**Literary Devices**

1. **Analepsis or Flashback**

* It takes the narrative back in time from the current point the story has reached. Flashbacks are often used to recount events that happened before the story’s primary sequence of events or to fill in crucial backstory.
* A flashback (also called analepsis) is an interjected scene that takes the narrative back in time from the current point the story has reached. Flashbacks are often used to recount events that happened prior to the story’s primary sequence of events or to fill in crucial backstory. Character origin flashbacks specifically refers to flashbacks dealing with key events early in a character's development (Clark Kent discovering he could fly, for example, or the Elric brothers' attempt to bring back their mother). In the opposite direction, ***a flashforward (or prolepsis***) reveals events that will occur in the future. The technique is used to create suspense in a story, or develop a character. In literature, internal analepsis is a flashback to an earlier point in the narrative; external analepsis is a flashback to before the narrative started.  
    
  An early example of analepsis is in the Mahabharata, where the main story is narrated through a frame story set in a later time.

1. **Foreshadowing**

* The use of hints or clues to suggest what will happen later in literature.
* The presentation of details, characters, or incidents in a narrative in such a way that later events are prepared for (or "shadowed forth").
* For example in Chaucer’s Troilus and Criseyde, Troilus glimpses Criseyde and feels the “dreadful joy” of love at looking at her. This is foreshadowing because it connotes that Troilus will have joy in his love, but also suffer as a result of it.
* Shakespeare uses foreshadowing frequently, sometimes in quite obvious ways. Romeo and Juliet both talk about dying. However, Shakespeare’s use of foreshadowing can also be quite subtle, and critics argue about what certain symbols foreshadow. The ghost in Hamlet is often thought to foreshadow the death of the royalty of Denmark, though some argue it only foretells Hamlet’s death.

1. **Epiphany**

* The term refers to a moment in a story (whether narrative or drama) in which something suddenly becomes clear, usually to the character (most often the protagonist), ***which in turn causes*** past events to appear in a significantly new light, to the character or to the audience or to both.
* The epiphantic moment for a character can be distinct from what it is for the reader or audience.  Consider Robert Browning's dramatic monologue "My Last Duchess."  We have to read the entire poem before we can grasp the situation:  the Duke of Ferrara is talking to an ambassador for a neighboring count who has come to explore the prospects for a marriage between the count's young daughter and the widowed duke. The duke is accompanying his guest from his quarters to a social event (probably a banquet, with music and dance) on the palace grounds.  Just before descending the stairs to the assembled company, the duke pauses to call his guest's attention to the portrait of his dead former wife (to which the poem's title refers).  He uses this occasion to acquaint the ambassador with some interesting history concerning the temperament and fate of this young lady.  For the ambassador, the interesting realization would be the moment in which the Duke makes his intention plain while simultaneously backing it up with a savage threat:  my next wife had better focus her attentions exclusively on me, or she'll end up dead, as my last duchess did.  This would be the moment when he reveals that he "gave commands" and then "all smiles stopped together."  But, for the reader, the epiphany comes later:  when we realize whom the duke is speaking to, and within what situation -- i.e., that he is negotiating with the ambassador of a neighboring count for the hand of his daughter.  Only then do ***we*** realize what the point was of the story he had been telling his auditor about his former wife whom he'd had eliminated because she took too much innocent pleasure in life.
* In narrative, a character's sudden "seeing into the heart" of a situation is usually a moment of special intensity.  In plot terms, it amounts to an instance of anagnorisis (or "recognition") and often brings with it peripeteia (or reversal).  From the standpoint of character development, it is often axial in a dynamic character's change, or the focal point of a static character's refusal to change.  Specifically how an epiphantic moment impacts a protagonist is thus likely to be intimately tied up with which of the four general types of plot a given story chooses for the purposes of its particular theme.
* Epiphany is often occasioned when some previously unknown fact (apparently insignificant in itself) is introduced.  And this in turn can happen in conjunction with some striking image, phrase, or other detail.  An especially rich series of such moments occurs at the end of Flannery O'Connor's story "Revelation."

1. **Twist (Surprise Ending)**

* A **plot twist** is a change in the expected direction or outcome of the plot of any fictional work. It is a common practice in narration used to keep the interest of an audience, usually surprising them with a revelation. Some "twists" are foreshadowed and can thus be predicted by many viewers/readers, whereas others are a complete shock.
* When a plot twist happens near the end of a story, especially if it changes one's view of the preceding events, it is known as a **twist ending**.
* A **twist ending** is a plot twist occurring near or at the conclusion of a story, an unexpected conclusion to a work of fiction that causes the audience to reevaluate the narrative or characters.
* An early example of the murder mystery genre with multiple twists was the Arabian Nights tale "The Three Apples". It begins with a fisherman discovering a locked chest. The first twist occurs when the chest is broken open and the dead body is found inside. The initial search for the murderer fails, and a twist occurs when two men appear, separately claiming to be the murderer. A complex chain of events finally reveal the murderer to be the investigator's own slave.

1. **Deux ex machina**

* "god out of the machine"
* A plot device whereby a seemingly inextricable problem is suddenly and abruptly solved with the contrived and unexpected intervention of some new event, character, ability, or object.
* Example is Superman II

Clark gives up his powers, and when he does so, he's told that it's forever. There's NO WAY to ever get his powers back. EVER. Then the Phantom Zone criminals show up. So Clark makes his way back to the Arctic, where he finds a magic green crystal that somehow overrides the absolute prohibition that was stated earlier in the film, and gives him his powers back.

The film also pulls a huge Deus Ex Machina with the resolution of the 'Lois knows' subplot. Now that Lois knows Clark is Superman, what will happen next? Well, it suddenly turns out that Clark has amnesia-kiss powers, which solve the problem.

1. **Side Story**

* A side story in fiction is a form of narrative that occurs alongside established stories set within a fictional universe. As opposed to a prequel, sequel, or interquel, a side story takes place within the same time frame as an existing work.
* Early examples of a side story are found in the ancient Indian epics Mahabharata and Ramayana, which contained numerous side stories which were loosely related to the main story of those epics. It is typical for side stories to be self contained, small scale events, insignificant in the bigger picture. They tend to be one shot stories with a beginning, middle, and end and focus heavily on character drama while the major action occurs mostly in the background.

1. **Dream Sequence**

* A series of dreams which allow a character to see events that occur or have occurred in another time.
* A technique used in storytelling to set apart a brief interlude from the main story. The interlude may consist of a flashback, a flashforward, a fantasy, a vision, a dream, or some other element. Commonly, dream sequences appear in many films to shed light on the psychical process of the dreaming character. For instance in Pee-Wee's Big Adventure, the purpose of Pee Wee's dreams is to inform the audience of his anxieties and fears after losing his bike.

1. **Narrative Hook**

* A narrative hook is a section at the beginning of the story that gets the reader or audience aroused and interested and thus wanting to continue to engage with the story.
* The narrative hook - also known as a literary hook - is the literary device whereby you hook the reader's attention and intrigue her enough so that she'll keep reading.
* Examples:
  + The first few minutes shows the hero in the final exciting scenes of a *previous* adventure before they start the adventure in *this* story.
  + The story starts with a dramatic mystery, such as person falling from a balcony.
  + A child is abducted. The parents are distraught.

1. **Poetic Justice**

* Poetic justice is a literary outcome in which bad characters are punished and good characters are rewarded. Think: "What comes around goes around." In its purest form, poetic justice is when one character plots to undermine another and then ends up caught in his own trap.
* The self-fulfilling prophecy can be considered an early example of poetic justice. One example of this is the ancient Sanskrit story of Krishna, where King Kamsa is told in a prophecy that a child of his sister Devaki would kill him. In order to prevent it, he imprisons both Devaki and her husband Vasudeva, allowing them to live only if they hand over their children as soon as they are born. He murders nearly all of them one by one, but the eighth child, Krishna, is saved and raised by a cowherd couple, Nanda and Yasoda. After growing up and returning to his kingdom, Kamsa is eventually killed by Krishna. In other words, Kamsa's cruelty in order to prevent his death is what led to him being killed.

1. **Cliff Hanger**

* A cliffhanger is an abrupt ending that leaves the main characters in a precarious or difficult situation, creating a strong feeling of suspense that provokes the reader to ask, "What will happen next?" Cliffhangers often frustrate the reader, since they offer no resolution at all; however, the device does have the advantage of creating the Zeigarnik effect (unfinished or interrupted tasks are better remembered). A cliffhanger is often employed at the end of an installment of serialized novels, movies, or in most cases, TV series. In The Dark Tower, Stephen King uses cliffhangers between most of the books; especially in the end of The Dark Tower III: The Waste Lands. A literal cliffhanger can be seen at the end of The Italian Job.