consonant sounds within words, phrases or sentences. **Assonance**  - vowels.

**Allusion** = reference to other cultural works or earlier parts of the same work.

**Analogy** = explaining one thing by comparing it to another **Hyperbole** = when the author/speaker deliberately and obviously exaggerates to an extreme. Used for emphasis often to make the description more creative or humorous. (vs. **understatement**)

**Irony** = when the literal meaning of a word or phrase is the opposite of its figurative meaning (verbal irony, irony of situation, irony of tone).

**Metaphor** = using words in a manner other than their literal meaning to make comparisons between unrelated things or ideas.

**Metonymy** = word or phrase used to relate to a bigger meaning (substitution by association).

**Onomatopoeia** = words whose pronunciation imitates the sounds they describe (dogs woof, cats meow, oceans roar).

**Oxymoron** = using together two words that have contradictory meanings (a small crowd).

**Simile** = using the words "like" or "as" to compare two unrelated by definition things (as tall as a mountain).

**Symbol** = an image or thing that stands for something else, adding layers of meaning (flag stands for the nation).

**Synecdoche** = when the part stands for the whole.

**Rhetorical Questions** = a question that is not to be answered