

AP LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

Literary Devices

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GENERAL LITERARY DEVICES

Allegory- a representation of an abstract or spiritual meaning through concrete or material forms; figurative treatment of one subject under the guise of another. A story with a literal level and a symbolic level. Examples: “Young Goodman Brown,” Animal Farm, and Pilgrim’s Progress- *Christian* is on his way to the *Celestial City* and must pass through the *Fair of Temptations*.

Anachronism- something located at a time when it could not have existed or occurred. Example- the clock chiming in Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar.

Analogy- An analogy is a comparison in which an idea or a thing is compared to another thing that is quite different from it. It aims at explaining that idea or thing by comparing it to something that is familiar. Metaphors and similes are tools used to draw an analogy. Therefore, analogy is more extensive and elaborate than either a simile or a metaphor. Consider the following example:

“Structure of an atom is like a solar system. Nucleus is the sun and electrons are the planets revolving around their sun.”

Here an atomic structure is compared to a solar system by using “like”. Therefore, it is a simile. Metaphor is used to relate the nucleus to the sun and the electrons to the planets without using words “like” or “as”.

Hence, similes and metaphors are employed to develop an analogy.

Writers use analogies to link an unfamiliar or a new idea with common and familiar objects.

Anecdote- A very short tale told by a character in a literary work. In Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales, “The Wife of Bath’s Tale” would be an example. When a character tells a story from his/her past to illustrate a point is another example.

Archetypes- Universal symbols that evoke deep and sometimes unconscious responses in a reader. As a literary device, an archetype is a reoccurring symbol or motif throughout literature that represents universal patterns of human nature. It can also refer to the original model on which all other things of the same kind are based. For example, the common character of a hero is an archetype in that all heroes in literature share some key traits. (Other include “the quest,” “the villain,” “the sidekick,” “the mentor,” “the threshold guardian,” etc.). Example: similar character archetypes can be found in *Harry Potter*, *Lord of the Rings*, and *Star Wars*

- Hero
- Anti-hero- a morally weak, cowardly, dishonest, or unsavory protagonist, such as Winston in 1984 (TED TALK- <http://ed.ted.com/lessons/an-anti-hero-of-one-s-own-tim-adams>)
- The antihero is always the main character of a story, which fits the protagonist definition. However, this type of protagonist lacks the traditional heroic values of morality and bravery. As the main character, though, the audience is still expected to understand the mental calculations of the antihero even if they object to the actions the antihero takes. A popular recent example of an antihero is Walter White from the television show Breaking Bad.

- Tragic Hero-
- Tragic Flaw (or Hamartia)- weakness of character in an otherwise good individual that leads to his or her demise

Characterization- can be direct/explicit or indirect/implicit. Can be through actions, dialogue, other characters' reactions, thoughts, flashbacks, etc.

- **Protagonist**- The protagonist is the main character of a work of literature, theater, or cinema. There may be more than one protagonist in a large piece of work or a work with several overlapping narratives. In some particularly sprawling works, like Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, it may be nearly impossible to identify the "main" character.
 - While the protagonist is often "the good guy" at odds with a villain or antagonist, the protagonist can also be an antihero (Satan in *Paradise Lost*). Whether or not the protagonist is good or evil, the audience is generally supposed to empathize with this person and understand the motivations that propel the character to do what he or she does.
 - **False Protagonist**: The usage of a false protagonist is a technique of starting a story with one character that appears to be the main character, only to have that person disappear or die unexpectedly. George R.R. Martin, the author of the popular series *A Song of Ice and Fire* (known as *Game of Thrones* on television), uses this device frequently.
- **Antagonist**- The antagonist may lack heroic qualities, like the antihero. However, the antagonist is not the main character of the story, and thus the audience is not privy to the antagonist's inner life and will generally not empathize with the antagonist's motivations. The antagonist is the chief instigator of conflict with the protagonist, but is not necessarily an evil person. Antagonists may be just the person or group of people who present an obstacle to the protagonist, whether or not that obstacle is unjustified or cruel. For example, if the protagonist of the story is a criminal the antagonist may be a police officer trying to track down the protagonist. Iago from Shakespeare's *Othello* is a famous antagonist who is quite evil, while Severus Snape is one of the primary antagonists from J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, yet is not evil himself and works against the ultimate villain.
- **Static**- character who stays the same over the course of the work
- **Dramatic**- character who changes over the course of the work
- **Major**
- **Minor**
- **Caricature**- a portrait that exaggerates a facet of personality. Oftentimes used in satires.

Dialect

- **Colloquialism**- refers to the usage of informal or everyday language in literature. Colloquialisms are generally geographic in nature, in that a colloquial expression often belongs to a regional or local dialect. They can be words, phrases, or aphorisms. One famous colloquial difference in the United States is the way a person refers to a carbonated beverage. There are regional borders that separate the usage of the words "soda", "pop", "soft drink", and "Coke." Words such as "ain't" and "gonna" are examples of colloquialism, as they are not used widely throughout English-speaking populations. "What's the use you learning to do right, when it's troublesome to do right and it ain't no trouble to do wrong, and the wages is just the same?" - *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain
- **Regional Dialect**- "dialect" is a type of language that is characteristic to a certain set of speakers. Usually, this has to do with a population's speech patterns and it's defined by the people's grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. "Colloquialisms" is similar to this definition, but not quite the same. Instead, it refers to single words or phrases in everyday use (as opposed to formal language). While

the dialect of a region refers to the way the language is spoken, colloquialisms are individual, informal words that are in common use.

- **Register** - a register is a variant of a language used for a particular purpose or in a particular social setting. For example, when speaking in a formal setting contrary to an informal setting, an English speaker may be more likely to use features of prescribed grammar—such as pronouncing words ending in -ing as "walking", not "walkin'", choosing more formal words (e.g. father vs. dad, child vs. kid, etc.), and refraining from using words considered nonstandard, such as ain't.
 - Other examples of registers: school, friends, family, office, etc.

Dialogue - a literary technique in which writers employ two or more characters to be engaged in conversation with each other. Inner dialogue (stream-of-consciousness or internal monologue) and external dialogue.

Foil/Doppelganger - In literature, a foil is a character that shows qualities that are in contrast with the qualities of another character with the objective to highlight the traits of the other character. The term foil, though generally being applied for a contrasting character, may also be used for any comparison that is drawn to portray a difference between two things.

What we observe in literature very often is that a foil is a secondary character who contrasts with the major character to enhance the importance of the major character. Example: Draco Malfoy and Harry Potter; Bernard Marx and Henry Foster from Brave New World.

- **Doppelganger** - usually shaped as a twin, shadow or a mirror image of a protagonist. It refers to a character who physically resembles the protagonist and may have the same name as well. Several types of doppelganger can be spotted in world literature. It may take the form of an “evil twin”, not known to the actual person, who confuses people related to that original person. Besides, it may be figured as one person existing in two different places at the same time. Sometimes, a doppelganger is a person’s past or future self. In some cases, it may simply be a person’s look alike.
- Examples: Hamlet’s father’s ghost in Hamlet, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

Hubris - arrogance and pride exhibited by a character which ultimately leads to his downfall.

Hubris is one of the typical flaws for a character, often occurring when he occupies a prominent position, then miscalculates and overestimates his capabilities. This overestimation goes so far that the character loses his ability to be realistic and pragmatic. A character that has hubris tries to go beyond the limits of normal human strength and in the process violates moral codes. (Aristotle/Greek Tragedy)

In Medias Res - a piece of writing that begins in the middle of the action (skips the exposition at the beginning and oftentimes fills in this information later).

Irony - a contrast or incongruity between expectations for a situation and what is reality. A device that makes use of the opposite of what was expected. A figure of speech in which words are used in such a way that their intended meaning is different from the actual meaning of the words. It may also be a situation that may end up in quite a different way than what is generally anticipated. In simple words, it is a difference between the appearance and the reality.

Irony is sometimes confused with events that are just unfortunate coincidences. For example, Alanis Morissette’s song “Ironic” contains many events that are not ironic in any sense. She cites “rain on your wedding day” and “a traffic jam when you’re already late” as ironic situations, yet these are merely bad luck.

- **Situational** - Situational irony consists of a situation in which the outcome is very different from what was expected. There are contradictions and contrasts present in cases of situational irony. For

example, in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, the citizens of the Emerald City assume that Oz is great and all-powerful, yet the man behind the curtain is revealed to be an old man with no special powers.

- Referring to WWI as “the war to end all wars”
- **Dramatic** - Dramatic irony occurs when the audience has more information than one or more characters in a work of literature. This literary device originated in Greek tragedy and often leads to tragic outcomes.
 - In Shakespeare’s *Othello*, the audience is aware that Othello’s best friend Iago is villainous and attempting to bring Othello down. The audience is also aware that Desdemona has been faithful, though Othello doesn’t know this. The audience can foresee the imminent disaster.
- **Verbal** - takes place when the speaker says something in sharp contrast to his or her actual meaning. The speaker often makes a statement that seems very direct, yet indicates that the opposite is in fact true, or what the speaker really means. Unlike dramatic and situational irony, verbal irony is always intentional on the part of the speaker.
 - “What a pleasant day” (when it is raining heavily)

Mood/Atmosphere - As a literary device, mood is the emotional feeling or atmosphere that a work of literature produces in a reader. All works of literature produce some sort of emotional and psychological effect in the audience; though every reader may respond differently to the same work of literature there is often a similar type of mood produced. For example, in a thriller most readers will feel some sort of suspense, while dramatic novels may produce a sense of sentimentality. Authors use many different factors to create mood, including setting, theme, voice, and tone.

Difference Between Mood and Tone

Though mood and tone are related and often confused, they are very different literary devices. Tone refers to the author’s attitude toward the work or speaker’s attitude towards something within the work, while the definition of mood is that it is the emotions provoked in the reader.

*****Thus, the difference can be understood in this way: tone is how the author feels, while mood is how the reader feels.**

Example:

“They’re trying to kill me,” Yossarian told him calmly.

“No one’s trying to kill you,” Clevinger cried.

“Then why are they shooting at me?” Yossarian asked.

“They’re shooting at *everyone*,” Clevinger answered. “They’re trying to kill everyone.”

“And what difference does that make?”

- *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller

Tone of each character: Yossarian is paranoid, Clevinger is exasperated.

Mood: despair, confusion, desperation, amusement

Narrator - The narrator is the one telling the story. In a first person or limited omniscient third person point of view story the narrator is often the protagonist. This is because the audience discovers the story through the narrator’s perspective, and generally sides with the narrator. However, in some cases the narrator is an actor in the story and yet not the main character. This is the case in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, which is narrated by Nick Carraway but focuses on Jay Gatsby.

- **Narrator (Unreliable)**- a narrator whose credibility has been or seems to be seriously compromised. Examples: Chief Bromden in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, *Life of Pi*, *Lolita*, *Catcher in the Rye*, *Huckleberry Finn*
Types: The clown, the madman, the liar, the Picaro, the Naif (immature- Huck Finn, Holden Caulfield), etc.

Pathetic Fallacy- Pathetic fallacy is a literary device that attributes human qualities and emotions to inanimate objects of nature. The word “pathetic” in the term is not used in the derogatory sense of being miserable; rather, here, it stands for “imparting emotions to something else”. Generally, Pathetic fallacy is confused with personification. The fact is that they differ in their function. Pathetic fallacy is a kind of personification that gives human emotions to inanimate objects of nature for example referring to weather features reflecting a mood. Personification, on the other hand, is a broader term. It gives human attributes to abstract ideas, animate objects of nature or inanimate non-natural objects. For example, the sentence “The somber clouds darkened our mood” is a pathetic fallacy as human attributes are given to an inanimate object of nature reflecting a mood. But, “The sparrow talked to us” is a personification because the animate object of nature “sparrow” is given the human quality of “talking”.

Examples:

Shakespeare uses pathetic fallacy in his play “Macbeth” to describe the dark murder of “Duncan”. In Act 2 Scene 3 “Lennox” says:

“The night has been unruly. Where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down and, as they say,
Lamentings heard i’ th’ air, strange screams of death,
And prophesying with accents terrible
Of dire combustion and confused events
New hatched to the woeful time. The obscure bird
Clamored the livelong night. Some say the Earth
Was feverous and did shake.”

The pathetic fallacy examples in the above lines describe the ominous atmosphere on the night of the murder of “Duncan”. The “unruly” night, the “screams of death” in the air, and the “feverous” earth depict the “evil” act of murder that happened a night before.

William Wordsworth in his poem “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” says:

“I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o’er vales and hills,”
The poet describes clouds as “lonely” to describe his state.

Perspective- the scene as viewed through the eyes/mind of the chosen “narrator,” but in poetry this can include non-human beings or objects too. (For example, it could be the perspective of a fly or a cloud)

Rhetoric - Rhetoric is a technique of using language effectively and persuasively in spoken or written form. It is an art of discourse, which studies and employs various methods to convince, influence or please an audience.

For instance, a person gets on your nerves, you start feeling irritated, and you say, “Why don’t you leave me alone?” By posing such a question, you do not ask for a reason. Instead, you simply want him to stop irritating you. Thus, you direct language in a particular way for effective communication or make use of rhetoric. A situation where you make use of rhetoric is called a “rhetorical situation”.

Rhetorical figures or devices are employed to achieve particular emphasis and effect. Rhetorical devices, however, are different from “figures of speech”. Wherever and whenever a figure of speech is used in written texts and speech, it alters meanings of words. For example, the metaphor used in the expression “He is a tiger,” is a complete altered form of a simple idea “He is brave.” Compare this example to the use of a rhetorical device in the example below:

“I am never ever going to rob anyone for you and never, never ever give in to your sinful wish.”

The repetition in the above example does lay emphasis on the statement but does not alter the sense of it.

Below are a few examples on how rhetoric is employed by using various literary devices:

- How did this idiot get elected? – A rhetorical question to convince others that the “idiot” does not deserve to be elected.
- Here comes the Helen of our school. – An allusion to “Helen of Troy” to emphasize the beauty of a girl.
- I would die if you asked me to sing in front of my parents – A hyperbole to persuade others not to use force to make you do something which you don’t want to do.

Nevertheless, the difference between rhetorical devices and figures of speech is so minute that both share many features. A figure of speech becomes a device in rhetoric when it is aimed at persuading the readers or listeners.

Often, we find rhetoric examples in religious sermons and political speeches. They aim to make comparisons, to evoke tender emotions, to censure rivals and all this is done to persuade listeners. Advertisers give their ads a touch of rhetoric to boost their sales by convincing people that their product is better than other products in the market. For instance, in an advertisement, a girl – after shampooing her hair – says, “I can’t stop touching my hair.” This is an attempt to entice consumers, through visual rhetoric, to have soft and shiny hair like her.

Theme - a main idea, message, or an underlying meaning of a literary work that may be stated directly or indirectly. In regards to the A.P. Lit. exam, always take “theme” as meaning “thematic statement” of a work. The thematic concept (topic) might be “war,” but the thematic statement is the comment the work makes about the topic- “war causes people to change drastically and usually permanently.”

Verisimilitude - is likeness to the truth i.e. resemblance of a fictitious work to a real event even if it is a far-fetched one.

Verisimilitude ensures that even a fantasy must be rooted in reality, which means that events should be plausible to the extent that readers consider them credible enough to be able to relate them somehow to their experiences of real life.

The theory of verisimilitude comes from a Platonic and Aristotelian dramatic theory called “mimesis”. According to this theory, a work of art should convince the audience by imitating and representing nature and having basis in reality. The playwright, conforming to the above- mentioned theory, had to draw themes from sources well-known to the common people of his time and maintain the unities of action, place and time. Besides, he had to bring a realistic union between the style and the subject.

The theory of verisimilitude leads to the idea of “suspension of disbelief” or “willing suspension of disbelief,” a term coined in 1817 by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. He was of the opinion that if a writer was able to fill his work with a “human interest and a semblance of truth”, the readers would willingly suspend or delay their judgment in relation to the doubtfulness of a narrative.

Examples:

Jonathan Swift’s Gulliver Travels

Mark Twain in Adventure of Huckleberry Fin used Black American Vernacular to show realistically how the “negroes” [Black Americans] talked in real life:

“I didn’t want to go back no more. I had stopped cussing, because the widow didn’t like it; but now I took to it again because pap hadn’t no objections... But by-and-by pap got too handy with his hick’ry, and I could’t stand it. I was all over with welts. He got to going away so much, too, and locking me in. Once he locked me in and was gone three days. It was dreadful lonesome.”

Twain successfully achieves verisimilitude or resemblance to a reality by introducing colloquialism in his narrative, such as the use of double negatives is quite evident in the above passage.

Word Play -

- **Pun** - A pun is a play on words which usually hinges on a word with more than one meaning or the substitution of a homonym that changes the meaning of the sentence for humorous or rhetorical effect. Puns show us the multiple meanings of a word by replacing that word with another that is similar in sound but has a very different meaning. For example, “when he went trick-or-treating in a Batman costume, he got lots of snickers.” Snickers. Get it?

Examples:

HAMLET

I will speak to this fellow.—Whose grave’s this, sirrah?

GRAVEDIGGER

Mine, sir.

HAMLET

I think it be thine, indeed, for thou liest in ’t.

GRAVEDIGGER

You lie out on ’t, sir, and therefore it is not yours. For my part, I do not lie in ’t, and yet it is mine.

HAMLET

Thou dost lie in ’t, to be in ’t and say it is thine. ‘Tis for the dead, not for the quick. Therefore thou liest.

GRAVEDIGGER

‘Tis a quick lie, sir. ‘Twill away gain from me to you.

- *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare used hundreds of puns in his plays and sonnets. They indicate a cleverness of thought on the part of the speaker; Hamlet being perhaps the cleverest character in all of Shakespeare’s works, it is not surprise that he uses many throughout the play. Hamlet encounters a gravedigger in this pun example and the two of them have a witty back-and-forth using the two meanings of the word “lie.” They pun on the idea of the gravedigger resting horizontally in the grave versus the gravedigger fabricating the story of the grave being his own.

- **Idiom** - a phrase or fixed expression that is not taken literally, but the meaning is fixed and known by speakers of a particular language or group of speakers. Idioms exist in every language. There are thousands of idioms, and they occur frequently in all languages. It is estimated that there are at least twenty-five thousand idiomatic expressions in the English language.

Examples:

That was the straw that broke the camel’s back

Every cloud has a silver lining

It’s raining cats and dogs

Rule of thumb

Kirk: If we play our cards right, we may be able to find out when those whales are being released.

Spock: How will playing cards help?

(Captain James T. Kirk and Spock in *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*, 1986)

Learning a Language with Idioms

Because of idioms, learning a language can be complicated. After you can conjugate verbs, and know a lot of words, you may still have difficulty speaking the language with native users.

Idiom usage is not just regional, but also varies according to people's interests and social groups.

Idioms Around the Globe

There are certain things that happen in every culture and there are idioms to deal with them.

- In Norwegian and Czech, “walking around hot porridge” refers to beating around the bush, which is also an idiom meaning not getting to the point.
- If it is raining in large amounts, most cultures have an interesting way of saying that:
 - In English, it would be “raining cats and dogs”
 - In Africa, they might say “it's raining old women with clubs”
 - In Norway they say “it's raining female trolls”
 - The Irish say “it's throwing cobblers knives”
- Opposite connotations:
 - In Finnish, “with long teeth” means you are doing something that you really don't want to do
 - In French, “to have long teeth” means you are ambitious.

- **Oxymoron** - An oxymoron is simply a pair of words that are opposites, used together. The two words contradict each other, hence the contradictory nature of the oxymoron as a whole. Some examples of oxymoron include: awfully good, open secret, alone together, etc. As you can see, many of these examples of oxymoron have gained idiomatic meaning, such that when we hear them we understand the intent and are not confused by the apparent contradiction.

- **Aphorism** - a statement of truth or opinion expressed in a concise and witty manner. The term is often applied to philosophical, moral and literary principles. To qualify as an aphorism, it is necessary for a statement to contain a truth revealed in a terse manner. Aphoristic statements are quoted in writings as well as in our daily speech.

Aphorisms often come with a pinch of humor, which makes them more appealing to the masses. Proverbs, maxims, adages and clichés are different forms of aphoristic statements that gain prevalence from generation to generation and frequently appear in our day-to-day speech.

- Those who mind don't matter, and those who matter don't mind.—Bernard Baruch (frequently misattributed to Dr. Seuss)
- I'd rather die on my feet, than live on my knees.—Emiliano Zapata (in Spanish: *Prefero morir de pie que vivir de rodillas.*)
- I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.—Evelyn Beatrice Hall (frequently misattributed to Voltaire)
- The old law of ‘an eye for an eye’ leaves everyone blind. —Martin Luther King Jr.
- A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. —Lao Tzu
- Better safe than sorry.
- Early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.
- Every cloud has a silver lining.

- **Euphemism** - The term euphemism refers to polite, indirect expressions which replace words and phrases considered harsh and impolite or which suggest something unpleasant. Euphemism is an idiomatic expression which loses its literal meanings and refers to something else in order to hide its unpleasantness. For example, “kick the bucket” is a euphemism that describes the death of a person. In addition, many organizations use the term “downsizing” for the distressing act of “firing” its employees.

- **Malapropism** - from French *mal a propos* (*inappropriate*), is a use of an incorrect word in place of a similar sounding word that results in a nonsensical and humorous expression.

Examples:

Richard J. Daley, the former mayor of Chicago, is said to have called “tandem bicycle” as “tantrum bicycle” and also have incorrectly used “Alcoholics Unanimous” instead of “Alcoholics Anonymous”.

Rainy weather can be hard on the sciences. (sinuses)

Good punctuation means not to be late. (punctuality)

- **Paradox** - a juxtaposition of a set of seemingly contradictory concepts that reveal a hidden and/or unexpected truth. Situation or statement that seems to contradict itself but does not. An oxymoron falls under the umbrella of paradox terms.

Examples:

“Life is a preparation for the future; and the best preparation for the future is to live as if there were none.” -Albert Einstein

“I know one thing: that I know nothing.” -Socrates (via Plato)

You can save money by spending it.

JULIET: My only love sprung from my only hate!

Too early seen unknown, and known too late!

Prodigious birth of love it is to me,

That I must love a loathèd enemy.

- *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare

CECILY: To be natural is such a very difficult pose to keep up.

- *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde

“War is peace, freedom is slavery, and ignorance is strength.”

“The Ministry of Peace, which concerned itself with war...”

- *1984* by George Orwell

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Allusion - An allusion is a literary device used to reference another object outside of the work of literature. An indirect reference to something of historic, cultural, or literary significance. The object can be a real or fictional person, event, quote, or other work of artistic expression. Allusions can be shorthand for adding emotion or significance to a passage by drawing on the reader’s prior associations with the object.

Examples:

“Don’t act like a Romeo in front of her.” – “Romeo” is a reference to Shakespeare’s Romeo, a passionate lover of Juliet, in “Romeo and Juliet”.

The rise in poverty will unlock the Pandora’s box of crimes. – This is an allusion to one of Greek Mythology’s origin myth, “Pandora’s box”.

“The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted; but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus is but the outside of the earth everywhere.”

-Walden by Thoreau

In this excerpt from *Walden*, Henry David Thoreau alludes to Olympus. In Greek mythology, Mt. Olympus was where the pantheon of gods lived. By comparing the outside world to Mt. Olympus Thoreau is saying that nature holds all the wondrousness of the home of the gods.

Apostrophe - when the speaker is talking to someone/something not there. A speaker, using an apostrophe, detaches himself from the reality and addresses an imaginary character in his speech. Example:

“Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand?
Come, let me clutch thee!
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.” – Macbeth

“Oh! Stars and clouds and winds, ye are all about to mock me; if ye really pity me, crush sensation and memory; let me become as nought; but if not, depart, depart, and leave me in darkness.” – Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*

“Death be not proud...” by John Donne

Connotation - The suggestive meaning of a word – the **associations** it brings up. A “connection” to the word. Connotations depend a lot on the culture and experience of the person reading the word. For some people, the word “liberal” has a positive connotation. For others, it’s negative. Think of connotation as the murky haze hanging around the literal meaning of a word. For example, “cool” has become associated as a word that now means “part of the in crowd” rather than just cold.

Imagery - words and/or phrases which have sensory appeal: sound, smell, taste, touch, sight. Imagery consists of descriptive language that can function as a way for the reader to better imagine the world of the piece of literature. Imagery can also pertain to details about movement or a sense of a body in motion (kinesthetic imagery) or the emotions or sensations of a person, such as fear or hunger (organic imagery or subjective imagery). While an author may use imagery just to help readers understand the fictive world, details of imagery often can be read symbolically. In Macbeth, the thunder and lightning that open the play symbolize both the storm that is already taking place in Scotland and the one that is about to begin once Macbeth takes over the throne. Thus, when analyzing literature it is important to consider the imagery used so as to understand both the mood and the symbolism in the piece.

Examples:

John Keats’ “To the Autumn” is an ode rich with auditory imagery examples. In the last five lines of his ode he says:

“Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.”

**See later Appendix for more Imagery examples.

Hyperbole vs. Understatement - Hyperbole is exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally. A gross exaggeration. For example, “tons of money” is a hyperbole.

An understatement seeks to express a thought or impression by underemphasizing the extent to which a statement may be true. Understatement is the opposite of hyperbole and is frequently used for its comedic value in articles, speeches, etc. when issues of great importance are being discussed. Example: “There’s just one, tiny, little problem with that plan – it’ll get us all killed!”

Metaphor/Extended Metaphor - figure of speech that compares two subjects without the use of “like” or “as.” While a simile states that one thing is like another, a metaphor asserts that one thing is the other, or is a substitute for the other thing. A metaphor asserts a correlation or resemblance between two things that are otherwise unrelated. Extended metaphor refers to a metaphor developed over a series of examples.

Difference between Simile and Metaphor

While simile compares two things with the connecting words “like” or “as,” metaphor simply states that one thing is the other. For example, a simile would be, “He was as aggressive as a tiger in that argument,” whereas a metaphor would be, “He was a tiger in that argument.” Metaphors are thus subtler and can be stronger in a rhetorical sense, because they equate the two things in comparison rather than just present them as similar. Similes, however, allow for truly bizarre comparisons that make the reader stretch to understand the connection between them.

Examples:

“But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.”

-*Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare)

As one of the most famous romances of all time, Shakespeare’s “Romeo and Juliet” has many often-quoted lines about love. In this line, Romeo uses the metaphor of Juliet being the rising sun to demonstrate his devotion. Sunrise can signify new hope, which is how Romeo views his relationship with Juliet. Furthermore, the planet revolves around the sun and Romeo feels that his world now revolves around Juliet.

Extended Metaphor Example:

As You Like It, Act II, Scene VII William Shakespeare

Jaques: All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first, the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse’s arms.
Then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress’ eyebrow. Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation

Even in the cannon’s mouth. And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lined,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slippered pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side;
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

Metonymy - is a figure of speech in which a thing or concept is called not by its own name but rather by the name of something associated in meaning with that thing or concept.

Examples: “the crown” meaning the Queen or “the White House is making a decision” meaning the President. “The pen is mightier than the sword” meaning writing is more powerful than physical aggression/war. “Marv has a good head on his shoulders” actually is referring to Marv’s brain.

How Synecdoche and Metonymy Differ

The definition of synecdoche requires **the substituted term to be either a part of the whole or a whole standing in for a part** (so you can think “Synecdoche has to be part of the SAME”). Metonymy, on the

other hand, can refer to the substitution of a term that is connected in any way to the original concept. For example, using “the crown” to refer to a member of royalty is metonymy because the concept of the crown is related to royalty. However, a crown is neither part of the royal person, nor is the royal person part of the crown.

Motif/Controlling Image - a narrative element with symbolic meaning that repeats throughout a work of literature. Motifs may come in the form of reoccurring imagery, language, structure, or contrasts. In drama, motifs may also take the form of repeated music, visual components, or physical movements. The development of motifs in a work of literature often contributes to mood and/or theme.

The word “motif” comes from the French for “a dominant idea” or “theme.”

The concepts of motif and theme are similar as literary devices; the key difference, however, is that a theme is abstract while a motif is concrete. The theme of a work is an idea or central statement, and can often be summed up in a short phrase, such as “love conquers all.” The theme is also generally not explicitly stated in the text. The definition of motif, however, is such that it is more obvious to the reader, such as the repetition of certain words or images.

To see the difference, consider William Shakespeare’s tragedy *Macbeth*. One of the themes of the play is ambition, and its power to corrupt. We see Macbeth strive for power and kill people in his quest. One of the motifs, on the other hand, is water and the washing of hands. Lady Macbeth famously tries to wash the blood from her hands, crying, “Out, damned spot! Out, I say!” The inability of water to cleanse the sins of Macbeth and his wife show how irredeemable they are and to what extent they have lost their morals in pursuit of their ambitions.

Examples:

ABIGAIL: I want to open myself! . . . I want the light of God, I want the sweet love of Jesus! I danced for the Devil; I saw him, I wrote in his book; I go back to Jesus; I kiss His hand. I saw Sarah Good with the Devil! I saw Goody Osburn with the Devil! I saw Bridget Bishop with the Devil!

-*The Crucible* by Arthur Miller

One key motif in Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible* is that of accusations and confessions. In this excerpt, Abigail has just realized that her confession will protect her and so she both makes her own confession and accuses more women in the town of Salem. The increasing power of the confessions crescendos in the play until the character of John Proctor refuses to make the confession that he is being forced to make.

“Who controls the past,” ran the Party slogan, “controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.” And yet the past, though of its nature alterable, never had been altered. Whatever was true now was true from everlasting to everlasting. It was quite simple. All that was needed was an unending series of victories over your own memory. “Reality control,” they called it: in Newspeak, “doublethink.”

-*1984* by George Orwell

George Orwell coined the term “doublethink” in his novel *1984* and it resonated deeply with his reading audience. It is one of the most important examples of motif in the novel, and represents the necessity of the ruling party to believe completely in opposite ideas at the same time.

Personification - attribution of characteristics that normally belong only to humans to inanimate objects, animals, deities, or forces of nature. These characteristics can include verbs of actions that only humans do or adjectives that describe a human condition. The characteristics can also be emotions, feelings, or motives given to objects incapable of thought. For example, if someone said, “the trees whispered their discontent,” this would personify the trees both as able to whisper and of feeling unhappy. Personification is also sometimes referred to as anthropomorphism when it is used to give human feelings and actions to animals.

Personification can also mean the embodiment of an abstract idea or quality. This definition of personification can extend even to humans. For example, a person can be said to personify the patriotism of his country or the ambition of her company. We could say, “She is the personification of the grit and determination needed to make this start-up work.” Personification can also be seen in allegorical instances, such as when Fate or Death enter a room.

Examples:

- Justice is blind
- Her heart skipped a beat
- The sun smiled down on them
- The stars winked
- The party died down
- The city never sleeps
- The wind howled
- The iron gates looked down at them cruelly
- The house sighed

“Her heart was divided between concern for her sister, and resentment against all the others.”

-Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

In this excerpt from Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen writes about a heart that feels concern and resentment. The heart in question is of the character Elizabeth. It’s clear that Elizabeth is the one divided between concern for her sister Jane and resentment for the others, yet Austen personifies Elizabeth’s heart to have these feelings to add some poetic sensibility to the sentence.

“When death comes
like the hungry bear in autumn;
when death comes and takes all the bright coins from his purse
to buy me, and snaps the purse shut...

I want to step through the door full of curiosity, wondering:
what is it going to be like, that cottage of darkness?”

-“When Death Comes” by Mary Oliver

Mary Oliver’s poem “When Death Comes” uses several different ways to describe death. She begins here with the image of death as a hungry bear. Then Oliver gives death the human characteristics of having money and wanting to make a purchase, thereby personifying it. Thus death is full of desire in this poem. Oliver uses this concept to contrast her own desire to live her life as fully as possible before death comes for her.

Simile - Simile is an explicit comparison between two unlike things through the use of connecting words, usually “like” or “as.” The technique of simile is known as a rhetorical analogy, as it is a device used for comparison (so simile falls under the umbrella of analogy because it is one of the ways to make an analogy).

Difference between Simile and Metaphor

While simile compares two things with the connecting words “like” or “as,” metaphor simply states that one thing is the other. For example, a simile would be, “He was as aggressive as a tiger in that argument,” whereas a metaphor would be, “He was a tiger in that argument.” Metaphors are thus subtler and can be stronger in a rhetorical sense, because they equate the two things in comparison rather than just present them as similar. Similes, however, allow for truly bizarre comparisons that make the reader stretch to understand the connection between them.

Examples:

“My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun;

Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.”

-“Sonnet 130” by William Shakespeare

This excerpt from Shakespeare’s “Sonnet 130” is an example of a negative simile. Shakespeare goes against the expectation praising his mistress’s beauty and instead says what she is not like. Her lips are not as red as coral, her skin is not pure as snow, and so on. This striking simile example plays with both the tradition of sonnets as well as the usual function of similes.

“What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over—
like a syrupy sweet?
Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?”

-“Harlem” by Langston Hughes

Langston Hughes uses five examples of simile in this short poem, “Harlem.” Each simile is one possibility that Hughes imagines for “a dream deferred.”

Epic Simile - also called **Homeric simile**, an extended simile often running to several lines, used typically in epic poetry to intensify the heroic stature of the subject and to serve as decoration. An example from the Iliad follows:

As when the shudder of the west wind suddenly rising scatters across the water,
And the water darkens beneath it, so darkening were settled the ranks of Achaians and Trojans in the plain.
And but swift Aias the son of Oileus would not at all now take his stand apart from Telamonian Aias,
Not even a little; but as two wine-coloured oxen straining
With even force drag the compacted plough through the fallow land,
And for both of them at the base of the horns the dense sweat gushes;
Only the width of the polished yoke keeps a space between them
As they toil down the furrow till the share cuts the edge of the ploughland;
So these took their stand in battle, close to each other.

Symbolism - to imbue objects with a certain meaning that is different from their original meaning or function. Something (could be a character, setting, things, etc.) that is used to represent something larger than itself, often leading to a larger theme or idea.

Examples:

“Thus the young and pure would be taught to look at her, with the scarlet letter flaming on her breast,—at her, the child of honorable parents,—at her, the mother of a babe, that would hereafter be a woman, —at her, who had once been innocent, —as the figure, the body, the reality of sin.”

-The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Nathaniel Hawthorne named his novel The Scarlet Letter after the central symbol of the book. The scarlet letter is a very real thing—a red letter “A” that stands for adulteress, which main character Hester Prynne is forced to wear around her small town. In this excerpt, the meaning of the symbol is explicitly stated. The

scarlet letter is a symbol of sin. But, in fact, Hester Prynne's entire body becomes a symbol for sin by wearing the letter, as her body represents the destruction of innocence.

“One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,
One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them.”

-The Lord of the Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien

J.R.R. Tolkien's famous fantasy series, *The Lord of the Rings*, is a hero's quest in which the hobbit Frodo Baggins must destroy an all-powerful ring. This object is imbued with magic through its creation, and is a symbol for ultimate power. The ultimate power also becomes equated with evil. The ring simply being in Frodo's presence begins to turn Frodo toward desire of power, and thus evil. However, Frodo's ability to combat the power of the ring shows that he possesses a great inner source of goodness.

Synecdoche - a word or phrase that refers to a part of something is substituted to stand in for the whole, or vice versa. Falls under the umbrella of metaphors (so synecdoche is a special type of metaphor). This often appears in the Multiple Choice section of the AP Lit. exam as an answer choice.

How Synecdoche and Metonymy Differ

The definition of synecdoche requires **the substituted term to be either a part of the whole or a whole standing in for a part** (so you can think “Synecdoche has to be part of the **S**AME”). Metonymy, on the other hand, can refer to the substitution of a term that is connected in any way to the original concept. For example, using “the crown” to refer to a member of royalty is metonymy because the concept of the crown is related to royalty. However, a crown is neither part of the royal person, nor is the royal person part of the crown.

Examples:

The phrase “all hands on deck” is a demand for all of the crew to help, yet the word “hands”—just a part of the crew—stands in for the whole crew.

“One does not live by bread alone.” The statement assumes that bread is representative of all categories of food.

New wheels= new car

Going to steeple= going to church

From “Ozymandias” by Percy Shelley

“Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them.”

“The hand” in the above lines refers to the sculptor who carved the “lifeless things” into a grand statue.

Synesthesia - a technique adopted by writers to present ideas, characters or places in such a manner that they appeal to more than one senses like hearing, seeing, smell etc. at a given time.

Examples:

Dante's *The Divine Comedy* contains one of the good synesthesia examples in literature. In the first canto, the poet tells us about a place called “Inferno”. He says, “Back to the region where the sun is silent.” Here, Dante binds the sense of sight (sun) with the sense of hearing (silent).

Emily Dickinson's poem “Dying”

“With blue, uncertain, stumbling buzz,
Between the light and me;
And then the windows failed, and then
could not see to see.”

Here, the poetess added a visual element of the sound “buzz” by describing it as having blue color.

STYLE and Terms Related to Style

Diction

- **Connotation** - The suggestive meaning of a word – the **associations** it brings up. A “connection” to the word. Connotations depend a lot on the culture and experience of the person reading the word. For some people, the word “liberal” has a positive connotation. For others, it’s negative. Think of connotation as the murky haze hanging around the literal meaning of a word. For example, “cool” has become associated as a word that now means “part of the in crowd” rather than just cold.
- **Denotation** - The literal, straightforward meaning of a word. It’s “dictionary definition.” The word “cool” denotes a slightly cold feeling.

Mood/Atmosphere - As a literary device, mood is the emotional feeling or atmosphere that a work of literature produces in a reader. All works of literature produce some sort of emotional and psychological effect in the audience; though every reader may respond differently to the same work of literature there is often a similar type of mood produced. For example, in a thriller most readers will feel some sort of suspense, while dramatic novels may produce a sense of sentimentality. Authors use many different factors to create mood, including setting, theme, voice, and tone.

Difference Between Mood and Tone

Though mood and tone are related and often confused, they are very different literary devices. Tone refers to the author’s attitude toward the work or speaker’s attitude towards something within the work, while the definition of mood is that it is the emotions provoked in the reader.

*****Thus, the difference can be understood in this way: tone is how the author feels, while mood is how the reader feels.**

Example:

“They’re trying to kill me,” Yossarian told him calmly.

“No one’s trying to kill you,” Clevinger cried.

“Then why are they shooting at me?” Yossarian asked.

“They’re shooting at *everyone*,” Clevinger answered. “They’re trying to kill everyone.”

“And what difference does that make?”

- *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller

Tone of each character: Yossarian is paranoid, Clevinger is exasperated.

Mood: despair, confusion, desperation, amusement

Satire - A literary technique in which ideas, customs, behaviors, or institutions are ridiculed to point out flaws in society.

A genre of literature that uses wit for the purpose of social criticism. Satire ridicules problems in society, government, businesses, and individuals in order to bring attention to certain follies, vices, and abuses, as well as to lead to improvements. Irony and sarcasm are often an important aspect of satire. Satirists also often use juxtaposition, analogy, parody, and double entendre to highlight their points.

- **Horatian**: Horace playfully mocked the societal norms of his day, and the satire named after him is clever, yet gentle. Rather than attacking evils, Horatian satire ridicules universal human folly so that the reader might identify with what is being critiqued and laugh at him/herself as well as at society.
- **Juvenalian**: Unlike Horace, Juvenal attacked public officials and governmental organizations through his satires. He regarded their opinions not just as wrong, but instead as evil. Juvenalian satire thus is

more contemptuous and abrasive, and uses strong irony and sarcasm. Polarized political satire is often of this nature, and aims to provoke change. Juvenalian satire is not often as humorous.

- Menippean: Menippean satire criticizes mental attitudes rather than societal norms or specific individuals. This type of satire often ridicules single-minded people, such as bigots, misers, braggarts, and so on.

Satire examples:

Gulliver's Travels, Canterbury Tales, "A Modest Proposal," Animal Farm, The Onion, Steven Colbert

Tone - the attitude or approach that the author takes toward the work's central theme or subject. All works of literature have a tone. Authors use elements such as syntax, diction, imagery, details, and figurative language to create tone. Authors must use words to convey emotions and feelings, and the choice of these words constitutes the tone the author has toward the work's main subject. Characters can have tones as well (an attitude towards the circumstances, those around him/her, etc.)

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Examples:

- "I'm so glad that jerk was fired; now I won't have to deal with him anymore." Vs. "It's terrible that Tony was let go; he was such a great colleague!"
- "The movie was amazing! I was laughing so hard I cried!" Vs. "You can only watch infantile humor for so long before you want to punch yourself in the face."
- "The principal just called to say that our son was in a fight. I can't believe he would do that." Vs. "I'm proud of Billy for sticking up for himself. That bully had it coming."
- "I'm so excited that he called! I've been hoping to hear from him." Vs. "Why is that weirdo calling me again after all this time?"

"I couldn't forgive [Tom] or like him, but I saw that what he had done was, to him, entirely justified. It was all very careless and confused. They were careless people, Tom and Daisy – they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made."

-The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald: Disillusioned

The narrator of The Great Gatsby, Nick Carraway, changes tone throughout the novel. At times he is in great admiration of Jay Gatsby, while at others times he scorns the wastefulness and foolishness of the upper class. Here he calls Tom and Daisy "careless people" and clearly feels no love lost for either of them. After he passes the summer in their company his tone has changed so that he is not in admiration of their lifestyle at all anymore.

SOUND DEVICES

Alliteration - a sound device in which the beginning sounds of words are repeated, in close proximity. For example, "the silly snake silently slinked by" is a form of alliteration.

Assonance - repetition of the same vowel sounds in nearby lines of poetry

Cacophony - (kacoffin-y) having a harsh, unpleasant, discordant sound. “Cacophonous” is the adjective form. Cacophony points to a situation where there is a mixture of harsh and inharmonious sounds. In literature, however, the term refers to the use of words with sharp, harsh, hissing and unmelodious sounds primarily those of consonants to achieve desired results. Similarly, a discordant sound of a musical band, tuning up their musical instruments, is also an example of cacophony.

Cacophony versus Euphony

Cacophony is opposite to euphony which is the use of words having pleasant and harmonious effects. Generally, the vowels, semi-vowels and the nasal consonants e.g. l, m, n, r, y are considered to be euphony. Cacophony, on the other hand, uses consonants in combinations which requires explosive delivery e.g., p, b, d, g, k, ch-, sh- etc.

Examples:

Look at the following excerpt from Jonathan Swift’s “Gulliver’s Travel”:

“And being no stranger to the art of war, I have him a description of cannons, culverins, muskets, carabines, pistols, bullets, powder, swords, bayonets, battles, sieges, retreats, attacks, undermines, countermines, bombardments, sea-fights...”

In order to describe the destructive consequences of war, the writer chooses words and arranges them in an order that they produce an effect that is unmelodious, harsh and jarring that corresponds with the subject matter.

Read the following lines from Coleridge’s “Rime to the Ancient Mariner”:

“With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call.”

These lines illustrate cacophony by using words *black, baked and agape* which corresponds with the severity of situation faced by the Mariner and other people on board.

Consonance - repetition of the same consonant sounds in nearby lines of poetry

Euphony - having a pleasing sound; agreeable to the ear. “Euphonious” is the adjective form. Defined as the use of words and phrases that are distinguished as having a wide range of noteworthy melody or loveliness in the sounds they create. It gives pleasing and soothing effects to the ears due to repeated vowels and smooth consonants. It can be used with other literary devices like alliteration, assonance and rhyme to create more melodic effects. Examples of euphony are commonly found in poetry and literary prose.

Example:

Season of **mists** and **mellow** fruitfulness,
Close bosom-**friend** of the **maturing** sun;
Conspiring with him how to **load** and bless
With **fruit** the **vines** that round the **thatch** -eves run;
To bend with apples the **moss’d** cottage-trees,
And **fill** all **fruit** with **ripeness** to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,

And still more, later flowers for the bees,

-*Ode to Autumn* by John Keats

There are many different words and phrases that can create euphony. However, in the given poem, Keats has used euphony in the whole poem which gives soothing and pleasing effects. Long vowel sounds like mellow, maturing, load, ripeness and semi-vowels like “s” and “w” sounds are exquisitely used.

Onomatopoeia - A word, which imitates the natural sounds of a thing. It creates a sound effect that mimics the thing described, making the description more expressive and interesting. For example “Hiss” “Bam! Pow! Splash!”

Repetition - a literary device that repeats the same words or phrases a few times intentionally to make an idea clearer. There are several types of repetitions commonly used in both prose and poetry. As a rhetorical device, it could be a word, a phrase or a full sentence or a poetical line repeated to emphasize its significance in the entire text. Repetition is not distinguished solely as a figure of speech but more as a rhetorical device.

- **Anaphora**- Anaphora involves the repetition of the same word or group of words at the beginning of successive clauses or sections. Think of an annoying kid on a road trip: “Are we there yet? / Are we going to stop soon? / Are we having lunch soon?”

Rhyme - literary device in which the repetition of the same or similar sounds occurs in two or more words, usually at the end of lines in poems or songs. In a rhyme in English, the vowel sounds in the stressed syllables are matching, while the preceding consonant sound does not match. The consonants after the stressed syllables must match as well. For example, the words “gaining” and “straining” are rhyming words in English because they start with different consonant sounds, but the first stressed vowel is identical, as is the rest of the word.

For example, “mind” and “kind” are perfect rhymes, whereas “mind” and “line” are an imperfect match in sounds.

- **Eye Rhyme** – This is common in English because so many of our words are spelled in the same way, yet have different pronunciations. For example, “good” and “food” look like they should rhyme, but their vowel sounds are different.
- **Imperfect or Near Rhyme:** In this type of rhyme, the same sounds occur in two words but in unstressed syllables (“thing” and “missing”).

Rhythm - the pattern of stressed and unstressed beats. Rhythm is most commonly found in poetry, though it is also present in some works of drama and prose. The rhythm of a poem can be analyzed through the number of lines in a verse, the number of syllables in the line, and the arrangement of syllables based on whether they are long or short, accented or unaccented.

Rhythm is also closely associated with meter, which identifies units of stressed and unstressed syllables. When an author combines metrical units into a pattern, he or she creates rhythm.

STRUCTURE and Terms Related to Structure

Antithesis- Antithesis is the use of contrasting concepts, words, or sentences within parallel grammatical structures. This combination of a balanced structure with opposite ideas serves to highlight the contrast between them. For example, the following famous Muhammad Ali quote is an example of antithesis: “Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee.” This is an antithesis example because there is the contrast between the animals and their actions (the peaceful floating butterfly versus the aggressive stinging bee) combined with the parallel grammatical structure of similes indicated by “like a.” Ali is indicating the contrasting skills necessary to be a good boxer.

Difference Between Antithesis and Juxtaposition

Antithesis is very similar to juxtaposition, as juxtaposition also sets two different things close to each other to emphasize the difference between them. However, juxtaposition does not necessarily deal with completely opposite ideas—sometimes the juxtaposition may be between two similar things so that the reader will notice the subtle differences. Juxtaposition also does not necessitate a parallel grammatical structure. The definition of antithesis requires this balanced grammatical structure.

Common Examples of Antithesis

- “We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.” – Martin Luther King, Jr.
- “And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.” –John F. Kennedy Jr.
- “We will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist.” –Barack Obama
- “Decided only to be undecided, resolved to be irresolute, adamant for drift, solid for fluidity, all-powerful to be impotent.” –Winston Churchill
- “The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.” –Abraham Lincoln
- “To be, or not to be...” Hamlet
- “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.” A Tale of Two Cities
- “Fair is foul, foul is fair” Macbeth

Chiasmus - Chiasmus is a rhetorical device in which two or more clauses are balanced against each other by the reversal of their structures in order to produce an artistic effect.

Let us try to understand chiasmus with the help of an example:

“Never let a Fool Kiss You or a Kiss Fool You.”

Notice that the second half of the above mentioned sentence is an inverted form of the first half both grammatically and logically. In the simplest sense, the term chiasmus applies to almost all “criss-cross” structures and this is the concept that is common these days.

Example: “The purpose of literature is to comfort the disturbed and disturb the conformable.”

Drama- a mode of fictional representation through dialogue and performance. It is one of the literary genres, which is an imitation of some action. Drama is also a type of a play written for theaters, televisions, radios and films. In simple words, a drama is a composition in verse or prose presenting a story in pantomime or dialogue, containing conflict of characters, particularly the ones who perform in front of audience on the stage. The person who writes drama for stage directions is known as a dramatist or playwright.

Epigraph - a short quotation or saying at the beginning of a book or chapter, intended to suggest its theme

Plot Structure -

- **Prologue/Epilogue -**
- **Exposition -**
- **Crisis -**
- **Inciting Moment -**
- **Rising Action -**
- **Climax/ Anti-Climax -**
- **Falling Action -**
- **Resolution -**

- **Denouement** - wrapping up of loose ends at the very end of a story (oftentimes after the resolution of the main plot)

Poetry - a collection of spoken or written words that expresses ideas or emotions in a powerfully vivid and imaginative style, comprising of a particular rhythmic and metrical pattern. In fact, it is a literary technique, which is different from prose or ordinary speech, as it is either in metrical pattern or in free verse.

Point of view -

- **First** - First person singular point of view uses the “I” pronoun to refer to the narrator. This narrator is usually the protagonist of the story, and this point of view allows the reader access to the character’s inner thoughts and reactions to the events occurring. All of the action is processed through the narrator’s perspective, and therefore this type of narrator may be unreliable.
- **Second** - employs the pronoun “you”. using the “you” pronoun to narrate the story. This point of view either implies that the narrator is actually an “I” trying to separate himself or herself from the events that he or she is narrating, or allows the reader to identify with the central character. This was popularized in the 1980s series Choose Your Own Adventure.
Example from *Pretty Little Mistakes* by Heather McElhatton:
“While standing in his parents kitchen, you tell your boyfriend you’re leaving. You’re not going to college. You’re not buying into the schedules, the credits, or the points. No standardized success for you.”
- **Third-person Omniscient Limited** - This point of view definition uses “he” and “she” as the pronouns to refer to different characters, and provides the greatest amount of flexibility for the author. In a third person limited point of view, the reader is privy only to one main character’s thoughts. In this way, it is similar to the first person singular point of view, since the focus stays tightly on one character.
- **Third-person Omniscient** - This point of view definition uses “he” and “she” as the pronouns to refer to different characters, and provides the greatest amount of flexibility for the author. Third person omniscient point of view allows the author to delve into the thoughts of any character, making the narrator seem godlike. This was a popular point of view in 19th century novels. For example, the opening of Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* presents an all-knowing narrator:
“It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.”
It is important to note that even in a narrative of this kind, the events can be focalized by a single character at any give moment. For example, the narrator could say, “To him, it seemed as if she has been lying.” The omniscient narrator is not saying that she had lied, but that it **seemed to him** as if she had lied.
- **Alternating Perspective**- Some novels combine two or more of the above types of point of view. For example, some novels alternate between a first person singular point of view in some chapters and the third person point of view in other chapters. Some alternate between various 3rd person narrators by chapters.

Prose- A communicative style that sounds natural and uses grammatical structure- the opposite of verse, or poetry, which employs a rhythmic structure that does not mimic ordinary speech.

A form of language that has no formal metrical structure. It applies a natural flow of speech, and ordinary grammatical structure rather than rhythmic structure, such as in the case of traditional poetry. Normal every day speech is spoken in prose and most people think and write in prose form. Prose comprises of full grammatical sentences which consist of paragraphs and forgoes aesthetic appeal in favor of clear, straightforward language. It can be said to be the most reflective of conversational speech. Some works of prose do have versification and a blend of the two formats that is called prose poetry.

Unlike poetry, prose focuses on characters and plot than focusing on sounds. It includes short stories and novels, while fiction and non-fiction are its sub genres. Prose is further categorized into essays, speeches, sermons and interpretations.

Rhetorical Questions - a question that is asked not to get an answer, but instead to emphasize a point. The word “rhetorical” signifies that the question is meant as a figure of speech. Though no answer is necessary for rhetorical questions, they are often used to elicit thought and understanding on the part of the listener or reader.

‘Take some more tea,’ the March Hare said to Alice, very earnestly.

‘I’ve had nothing yet,’ Alice replied in an offended tone, ‘so I can’t take more.’

‘You mean you can’t take *less*,’ said the Hatter: ‘it’s very easy to take *more* than nothing.’

‘Nobody asked your opinion,’ said Alice.

‘Who’s making personal remarks now?’ the Hatter asked triumphantly.

-Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll

Lewis Carroll used many rhetorical devices in Alice in Wonderland, especially when Alice encounters the Mad Hatter. In this rhetorical question example, the Mad Hatter says “Who’s making personal remarks now?” to insinuate that Alice is being the rude one of the group.

Syntax -

- **Anastrophe** - the inversion of the usual order of words or clauses (an irregular form of syntax). Yoda speak is an example (“Go there you will...”)
- **Anaphora** - Anaphora involves the repetition of the same word or group of words at the beginning of successive clauses or sections. Think of an annoying kid on a road trip: “Are we there yet? / Are we going to stop soon? / Are we having lunch soon?” The Prose Essay 2011 Form B *Kiss of the Fur Queen* by Tomson Highway uses anaphora.

NOVEL Exclusive Devices

Frame stories - a literary technique that sometimes serves as a companion piece to a story within a story, whereby an introductory or main narrative is presented, at least in part, for the purpose of setting the stage either for a more emphasized second narrative or for a set of shorter stories. The frame story leads readers from a first story into another, smaller one (or several ones) within it.

Examples: Titanic, Frankenstein, 1001 Arabian Nights, Princess Bride

Foreshadowing - a literary device in which a writer gives an advance hint of what is to come later in the story.

Flashback - an interruption of the chronological sequence of a narrative to show an event of earlier occurrence.

Genre - the type of art, literature or music characterized by a specific form, content and style. For example, literature has four main genres; poetry, drama, fiction and non-fiction. All of these genres have particular features and functions that distinguish them from one another.

- **Hero's journey** - a pattern of narrative identified by the American scholar Joseph Campbell that appears in drama, storytelling, myth, religious ritual, and psychological development. It describes the typical adventure of the archetype known as The Hero, the person who goes out and achieves great deeds on behalf of the group, tribe, or civilization.

Its stages are:

1. **THE ORDINARY WORLD.** The hero, uneasy, uncomfortable or unaware, is introduced sympathetically so the audience can identify with the situation or dilemma. The hero is shown against a background of environment, heredity, and personal history. Some kind of polarity in the hero's life is pulling in different directions and causing stress.
2. **THE CALL TO ADVENTURE.** Something shakes up the situation, either from external pressures or from something rising up from deep within, so the hero must face the beginnings of change.
3. **REFUSAL OF THE CALL.** The hero feels the fear of the unknown and tries to turn away from the adventure, however briefly. Alternately, another character may express the uncertainty and danger ahead.
4. **MEETING WITH THE MENTOR.** The hero comes across a seasoned traveler of the worlds who gives him or her training, equipment, or advice that will help on the journey. Or the hero reaches within to a source of courage and wisdom.
5. **CROSSING THE THRESHOLD.** At the end of Act One, the hero commits to leaving the Ordinary World and entering a new region or condition with unfamiliar rules and values.
6. **TESTS, ALLIES AND ENEMIES.** The hero is tested and sorts out allegiances in the Special World.
7. **APPROACH.** The hero and newfound allies prepare for the major challenge in the Special world.
8. **THE ORDEAL.** Near the middle of the story, the hero enters a central space in the Special World and confronts death or faces his or her greatest fear. Out of the moment of death comes a new life.
9. **THE REWARD.** The hero takes possession of the treasure won by facing death. There may be celebration, but there is also danger of losing the treasure again.
10. **THE ROAD BACK.** About three-fourths of the way through the story, the hero is driven to complete the adventure, leaving the Special World to be sure the treasure is brought home. Often a chase scene signals the urgency and danger of the mission.
11. **THE RESURRECTION.** At the climax, the hero is severely tested once more on the threshold of home. He or she is purified by a last sacrifice, another moment of death and rebirth, but on a higher and more complete level. By the hero's action, the polarities that were in conflict at the beginning are finally resolved.
12. **RETURN WITH THE ELIXIR.** The hero returns home or continues the journey, bearing some element of the treasure that has the power to transform the world as the hero has been transformed.

- **Bildungsroman** - a special kind of novel that focuses on the psychological and moral growth of its main character from his or her youth to adulthood.
- **Novella** - fictional, prose narrative normally longer than a short story but shorter than a novel. A novella generally features fewer conflicts than a novel, yet more complicated ones than a short story. The conflicts also have more time to develop than in short stories. Unlike novels, they are usually not divided into chapters, and are often intended to be read at a single sitting, as the short story, although white space is often used to divide the sections. They maintain, therefore, a single effect
- **Dystopian** - explore social and political structures. Utopian fiction is the creation of an ideal society, or utopia, as the setting for a novel. Dystopian fiction (sometimes referred to as apocalyptic literature) is the opposite: creation of an utterly horrible or degraded society that is generally headed to an irreversible oblivion, or dystopia.[1] Many novels combine both, often as a metaphor for the different directions humanity can take in its choices, ending up with one of two possible futures.

POETRY Exclusive Devices

Blank verse - un-rhyming verse written in iambic pentameter. In poetry and prose, it has a consistent meter with 10 syllables in each line (pentameter); where, unstressed syllables are followed by stressed ones and five of which are stressed but do not rhyme. It is also known as un-rhymed iambic pentameter. Most natural to the English language. Poets write in verse paragraphs.

“But, **woe** is **me**, you **are** so **sick** of **late**,
 So **far** from **cheer** and **from** your **former state**,
 That **I** distrust you. **Yet**, though **I** distrust,
 Discomfort **you**, my **lord**, it **nothing must**.....”

-*Hamlet* by William Shakespeare

Hamlet is a perfect example of a typical blank verse. It is written in iambic pentameter. Shakespeare employed the deliberate effort to use the syllables in a particular way. Shakespeare brought variation by using caesuras (pause) in the middle of the line, as in the third line.

Cadence - the rhythm of a poem (fast or slow). Cadence refers to the rhythmic or musical elements of a poem. You can think of it as the thing that makes poetry sound like poetry. Whereas “meter” refers to the regular elements of rhythm – the beats or accents – “cadence” refers to the momentary variations in rhythm, like when a line speeds up or slows down. Poets often repeat or contrast certain cadences to create a more interesting sound than normal prose.

It is the term used to signal the rising and falling of the voice when reading a literary piece. In poetry, it is the momentary changes in rhythm and pitch. Cadences help set the rhythmic paces of a literary piece and can be discussed in terms of the punctuation of a piece as well as other rhythmic and pitch changes.

Example:

“Dulce Decorm Est” by Wilfred Owen

...Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,
 But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
 Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots

Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time...

The cadence changes when the gas is dropped, with the short, clipped exclamations.

Conceit - an extended metaphor with a complex logic that governs a poetic passage or entire poem. By juxtaposing, usurping and manipulating images and ideas in surprising ways, a conceit invites the reader into a more sophisticated understanding of an object of comparison.

A figure of speech in which two vastly different objects are likened together with the help of similes or metaphors.

Conceit develops a comparison which is exceedingly unlikely but is, nonetheless, intellectually imaginative. A comparison turns into a conceit when the writer tries to make us admit a similarity between two things of whose unlikeness we are strongly conscious and for this reason, conceits are often surprising.

For example, it will not surprise us to hear someone saying, “You are a snail” or “You are slow as a snail,” as we understand that the similarity is drawn on a common quality “slowness”. We, however, will definitely be surprised to hear someone comparing “two lovers with the two legs of a draftsman’s compass.” Thus, conceit examples have a surprising or shocking effect on the readers because they are novel comparisons unlike the conventional comparisons made in similes and metaphors. The term is generally associated with the 17th century metaphysical poets

Enjambment - a “sentence” of poetry that continues from one line to the next without punctuation. Where lines of poetry are broken and finished on the next lines. These are intentional choices by the poet to emphasize ideas, words, shape, etc. Example from a poem by Joyce Kilmer: 'I think that I shall never see / A poem as lovely as a tree.' The sentence continues right over the break with only a slight pause. Continuation of a syntactic unit from one line or couplet of a poem to the next with no pause.

Free verse - unrhymed poetry

Metric foot- Makes up the rhythm, which is the pattern of stressed and unstressed beats. The most basic unit of a poem’s meter, a foot is a combination of long and short syllables. The foot is the basic rhythmic unit of poetry, usually two or three syllables. There are all kinds of different feet, such as “LONG-short” and “short-short-LONG.”

- **Iamb** - An “iamb” is an unaccented syllable followed by an accented one. “Penta” means “five,” and “meter” refers to a regular rhythmic pattern. So “iambic pentameter” is a kind of *rhythmic pattern* that consist of *five iambs* per line. Iambic pentameter is meter of poetry in which one line contains 5 stressed syllables, each preceded by an unstressed syllable (ba-DUM, ba-DUM). It’s the most common rhythm in English poetry and sounds like five heartbeats: ba-DUM, ba-DUM, ba-DUM, ba-DUM, ba-DUM. Let’s try it out on the first line of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*: “In fair Verona, where we lay our scene.” Every second syllable is accented, so this is classic iambic pentameter.
- **Trochee** - The opposite of an iamb, a trochee is one stressed syllable followed by one unstressed syllable. Examples of trochees: ALtar, BRIDESmaid, MARRiage
- **Anapest** - An anapest is the opposite of a dactyl in that it has two unstressed syllables followed by one stressed syllable. Examples of anapests: souvenIR, a la CARTE, debonAIR. (Note that all of

these examples have a clear French influence, in which anapests are much more common than in Germanic languages).

- **Dactyl** - A dactyl is comprised of one stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables. A poem written with many dactyls has a very musical quality to it, such as in a limerick (There ONCE was a MAN from NanTUCKet). Examples of dactyls: ANimal, TERRible, DIFFerent
- **Spondee** - A spondee is a pattern of two subsequent stressed syllables. Examples of spondees in English are usually compound words or two one-syllables words: HOW NOW, RAINSTORM, SUNSHINE

Meter/Scansion -

- **Monometer** - a rare form of verse in which each line consists of a single metrical unit (a foot). The best-known example of an entire poem in monometer is Robert Herrick's "Upon His Departure Hence":

Thus I	And laid
Passe by,	I'th grave,
And die:	There have
As One,	My Cave.
Unknown,	Where tell
And gon:	I dwell,
I'm made	Farewell.
A shade,	

- **Dimeter** - a line of poetry consisting of 2 feet
- **Trimeter** - a line of poetry consisting of 3 feet
- **Tetrameter** - a line of poetry consisting of 4 feet
- **Pentameter** - a line of poetry consisting of 5 feet
- **Hexameter** - a line of poetry consisting of 6 feet

Punctuation

- **Caesura**- || marks a major pause in a line. Can come in the middle of a foot, between feet, anywhere... Oftentimes a component of Old English poetry such as *Beowulf*, where it occurs in the middle of the line.
Example: A poem is a composition || written for performance by the human voice
- **Ellipsis** - is a series of dots (...) that usually indicates an intentional omission of a word, sentence, or whole section from a text without altering its original meaning.

- **Dash-** like commas, semicolons, colons, ellipses, and parentheses, indicate added emphasis, an interruption, or an abrupt change of thought. Experienced writers know that these marks are not interchangeable. Emily Dickinson is famous for using dashes in her poetry.

Note how dashes subtly change the tone of the following sentences:

You are the friend, the only friend, who offered to help me.

You are the friend—the only friend—who offered to help me.

I pay the bills; she has all the fun.

I pay the bills—she has all the fun.

I wish you would...oh, never mind.

I wish you would—oh, never mind.

- **Accent-** Noun used to describe the stress put on a certain syllable while speaking a word.
- **Stressed-** STRESSED syllables are pronounced slightly louder, for a slightly longer duration, and at a slightly higher pitch than UNstressed syllables.

To indicate the changes in meter, scholars put a diagonal line (´) or a macron (¯) over stressed syllables. A small curving loop (˘) or a small x (x) goes over the unstressed syllables.

➤ / / U U /UU / U / U / U
Darth Vader decided to crush the rebel soldier.

➤ / / / U / U / U / U / U / U
Luke Skywalker will rebel against his father's wishes.

- **Unstressed**

Repetition- a literary device that repeats the same words or phrases a few times intentionally to make an idea clearer. There are several types of repetitions commonly used in both prose and poetry. As a rhetorical device, it could be a word, a phrase or a full sentence or a poetical line repeated to emphasize its significance in the entire text. Repetition is not distinguished solely as a figure of speech but more as a rhetorical device.

- **Refrain-** is the line or lines that are repeated in music or in verse; the "chorus" of a song. Poetic fixed forms that feature refrains include the villanelle, the virelay, and the sestina.
- **Anaphora-** Anaphora involves the repetition of the same word or group of words at the beginning of successive clauses or sections. Think of an annoying kid on a road trip: "Are we there yet? / Are we going to stop soon? / Are we having lunch soon?"
 "A Tale of Two Cities" by Charles Dickens starts with following lines:
 "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair."
- **Epiphora-** also known as epistrophe, is a stylistic device in which a word or a phrase is repeated at the end of successive clauses. Examples of epiphora are not only found in literary pieces. Debates and persuasive writings are also rich with epiphora examples. Despite being different in their structures, both anaphora and epiphora have the same function of laying emphasis on a particular point.

“Hourly joys be still upon you! Juno sings her blessings on you. . . . Scarcity and want shall shun you, Ceres’ blessing so is on you.”

-The Tempest by William Shakespeare)

Mark the emphasis on “you”; Shakespeare wants to convey the importance of “you” through the use of epiphora.

Rhyme

- **Slant-** A rhyme that isn’t quite a rhyme. The words “dear” and “door” form a slant rhyme. The words sound similar, but they aren’t close enough to make a full rhyme.
- **Internal-** rhyming words are found **within** lines
- **End-** endings of lines rhyme exactly (vowel sounds are the same, consonants vary)
- **Rhyming Couplet-** every two lines rhyme with each other. Some sonnets end with a rhyming couplet (such as Shakespearean sonnets).
- **Capping Couplet-** a rhyming couplet at the end of a poem, section, or act. Frequently found in Shakespearean works.
- **Rhyme Royal-** a rhyming stanza form that was introduced into English poetry by Geoffrey Chaucer. The rhyme royal stanza consists of seven lines, usually in iambic pentameter. The rhyme scheme is a-b-a-b-b-c-c. In practice, the stanza can be constructed either as a tercet and two couplets (a-b-a, b-b, c-c) or a quatrain and a tercet (a-b-a-b, b-c-c). This allows for variety, especially when the form is used for longer narrative poems. Along with the couplet, it was the standard narrative metre in the late Middle Ages.

Rhyme Scheme- The rhyme scheme is the practice of rhyming words placed at the end of the lines in poetry. Rhyme scheme refers to the order in which particular words rhyme. If the alternate words rhyme, it is an “a-b-a-b” rhyme scheme, which means “a” is the rhyme for the lines 1 and 3 and “b” is the rhyme affected in the lines 2 and 4. This is particularly useful when commenting on irregularities in poems, such as a line ending in a rhyme that doesn’t fit. Poets often do this to add emphasis to that line.

Stanza- a grouped set of lines within a poem, usually set off from other stanzas by a blank line or indentation.[1] Stanzas can have regular rhyme and metrical schemes, though stanzas are not strictly required to have either. There are many unique forms of stanzas. Some stanzaic forms are simple, such as four-line quatrains. Stanzas in poetry are similar to paragraphs in prose. Both stanzas and paragraphs include connected thoughts and are set off by a space.

- **Quatrain-** Stanza of four lines, rhymed or not. Example: “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (ballad stanza)
- **Tercet-** Stanza of three lines, usually with one single rhyme, or a three line section of a larger poem. Terza rima – linked tercet; the 2nd line of each stanza rhymes with the 1st and 3rd lines of the next stanza.
- **Couplet-** having two successive rhyming lines in a verse and has the same meter to form a complete thought. It could an independent poem, and could be a part of other poems such as sonnets in Shakespearean poetry. If a couplet has the ability to stand apart from the rest of the poem, it is independent and hence it is called a closed couplet. A couplet which cannot render a proper meaning alone is called an open couplet.

One of the commonly used couplet examples are these two lines from William Shakespeare’s Hamlet.

“The time is out of joint, O cursed spite
That ever I was born to set it right!”

Shift- (poetic, tonal): a change in direction in a work (especially in poetry- sonnets), either in meaning, mood, style, or attitude (tone) and sometimes signified by words, such as *yet, but, or*.

Types:

- **Sonnet** - Fourteen line poem in iambic pentameter with a rhyme scheme.

One of the oldest verse forms in English (used a lot, but widely= variety).
Originated in Italy (Petrarch).

Italian sonnet

- made of an octave (8 lines) + a sestet (6). There is a turn after the octave.
 - has a statement and counterstatement
 - rhyme scheme is abba|abba|cde|cde
 - conventional subject matter (mostly love and longing)
- Example: "Ozymandius" by Percy Bysshe Shelley

English/Shakespearean sonnet

- three quatrains + a couplet. There is oftentimes a turn at either the end of line 8 or 12.
- structure is question and response or problem and resolution
- rhyme scheme is abab|cdcd|efef|gg

- **Ballad** - a form of verse, often a narrative, set to a music-like rhythm (a sing-song feel). Many are written in quatrains and rhyme on the 2nd and 4th lines. Other conspicuous elements of any ballad is the recurrence of certain lines at regular intervals (repetition of a certain phrase), simple plots, and dialogue in dialect (more common language). Examples: "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," "Barbara Allan," "Robin Hood and the Three Squires."
- **Elegy/Dirge/Requiem** - Formal lament for a dead person, remembering influential figures.
Example: "Daddy" by Sylvia Plath, "Out, Out" by Robert Frost, or "On My First Son" by Ben Jonson.
"Dirge" is oftentimes referred to as a "funeral dirge"- an elegy recited at a funeral.
- **Sestina** - Sestina is a type of a poem that contains six stanzas, each stanza having six lines, while concluding seventh stanza having three lines called as envoi, that is also known as tornada. As sestina derives its name from fixed structure and characteristics, therefore it is as popular as sextain. Unlike other poetic forms, sestina does not rhyme, however, has rhythmic quality on account of the repetition of six end words of the first stanza that recur in the remaining poem. Hence, a sestina follows the rule of an **end word pattern**.

"Sestina" by Elizabeth Bishop

September rain falls on the house.
In the failing light, the old grandmother
sits in the kitchen with the child
beside the Little Marvel Stove,
reading the jokes from the almanac,
laughing and talking to hide her tears.

She thinks that her equinoctial tears
and the rain that beats on the roof of the house
were both foretold by the almanac,

but only known to a grandmother.
The iron kettle sings on the stove.
She cuts some bread and says to the child,

It's time for tea now; but the child
is watching the teakettle's small hard tears
dance like mad on the hot black stove,
the way the rain must dance on the house.
Tidying up, the old grandmother
hangs up the clever almanac

on its string. Birdlike, the almanac

hovers half open above the child,
hovers above the old grandmother
and her teacup full of dark brown tears.
She shivers and says she thinks the house
feels chilly, and puts more wood in the stove.

It was to be, says the Marvel Stove.
I know what I know, says the almanac.
With crayons the child draws a rigid house
and a winding pathway. Then the child
puts in a man with buttons like tears
and shows it proudly to the grandmother.

But secretly, while the grandmother
busies herself about the stove,
the little moons fall down like tears
from between the pages of the almanac
into the flower bed the child
has carefully placed in the front of the house.

Time to plant tears, says the almanac.
The grandmother sings to the marvelous stove
and the child draws another inscrutable house.

- **Villanelle** - Villanelle is derived from an Italian word “villano” that means a peasant. In fact, it is a dance song coupled with pastoral themes. In literature, it is defined as a poetic device which requires a poem to have 19 lines and a fixed form. It has five tercets (first 15 lines), a quatrain (last four lines), and a couplet at the end of the quatrain.

“Mad Girl’s Love Song” by Sylvia Plath

“I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead; (A1)

I lift my lids and all is born again. (a)

(I think I made you up inside my head.) (A2)

The stars go waltzing out in blue and red, (a)

And arbitrary blackness gallops in: (b)

I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead. (A1)

I dreamed that you bewitched me into bed (a)

And sung me moon-struck, kissed me quite insane. (b)

(I think I made you up inside my head.) (A2)

God topples from the sky, hell’s fires fade: (a)

Exit seraphim and Satan’s men: (b)

I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead. (A1)

I fancied you’d return the way you said, (a)

But I grow old and I forget your name. (b)

(I think I made you up inside my head.) (A2)

I should have loved a thunderbird instead; (a)

At least when spring comes they roar back again. (b)

I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead. (A1)

(I think I made you up inside my head.)” (A2)

- **Pastoral** - A poem about nature or simple, country life. If the poem you’re reading features babbling brooks, gently swaying trees, hidden valleys, rustic haystacks, and sweetly singing maidens, you’re probably dealing with a pastoral.

- **Epithalamion** - a poem written specifically for the bride on the way to her marital chamber. This form continued in popularity through the history of the classical world.
- **Epic** - It is a form of poem, often written in blank verse, lengthy in size in which poet shows protagonist in action of historical significance or great mythic.
- **Lytic** - Poetry that explore the poet's personal interpretation of and feelings about the world. Expresses personal emotions or feelings, typically spoken in the first person. The term owes its importance in literary theory to the division developed by Aristotle between three broad categories of poetry: lyrical, dramatic and epic.
- **Ode** - A poem written in praise or celebration of a person, thing, or event. Odes have been written about everything from famous battles and lofty emotions to family pets and household appliances. Elevated style and elaborate stanzas.
- **Prose** - is poetry written in prose instead of using verse but preserving poetic qualities such as heightened imagery and emotional effects.
- **Narrative** - a form of poetry that tells a story, often making use of the voices of a narrator and characters as well; the entire story is usually written in metred verse. Narrative poems do not have to follow rhythmic patterns. The poems that make up this genre may be short or long, and the story it relates to may be complex. It is usually dramatic, with objectives, diverse characters, and meter. Narrative poems include epics, ballads, idylls, and lays.
- **Dramatic Monologue** - also known as a persona poem, is a type of poetry written in the form of a speech of an individual character that reveals a concentrated narrative in a specific moment, usually in reaction to a critical moment. Popular in Victorian period.
 1. A single person, who is patently not the poet, utters the speech that makes up the whole of the poem, in a specific situation at a critical moment [...].
 2. This person addresses and interacts with one or more other people; but we know of the auditors' presence, and what they say and do, only from clues in the discourse of the single speaker.
 3. The main principle controlling the poet's choice and formulation of what the lyric speaker says is to reveal to the reader, in a way that enhances its interest, the speaker's temperament and character
- **Haiku** - a type of Japanese poem, consisting of three unrhymed lines with mostly five, seven and five syllables in each line.
- **Carpe Diem** - Latin for “seize the day.” “To His Coy Mistress” by Andrew Marvell is one of the most famous. The poems invoke ideas of passing time, youth, living in the moment, etc.
- **Lament** - a nonnarrative poem expressing deep grief or sorrow over a personal loss. The form developed as part of the oral tradition along with heroic poetry and exists in most languages. Popular during Anglo-Saxon times, such as *ubi-sunts* and “The Wanderer.”
- **Metaphysical Poets/Poems**- a term coined by the poet and critic Samuel Johnson to describe a loose group of English lyric poets of the 17th century, whose work was characterized by the inventive

use of conceits, and by speculation about topics such as love or religion. These poets were not formally affiliated; most of them did not even know one another or read one another's work.

DRAMA Exclusive Devices

Act - a division or unit of a drama. The number of acts in a production can range from one to five or more, depending on how a writer structures the outline of the story.

A scene is a part of an act defined with the changing of characters.

To be more specific, the elements that create the plot of a play or any story, and divide a play into acts include the exposition, which give information, setting up the rest of the story. Another is the inciting incident, which starts all of the action that will follow. Going along with the inciting incident, the major dramatic question is formed; this holds the rest of the play. The majority of the play is made up of complications. These are the things that change the action. These complications lead up to the crisis, this is the turning point. Most of the time, at this point, the major dramatic question has been answered. Finally, there is the resolution. This is the end of the play where everything comes together and the situation has been resolved. This leaves the audience satisfied with the play as a whole. These more specific elements of plot in a play are the main things used to divide a play up into acts and sometimes scenes.

The Roman theatre was the first to divide plays into a number of acts separated by intervals. Acts may be further divided into scenes; in classical theater each regrouping between entrances and exits of actors is a scene, while later use describes a change of setting.

Modern plays often have only one level of structure, which can be referred to as either scenes or acts at the whim of the writer; and some writers dispense with firm divisions entirely. Successive scenes are normally separated from each other in either time or place; but the division between acts is more to do with the overall dramatic structure of the piece. The end of an act often coincides with one or more characters making an important decision, else having an important decision to make. A decision which has a profound impact on the story being told.

Aside - playwrights use dialogues to express their characters, but often it becomes difficult for them to express the thinking of their characters. Hence, they use a typical dramatic device, aside, that solves this problem. It is a short comment or speech that a character delivers directly to the audience or to himself, while other actors on the stage cannot listen. Only the audience can realize that an actor has expressed speech for them. In essence, through aside, a character comments on what happens in the play. Simply, we can define aside as a short commentary that reveals private opinions and reactions of the character.

Catharsis - an emotional discharge through which one can achieve a state of moral or spiritual renewal or achieve a state of liberation from anxiety and stress. Catharsis is a Greek word and it means cleansing. In literature it is used for the cleansing of emotions of the characters. It can also be any other radical change that leads to emotional rejuvenation of a person.

the purification and purgation of emotions—especially pity and fear—through art or any extreme change in emotion that results in renewal and restoration.

Examples:

Macbeth by William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare wrote two of the famous examples of catharsis. One of these catharsis examples is his tragic drama “Macbeth”. This play presents a great example of catharsis. The audience and readers of Macbeth usually pity the tragic central figure of the play because he was blinded by his destructive preoccupation with ambition.

In Act 1 he is made the thane of Cawdor by King Duncan, which makes him a prodigy, well-regarded for his valor and talent. However, the era of his doom starts when he, like most people, gets carried away by ambition and the supernatural world as well. Subsequently, he loses his wife, his veracity and eventually his

life. The temptation of ambition robs him of the essence of his existence as a human being and leaves behind nothing but discontent and a worthless life. In Act V, Macbeth (5.5.24-28) gathers this idea in his soliloquy. He says while speaking of his life:

“...a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing”

Chorus - in drama and music, those who perform vocally in a group as opposed to those who perform singularly. The chorus in Classical Greek drama was a group of actors who described and commented upon the main action of a play with song, dance, and recitation.

A homogeneous, non-individualised group of performers in the plays of classical Greece, who comment with a collective voice on the dramatic action. The chorus consisted of between 12 and 50 players, who variously danced, sang or spoke their lines in unison and sometimes wore masks.

Plays of the ancient Greek theatre always included a chorus that offered a variety of background and summary information to help the audience follow the performance. They commented on themes, and, as August Wilhelm Schlegel proposed in the early 19th century to subsequent controversy, demonstrated how the audience might react to the drama. In many of these plays, the chorus expressed to the audience what the main characters could not say, such as their hidden fears or secrets. The chorus often provided other characters with the insight they needed. The chorus represents, on stage, the general population of the particular story, in sharp contrast with many of the themes of the ancient Greek plays which tended to be about individual heroes, gods, and goddesses.

Comedic Relief - the inclusion of a humorous character, scene, or witty dialogue in an otherwise serious work, often to relieve tension.

Comic relief often takes the form of a bumbling, wisecracking sidekick of the hero or villain in a work of fiction. A sidekick used for comic relief will usually comment on the absurdity of the hero's situation and make comments that would be inappropriate for a character who is to be taken seriously. Other characters may use comic relief as a means to irritate others or keep themselves confident.

Examples:

William Shakespeare deviated from the classical tradition and used comic relief in Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, The Merchant of Venice and Romeo and Juliet. The Porter scene in Macbeth, the grave-digger scene in Hamlet and the gulling of Roderigo provide immense comic relief. The mockery of the fool in King Lear may also be regarded as a comic relief.

In popular culture, the character of C-3PO, featured in all six Star Wars films, is also considered to be used as comic relief. He is often found criticizing the desperate situation the other characters find themselves in, or being rescued from predicaments by his counterpart R2-D2.

Drama- a mode of fictional representation through dialogue and performance. It is one of the literary genres, which is an imitation of some action. Drama is also a type of a play written for theaters, televisions, radios and films. In simple words, a drama is a composition in verse or prose presenting a story in pantomime or dialogue, containing conflict of characters, particularly the ones who perform in front of audience on the stage. The person who writes drama for stage directions is known as a dramatist or playwright.

Dramatis Personae - "People of Drama" in Latin; a list of the characters in a play, usually found on the first page of the script; often includes important information about the character

“The Fourth Wall” – A stage set only has three walls, but actors usually pretend there is an invisible fourth wall between themselves and the audience. When a character directly addresses the audience, recognizing that they are being watched, he or she is “breaking the fourth wall.” Exposition and monologues sometimes break the fourth wall.

Hamartia (or Tragic Flaw)- Tragic flaw is a literary device that can be defined as a trait in a character leading to his downfall and the character is often the hero of the literary piece. This trait could be the lack of self-knowledge, lack of judgment and often it is hubris (pride). The Greek word for Tragic flaw is *hamaratia* or *hamartanein* that means “to err”. It was Aristotle who introduced this term first in his book the *Poetics* and his idea was that it is an “error of judgment” on the part of a hero that brings his downfall.

Lines - dialogue spoken by the actors; in the script, preceded by the name of the character that is to speak the words

Monologue - the speech or verbal presentation that a single character presents in order to express his/her collection of thoughts and ideas aloud. Often this character addresses another character or is stating his/her internal thoughts in front of other characters (“talking to himself”). See discussion of Monologue vs. Soliloquy vs. Aside under “Soliloquy” entry below)

Playwright - The person who writes drama for stage directions is known as a dramatist or playwright.

Peripeteia - is a reversal of circumstances, or turning point. Aristotle defines it as "a change by which the action veers round to its opposite, subject always to our rule of probability or necessity." According to Aristotle, peripeteia, along with discovery, is the most effective when it comes to drama, particularly in a tragedy.

Occurs when a situation seems to be developing in one direction, then suddenly "reverses" to another.

Peripeteia includes changes of character, but also more external changes. A character who becomes rich and famous from poverty and obscurity has undergone peripeteia, even if his character remains the same.

When a character learns something he had been previously ignorant of, this is normally distinguished from peripeteia as anagnorisis or discovery, a distinction derived from Aristotle's work.

Aristotle considered anagnorisis, leading to peripeteia, the mark of a superior tragedy. Two such plays are Oedipus the King, where the oracle's information that Oedipus had killed his father and married his mother brought about his mother's death and his own blindness and exile, and Iphigenia in Tauris, where Iphigenia realizes that the strangers she is to sacrifice are her brother and his friend, resulting in all three of them escaping Tauris. These plots he considered complex and superior to simple plots without anagnorisis or peripeteia, such as when Medea resolves to kill her children, knowing they are her children, and does so. Aristotle identified Oedipus the King, as the principal work demonstrating peripety.

Prologue - The prologue, Greek *prologos* (meaning: before word), is an opening of a story that establishes the setting and gives background details.

Generally speaking, the main function of a prologue tells some earlier story and connects it to the main story. Similarly, it serves as a means to introduce characters of a story and throws light on their roles. In its modern sense, a prologue acts as a separate entity and is not considered part of the current story that a writer ventures to tell.

A speech or discussion presented oftentimes by a narrator (not a character) in a very straight-forward manner that is designed to convey information or explain what is difficult to understand in the play to come. A famous example is the Prologue in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet:

“Two households, both alike in dignity

(In fair Verona, where we lay our scene),
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life,
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows
Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.
The fearful passage of their death-marked love
And the continuance of their parents' rage,
Which, but their children's end, naught could remove,
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage—
The which, if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.”

Scene - a scene is a unit of action, often a subdivision of an act. (For more, see “Act” definition above.)

Script – the written text of a play. Usually includes a list of characters that appear in the play with a brief description of what the character is like (**Dramatis Personae**), brief descriptions of the sets or setting, and the lines the characters will speak.

Setting - Theatrical scenery is that which is used as a setting for a theatrical production. Scenery may be just about anything, from a single chair to an elaborately re-created street, no matter how large or how small, whether or not the item was custom-made or is the genuine item, appropriated for theatrical use.

The history of theatrical scenery is as old as the theatre itself, and just as obtuse and tradition bound. What we tend to think of as 'traditional scenery', i.e. two-dimensional canvas-covered 'flats' painted to resemble a three-dimensional surface or vista, is a relatively recent innovation and a significant departure from the more ancient forms of theatrical expression, which tended to rely less on the actual representation of space and more on the conveyance of action and mood. By the Shakespearean era, the occasional painted backdrop or theatrical prop was in evidence, but the show itself was written so as not to rely on such items to convey itself to the audience. However, this means that today's set designers must be that much more careful, so as to convey the setting without taking away from the actors.

As time progressed, stage settings grew more realistic, reaching their peak in the Belasco realism of the 1910-'20s, in which complete diners, with working soda fountains and freshly made food, were recreated onstage. Perhaps as a reaction to such excess and in parallel with trends in the arts and architecture, scenery began a trend towards abstraction, although realistic settings remained in evidence, and are still used today. At the same time, the musical theatre was evolving its own set of scenic traditions, borrowing heavily from the burlesque and vaudeville style, with occasional nods to the trends of the 'straight' theatre. Everything came together in the 1980s and 1990s and, continuing to today, until there is no established style of scenic production and pretty much anything goes. Modern stagecraft has grown so complex as to require the highly specialized skills of hundreds of artists and craftspeople to mount a single production.

Soliloquy - used in drama to reveal the innermost thoughts of a character. It is a great technique used to convey the progress of action of the play by means of expressing a character's thoughts about a certain character or past, present or upcoming event while talking to himself without acknowledging the presence of any other person.

The word soliloquy is derived from Latin word “solo” which means “to himself” and “loquor” means “I speak” respectively. A soliloquy is often used as a means of character revelation or character manifestation to the reader or the audience of the play. Due to a lack of time and space, it was sometimes considered

essential to present information about the plot and to expose the feelings and intentions of the characters. Dramatists made extensive use of soliloquies in their plays but it has become outdated, though some playwrights still use it in their plays. Soliloquy examples abound during the Elizabethan era.

What Separates a Soliloquy from a Monologue or an Aside?

Although, like soliloquy, a monologue is a speech, the purpose and presentation of both is different. In a monologue, a character usually makes a speech in the presence of other characters, while in a soliloquy, the character or speaker speaks to himself. By doing so, the character keeps these thoughts secret from the other characters of the play. An aside on the other hand, is a short comment by a character towards the audience for another character usually without his knowing about it.

Stage Directions - a description (as of a character or setting) or direction (as to indicate stage business) provided in the text of a play, usually indicated with italics and/or parentheses. May indicate where the scene takes place, what a character is supposed to do, or how a character should deliver certain lines.

Stichomythia - a technique, especially used in drama, in which sequences of single alternating lines, or half-lines or two-line speeches are given to alternating characters. It typically features repetition and antithesis. Stichomythia is particularly well suited to sections of dramatic dialogue where two characters are in violent dispute. The rhythmic intensity of the alternating lines combined with quick, biting ripostes in the dialogue can create a powerful effect.

Examples:

In Shakespeare's Hamlet, Act III, Scene iv (the Closet scene), Hamlet is confronted by his mother, the queen, about the play (III, ii) which Hamlet rigged to expose his murderous step-uncle.

QUEEN: Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

HAMLET: Mother, you have my father much offended.

QUEEN: Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

HAMLET: Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

Shakespeare's Richard III, Act I, scene ii. Richard Plantagenet, Earl of Gloucester (later Richard III of England) threatens to kill himself unless Lady Anne, widow of Prince Edward (of Lancaster), agrees to marry him.

LADY ANNE: I would I knew thy heart.

GLOUCESTER: 'Tis figured in my tongue.

LADY ANNE: I fear me both are false.

GLOUCESTER: Then never man was true.

LADY ANNE: Well, well, put up your sword.

GLOUCESTER: Say, then, my peace is made.

LADY ANNE: That shall you know hereafter.

GLOUCESTER: But shall I live in hope?

LADY ANNE: All men, I hope, live so.

GLOUCESTER: Vouchsafe to wear this ring.

LADY ANNE: To take is not to give.

GLOUCESTER: Sweet saint, for charity, be not so curst.

LADY ANNE: Foul devil, for God's sake, hence, and trouble us not,

Discussion Words (to use for any work)

Aesthetics - a set of principles concerned with the nature and appreciation of beauty, especially in art. A branch of philosophy dealing with the nature of art, beauty, and taste, with the creation and appreciation of beauty.

Ambiguity - a word, phrase, or statement which contains more than one meaning.

Ambiguous words or statements lead to vagueness and confusion, and shape the basis for instances of unintentional humor. For instance, it is ambiguous to say "I rode a black horse in red pajamas," because it may lead us to think the horse was wearing red pajamas. The sentence becomes clear when it is restructured "Wearing red pajamas, I rode a black horse." Although ambiguity is considered a flaw in writing, many writers use this technique to allow readers to understand their works in a variety of ways, giving them depth and complexity, especially when used in larger plot schemes (especially endings) or character development rather than just at the sentence-level.

Canon - A group of literary works that are generally accepted as representing a field. The term "Western canon" denotes a body of books and, more broadly, music and art that have been traditionally accepted by Western scholars as the most important and influential in shaping Western culture. As such, it includes the "greatest works of artistic merit".

Complexity - can be used to discuss language or structure

Contrast -

Didactic -

Digression/Tangent-

Dissonance- A disruption of harmonic sounds or rhythms. Like cacophony, it refers to a harsh collection of sounds; dissonance is usually intentional, however, and depends more on the organization of sound for a jarring effect, rather than on the unpleasantness of individual words.

Epiphany - a moment of stark realization in which something is seen in a new light

Juxtaposition -

Kinetic -

Literary Merit -

Shift -

Tension -

Unity -

A Strong Discussion of Stylistic Differences:

Examples of Prose in Literature

Example #1

I shall never be fool enough to turn knight-errant. For I see quite well that it's not the fashion now to do as they did in the olden days when they say those famous knights roamed the world.

(*Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes)

Don Quixote is often considered the forerunner of the modern novel, and here we can see Cervantes's prose style as being very direct with some sarcasm.

Example #2

The ledge, where I placed my candle, had a few mildewed books piled up in one corner; and it was covered with writing scratched on the paint. This writing, however, was nothing but a name repeated in all kinds of characters, large and small—Catherine Earnshaw, here and there varied to Catherine Heathcliff, and then again to Catherine Linton. In vapid listlessness I leant my head against the window, and continued spelling over Catherine Earnshaw—Heathcliff—Linton, till my eyes closed; but they had not rested five minutes when a glare of white letters started from the dark, as vivid as spectres—the air swarmed with Catherines; and rousing myself to dispel the obtrusive name, I discovered my candle wick reclining on one of the antique volumes, and perfuming the place with an odour of roasted calf-skin.

(*Wuthering Heights* by Charlotte Brontë)

In this prose example from Charlotte Brontë we hear from the narrator, who is focused on the character of Catherine and her fate. The prose style mimics his obsession in its long, winding sentences.

Example #3

"I never know you was so brave, Jim," she went on comfortingly. "You is just like big mans; you wait for him lift his head and then you go for him. Ain't you feel scared a bit? Now we take that snake home and show everybody. Nobody ain't seen in this kawn-tree so big snake like you kill."

(*My Antonia* by Willa Cather)

In this excerpt from *My Antonia*, Willa Cather uses her prose to suggest the sound of Antonia's English. She is a recent immigrant and as the book progresses her English improves, yet never loses the flavor of being a non-native speaker.

Example #4

Robert Cohn was once middleweight boxing champion of Princeton. Do not think I am very much impressed by that as a boxing title, but it meant a lot to Cohn. He cared nothing for boxing, in fact he disliked it, but he learned it painfully and thoroughly to counteract the feeling of inferiority and shyness he had felt on being treated as a Jew at Princeton.

(*The Sun also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway)

Ernest Hemingway wrote his prose in a very direct and straightforward manner. This excerpt from *The Sun Also Rises* demonstrates the directness in which he wrote—there is no subtlety to the narrator's remark "Do not think I am very much impressed by that as a boxing title."

Example #5

The Lighthouse was then a silvery, misty-looking tower with a yellow eye, that opened suddenly, and softly in the evening. Now—

James looked at the Lighthouse. He could see the white-washed rocks; the tower, stark and straight; he could see that it was barred with black and white; he could see windows in it; he could even see washing spread on the rocks to dry. So that was the Lighthouse, was it?

No, the other was also the Lighthouse. For nothing was simply one thing. The other Lighthouse was true too. (*To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf)

Virginia Woolf was noted for her stream-of-consciousness prose style. This excerpt from *To the Lighthouse* demonstrates her style of writing in the same way that thoughts occur to a normal person.

Example #6

And if sometimes, on the steps of a palace or the green grass of a ditch, in the mournful solitude of your room, you wake again, drunkenness already diminishing or gone, ask the wind, the wave, the star, the bird, the clock, everything that is flying, everything that is groaning, everything that is rolling, everything that is singing, everything that is speaking. . . ask what time it is and wind, wave, star, bird, clock will answer you: “It is time to be drunk! So as not to be the martyred slaves of time, be drunk, be continually drunk! On wine, on poetry or on virtue as you wish.”

(“Be Drunk” by Charles Baudelaire)

Unlike the previous examples, this is an example of a prose poem. Note that it is written in a fluid way that uses regular grammar and rhythm, yet has an arguably poetic sense to it.

Examples of Imagery in Literature

Example #1: Taste

On rainy afternoons, embroidering with a group of friends on the begonia porch, she would lose the thread of the conversation and a tear of nostalgia would salt her palate when she saw the strips of damp earth and the piles of mud that the earthworms had pushed up in the garden. Those secret tastes, defeated in the past by oranges and rhubarb, broke out into an irrepressible urge when she began to weep. She went back to eating earth. The first time she did it almost out of curiosity, sure that the bad taste would be the best cure for the temptation. And, in fact, she could not bear the earth in her mouth. But she persevered, overcome by the growing anxiety, and little by little she was getting back her ancestral appetite, the taste of primary minerals, the unbridled satisfaction of what was the original food.

(*One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez)

This passage from Gabriel García Márquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude* discusses one of the character’s pica eating disorder. There are many examples of imagery using the sense of taste, including “a tear would salt her palate,” “oranges and rhubarb,” and “the taste of primary minerals.” The imagery in this excerpt makes the experience of an eating disorder much more vivid and imaginable to the reader.

Example #2: Sound

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.
He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound’s the sweep

Of easy wind and downy flake.

(“Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” by Robert Frost)

When most people think of Robert Frost’s famous poem “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,” the final refrain comes to mind: “And miles to go before I sleep.” Yet the short poem contains many imagery examples that are simple yet set the scene well. In this excerpt, there is a juxtaposition of two sounds: the bright noise of the horse’s harness bells and the nearly silent sound of wind and snowflake. While the reader knows that this is a dark night, the sense of sound makes the scene even more realistic.

Example #3: Sight

Outside, even through the shut window-pane, the world looked cold. Down in the street little eddies of wind were whirling dust and torn paper into spirals, and though the sun was shining and the sky a harsh blue, there seemed to be no colour in anything, except the posters that were plastered everywhere. The black mustachioed face gazed down from every commanding corner. There was one on the house-front immediately opposite. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption said, while the dark eyes looked deep into Winston’s own. Down at street level another poster, torn at one corner, flapped fitfully in the wind, alternately covering and uncovering the single word INGSOC. In the far distance a helicopter skimmed down between the roofs, hovered for an instant like a bluebottle, and darted away again with a curving flight. (1984 by George Orwell)

One of the central conceits of George Orwell’s classic dystopian novel *1984* is the all-pervasive surveillance of this society. This is a world that has its eyes constantly open—“Big Brother is watching you” is the motto of the society—yet the world itself is almost colorless. All that the main character, Winston, sees is “whirling dust,” “torn paper,” and posters of a “black mustachioed face” with “dark eyes.” These sensory details contribute to a general feeling of unease and foreshadow the way in which the world appears more chilling as the novel goes on.

Example #4: Smell

In the period of which we speak, there reigned in the cities a stench barely conceivable to us modern men and women. The streets stank of manure, the courtyards of urine, the stairwells stank of moldering wood and rat droppings, the kitchens of spoiled cabbage and mutton fat; the unaired parlors stank of stale dust, the bedrooms of greasy sheets, damp featherbeds, and the pungently sweet aroma of chamber pots. The stench of sulfur rose from the chimneys, the stench of caustic lyes from the tanneries, and from the slaughterhouses came the stench of congealed blood. People stank of sweat and unwashed clothes; from their mouths came the stench of rotting teeth, from their bellies that of onions, and from their bodies, if they were no longer very young, came the stench of rancid cheese and sour milk and tumorous disease.

(*Perfume: The Story of a Murderer* by Patrick Suskind)

Patrick Suskind’s novel *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer* focuses on a character who has a very acute sense of smell. The novel, therefore, has numerous examples of imagery using descriptions of smell. This excerpt comes from the beginning of the novel where Suskind sets up the general palate of smells in eighteenth-century Paris. Using these smells as a backdrop, the reader is better able to understand the importance of the main character’s skill as a perfumer. The reader is forced to imagine the range of smells in this novel’s era and setting that no longer assault us on a daily basis.