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|  **LITERARY DEVICES** **Definitions and Examples \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_****Figurative Language****1. imagery:** descriptive language that appeals to the senses and re-creates sensory experience. ***[Note that "imagery" is a collective noun, referring to a number of images. Do not use the word "imageries."]***a. **Visual:** *"Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves"*b. **Auditory/sound:** *"The deafening tic-tic-tic of the clock"*c. **Olfactory/smell:** *"Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach"*            d. **Gustatory/taste:** *"And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon"*e. **Tactile/touch:** *"Soft as a child's nose"* f. **Synesthetic (synesthesia—n.):** *"She stroked molten tones"***2. simile:** a figure of speech that makes a comparison between two **unlike** things, using an explicit word such as *like, as, resembles, or than*.* *"Worry is like interest paid in advance on a debt that never comes due."*
* *"Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,/Stains the white radiance of Eternity"*
* *"Oh, my love is like a red, red rose"*

**3. metaphor:** a figure of speech in which one thing is spoken of as though it were something else* *"My thoughts no longer hover. . . resting their wings"*
* *"Last night I plowed through a book"*

            a. **mixed metaphor:** the inconsistent mixture of two or more metaphors, *usually* considered evidence of bad writing·         *"Let's set sail and get this show on the road"*·         *"That's a very hard blow to swallow"*·         *"Take arms against a sea of troubles" (Hamlet)*            b. **dead metaphor:** a metaphor that is so overused that it has become trite or cliché ·         *"the eye of the storm"*·         *"the arm of the chair"*·         *"The fascist octopus has sung its swan song"*            c. **extended metaphor:** a metaphor that is extended, or developed, over several lines of writing or even throughout an entire poem.      ***Art****I would like to think**That someday I could open**The hermetic oyster**Where my soul sleeps.**Sprinkle on it the bitter juice of the afternoon.**Eat it**And find a pearl in my mouth.**—Hjalmar Flax***4. metonymy:** a figure of speech that substitutes something closely related for the thing actually meant* *Loyal citizens pay homage to the Crown.*
* *"Just for a handful of silver he left us"*
* *"The pen is mightier than the sword"*

**5. synecdoche:** a figure of speech in which a part of something is used to stand for the whole* *"And did those feet in ancient time/Walk upon England'*s *mountains green?"*
* In Night, Elie Wiesel speaks of himself as *"a body. Perhaps less than that even: a starved stomach."'*
* An old-fashioned suitor might ask for a young lady's *hand* in marriage.

**6. antithesis:** a figure of speech in which contrasting or opposite ideas are presented in parallel form.* *"Some praise at morning what they blame at night."*
* *"I long and dread to close."*
* *"To err is human, to forgive, divine."*
* *"It was the best of times, it was the worst of time, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity. . ."* (the beginning of Dickens's A Tale of Two Cities)

**7. hyperbole:** a deliberate exaggeration or overstatement* *"All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand."*
* "He had a zit the size of Texas!"

**8. personification:** a figure of speech in which a nonhuman subject is given human characteristics* *"a smiling moon"*
* *"a jovial sun"*
* *"Father Time"*

**9. apostrophe:** a figure of speech in which the speaker directly and often emotionally addresses a person who is dead or otherwise not physically present, an imaginary person or entity, something inhuman, or a place or concept (usually an abstract idea or ideal)* *"Death, be not proud!"* (Donne)
* *"Oh, grave, where is thy victory? Oh, death, where is thy sting?"*
* *"Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll!"*

**10. irony:** a contrast or discrepancy between expectation and reality—between what is said and what is really meant, between what is expected to happen and what really does happen, or between what appears to be true and what is really true            a. **verbal** irony—a writer or speaker says one thing but means another                        (often resembling *sarcasm*, which is NOT a literary device)·         *"You're a real Babe Ruth"* (said to a bad baseball player)            b. **situational** irony—a contrast between what would seem appropriate and what really happens. Alanis Morissette in "Ironic" (1995) gives these examples:·         Dying the day after you win the lottery·         Working up the courage to take your first airplane flight and then crashing·         Finding the man of your dreams only to discover that he has a beautiful wife            c. **dramatic** irony—a discrepancy between a character's perception and what the reader or audience knows to be true·         Romeo drinks poison because he thinks Juliet is dead, while the audience knows she is merely drugged and not dead at all. **12. rhetorical question:** any question asked for a purpose other than to obtain the information the question asks·         *Why are you so stupid?*·         *Why me, God?*·         *"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"***A Few Terms NOT on the Spanish List:** **oxymoron:** a figure of speech that fuses two contradictory or opposing ideas* *"freezing fire"*
* *"happy grief"*
* *"darkness visible"*

**allusion:** a reference to a statement, person, place, event, or thing that is known from literature, history, religion, myth, politics, sports, science, or pop culture* *I swear it "by Cupid's bow."*
* *Plan ahead. It was not raining when Noah built the Ark.*
* *The software included a Trojan horse.*
* *as old as Mathuselah*
* *"sons of Adam and daughters of Eve"*

**symbol:** anything that stands for or represents something larger and more complex**symbolism:** the serious and relatively sustained use of symbols to represent or suggest other things or ideas* *Joseph Conrad uses snake symbolism in Heart of Darkness.*

***Avoid the word "symbolisms," like the equally obnoxious "imageries." If tempted, consider "symbols" or "images" instead.*** **\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*****Sound Devices** *(or "****prosodic devices****" when analyzing poetry)***13.  alliteration:** the repetition of initial consonant sounds, or simply the repetition of sounds in words* *"The bird's fire-fangled feathers dangle down"*
* *"The voice of the sea is seductive; never ceasing, whispering, clamoring, murmuring, inviting the soul to wander for a spell in abysses of solitude."*

**a**. **assonance:** the repetition of identical or similar vowel sounds·         *"What large, dark hands are those at the window?"* (Lawrence)·         *"Thou foster child of silence and slow time"* (Keats)      **b. consonance:** the repetition of consonant sounds in stressed syllables ·         *"Let the boy try along this bayonet* ***blade**** *How cold steel is, and keen with hunger of* ***blood****"*

**[Assonance and consonance often produce effects known as half-rhyme, approximate rhyme or slant rhyme.]****14.  repetition:** the use, more than once, of any element of language—a sound, a word, a phrase, a clause, a sentence, a grammatical pattern, or a rhythmical pattern.* *"Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow/Creeps in this petty pace. . ."*

**15.  pun** : a play on words, either using a word or a phrase that has two different meanings or two different words or phrases with the same sound* *What has four wheels and flies? A garbage truck!*
* The dying Mercutio: *Ask for me tomorrow and you shall find me a grave man.*
* Lumberyard: "Come see, come saw."

**16. ellipsis:** three periods (or dot-dot-dot) used to show a pause in dialogue due to hesitancy, perhaps, or to show that words or sentences have been left out* *Why is it . . ., Ozu suddenly thought one day, that I'm always worrying about him? . . . I'm a student at P. University now, and I've got my own life to live. . . .*

**17. anaphora:** repetition of words or phrases at the beginning of successive lines or sentences. ***[Pedantic! Instead, use the simpler, more general terms "parallel structure" or "repetition."]**** *"To raise a happy, healthy, and hopeful child, it takes a family; it takes teachers; it takes clergy; it takes business people; it takes community leaders; it takes**those who protect our health and safety. It takes all of us."*

**18. parallelism:** the use of grammatically similar constructions, often repetition, to accentuate ideas or images.* *See the Dickens example in* ***antithesis.***
* *"Thomas Gradgrind, sir. A man of realities. A man of facts and calculations. A man who proceeds upon the principle that two and two are four, and nothing over, and who is not to be talked into allowing for anything over. Thomas Gradgrind, sir—peremptorily Thomas—Thomas Gradgrind."*

**19. onomatopoeia:** The use of words whose sounds imitate or suggest their meanings* *Crackle, pop, fizz, click, zoom, chirp*
* *Tic-tic-tic*
* *Thump-thump-thump*
* *"Suck was a queer word. The sound was ugly. Once he had washed his hands in the lavatory of the Wicklow Hotel and his father pulled the stopper up by the chain after and the dirty water went down through the hole in the basin. And when it had all gone down slowly the hole in the basin had made a sound like that: suck. Only louder"* (Joyce).

**RHETORICAL DEVICES****20. paradox:** a statement that seems to be contradictory but that actually presents a truth* ***"****Methinks I lied all winter, when I swore/My love was infinite, if spring make it more."* (Donne)
* *"What is the sound of one hand clapping?"*

**FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS OF THE ART OF THE NOVEL****21. plot:** the sequence of events in a literary work [Gustav Freytag, of Freytag's Pyramid fame, enumerated a typical sequence of plot events: introduction, rising action, climax, falling action and catastrophe (now often termed denouement). Some variations of plot include flashbacks and "flash forwards." Story is the raw material of which plot is constructed. According to E.M. Forster, "the king died and the queen died" is a story, whereas "the king died and then the queen died of grief" is a plot because it emphasizes causality. *Hmmmm?***22. theme:** not simply the subject of a literary work, but rather a statement that the text seems to be making about that subject. So the subject of a novel might be suffering; the theme, depending on the view of the individual author, might be that suffering is in God's plan and should therefore simply be accepted. English teachers make use of many synonyms for theme: main idea, gist, central concept, message, moral, lesson or perspective (to name few).**23. motif:** a unifying element in an artistic work, especially any recurrent image, symbol, theme, character type, subject or narrative detail. *(*Not to be confused with *motive.)** Specific colors such as green and white serve as motifs in Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby.

**24. setting:** that combination of place, historical time, and social milieu that provides the general background for the characters and plot of a literary work.**24. narrator:** a speaker through whom an author presents a narrative, often but not always a character in the work* **point of view/perspective:** the vantage point from which a narrative is told
* **first person ("I")**
* **third person (omniscient or limited)**
* **reliable**
* **unreliable**

**25. style:** the way in which a literary work is written, the devices the author uses to express his or her thoughts and convey the work's subject matter* **syntax**
* **structure**

**26. tone (voice):** the attitude of the author toward the reader or the subject matter **27. mood/atmosphere:** the general feeling created in the reader by a work at a given point***(Another List with Many of the Same Terms as the Above)* Glossary of Literary Terms**

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| ***Accent*** | In poetry, *accent* refers to the stressed portion of a word.  In "To be, or not to be," accent falls on the first "be" and "not."  It sounds silly any other way.  But accent in poetry is also often a matter of opinion.  Consider the rest of the first line of Hamlet's famous soliloquy, "That is the question."  The stresses in that portion of the line are open to a variety of interpretations. |
| ***Allegory*** | An *allegory* is a story in which each aspect of the story has a symbolic meaning outside the tale itself.  Many fables have an allegorical quality.  For example, Aesop's "Ant and Grasshopper" isn't merely the story of a hardworking ant and a carefree grasshopper, but is also a story about different approaches to living--the thrifty and the devil-may-care.  It can also be read as a story about the seasons of summer and winter, which represent a time of prosperity and a time of hardship, or even as representing youth and age.  True allegories are even more hard and fast.  Bunyan's epic poem, *Pilgrim's Progress*, is an allegory of the soul, in which each and every part of the tale represents some feature of the spiritual world and the struggles of an individual to lead a Christian life. |
| ***Alliteration*** | The repetition of initial consonant sounds is called *alliteration*.  In other words, consonant clusters coming closely cramped and compressed-- no coincidence.  |
| ***Allusion*** | A reference to another work of famous figure is an *allusion*.  A classical allusion is a reference to Greek and Roman mythology such as *The Iliad.*  A biblical allusion refers to the Bible. Allusions can be topical or popular as well.  A topical allusion refers to a current event.  A popular allusion refers to something from popular culture, such as a reference to a television show or a hit movie.  |
| ***Analogy*** | An *analogy* is a comparison.  Usually analogies involve two or more symbolic parts, and are employed to clarify an action or a relationship.  *Just as the mother eagle shelters her young from the storm by spreading her great wings above their heads, so does Acme Insurance of America spread an umbrella of coverage to protect its policy-holders from the storms of life.* |
| ***Anthropomorphism*** | In literature, when inanimate objects are given human characteristics, anthropomorphism is at work.  For example, *In the forest, the darkness waited for me, I could hear its patient breathing*. . .  Anthropomorphism is often confused with personification.  But personification requires that the non-human quality or thing take on human shape. |
| ***Apostrophe*** | A figure of speech wherein the speaker talks directly to something that is nonhuman. |
| ***Aside*** | A speech (usually just a short comment) made by an actor to the audience, as though momentarily stepping outside of the action on stage.  (See *soliloquy*.) |
| ***Atmosphere*** | The prevailing mood or feeling of a literary work.  Atmosphere is often developed, at least in part, through descriptions of setting.  Such descriptions help to create an emotional climate for the work that serves to establish the reader's expectations and attitudes.   |
| ***Ballad*** | A long, narrative poem, usually in very regular meter and rhyme. A ballad typically has a naive, folksy quality, a characteristic that distinguishes it from epic poetry. |
| ***Black humor*** | This is the use of disturbing themes in comedy.  In Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, the two tramps, Didi and Gogo, comically debate over which should commit suicide first, and whether the branches of the tree will support their weight.  This is black humor. |
| ***Cacophony*** | In poetry, cacophony is using deliberately harsh, awkward sounds. |
| ***Caricature*** | A portrait (verbal or otherwise) that exaggerates a facet of personality. |
| ***Catharsis*** | This is a term drawn from Aristotle's writings on tragedy.  *Catharsis* refers to the "cleansing" of emotion an audience member experiences, having lived (vicariously) through the experiences presented on stage. |
| ***Chorus*** | In Greek drama, this is the group of citizens who stand outside the main action on stage and comment on it. |
| ***Colloquialism*** | This is a word or phrase used in everyday conversational English that isn't a part of accepted "school-book" English.  For example, *I'm toasted.  I'm a crispy-critter man*, *and now I've got this wicked headache.* |
| ***Connotation, denotation*** | The *denotation* of a word is its literal meaning.  The *connotations* are everything else that the word suggests or implies.  For example, in the phrase t*he dark forest, dark* denotes a relative lack of light.  The connotation is of danger, or perhaps mystery or quiet; we'd need more information to know for sure, and if we did know with complete certainty that wouldn't be connotation, but denotation.  In many cases connotation eventually so overwhelms a word that it takes over the denotation. For example, *livid* is supposed to denote a dark purple-red color like that of a bruise, but it was been used so often in the context of extreme anger that many people have come to used *livid* as a synonym for rage, rather than a connotative description of it.  |
| ***Consonance*** | The repetition of consonant sounds within words (rather than at their beginnings, which is alliteration.)  A flo*ck* of si*ck*, bla*ck*-che*ck*ered, du*ck*s. |
| ***Couplet*** | A pair of lines that end in rhyme:  But at my back I always *hear,* Time's winged chariot hurrying *near*. --From "To His Coy Mistress" by Andrew Marvell |
| ***Diction, syntax*** | The author's choice of words.  Whether to use wept or cried is a question of diction.  Syntax refers to the ordering and structuring of the words.  Whether to say, *The pizza was smothered in cheese and pepperoni.  I devoured it greedily, or Greedily, I devoured the cheese and pepperoni smothered pizza*, is a question of syntax. |
| ***Dissonance*** | This refers to the grating of incompatible sounds. |
| ***Dramatic Irony*** | When the audience knows something that the characters in the drama do not. |
| ***Dramatic Monologue*** | When a single speaker in literature says something to a  silent audience. (See *soliloquy*.*)* |
| ***Enjambment*** | The continuation of a syntactic unit from one line or couplet of a poem to the next with no pause. |
| ***Epiphany*** | A movement of illumination, usually occurring at or near the end of a work.  In James Joyce's story "Araby," the epiphany occurs when the narrator realizes, with sudden clarity, that his dream of visiting the splendid bazaar has resulted only in frustration and disillusion. |
| ***Euphemism***  | A word or phrase that takes the place of a harsh, unpleasant, or impolite reality.  The use of *passed away* for died, and *let go* for fired are two examples of euphemisms. |
| ***Farce*** | Today we use this word to refer to extremely broad humor.  Writers of earlier times used *farce* as a more neutral term, meaning simply a funny play; a *comedy*.  (And you should know that for writers of centuries past, comedy was the generic term for any play; it did not imply humor.) |
| ***Feminine rhyme*** | Lines rhymed by their final two syllables.  A pair of lines ending with *running* and *gunning* would be an example of feminine rhyme.  Properly, in a feminine rhyme (and not simply a double rhyme) the penultimate syllables are stressed and the final syllables are unstressed. |
| ***Flashback*** | A scene in a short story, novel, play or narrative poem that interrupts the action to show an event that happened earlier.  Most narratives present events in chronological order--that is, as they occur in time.  Sometimes, however, a writer interrupts this natural sequence of events and "flashes back" to tell the reader what happened earlier in the story or in a charter's life.  Often a flashback takes the form of a character's recollection. |
| ***Foil*** | A secondary character whose purpose is to highlight the characteristics of a main character, usually by contrast.  For example, an author will often give a cynical, quick-witted character a docile, naive, sweet-tempered friend to serve as a foil.  |
| ***Foot*** | The basic rhythmic unit of a line of poetry.  A foot is formed by a combination of two or three syllables, either stressed or unstressed.   |
| ***Foreshadowing*** | An event or statement in a narrative that in miniature suggests a larger event that comes later. |
| ***Free verse*** | Verse that has either no metrical pattern or an irregular pattern.  Although most free verse belongs to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it can be found in earlier literature, particularly in the Psalms of the Bible.  Poetry written without a regular rhyme scheme or metrical pattern. |
| ***Genre*** | A sub-category of literature. Science-fiction and detective stories are *genres* of fiction. |
| ***Hubris*** | The excessive pride or ambition that leads to the main character's downfall (another term from Aristotle's discussion of tragedy). |
| ***Hyperbole*** | A figure of speech using exaggeration, or overstatement, for special effect.   |
| ***Iambic pentameter*** | A poetic line consisting of five verse feet (penta-- is from a Greek word meaning "five"), with each foot an iamb--that is, an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable.   Iambic pentameter is the most common verse line in English poetry.  The following lines from *Paradise Lost* are written in **blank verse**--unrhymed iambic pentameter:  "At once as far as angles ken he views/ The dismal situation waste and wild:/ A dungeon horrible on all sides round/ As one great furnace flamed, yet from those flames/ No light, but rather darkness visible. . . ." |
| ***Imagery*** | Words or phrases that create pictures, or images, in the reader's mind.  Images are primarily visual, as in these lines from William Wordsworth's "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey": Once again I see/ These hedgerows, hardly hedgerows, little lines/ Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms/ Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke/ Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!Images can appeal to other senses as well: touch, taste, smell and hearing.   |
| ***Implicit*** | To say or write something that suggests and implies but--gasp--never says it directly or clearly.  "Meaning" is definitely present, but it's in the imagery, or "between the lines." |
| ***Interior Monologue*** | This is a term for novels and poetry, not dramatic literature.  It refers to writing that records the mental talking that goes on inside a character's head.  It  is related, but not identical to stream of consciousness.  Interior monologue tends to be coherent, as though the characters were actually talking.  Stream of consciousness is looser and much more given to fleeting mental impressions. |
| ***Irony*** | One definition of irony is a statement that means the opposite of what it seems to mean, and while that isn't a bad definition, it doesn't get a t the delicacy with which the authors use irony.  Simply saying the opposite of what one means is sarcasm.  The hallmark of irony is an undertow of meaning, sliding against the literal meaning of words.  Jane Austen is famous for writing descriptions which seem perfectly pleasant, but to the sensitive reader have a deliciously mean snap to them.  Irony insinuates.  IT whispers underneath the explicit statement, Do you understand what I really mean?  Think of the way Mark Antony says again and again of Brutus, "But he is an honorable man."  At first it doesn't seem like much, but with each repetition the undertone of irony becomes ever more insistent.  |
| ***Masculine rhyme*** | A rhyme ending on the final stressed syllable (a.k.a., regular old rhyme).  |
| ***Metaphor and Simile*** | A metaphor is a comparison, or analogy that states one thing is another. *His eyes were burning coals*, or *In the morning, the lake is covered in liquid gold*.  It's a simple point, so keep it straight: a simile is just like a metaphor but softens the full-out equation of things, often, but not always by using like or as.  *His eyes were like burning coals*, or *In the morning the lake is covered in what seems to be liquid gold.* |
| ***Metonymy*** | A figure of speech in which something very closely associated with a thing is used to stand for or suggest the thing itself.  "Three sails came into the harbor" is an example of metonymy; the words *sails* stands for the ships themselves.  |
| ***Motif*** | A recurring feature (such as a name, an image, or a phrase) in a work of literature.  A motif generally contributes in some way to the theme of a short story, novel, poem, or play.   |
| ***Narrator*** | One who narrates, or tells, a story. A story may be told by a *first-person* narrator, someone who is either a major or minor character in the story.  Or a story many be told by a *third-person* narrator, someone who is not in the story at all.  The word narrator can also refer to a character in a drama who guides the audience through the play, often commenting on the action and sometimes participating in it.   |
| ***Onomatopoeia*** | Words that sound like what they mean are examples or onomatopoeia.  *Boom.  Splat.  Babble.  Gargle.* |
| ***Oxymoron*** | A phrase composed of opposites; a contradiction. *Bright black.  A calm frenzy.  Jumbo shrimp.  Dark light.  A truthful lie.*  |
| ***Parable*** | Like a fable, or an allegory, a parable is a story that instructs.  |
| ***Paradox*** | A situation or statement that seems to contradict itself, but on closer inspection, does not. |
| ***Parallelism*** | Repeated syntactical similarities used for effect. |
| ***Paraphrase*** | To restate phrases and sentences in your own words, to re-phrase. Paraphrase is not analysis or interpretation, so don't fall into the thinking that traps so many students.  Paraphrasing is just a way of showing that you comprehend what you've just read--that you can now put it in your own words, no more, no less. |
| ***Parody*** | The work that results when a specific work is exaggerated to ridiculousness. |
| ***Personification*** | When an inanimate object takes on human shape.  *The darkness of the forest became the figure of a beautiful, pale-skinned woman in night-black clothes.* |
| ***Point of View*** | The point of view is the perspective from which the action of a novel (or narrative poem) is presented, whether the action is presented by one character or from different vantage points over the course of the novel.  Related to point of view is the narrative form that a novel or story takes.  There are a few common narrative positions:**\*The omniscient narrator:**  This is a third person narrator who sees, like God, into each character's mind and understands all the action going on.**\*The limited omniscient narrator:** This is a third person narrator who generally reports only what one character (usually the main character) sees, and who only reports the thoughts of that one privileged character.**\*The objective, or camera eye narrator:** This is a third person narrator who only reports on what would be visible to a camera.  The objective narrator does not know what the character is thinking unless the character speaks of it.  **\*The first person narrator :** This is a narrator who is a character in the story and tells the tales the tale from his or her point of view.  Then the first person narrator is crazy, a liar, very young, or for some reason not entirely credible the narrator is *unreliable*. \***The stream of consciousness technique:** This method is like first person narration but instead of the character telling the story, the author places the reader inside the main character's head and makes the reader privy to all the character's thoughts as they scroll through her consciousness. |
| ***Protagonist*** | The main character of a novel or play. |
| ***Pun*** | The usually humorous use of a word in such a way to suggest two or more meanings. |
| ***Rhetorical question*** | A question that suggests an answer.  In theory, the effect of a rhetorical question is that is causes the listener to feel she has come up with the answer herself.  *Well, we can fight it out, or we can run--so, are we cowards?* |
| ***Rhythm*** | The arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables into a pattern.  Rhythm is most apparent in poetry, though it is part of all good writing.   Rhythm often gives a poem a distinct musical quality. |
| ***Satire*** | Satire exposes common character flaws to the cold light of humor.  In general, satire attempts to improve things by pointing out people's mistakes in the hope that once exposed, such behavior will become less common.  The great satirical subjects are hypocrisy, vanity, and greed, especially where those all too common characteristics have become institutionalized in society.  |
| ***Soliloquy*** | A speech spoken by a character alone on stage.  A soliloquy is meant to convey the impression that the audience is listening to the character's thoughts.  Unlike an aside, a soliloquy is not meant to imply that the actor acknowledges the audience's presence. |
| ***Sonnet*** | A fourteen-line lyric poem, usually written in rhymed iambic pentameter.  A sonnet generally expresses a single theme or idea.  Sonnets vary in structure and rhyme scheme, but are generally of two types; the ***Petrarchan or Italian sonnet***and the ***Elizabethan or Shakespearean sonnet****.*  The Italian sonnet is a form that originated in Italy in the 13th century.  The Italian sonnet has two parts, an **octave** (eight lines) and a **sestet** (six lines).  Its rhyme scheme is usually *abbaabbacdecde.* The two parts of the Italian sonnet play off each other in a variety of ways.  Sometimes the octave raises a question that the sestet answers.  Sometimes the sestet opposes what the octave says, or extends it.  The Italian sonnet is often called the Petrarchan sonnet, because the Italian poet Francesco Petrarch used it so extensively.  He dedicated more than three hundred sonnets to a woman named Laura.Petrarch inspired the vogue of sonnet writing in Elizabethan England.  It became conventional for English poets to address sonnets to a beautiful but cruel mistress whose eyes were stars, whose lips were cherries, and whose cheeks were roses.  Shakespeare's "Sonnet 130" has been called anti-Petrarchan because he inverts the conventions, describing his mistress in realistic terms. |
| ***Stanza*** | A group of lines roughly analogous in function in verse to the paragraph's function in prose. |
| ***Stereotype*** | A commonplace type of character that appears so often in literature that his or her nature is immediately familiar to the reader.  Stereotypes, also called *stock characters*, always look and act the same way and reveal the same traits of character.  Examples of stereotypes are the temperamental movie star, the talkative cab driver, the mad scientist, the villain with a waxed mustache, and the wisecracking, hard-boiled private detective.  |
| ***Symbolism*** | A device in literature where an object represents an idea. |
| ***Synecdoche*** | A figure of speech that substitutes a part for a whole.  An example is T. S. Eliot's use of "feet" and "hands" to stand for "people" in the poem "Preludes." |
| ***Syntax*** | The structure of a sentence; the arrangement of words in a sentence.  A discussion of syntax in your essay could include such considerations as the length or brevity of the sentences, the kinds of sentences (questions, exclamations, declarative sentences, rhetorical questions--or a periodic or loose; simple, complex, or compound).    |
| ***Theme*** | The main idea of the overall work; the central idea.  It is the topic of discourse or discussion. |
| ***Thesis*** | The main position of an argument.  The central contention that will be supported. |
| ***Tone*** | The attitude a writer takes toward his or her subject, characters, or audience.  In writing about his childhood in his poem "Fern Hill," Dylan Thomas' tone is nostalgic.  In *Preface to Shakespeare*, Samuel Johnson's tone is serious and admiring.  Tone is found in every kind of writing.  It is created through the choice of words and details.  |
| ***Tragic flaw*** | In a tragedy, this is the weakness of character in an otherwise good (or even great) individual that ultimately leads to his demise. |

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