**Definitions of Common Literary Devices and Terms**

1. **Irony: The opposite of an expected or intended outcome or event. Three types are:**
   1. **Verbal Irony: A contrast between what a character or narrator says or writes and what s/he really means.**
   2. **Dramatic Irony: When readers or viewers are aware of an opposite meaning, fate or outcome than one understood or anticipated by a character.**
   3. **Situational Irony: When what actually happens is different from what is expected by the reader or viewer (i.e. “twist ending“).**
2. **Contrast: Showing the difference between characters, events, settings, objects or ideas.**
3. **Foil: A character who, through contrast, enhances the distinctive characteristics of another. It can also mean actions or situations which contrast with other actions and situations.**
4. **Suspense: An uncertainty about the outcome of an event or the fate of a character, especially the protagonist (the main character). Suspense (a mood) draws readers/viewers deeper into the plot.**
5. **Dialogue: Any exchange of words between two or more characters. Dialogue helps to reveal character traits, to advance the plot, and to add suspense or atmosphere to the story.**
6. **Pathos: That quality of a work that invokes pity and sympathy in the reader (a mood) for the problems endured by a character.**
7. **Foreshadowing: Clues or hints that warn the reader of the future importance of certain events, characters and situations. This helps to create tension and suspense.**
8. **Nemesis: “Poetic Justice”. The fate of a character that is ironically linked to her/her own actions or words. Nemesis can refer to an event or to another character linked to the fate of another character.**
9. **Symbolism: The use of a person, place, event or object to represent an idea or a quality that is stressed in a literary work. Symbols are used to convey a theme or a quality to the reader.**
10. **Imagery: Refers to words or phrases that evoke vivid sensory impressions in the reader to draw him/her into the story. Metaphors, similes and personification help to generate images in order to develop themes, settings and characters in the story, and to make the reading experience intimate and enjoyable.**
11. **Flashback: The interruption of the logical time sequence of a story or play to relate an episode that occurred prior to the opening situation.**
12. **Allusion: A reference to a person, place, event, or artistic work that the author expects the reader to recognize. An allusion may be drawn from literature, history, geography, science, music, scripture, pop culture, or mythology.**
13. **Understatement: The suggestion that something is less than it really is for the purpose of emphasis or humour.**
14. **Metaphor: a deeper comparison that says that something is something else. ex: life is a highway.**
15. **Simile: A comparison using “like” or “as”. ex: as lovely as a rose**
16. **Hyperbole: A deliberate exaggeration for the purpose of emphasis or humour.**
17. **Epiphany: An insight into life, or a moment of self-discovery usually during a time of emotional or mental crisis.**
18. **Pathetic Fallacy: The representation of nature as being in sympathy with or affected by the deeds or feelings of humankind. It involves the use of personification and metaphor.**
19. **Repetition: The use of the same word, phrase, sentence or idea to achieve emphasis.**
20. **Personification: An object is given human qualities. Ex: The sun smiled down on us.**