Definition and History

Novel: A long narrative of more than 50,000 words, usually written in prose.

The term novel comes from the Latin word for new.

The literary form of the novel is a direct descendant of the epic poem.

The novel rose to popularity in the 18th century (1700s) with the rise of the middle class in Western Europe.

The novel traditionally serves two purposes: to entertain and/or to teach a lesson (as in a moral).

Character Types

NOTE: Some of these are more character traits than character types.

Character: The actors within the story that perform the action.

Protagonist: The central character of the story and its conflict.

Antagonist: The force(s) that oppose the protagonist. Though it is often the case, the antagonist does not have to be another character. The antagonist can be, for example, environmental or society in general.

Round Character: A well developed character, or a character that we know a lot about.

Flat Character: An underdeveloped character, or a character that we know very little about.

Dynamic Character: A character who changes significantly throughout the course of the story: Ebenazer Scrooge, for example.

Static Character: A character who does not change or is seemingly unaffected by the events that unfold in the story.

Character Types (cont)

Foil Character: A character who opposes another character (such as protagonist vs. antagonist) and whose purpose is to help develop another character by presenting opposite traits: Optimus Prime and Megatron, for example.

Stock Character: A stereotyped character. The villain in black, the cranky old man, or the fat, doughnut eating cop are all types of stock characters: Chief Wiggum from *The Simpsons*, for example.

Other Terms

Plot: The sequence of events in a narrative, or the pattern of the characters' actions as dictated by the introduced conflict.

Setting: Setting refers to the time and place a story takes place.

Atmosphere: The mood or feeling created by a setting's characteristics.

Characterization: The technique a writer uses to reveal a character's traits. This can be done through *Direct Characterization*, revealing traits through descriptions of the character and by the characters own words and actions, or by *Indirect Characterization*, revealing traits by expressing what other characters say and think.

1st Person Narrator: This type of narrator is a character within the story. His version of events is usually subjective (or subject to interpretation, not necessarily fact) and limited to his own thoughts, actions, and interactions with other characters.

3rd Person Limited Narrator: The knowledge of this narrator is limited to the thoughts of one or a few characters.

Other Terms (cont)

3rd Person Omniscient Narrator: This type of narrator is "all knowing." His access to information is unlimited. He has a tendency to only tell readers what he wants them to know, or what they need to know for the story to make sense. Generally speaking, this narrator's account of events is objective (factual).

Theme: The underlying meaning of the story's events, or the fundamental (and often universal) ideas explored in a literary work.

Motif: A recurring structure, contrast, or literary device (such as imagery) that can help develop and inform a text's major themes.

Symbol: An object, character, figure, color, etc. used to represent abstract ideas and concepts.