LITERARY TERMS

(numbered by grade level at which they should have been learned)

10. **ALLEGORY** - objects and characters in the story represent a second level of meaning besides the surface story
   eg. Orwell's *Animal Farm*

8. **ALLITERATION** - the repetition of sounds in nearby words, usually involving the first consonant sounds
   eg. 'flags floating free', 'The murmuring of innumerable bees'

11. **ALLUSION** - the reference to a famous literary, mythological, Biblical or historical figure or event.
   eg. 'He met his Waterloo', 'Cupid's arrow struck him'

11. **AMBIGUITY** - the effect of uncertainty produced by words and phrases that have two or more possible meanings. Ambiguity leaves room for alternative reaction.
   eg. 'I promise I'll give you a ring tomorrow.'

10. **ANACHRONISM** - something placed in an inappropriate period of time.
   eg. Clock striking in *Julius Caesar*

12. **ANADIPLOSIS** - repeating the ending word of a phrase as the beginning of the next one
    eg. 'Pleasure might cause her to read, reading might cause her to know, knowledge might win her fame....'

9. **ANALOGY** - resemblance or comparison between two different things
   eg. 'that's like the time when....'

8. **ANTAGONIST** - the force opposing the main character in a story (could be a person, a thing, nature, etc.)
   eg. Social custom in "The Lottery." Mr. Thomas' house in "The Destructors"

12. **ANTI-HERO** - a protagonist who is just a regular ordinary person and who encounters one problem after another as best she/he can without any superior qualities or abilities...sometimes they win and sometimes they lose.
    eg. Paul in Willa Cather's "Paul's Case." Characters played by Woody Allen.

11. **APHORISM** - a short statement of truth, usually clever and concise
    eg. 'Still waters run deep.'

12. **APPOSTROPHE** - a figure of speech consisting of words addressing an inanimate object, abstract idea, or deceased individual as though that object, idea, or person were alive.
    eg. 'Oh, Canada..', 'Death, where is thy sting?'

12. **ARCHETYPE** - a universal symbol or primordial image which lies in the collective unconsciousness. Similar motifs or themes and certain images recur in the myths of people. They tend to have a common meaning or to elicit comparable responses. Some examples are the sea as the mother of all life, as spiritual mystery and infinity, or as death and rebirth. (look up Carl Jung)
9. **ASIDE** - In drama, lines spoken by a character in a lower voice (undertone), or directly to the audience. An aside is meant to be heard only by the audience, and is supposedly not heard by the other characters on stage.

   eg. Polonius says, “Though this be madness, yet there is method in’t.”
   (Hamlet, 2.2.205-6)

11. **ASSONANCE** - repetition of similar vowel sounds, especially in poetry.

   eg. ‘Our echoes roll from soul to soul and grow for ever and ever’

8. **AUTOBIOGRAPHY** - a person’s account of his or her own life.

   eg. “The Diary of Anne Frank.”

8. **BALLAD** - A fairly short, simple poem which tells a story. Ballads were often meant to be sung, and are one of the earliest forms of literature. Before the written word was in common use they were a means of passing stories on from place to place, and to future generations.

   eg. Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”
   Paul McCartney “Eleanor Rigby”
   Robert Service’s “The Cremation of Sam McGee”

8. **BIOGRAPHY** - a detailed account of a person’s life written by another person

   eg. Boswell’s, “The Life of Johnson”

11. **BLACK HUMOUR** - where humorous effects are achieved by associating grotesque or horrifying situations with humorous ones.

   eg. Kurt Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse Five*. This is a satire on the dreadful bombing of Dresden, through which Vonnegut lived.

10. **BLANK VERSE** - unrhymed iambic pentameter (5 beats per line, emphasis on 2nd syllable). Found in much of Shakespeare’s work.

   eg. ‘You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things!’ *(Julius Caesar)*
   eg. ‘But soft! What light through yonder window breaks? It is the East, and Juliet is the sun!’ *(Romeo and Juliet)*

12. **CACOPHONY** - the use of harsh, discordant sounds for poetic effect.

   eg. ‘All day cows mooed and shrieked/Hollered and bellowed and wept...’

11. **CAESURA** - a pause in the meter or rhythm of a line shown by the symbol ‘//’.

   eg. Flood-tide below me! // I see you face to face!

9. **CHARACTER** - A person in a story (an animal or thing may also be thought of as a character).

   a) a consistent character is one whose continuing actions conform to what the author has already revealed about him/her
   b) a static character does not change in the course of a story
   c) a dynamic character changes; he/she is affected by the events in a story
   d) a flat character is one who is represented as having only a single ‘side’ or trait, and whose behaviour is therefore predictable
   e) a round character seems as many-sided, and therefore as believable, as one in real life.
   f) a stock character is the familiar, stereotyped figure who appears regularly in literature, such as the wicked landlord, the dumb blonde, the mad scientist, the strong, silent sheriff, etc.
9. **Cliché** - an over-used, tired expression.
   eg. ‘cold as ice’, ‘busy as a bee’, etc.

10. **Climax** - the point of greatest intensity, interest, or suspense in a story. It usually marks the turning point in the protagonist’s fortunes and the major crisis of the story.
   eg. Hal’s show of sober, vigorous commitment in *Henry 4, Part 1*, or the death of Julius Caesar in *Julius Caesar* or Claudius rising in the play within the play in *Hamlet*.

11. **Comic Relief** - a funny part inserted into a serious or tragic work, especially a play, to relieve the tension.
   eg. the drunken porter’s speech in *Macbeth*, the tavern scenes in *Henry 4, Part 1*, the graveyard scene in *Hamlet*.

10. **Conceit** – an extended metaphor, a comparison that is often elaborate, extended, or startling, between objects which are apparently dissimilar. See John Donne’s “Valediction: Forbidding Mourning,” for example: “Let man’s soul be a sphere, and then, in this, / The Intelligence that moves, devotion is.”

8. **Concrete Poem** - a poem written in a special shape that usually suggests the poem’s subject.
   eg. could be in the shape of a heart, a Christmas tree, a gun, etc.

8. **Conflict** - the struggle between two opposing forces or characters. It may be external or internal. It may take the form of:
   a) man versus man (a person against another person)
   eg. Ralph and Jack in *Lord of the Flies*
   b) man versus environment (a person against society)
   eg. Holden Caulfield in *Catcher in the Rye*
   (or against an objective symbol in society)
   eg. Trevor in Graham Greene’s “The Destructors”
   (or against nature)
   eg. Captain Ahab in *Moby Dick* or man against the natural elements in Earl Birney’s poem, “David.”
   c) man versus self (a person against himself, that is, two elements within a person struggling for mastery)
   eg. *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson
   The barber’s dilemma in “Just Lather, That’s All.”
   Note: Most imaginative works contain more than one form of conflict.

9. **Connotation** - the feelings and associations suggested by a word
   eg. note different associations of ‘horse’, ‘nag’ and ‘steed’, or the difference between ‘frugal’ (positive) and ‘cheap’ (negative)

11. **Consonance** - the repetition of the same consonant sound within words close together.
   eg. ‘such weight and thick pink bulk...’

9. **Couplet** - two consecutive lines of poetry that rhyme.
   eg. *Hamlet* says, ‘The play’s the thing
   Wherein I’ll catch the conscience of the King. (2.2.600-1)
12. DÉNOUEMENT - (pronounced day-NEW-mahh) the final unravelling of the plot following the major climax, in which mysteries or misunderstandings are set straight, etc.
   eg. in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, when all the lovers are revealed for who they really are, various marriages are carried out, etc.

12. DEUS EX MACHINA - (literally, ‘god from a machine’) the use of an improbable happening to rescue a hero or untangle a plot.
   eg. a bolt of lightning suddenly appears to strike a killer and save the girl.

9. DIALECT - the peculiarities of speech of a particular region or area, such as a French Canadian or Newfoundland, or a New York accent or a Southern drawl.

8. DIALOGUE - spoken words exchanged between two or more characters in a story.

11. DILEMMA - a choice between two equally undesirable courses of action.
   eg. You must miss watching your favourite TV program to study for a test or fail the test.

12. EPIC - a long narrative poem telling about the deeds of a great hero and reflecting the values of the society from which it originated.
   eg. *Beowulf* and John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*

10. ELEGY – a dignified poem mourning the death of an individual. For example, Auden wrote “In Memory of W.B. Yeats” or, Gray wrote about all men, “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard”. A specific subtype is the pastoral elegy where the poet and his subjects are spoken of as shepherds or goatherds, and the setting is the Classical pastoral world. Examples are Milton’s “Lycidas” and Shelley’s “Adonais.”

11. ENJAMBEMENT – a run-on line, continuing into the next without a grammatical break.
   eg. Green rustlings, more-than-regal charities
       Drift coolly from that tower of whispered light.

10. EPIGRAM - short, witty poem or statement.
   eg. “I don’t mind eels /Except as meals,” (Ogden Nash)
   eg. “I can resist everything except temptation.” (Oscar Wilde)

11. EPILOGUE - a short addition or conclusion at the end of a literary work. This is often added by another many years later, or after the author’s death.
   eg. At the end of *The Diary of Anne Frank*, we learn in the epilogue that she died in a concentration camp before the end of the war.

12. EPIPHANY – “a showing forth” (from the Greek). James Joyce made the term famous when he used it in *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. The hero, Stephen Dedalus experiences “a sudden spiritual manifestation” or he has “a significant insight.”
   eg. ...he felt that the augury he had sought in the wheeling darting birds and in the pale space of sky above him had come forth from his heart like a bird from a turret quietly and swiftly. Symbol of departure or loneliness?
10. **EPITAPH** - a serious or humorous poem or statement on a gravestone  
   eg. ‘Here lies dear old Uncle Bill,  
       We loved him then and always will.’

10. **ESCAPE LITERATURE** - work written purely for entertainment to help us pass the time pleasurably.  
    eg. most magazines, comic books, and many novels

10. **ESSAY** - a short composition that deals with a subject in a limited way and expresses a particular point of view.  
    eg. George Orwell’s ‘Shooting an Elephant’

11. **EUPHEMISM** - the substitution of a mild word or phrase for another felt to be too blunt or painful.  
    eg. ‘passed away’ for ‘died’

12. **EUPHONY** - the pleasant, musical quality produced by agreeable sounds in poetry  
    eg. ‘And the words hung hushed in their long white dream  
       By the ghostly glimmering, ice-blue stream.’

10. **FABLE** - a brief story that is told to present a moral or a practical lesson.  
    eg. Aesop’s story about the hare and the turtle

8. **FIGURE OF SPEECH** - the special use of language where a word or expression is not meant to be taken in the literal sense, often to show comparison between unlike things.  
   eg. similes, metaphors, personification, hyperbole, etc.  
   eg. ‘It’s raining cats and dogs.’

9. **FIGURATIVE MEANING** - an understood meaning of a phrase.  
   eg. ‘Let’s hit the road.’ is understood figuratively to mean ‘Let’s get going.’

10. **FLASHBACK** - a scene in a piece of literature that interrupts the action to show an event that happened earlier.

10. **FOIL** - a character whose behaviour, attitudes, or opinions contrast with those of the protagonist. The foil helps us to better understand the main character.  
    eg. Macduff for Macbeth, Hotspur for Hal, Horatio for Hamlet.

11. **FOOT** - a group of syllables forming a metrical unit. Most of the feet recognized in English verse contain one accented and one or two unaccented syllables. The most commonly used feet are as follows:  
    iambus  iambic foot  \-\  return  
    trochee  trochaic  \-/\  double  
    spondee  spondaic  \-\-\-\  football  
    anapest  anapestic  \-/-\  contravene  
    dactyl  dactylic  \/-\-\  merrily
The number of feet per line makes up the metre. These are measured as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Monometer</th>
<th>one foot per line</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dimeter</td>
<td>two feet per line</td>
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<td>Trimeter</td>
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<td>Heptameter</td>
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8. FORESHADOWING - an indication of something that may happen later in the story.
   
e.g. In *Lord of the Flies* Piggy tells Ralph not to worry because adults will come to rescue them. The killing of mice and dogs in *Of Mice and Men.*

8. FREE VERSE - poetry which has no regular patterns of rhyme, meter or line length.
   
e.g. ‘Thin as death,
      like dark brown weasel slides

11. GENRE - a particular kind or category of literature.
   
e.g. the murder mystery or the teen romance: or, more generally, poetry, short story, essay, novel, play, etc.

11. HYPERBOLE - an exaggeration not intended to deceive.
   
e.g. ‘If I don’t get an A (or pass) my mother will die.’
   ‘He must have weighed a ton!’

8. IMAGERY - words that help the reader picture or sense what is being described by using one of the senses.
   
e.g. ‘The wind roared and slashed at her as she walked.’
   eg. ‘I saw a field of white daisies swaying in the breeze’

12. INTERPRETIVE LITERATURE - written to broaden or sharpen our awareness of life (it may entertain as well, of course).
   
e.g. from a modern Canadian classic like W.O. Mitchell’s *Who Has Seen The Wind* to Jane Austen’s 1811 novel, ‘*Pride and Prejudice*’ to Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* of 1719.

8. IRONY - essentially, a difference or a contrast.
   
a) **verbal irony** - a difference between what is said and what is meant. The speaker says the opposite of what is meant.
   
eg. ‘Oh goody! It’s time to do my Math homework.’
   
eg. ‘Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind’ *Stephen Crane*
   
b) **situational irony** - a difference between what happens and what would be expected to happen.
   
eg. Student studies for days for an English test, but sleeps in the morning of the test, shows up late for class, and fails the test (with all his studying, the expectation is that he will do well).
   
c) **dramatic irony** - the difference between what the audience knows and what a character knows to be true.
   
eg. Man is eager to go home to see his wife, but the audience knows she is involved there with another man.
11. **Juxtapose** - to place together side by side.
   eg. A writer may place an image of beauty next to a horrible or grotesque event to achieve a powerful contrast

8. **Literal Meaning** - not figurative: restricted to the exact stated meaning.
   eg. ‘Let’s hit the road’ literally means to strike the pavement

10. **Litotes** - a deliberate understatement; it makes an assertion about something by denying its opposite.
    eg. Coleridge was no mean poet!
    eg. It’s no easy feat to walk a tightrope!

11. **Lyric** - a poem, usually a short one, that expresses a speaker’s personal thoughts or feelings.

8. **Metaphor** - the comparison of two unlike things without using ‘like’ or ‘as’.
    eg. ‘He is a dead duck.’

11. **Metaphor (Extended)** also called **A Conceit** - a comparison that is used throughout a poem or story to continue to show added similarities between two things.
    eg. Margaret Laurence’s ‘The Loons’
    eg. Robert Frost’s ‘The Road Not Taken’

8. **Meter** - the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables. The number of syllables in a line may be fixed while the number of stresses varies, or the stresses may be fixed with variation in the number of unstressed syllables.

12. **Metonymy** - naming something associated with what is really being talked about rather than naming the subject directly.
    eg. When we say ‘the pen is mightier than the sword’, we are really referring to words being more powerful than fighting

10. **Mood** - the dominant attitude or tone which runs through an entire piece of literature.
    eg. in Poe’s poem, ‘The Raven’ there is a negative, dark mood throughout

11. **Moral** - a lesson contained in or implied by a fable, poem, etc. Often it teaches us something about how to live life more successfully.
    eg. In the fable *The Ant and the Grasshopper* the moral is that if you play all the time while others are working, you will not be prepared for hard times; others are not obligated to help.

12. **Motif** - a dominant idea or central theme... a motif recurs (such as a name, a phrase, an image, etc.) in a piece of literature
    eg. the motif of mute figures standing in lonely isolation is a recurrent one in the artist’s works

10. **Motivation** - the conscious or unconscious need, drive, or incentive that causes a character to behave in a certain way.
    eg. Lady Macbeth is motivated to talk Macbeth into killing King Duncan so she may become queen.

*In medias res*: “into the middle of things” : narrative starts in the middle of the story
8. **MYTH** - a story, often about immortals and sometimes connected with religious rituals, that is intended to give meaning to the mysteries of the world.

   eg. the Greek myth about Zeus, ruler of the elements

8. **NARRATIVE POEM** - a poem that tells a story (ballads and epics are types of narrative poetry).

   eg. Alfred Lord Tennyson's 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'

8. **NARRATOR** - the person who tells the story. It may be a major or a minor character in the story, or someone who is not in the story at all.

   eg. Ponyboy in *The Outsiders*.

8. **OCTAVE** - an eight line poem. It is also an eight line stanza, such as in the first part of a Petrarchan sonnet. In this form the octave is contrasted with the sextet (six lines) by a change in the rhyme scheme and some important turn of thought.

8. **ONOMATOPOEIA** - a word whose sound suggests its meaning.

   eg. ouch, buzz, snarl, groan

9. **ODE** - a lyric poem of some length, serious in subject and dignified in style.

   eg. Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality."

   eg. Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale."

9. **OXYMORON** - a phrase consisting of contradictory terms.

   eg. 'glorious pain', 'cool heat' or 'parting is such sweet sorrow', from Romeo and Juliet or even 'jumbo shrimp' from a student

10. **PARADOX** - a statement that at first appears contradictory, but which, on closer examination, proves to contain truth.

    eg. Hamlet says to his mother, Queen Gertrude, "I must be cruel only to be kind."

10. **PARAPHRASE** - to restate the meaning of a passage in your own words.

11. **PARODY** - a composition designed to ridicule in a nonsensical (as in nonsense) fashion, or to criticize an original piece of work. The style of an author or work is mimicked, imitated for comic affect.

   eg. "Father William" by Lewis Carroll is a parody of a poem written by Robert Southey, entitled "The old Man's Comforts and how he gained them."

11. **PATHOS** - the quality of a work of literature that arouses our feelings of pity, sorrow or compassion for a character.

    eg. in *Macbeth*, Lady Macduff and her son are murdered by Macbeth's men.

8. **PASSIVE VOICE** - what would otherwise be the object of the verb becomes the subject.

    eg. The car was bought by the woman this morning.

8. **PERSONIFICATION** - giving non-human things human characteristics.

    eg. 'The wind whispered throughout the night'
11. **PETRARCHAN SONNET** – a poem of fourteen lines divided into two parts: the first eight lines called the octave, or octet, rhyme *abbaabba*; the remaining six lines or sestet, usually rhyme *cdecde* or a variation thereof. The octave generally contains the problem or theme which is resolved in the sestet. (See sonnet, below)

8. **PLOT** – the events as they happen in a story.

11. **POINT OF VIEW** – the vantage point from which a story is seen or told. There are two basic points of view: first-person and third-person.
   a) **first-person** – the story is told by one of the characters in his or her own words
      eg. ‘I walked to the store to see if John was there.’
   b) **third-person** – the story is being told by someone outside the story
      eg. ‘He walked to the store to see if John was there.’
   1) this narrator could be an omniscient (all-knowing) person who can describe or comment on all the characters and actions in the story
   2) on the other hand, the third-person narrator might tell the story from the point of view of only one person in the story (called the limited omniscient point of view)

10. **PROLOGUE** – an opening section of a longer work, usually intended to introduce some significant background information to the audience.
    eg. in *Romeo and Juliet* the prologue tells the story in advance

8. **PROSE** – writing in normal sentences and paragraphs.
   eg. most novels, stories, articles, etc.

8. **PROTAGONIST** – the main character of a story.
   eg. Ponyboy in *The Outsiders*
   Brutus in *Julius Caesar*

9. **PUN** – playing with the sound or meaning of words for humorous effect.
   a) a word for which two meanings can be suggested
      eg. ‘This coffee will ‘perk’ me up.’
      which has to do with the sound of the pot which “perks” and with feeling “perky”
      eg. In *Romeo and Juliet*, Mercutio, knowing he is about to die, says, ‘Ask for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a grave man.’ (‘grave’ meaning both ‘serious’ and ‘a place to put a dead body’)
   b) the use of two words with similar sound
      eg. ‘The farmer was found dead in the chicken house... foul/fowl play is suspected
      eg. In *Julius Caesar*, a cobbler is asked about his job or trade. He replies that it is ‘A trade, sir, that I hope, I may use with a safe conscience; which is... a mender of bad soles’ (souls).

8. **REFRAIN** – a line or lines repeated at intervals during a poem, usually at the end of each stanza. A refrain serves many purposes aside from helping to establish the meter and tone of the poem. It may be simply a nonsense line which lets everyone join the song such as this one from a WWI song about a girl who spoke only French. Parlez-vous?
   eg. “Inky, dinky, parlez-vous.”
8. **RHYME** - the placing of words with similar end sounds reasonably close together to emphasize the similarity of their sounds. It usually occurs at the end of lines (called 'end rhyme'), but may occur within a line of poetry (called 'internal rhyme').

   eg. ‘I think that I shall never see
       A poem as lovely as a tree...

9. **RHYME SCHEME** - the pattern of rhyme within a stanza or poem, usually shown by marking each similar sound with the same letter of the alphabet.

   eg. ...steeple a
e   town b
   ...people a
   ...downb
   this rhyme scheme is said to be abab

10. **RHYTHM** - a pattern of stressed and unstressed sounds in a poem. Like the beat in music. In verse, the rhythm is determined by the metrical pattern, whereas in prose or free verse it is the effect of an arrangement of words more nearly approximating natural speech. It is made up of metrical feet.

9. **SARCASM** - a scornful, taunting manner of speech that uses verbal irony to achieve its purpose (which is to hurt).

   eg. ‘Nice haircut, Charlie!’

11. **SATIRE** - sarcasm, irony, wit used to ridicule or expose the silliness of human behaviour (usually with the hope of improving human conduct).

   eg. *Gulliver’s Travels* by Jonathan Swift
   eg. “The Naked Gun” and “Airplane” are modern movies satirizing the detective genre and the airplane disaster films of the 1970’s
   eg. *All in the Family* – the television comedy series starring the late Carroll O’Connor which pokes fun at the prejudices (racial, religious and others) among the uneducated (represented by Archie Bunker) in America and in the world.

10. **SCANSION** - an analysis of the patterns of stressed (/) and unstressed (_) syllables into metrical feet and the grouping of lines according to the number of feet. It also includes the classifying of stanzas according to their rhyme schemes and the number of lines they contain.

   eg. ‘Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house
   Not a creature was stirring; not even a mouse.

8. **SESTET** – (sextet) a poem or stanza of six lines or the second part of a Petrarchan sonnet.

8. **SETTING** - the time and place in which the events of a story occur.

   eg. Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* takes place in the English Countryside early in the nineteenth century as does her satire of the Gothic novel, *Northanger Abbey*, which is set partly in Bath. These settings depict past lives we could never have imagined.

11. **SHAKESPEAREAN SONNET** – a poem of fourteen lines in iambic pentameter divided into three quatrains and a concluding couplet, also called the English sonnet. The rhyme scheme is generally abab, cdcd, efef, gg, or abba, cdcd, efef, gg. Each quatrain comments on some aspect of the problem and the rhyming couplet at the end serves as a statement of the central theme.
8. SIMILE - the comparison of two unlike objects using ‘like’ or ‘as’ (although one could also use such comparative terms as ‘than’, ‘resembles’, etc.)
   eg. ‘He runs like a gazelle.’

11. SOLILOQUY - in drama, a speech delivered by a character alone on the stage.
   eg. Macbeth’s ‘Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow’ speech (5.5.19-28)
   eg. Hamlet’s ‘To be or not to be...’ (1.56-90)
   eg. Falstaff’s ‘The better part of valour is discretion’, speech (5.4.110)

11. SONNET - a lyrical poem consisting of 14 lines in iambic pentameter. There are two different kinds:
   a) the English (or Shakespearean) sonnet has three four-line stanzas (abab, cdcd, efef) followed by a rhyming couplet (gg).
      eg. Shakespeare’s “Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day”
   b) the Italian or Petrarchan sonnet has two parts, an eight line section (abba abba) and a six line section (cde cde) (cd cd cd)
      eg. John Milton’s “On His Blindness”

9. STANZA - a grouping of several lines of a poem (like a paragraph in prose), usually separated from the next stanza by a space.

10. STEREOTYPE - a conventional mental image, especially a biased, generalized image of the characteristics of an ethnic or social group.
    eg. Teenagers are lazy and use illegal drugs.
    eg. Black Americans are good athletes.

8. STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS - the presentation of the natural flow of thoughts and feelings as they pass through the mind of a character, without apparent logic or order.
    eg. James Joyce’s Ulysses

11. STYLE - a manner of expression in writing or speaking, which, when analyzed often distinguishes one writer’s work from another. Robert Service’s poetic style is much different from Edgar Allan Poe’s
    eg. “The Cremation of Sam McGee has humour
    eg. “The Raven” is gloomy.

12. SURREALISM - a form of writing which expresses the subconscious rather than the conscious mind. It often appears more like dreams than reality.
    eg. ‘The Roller Rink’ by Alden Nowlan
    eg. ‘Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds’ by John Lennon

8. SUSPENSE - the quality of a story that makes the reader uncertain about the outcome.
    eg. all detective and mystery stories; most novels, stories and plays have some degree of suspense

11. SYMBOL - something chosen to stand for or represent something else.
    eg. the dove representing peace; black can represent death, evil, etc.
12. **SYNECDOCHE** - a figure of speech in which a part of something is used to represent the whole.
   
   eg. All ‘hands’ on deck means all workers on deck

9. **THEME** - the main idea of a story, often expressed as an insight about life in general or about human behaviour. It may be expressed directly, but often is implied.

11. **TONE** - the attitude a writer takes toward his or her subject. It is created through the choice of words and detail.
   
   eg. the tone sounds serious or admiring, angry, envious, etc.

12. **TROPE** - elaborate figurative language...less frequently used in literary discussions now than the more familiar *figures of speech*. Among the major tropes are metaphor, simile, hyperbole, personification, metonymy and irony.

11. **UNDERSTATEMENT** or **MEIOSIS** – the device of presenting something as less important than it really is.
   
   eg. upon winning a million dollar lottery, you say, ‘That’s nice’
   eg. in *Romeo and Juliet*, as Mercutio is dying of a sword-wound, he says it’s ‘...a scratch, a scratch...’
   eg. *Hamlet* is a play of some interest

10. **UNITY** – a unified work has a logical relationship of part to part within the whole.

12. **VERISIMILITUDE** - the quality of work whereby the action and characters are presented as sufficiently probable to the reader that they appear to represent reality.

12. **VICARIOUS EXPERIENCE** - the ‘sharing’ of the experience of someone else without actually taking part.
   
   eg. parent sharing in the feelings of a child involved in an athletic competition

10. **VIGNETTE** – a sketch or other brief literary work characterized by precision and delicacy of composition. A vignette may also be a section of a longer work.

8. **VILLAIN** – an evil character who acts in opposition to the hero. Sometimes, however, a writer centers his interest on a villain as in *Macbeth*. In other cases the villain comes dangerously close to seizing the major share of the attention in spite of the author, as does Satan in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*

12. **VILLANELLE** – one of the French fixed forms of poetry. Originally pastoral in subject matter (the name derives from villa, a farm or country house), it is often used for light verse.

There are five tercets followed by a quatrain, all on two rhymes. The opening line is repeated at the ends of tercets two and four; the final line of the first tercet concludes the third and fifth. The two refrain lines are repeated at the end of the quatrain. We will study Dylan Thomas’s *Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night.*

10. **WIT** - a brilliance and quickness of understanding combined with a cleverness of expression

   eg. Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*.
   
   eg. Hamlet in *Hamlet*, and Falstaff and Hal in *Henry IV, Part I*.
   
   eg. Kate and Petruchio’s bantering in *The Taming of the Shrew*