**A GLOSSARY OF LITERARY TERMS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **TERM** | **DEFINITION** | **EXAMPLE** |
| **Adjective** | A word that describes a noun | **Example in a text:**  “The notice informed them that it was a temporary matter.”  “She used to look this way sometimes, Shukumar thought...when she'd been too lazy to wash her face, too eager to collapse into his arms.”  **Example of how to use it in your writing:**  “In Ernest Hemingway’s novel *A Farewell to Arms*, the love between his two protagonists Catherine Barkley and Frederic Henry begins as merely a shallow distraction and escape from the horrors of war, yet develops into mutual and devoted dependence.” |
| **Adverb** | A word that describes a verb, usually ending in “-ly” | **Example in a text:**  “...he muttered gravely”  **Example of how to use it in your writing:**  “The death of Catherine Barkley which occurs independently from the random destruction of war...” |
| **Analogy** | A comparison of the similar features between two things. | **Example in a text:**  “Pupils are more like oysters than sausages. The job of teaching is not to stuff them and then seal them up, but to help them open and reveal the riches within.”  **Example of how to use it in your writing:**  “Lahiri’s use of analogy in *A Temporary Matter* highlights the different ways in which her protagonists manage the tragedy which has struck their lives, such as...” |
| **Antagonist** | A character, group or institution in a text who acts in opposition to the protagonist (main character) | **Example in a text:**  The Joker in *Batman Begins* and *The Dark Knight*  **Example of how to use it in your writing:**  “The distance between the two lovers functions as the narrative’s antagonist...” |
| **Character/**  **characterisation** | A character refers to a representation of a person in a narrative  Characterisation refers to how an artist has created a character in a narrative, including | **How it is used in a text:**  “Shoba...let the strap of her leather satchel, plump with files, slip from her shoulders, and left it in the hallway as she walked into the kitchen. She wore a navy blue poplin raincoat over gray sweatpants and white sneakers, looking, at thirty-three, like the type of woman she'd once claimed she would never resemble.”  **How to use it in your writing:**  “Jhumpa Lahiri in writing *Interpreter of Maladies* made several distinct and important choices in regards to characterisation. The short story is focalised through the character of Mr. Kapasi, allowing us the opportunity to form opinions of the family he is guiding in a very unique and powerful way. This choice and many others intersect to form the meaning of the story and guide the reader to an understanding of each colourful and distinct character.” |
| **Connotation** | The implied or suggested meaning of a word beyond what is directly said | “A possible connotation of ‘home’ is “a place of warmth, comfort, and affection.”  **How to use it in your writing:**  “Mallory’s use of the word ‘vagrants’ to describe her co-workers on the street contains a negative connotation, suggesting that she views herself as superior to the other characters featured in the play” |
| **Context** | The time, place and circumstances of events occurring in a text  OR  The time, place and circumstances in which a text was created | **How it is used in a text:**  “In Bentrock, I could be out in minutes, whether I walked, biked, ran, or followed the railroad tracks just on the other of our backyard.”  **How to use it in your writing:**  The context featured in a text:  “Tracy Chevalier’s *Girl With a Pearl Earring* is set in 17th Century Europe, a feudal and patriarchal society where women’s individual freedom was limited.”  The context of a text:  “Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* was written during the 19th century and contains elements of Romantic literature...” |
| **Denotation** | The explicit or direct meaning of a word | “Wind” is the denotation for air in natural motion. “Poodle” is the denotation for a certain breed of dog.  **How to use it in your writing:**  “This use of dialogue denotes that Larry sees a problem with Georgie’s promiscuity...” |
| **Dialogue** | Speech between characters | **How it is used in a text:**  “They sat at the table, the rice cakes between them. He turned to a fresh page in his sketch pad. “You draw.”  She selected a blue crayon. “What should I draw?”  He thought for a moment. “I know,” he said. He asked her to draw things in the living room: the sofa, the director’s chairs, the television, the telephone. “This way I can memorize it.”  “Memorize what?”  “Our day together.” He reached for another rice cake”  **How to use it in your writing:**  “Lahiri reveals the distance between her protagonists Shoba and Shukumar in *A Temporary Matter* through her use of dialogue, where husband and wife engage in nothing more than small talk.” |
| **Figurative language** | Language that compares one thing to another | **How it is used in a text:**  “The pantry was always stocked with extra bottles of olive and corn oil, depending on whether they were cooking Italian or Indian. There were endless boxes of pasta in all shapes and colors, zippered sacks of basmati rice, whole sides of lambs and goats from the Muslim butchers at Haymarket...  For months now they'd served themselves from the stove, and he'd taken his plate into the study, letting the meal grow cold on his desk before shoving it into his mouth without pause, while Shoba took her plate to the living room and watched game shows.”  **How to use it in your writing:**  “Lahiri’s use of figurative language communicates Shoba and Shukumar’s growing alienation from each other, as she compares Shoba’s meticulous preparation and sharing of food in the ‘golden’ days of their marriage to her tendency to eat the food Shukumar has cooked alone following the stillborn birth of their child.” |
| **Flashback** | A scene or sequence that takes the reader back in time to an earlier period than that which is featured in the narrative | **How it is used in a text:**  “Six months ago, in September, Shukumar was at an academic conference in Baltimore when Shoba went into labour, three weeks before her due date.”  **How to use it in your writing:**  “Lahiri’s use of flashbacks in *A Temporary Matter* communicates to the audience Shukumar’s feelings of guilt over his absence during the stillbirth of their child.” |
| **Foreshadowing** | An occurrence in a narrative that suggests/predicts events which might occur later | **How it is used in a text:**  “The storm before Mercutio’s death in *Romeo + Juliet*”  **How to use it in your writing:**  “Luhrmann foreshadows future tragedy, such as Mercutio’s death, with the distinct rumbling of thunder in the background at the beginning of the scene where the Montagues and Capulets feud on the beach.” |
| **Genre** | A category describing types of texts (Eg: drama, comedy of errors, romance, historical drama, science fiction, melodrama, horror, thriller) | **How to use it in your writing:**  “Larry Watson’s modern Western *Montana 1948* explores...” |
| **Interpretation** | An explanation of the meaning of an artist’s or writer’s work | **How to use it in your writing:**  “In this scene, the actions of the protagonist Laura can be interpreted as...” |
| **Irony** | The use of words to convey meaning that is opposite of its literal meaning. In other words, when something occurs that is the opposite to that which is expected. | **How it is used in a text:**  “I told her I have to work all weekend. “How nice!” She replied with a grimace.”  “A no smoking sign on your cigarette break”  **How to use it in your writing:**  In *The Real Durwan* Lahiri tells the story of Buri ma, a refugee in Calcutta after Partition who has fallen to misfortune...the irony is that even the ‘kind’ people like Mrs. Dalal get lost in the quagmire of vanity and selflessness as the disparity between the ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ is sharply emphasised in the story” |
| **Juxtaposition** | The act of comparing the differences between two things by placing them next to each other | **How it is used in a text:**  ““As you can see Lilia, it is a different country, a different colour...you are, of course aware of the current situation? Aware of East Pakistan’s fight for sovereignty?...What exactly do they teach you at school?”  I found a book titled *Pakistan: A Land and Its People*...Mrs. Kenyon emerged...She glanced at the book cover, then at me. “Is this book a part of your report, Lilia?”  “No, Mrs. Kenyon.”  “Then I see no reason to consult it.””  **How to use it in your writing:**  “In *Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine*, Lahiri juxtaposes the features of American history taught in Lilia’s classroom with the elements of Indian and Pakistani current events she is exposed to at home, to convey the differences between what is valued in US and Indian culture in Lilia’s world.” |
| **Metaphor** | Where one thing is described as another | **How it is featured in a text:**  “Juliet is the sun”  **How to use it in your writing:**  **“**Lahiri communicates the innocence of her protagonist through a poignant metaphor, where Lilia prays for Mr. Pirzada’s family every night by falling asleep with a sweet in her mouth, or as Lilia reflects, “with sugar on my tongue”” |
| **Motif** | A recurring element in a story that stands for an idea | **How it is featured in a text:**  Recurring images of bats in *Batman Begins*  The colour red in the film *We Need to Talk About Kevin*  **How to use it in your writing:**  “The act of ‘seeing’ functions as a motif in the short story titled *Interpreter of Maladies*, to communicate the idea that each character has a distorted way of seeing other people. Lahiri represents this in the text through her characters’ actions of viewing others through artificial means.” |
| **Narrative** | An account or story | **How to use it in your writing:**  “In her collection of short narratives, Lahiri explores the essence of that which makes us human, including...” |
| **Narrative voice** | The ‘voice’ through which a story is told. In other words, who is telling the story. Narrative voice can be:  -First person: “I”  -Second person: “You”  -Third person: “He/she”  Third person can be omniscient (a narrator that sees into all character’s minds) or limited (a narrative voice that is written in the third person but can has insight into one character’s perspective)  Narrative voice can be varied (mixed up) in a text to:  -Introduce different perspectives or convey information not available to the main character  -Show different sides of a conflict or problem  -Contrast how a character appears to others with how that character sees themselves  -Reveal complexities of a character not apparent to others  -Demonstrate present consequences of past decisions | **How it is featured in a text:**  First person: “I was thinking”  Second person: “You were thinking”  Third person: “She was thinking”  **How to use it in your writing:**  “Lahiri uses a third-person limited voice to represent Shoba and Shukumar’s distant relationship following the tragic stillbirth of their child. As it is written from a limited perspective, the events in *A Temporary Matter* are primarily from Shukumar’s point of view as he struggles to communicate with his estranged wife.” |
| **Omniscient narrator** | A narrative voice where the reader is presented with the story by a third-person narrator that has insight into the thoughts/feelings/minds of all characters, not just one. In other words, an “all-knowing” narrator. | **How it is featured in a text:**  “It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but, as matters stood, it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage.”  **How to use it in your writing:**  “Charles Dickens’ use of an omniscient narrator allows him to shift the narrative perspective from character to character, showing their diverse attitudes and viewpoints. It also allows him to create a narrator with a distinct set of values and beliefs, who closely guides the reader’s responses to characters and circumstances.” |
| **Personification** | When human characteristics are applied to objects | **How it is featured in a text:**  “The sun hammered down on my head”  “The moon envies the sun”  **How to use it in your writing:**  “Shakespeare personifies the moon and stars in *Romeo + Juliet* to encapsulate the depth of Juliet’s love for Romeo, when she urges Romeo to ‘Swear not by the [ever-changing] moon’ but by ‘the stars’.” |
| **Protagonist** | The main character in a text | **How it is featured in a text:**  Batman in *Batman Begins* or *The Dark Knight*  **How to use it in your writing:**  “In *Mr. Pirzaada Came to Dine*, the protagonist Lilia is represented as innocent and sensitive to Mr. Pirzaada’s predicament” |
| **Setting** | The time and place in which a text is set | **How it is featured in a text:**  *A Temporary Matter* is set in Boston  *Montana 1948* is set in Bentrock, Montana, in 1948.  **How you can use it in your writing:**  “Jhumpa Lahiri’s *A Temporary Matter* is set in Boston...” |
| **Simile** | When one object is compared to another using linking words such as “like” and “as” | **How it is featured in a text:**  “She lifted her pinkish brown sunglasses and arranged them on top of her head like a tiara."  **How you can use it in your writing:**  “Lahiri uses a striking simile in her characterisation of Mrs. Das in *Interpreter of Maladies:* “She lifted her pinkish brown sunglasses and arranged them on top of her head like a tiara”,to construct her as a character that holds herself aloof from others around her, like a princess.” |
| **Short story** | A short narrative written in prose | **How it is featured in a text:**  *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri is a collection of short stories  *Undone* by Paul Jennings is a collection of short stories  **How to use it in your writing:**  “Jhumpa Lahiri’s collection of short stories titled *Interpreter of Maladies* explores what it means to be human...” |
| **Symbol** | An object that represents an idea | **How it is featured in a text:**  The colour red could symbolise blood, violence, passion or love  **How to use it in your writing:**  “The haunting absence of food functions as a symbol for the lack of affection in Shoba and Shukumar’s relationship in *A Temporary Matter*”  “In *This Blessed House*, Sanjeev’s attitude towards the food Twinkle prepares for him mirrors his attitude towards her – frustrated, yet pleasantly surprised.”  “Mrs. Sen’s experiences in Jhumpa Lahiri’s short story *Mrs. Sen’s* , represent the power that physical objects have over human experience.” |
| **Theme** | A central idea in a text (eg: prejudice, love, conflict, the triumph of the human spirit in times of adversity, injustice, jealousy, survival, the migrant experience) | **How to use it in your writing:**  “In *Stolen*, Jane Harrison explores how having a weak sense of identity and belonging can have destructive effects upon individuals.”  “Jhumpa Lahiri’s short story collection *Interpreter of Maladies* not only highlights issues facing Indian migrants and citizens, but provides a detailed exploration of the aspects of human nature as well.” |
| **Values** | Qualities that a person /society holds to be worthwhile. (Eg: honesty, equality, knowledge, freedom of choice, family, taking responsibility for oneself, patriotism – love for one’s country, respect for others, etc).  When responding to texts, the values (what is important to) of the characters or society represented in the narrative should be explored. You should also address situations where a character’s behaviour contradicts or goes against their values, if a character’s individual values are opposed to society’s values or if characters’ values change. | **How it is featured in a text:**  Values can be shown through characters and the society the character’s belong to, and what they see as being important.  Eg: “No one at school talked about the war followed so faithfully in our living room. We continued to study the American Revolution, and learned about the injustices of taxation without representation, and memorized passages of the Declaration of Independence...showing the location of the Liberty Bell”  **How to use it in your writing:**  “Lahiri contrasts the preoccupation with values of liberty and independence taught in Lilia’s US classroom with Lilia’s family’s allegiance and loyalty to events occurring in their motherland in *Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine.*” |
| **Verb tenses** | Verb tenses indicate when the action in a text takes place. Verb tenses can be:  Past tense: Indicates action occurring in the past (eg: I rode my bike yesterday)  Present tense: Indicates action occurring in the present (eg: I am riding my bike now)  Future tense: Indicates action that will occur in the future (eg: I will ride my bike tomorrow) | **How to use it in your writing:**  “Lahiri shifts from past to present tense in *The Third and Final Continent* to separate the narrator’s nostalgic reflections on his romantic relationship with Mala from the pressing, matter-of-fact issues of the present.” |
| **Orientation** | The beginning of a story where the characters and setting are introduced |  |
| **Complication** | An event or action in a story that presents itself as a problem the characters face |  |
| **Rising action** | In a text, the rising tension between characters that leads to a climax, and the elements that make a story more exciting. |  |
| **Climax** | The most tense part of a narrative, the highest point of excitement or interest |  |
| **Resolution** | A part in a narrative where the tension/conflict/problems are resolved or understood |  |
| **Denouement** | The end result of a narrative after the events of the story have been resolved |  |