

What is Author's Craft?

Author's craft consists of the skills and techniques that an author uses to tell a story or create a piece of writing.

Below is a list of skills and techniques that authors often use and are all considered part of **author's craft**.

Narrative Elements:

- Characterization: The development of a character within a story—when the author is clearly developing a character by describing at length the character's thoughts, dialogue, or interactions with other characters.
- Sequencing: When the author uses a unique sequence of events to tell the story. For example, when the author jumps between alternating timelines to tell the story or has lapses in the story that become clear later in the story.
- Theme: The true meaning or message of the story; what is the author trying to communicate to his or her readers?
- Point of View: The perspective from which the story is being told. This is an example of author's craft when the author uses an unique point of view to tell the story OR changes the point of view in the story.
- Flashback: A jump back in time during the story, often done to provide the reader with important background information about a character or past event.
- Foreshadowing: A warning or indication of a future event in the story.
- Story Within a Story: When a character in the narrative retells a previous experience that happened to them or someone else within the time frame of the narrative (not a flashback).
- Cliffhanger: When the author abruptly ends part of the story to make you want to continue reading.
- Humor/Sarcasm: When the author uses sarcasm or humor to emphasis a point in the story.
- Chapter Set-Up: When the author uses a quote, famous saying, dates, or some unique characteristic at the beginning of a chapter.

Literary Devices:

- Repetition: Repeating of words or phrases throughout the text. The repetition needs to happen many times to emphasize an important message.
- Tone or Mood: The tone and feeling that the writer creates for the reader (funny, serious, dramatic, suspenseful). Authors will often establish the mood based upon the actions and feelings of the characters in the story.
- Simile: Comparisons between two unlike things using the words “like” or “as”. For example, “She is as sly as a fox.”
- Metaphor: A comparison between two unlike things. For example, “He’s a tiger.”
- Symbolism: An object or action that means something more than its literal meaning. For example—a rainy day often means a bad day or hard times.
- Alliteration: An author uses the same letter or sound to begin each word in a string of words. For example, Abbie’s alligator ate apples and asparagus.
- Onomatopoeia: When a word sounds like what it means. Examples—crash, buzz, thump, bang
- Allusion: A figure of speech that makes reference to a well-known person, event, or place—I was surprised his nose wasn’t growing like Pinocchio’s.
- Hyperbole: An exaggerated comment or line—I’ve told you that a million times.
- Personification: This occurs when an author gives animals, objects, ideas or actions, the qualities of humans. For example, the calm sea kissed the southern shore.
- Imagery: The use of descriptive language to create powerful images in the reader’s mind. Often the author describes one of the five senses to help create the image.