



# Boca Ciega High School

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## Summer Assignment—Building Background Knowledge The English Department of Boca Ciega High School

Welcome to English at Boca Ciega High School. Since this is a course that requires extensive background knowledge, it is imperative that we get off the ground running in August. Therefore, we wanted to share some of the main novels that may be used as text sets during the school year. Feel free to read these novels to have a solid foundation and take time to refresh yourselves on the definitions to literary terms before school begins.

Please read the novel(s) that pertains to the grade level or course that you will enter in the fall of 2017:

- 9<sup>th</sup> grade: Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury  
10<sup>th</sup> grade: Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald  
11<sup>th</sup> grade: Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller  
12<sup>th</sup> grade: It Was Never About a Hot Dog and a Coke! by Rodney L. Hurst Sr.

The movie version of any of these books is **not** a substitute for reading the novel; they are very different.

These books can be purchased at Amazon.com or from any major bookseller. You will find that paperback versions are very reasonable in price. The books can also be found at your local public library.

Students must be familiar with the following list of literary terms:

**Abstraction:** A term that is applied to ideas that are philosophical and emotional, not concrete or tangible, yet the idea comes from experience. Examples: truth, liberty, freedom

**Allegory:** A story in which the characters and their actions represent general truths about human conduct. The characters in an allegory often represent abstract concepts, such as faith, innocence, or evil.

**Alliteration:** The repetition of the same consonant sound at the beginning of words in a sentence or a line of poetry. Example: thundering thoughts wing wildly

**Allusion:** A reference to a well-known fictional, mythological, or historical person, place, or event, outside the story. Allusions enrich a story by suggesting similarities to comparable circumstances in another time or place; complex ideas are brought to the readers' minds simply and easily. Example: the warrior had Olympian strength. Mt. Olympus is the home of the Gods in Greek Mythology

**Ambiguity:** Either a faulty or unclear expression or a poetic device which deliberately uses a word or expression to indicate two or more distinct references, attitudes or feelings. The word has both connotations (secondary or associated significance) and denotations (primary definition or reference).

**Analogy:** exploring a topic by explaining it in terms of another seemingly unlike but more commonplace and less complicated object, or experience. Analogy extends a metaphor. Example: sound waves are compared to concentric ripples being created when a stone is dropped in the still water of a pond

**Antagonist:** the character or force in opposition to the protagonist. Example: "The Joker" in Batman

**Antithesis:** strong contrast shown through the juxtaposition of opposing words, phrases, clauses, sentences, or ideas. Example: "Every sweet has its sour [...]"

**Apostrophe:** the speaker is addressing an absent person or the dead, or an inanimate object, as if present. Example: O, beautiful rose! Thou art lovely!

**Aside:** a remark made by one character in the presence of others, but assumed not to be heard by them (sometimes said directly to the audience).



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**Assertion:** a statement that is debatable, as opposed to fact. Sometimes it is explicitly stated while sometimes it is implicit.

**Assonance:** the repetition of similar stressed vowel sounds within words in nearby sentences or words.

**Example:** the birds were hooting in the woodland

**Characterization:** the sort of personality a character displays; also the means by which the author reveals these characteristics

**Cliché:** a strikingly worded expression that is worn out from too much use. **Example:** two peas in a pod

**Comparison:** an examination designed to expose similarities between two objects or ideas.

**Concrete terms:** terms that represent, or try to evoke images or experiences of specific, tangible objects or entities. Concrete terms are usually thought of as opposed to abstractions or generalizations.

**Example:** science attempts to describe things in concrete terms

**Climax:** the crisis or turning point in a play or story: the point of greatest intensity or interests

**Conflict:** a clash of opposing purpose, viewpoints, or forces in a story, a novel, and especially in a play which causes tension or suspense; conflict may be external or internal

**Diction:** the word choice and usage in a work of literature

**Connotation:** the emotional associations that surround a word that goes beyond its narrow, literal meaning. **Example:** the words "solo" and "alone" both mean to be by one. However, "solo" connotes independence and choice where "alone" connotes loneliness and isolation

**Contrast:** a device where two objects or ideas are put in opposition to one another to show or emphasize the differences between them. **Example:** Felix and Oscar of *The Odd Couple*

**Denotation:** the literal, straightforward dictionary definition of a word that comes closest to the actuality for which the word stands.

**Dynamic character:** a character that grows and changes as a result of the plot. Dynamic characters are usually protagonists.

**Figurative language:** language that uses nonliteral figures of speech (such as simile, hyperbole, and metaphor) to convey an idea in an imaginative way.

**Ethos:** establishing competence, confidence, character, and goodwill with an audience

**Flat character:** an undeveloped, simple character that shows only one personality trait. **Example:** Peter Pan is a flat character because his refusal to grow up is the only trait that is shown.

**Flashback:** a dramatic device where the author interrupts the main action of a story to present an incident that occurred at an earlier time.

**Foil:** a character with good qualities that contrasts the qualities of another character. **Example:** There is one character is a responsible person and another character is a very irresponsible person.

**Foreshadowing:** suggestions of what will come later in a story, novel, or play by means of hints or by showing events of a similar nature

**Humor:** a conjunction of incongruous (opposite) situations or images in a surprising manner that evokes amusement. Humor may range from lighthearted and harmless to critical and sarcastic. Pure humor, however, does not contain criticism and solely comes from the amusing surprises of its incongruities.

**Hyperbole:** deliberate exaggeration used to produce heightened dramatic effects or humorous or ironic effects. **Examples:** I waited forever by the phone; I'm so hungry I could eat 200 pizzas!

**Implicit:** suggested or understood without being directly stated. To imply is to suggest rather than to state. An incident can imply an idea that would otherwise have to be stated.

**Inference:** an arrived at understanding or conclusion through deduction from evidence. One infers from that which is implied (indirectly hinted at) or implicit (unspoken and understood).

**Imagery:** the words or phrases that summon up the picture in the mind

**Irony:** a term for situations and for written and spoken observations that suggest some sort of incongruity (discrepancy) between appearance and reality. There are three basic forms of irony:



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**Verbal Irony:** when the speaker means the opposite of what he or she literally says. Example: to say "thanks" to someone who embarrassed you.

**Situational Irony:** situations in which there is a discrepancy (an incongruity, an opposition) between what the reader expects or presumes to be appropriate and what actually occurs. Example: the shoemaker's children had no shoes.

**Dramatic Irony:** 1) a situation in which a character, or narrator, unconsciously reveals to the characters and to the audience or reader some knowledge contrary to the impression he or she wishes to make. 2) a situation in which the character, or narrator, acts and reacts in ignorance of some vital, external, contrary knowledge held by one or more of the other characters and by the audience or reader.

**Juxtaposition:** side by side placement of sentences or ideas to bring about a desired effect.

**Logos:** presenting a logical, valid argument based on reliable data

**Metaphor:** a figure of speech that suggests a resemblance between two different things without using words of comparison (such as "like" or "as"). Examples: "laughing daffodils" and "He is a wolf."

**Meter:** the regular pattern of accented and unaccented syllables. The line is divided into a number of feet.

**Iambic:** style of poetic feet that has one unaccented syllable followed by an accented syllable.

**Iambic Pentameter:** most common in English verse. It is five (penta) feet (meters) of one unaccented syllable followed by an accented syllable. Example: "Büt sóft! Whät líght thröugh yöndër windöw bréaks?"

**Blank Verse:** unrhymed iambic pentameter. Example: Much of Shakespeare's writing is written in blank verse.

**Free Verse:** poetry without a fixed meter

**Motive:** the reasons, either revealed or hidden, for a character acting as he does.

**Mood:** (sometimes referred to as Atmosphere) the emotional atmosphere experienced by the reader of a literary work. Mood is often suggested by the writer's choice of words, by the events in the work, or by the physical setting. Example: The mood of most horror films is eerie.

**Motif:** a recurring idea that is woven like a design into a fabric of a literary work. It differs from a theme in that it is a concrete example of a theme. Example: a motif of birds (such as birds flying high, a boat named The Lark, the eagle a character sees in the mountains) underscore the theme of freedom.

**Onomatopoeia:** use of words that imitate the sound they describe. Examples: "zip" "buzz"

**Oxymoron:** a figure of speech that infuses two contradictory or opposing ideas to make perfect sense.

Examples: "pretty ugly"; jumbo shrimp

**Paradox:** a self-contradictory statement that may state a truth. Example: "The way to be safe is never to be secure."

**Pathos:** a feeling of sympathetic pity; establishing and meeting the needs of your audience

**Personification:** giving human characteristics to inanimate objects or ideas. Example: The sun smiled on our picnic.

**Persuasion:** type of writing (rhetoric) whose main purpose is to convince the audience to think, act, or feel a certain way. It involves appealing to reason (logos), to emotion (pathos), and/or to a sense of ethics (ethos).

**Plot:** the structure of what occurs in the story (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution)

**Point of view:** the perspective from which a story or novel is told; a work of fiction may use a first-person point of view told by one of the characters ("I locked the door and went up the stairs.") or it may be told from a third-person point of view ("He locked the doors and went up the stairs.")

**Protagonist:** usually the central or leading character; the opposing force in the conflict most responsible for bringing the conflict to an end.

**Pun:** a play on words that are similar in sound but have different meanings, usually providing a humorous effect. Example: Smart fish swim in schools.



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**Repetition:** the use of any element, such as a sound, word, clause, phrase or sentence more than once.

**Rhythm:** the patterns of sounds and pauses that are a feature of poetry, prose, and ordinary speech.

**Sarcasm:** a cutting remark, written or spoken, designed to make fun of, or hurt, its object. Sarcasm often employs irony and may be considered humorous.

**Satire:** making a subject seem ridiculous by evoking attitudes of amusement, contempt, indignation, or scorn to "correct" human vice or folly

**Setting:** the place and time of a story, poem, novel, or play.

**Simile:** a comparison between two things in which a word of comparison (such as like or as is used).

**Static character:** a character who remains constant in his or her beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, personality.

**Subjective:** personal; closely connected to an author's feelings, attitudes, prejudices, and personal reactions.

**Style:** the manner of writing rather than the content (how rather than what is said); an author's characteristic way of writing, which is determined by his choice of words in sentences, and the relationship of the sentences to each other.

**Symbolism:** something specific standing for a concept or an idea; a literary symbol, for example, may be a thing (an old tower) or an action (climbing stairs), and is so used that it becomes highly suggestive. (Climbing stairs, for example, may symbolize the struggle to gain wisdom.)

**Synecdoche:** a form of metonymy in which a part is made to stand for the whole or a whole for the part. Example: The U.S. won three gold medals. (Instead of: The members of the U.S. boxing team won three gold medals.)

**Theme:** the underlying idea or ideas of a literary work

**Thesis:** the principal focus of an essay. It is usually phrased in the form of a question to be answered, a problem to be solved, or an assertion to be argued. An essay's thesis is its umbrella statement, the assertion at the highest level of generality under which all the essay's assertions fit.

**Tone:** the attitude of the author as it is revealed through his written words

**Tragedy:** a form of literature that depicts the downfall of the leading character whose life, despite its tragic end, represents something significant. The leading character (known as the tragic hero), suffers from what Aristotle called "hamartia," a mistake in judgement on the part of the hero, frequently translated as "tragic flaw." Reversal is the sudden downturn of events that occurs, and discovery is the revelation to the hero of an important fact.

**Understatement:** the representation of something as less than it really is, for ironic effect. Example: The government needs to address the small problem of poverty.

Thank you,

The English Department of Boca Ciega High School