**Literary Terms**

**Some figurative language/figures of speech:** uses words or expressions that are different from the literal interpretation**:** an expression of language, such as simile, metaphor, or personification, by which the usual or literal meaning of a word is not meant.

**1. Alliteration** - the repetition of the initial consonant sound. There should be at least two repetitive sounds next to one another or in a line… remember it is the sound, not the letters.   
 e.g., Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.

**2. Allusion**- a brief or indirect reference to a person, place, event, or passage in a work of literature or the Bible assumed to be sufficiently well known to be recognized by the reader.

e.g., “I am *Lazarus*, come from the dead.”—T.S. Eliot (referencing Christ’s raising of Lazarus from the dead in the New Testament)

e.g., “What can be more moving than a wise, high-strung woman begging a child’s forgiveness, even as *King Lear knelt to Cordelia* for Pardon.”—Helen Keller (referencing Shakespeare’s King Lear asking his only faithful daughter who hadbeen cast out for forgiveness)

1. **Analogy** - the comparison of two pairs which have the same relationship. i.e., shoe is to foot as tire is to wheel; What moon is to the night, the sun is to the day
2. **Assonance** – The repetition of similar vowel sounds within a line of poetry ( Sweet sleep and keep safe)
3. **Cliché- an** expression that has been overused to the extent that it loses its original meaning or novelty. A cliché may also refer to actions and events which are predictable because of some previous events.

e.g., In describing time, the following expressions have turned into cliché

* *in the nick of time –* to happen just in time
* *at the speed of light –* to do something very quickly
* *lost track of time –* to stop paying attention to time
* *They all lived happily ever after.*
* *Read between the lines*
* *Waking up on the wrong side of the bed.*
* *The quiet before the storm*

1. **Connotation – The emotional connections/associations of a word that go beyond its dictionary definition (Be a man!)**
2. **Denotation – The dictionary definition of a word. Ex: man – an adult human male**
3. **Hyperbole** - a figure of speech involving exaggeration to show strong feeling or effect.   
    e.g., I’ve told you a million times to stop talking!
4. **Idiom-** words put together to make a clever phrase that means something other than what the individual words mean.

e.g., Cats got your tongue. He's pulling your leg. Like a bat outta hell.

1. **Imagery**- word choice that presents a representation of the five senses: sight, taste, touch, sound, and smell.

i.e., LITERALLY creates mental images about a subject

1. **Irony** – the opposite of what is meant.  
   1. ***Dramatic Irony*** – when the audience/reader knows something that’s going to happen in the story but the characters in the story do not
   2. ***Situational Irony***- when the resolution is the opposite of what the reader expected to have happened
   3. ***Verbal Irony*-** when the character says the opposite of what they feel or should have really said- like sarcasm.
2. **Metaphor** - a comparison in which one thing is said to be another.   
    e.g., The cat's eyes were jewels, gleaming in the darkness.
3. **Mood**- the feeling the text creates for the reader through the author’s voice.
4. **Moral- the** lesson drawn from a fictional or nonfictional story.
5. **Onomatopoeia** - the use of words to imitate the sounds they describe.  
    e.g., The burning wood crackled and hissed.
6. **Oxymoron:** a figure of speech in which two opposite ideas are joined to create an effect. The common oxymoron phrase is a combination of an adjective followed by a noun with contrasting meanings.

e.g., all alone, jumbo shrimp, pretty ugly, horribly cute

1. **Paradox** – a statement that seems contradictory and absurd, but nonetheless states a hidden truth.

e.g., “My only love sprung from my only hate.” – Romeo and Juliet

1. **Personification** - is giving human qualities to animals or objects.  
    e.g., The daffodils nodded their yellow heads.
2. **Pun** – a humorous play on word used to create a double meaning.

e.g., “You have dancing shoes. With nimble soles; I have a soul of lead.” – Romeo and Juliet

1. **Repetition** – using the same words frequently to reinforce concepts.  
    i.e., Martin Luther King, Jr. repeats “I have a dream” throughout his speech
2. **Simile** - figure of speech involving a comparison between unlike things using like, as, or as though.   
    e.g., She floated in like a cloud.
3. **Slang-** words that are not a part of standard vocabulary or language and are used informally. These words are mostly used in speech rather than in writing.

**http://www.manythings.org/slang/**

1. **Symbol**- A word or object that has its own meaning and represents another word, object or idea that is more abstract.

e.g., American Flag: literally U.S.A; symbolically: freedom, independence, America, honor, bravery, etc.

1. **Tone**- the style, manner, or expression most often understood through author’s word choice in writing is called Tone. (What the author meant for you to feel.)

i.e., the author’s implied attitude toward its subject (angry, sarcastic, loving, playful, didactic, etc.)

1. **Understatement-** a figure of speech employed by writers or speakers to intentionally make a situation seem less important than it really is. e.g., “It rained a bit more than usual” while describing an area being flooded after heavy rainfall.  
    “It was O.K.” is an understatement if someone who got the highest score in a test said this when asked about his result.

**Poetry:**

**Couplet –** a pair of rhymed lines.

**Quatrain** – a four-line stanza in a poem

**Verse –** a single line of poetry, or poetry in general (as opposed to prose)

**Enjambment** – a run-on line of poetry in which a sentence carries over to the next line

**Speaker** – the narrator of the poem

**Stanza** – a group of lines arranged together; equivalent to a paragraph in prose

**Rhythm** – the stressed syllables in a poem created by meter, rhyme, alliteration, and refrain (repetition)

**Meter** – the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a poem

**Rhyming/Rhythm** – includes end rhyme (a word at the end of one line rhymes exactly with a word at the end of another line), near rhyme (imperfect/close rhyme), and internal rhyme (a word within a line rhymes with another word in the same line).

**Theme** – the main message or lesson learned that is incorporated throughout a literary work.

**Types of poetry:**

**Blank verse** – is poetry that is written in unrhymed iambic pentameter (a meter that Shakespeare used for many of his plays).

**Free verse** – poetry that doesn’t have a regular pattern of rhythm (often doesn’t rhyme)

**Haiku** – a Japanese poem or form of poetry without rhyme having three lines with the first and last lines having five syllables and the middle having seven

**Sonnet** - a fixed verse form of Italian origin consisting of 14 lines that are typically 5-foot iambics rhyming according to a prescribed scheme

**Limerick** - especially one in five-line, predominantly [anapestic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anapaest)[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limerick_(poetry)#cite_note-2) [meter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meter_(poetry)) with a strict [rhyme scheme](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhyme_scheme) (AABBA), which is sometimes obscene with humorous intent. The first, second and fifth lines are usually longer than the third and fourth.

Ballad –

Epic

**Story Elements**

**Anecdote:** a short entertaining “story” personal or biographical used to bring humor or to illustrate a particular characteristic or trait.

**Protagonist -** A protagonist is considered to be the main character or lead figure in a novel, play, story, or poem; usually the person trying to solve the problem.

**Antagonist** - a character in a story or poem that deceives, frustrates, or works again the main character, or protagonist, in some way.

**Direct and Indirect characterization**

**Direct characterization-** AUTHOR makes statements about a character’s personality and/or describes the character.

**Indirect characterization-**  T- character tells about themselves

O- what others say or think about the character

A- character tells his/her appearance

D- what the character does; his/her actions

S- literally what the character says through dialogue

**Point of view -** a way the events of a story are conveyed to the reader, it is the “vantage point” from which the narrative is passed from author to the reader. The point of view can vary from work to work.

i.e. first person - the narrator speaks as "I" and the narrator is a character in the story that may or may not influence events within it.

i.e. third-person narrative - the narrator seems to be someone standing outside the story that refers to all the characters by name or as *he*, *she*, *they*, and so on

* The third-person narrator can be omniscient--a narrator who knows everything that needs to be known about the agents and events in the story, and is free to move at will in time and place, and who has privileged access to a character's thoughts, feelings, and motives.
* The narrator can also be limited--a narrator who is confined to what is experienced, thought, or felt by a single character, or at most a limited number of characters.

**Setting** - the time, place, physical details, and circumstances in which a situation occurs.

**Conflict** – the main problems to be solved; they may be internal (man vs. self ex: Paul’s tempted to pull her pigtail) or external (visible or audible ex: Paul pulls her pigtail) conflicts

**Climax** - the turning point of the action in the plot of a play or story. The climax represents the point of greatest tension/intensity in the work.   
**Dialogue-** literary techniques in which writers employ two or more characters to be engaged in conversation with each other. In literature, it is a conversational passage or a spoken or written exchange of conversation in a group or between two persons directed towards a particular subject.

e.g., “But who did he tell it to?  You and me?”

“They’ll get on all right!” Razumikhin answered reluctantly.

“But what business is it of yours?” Razumikhin cried with annoyance.

**Comic relief:** something said or done that provides a break from the seriousness of the text.  
**Conundrum-** a riddle whose answer is or involves a pun; it may also be a paradox or difficult problem.

e.g., Which came first, the chicken or the egg

**Epiphany-** that moment in the story where a character achieves realization, awareness or a feeling of knowledge after which events are seen through the prism of this new light in the story. Also referred to as an “Ah-ha moment.”

e.g., Let us consider an epiphany of a smoker: A more common example

“I used to smoke a lot. Everyone let me know that it was bad for my health however, I didn’t pay any notice. One day I saw my two year old reaching for a used cigarette in an ashtray. Upon seeing this, it dawned upon me how terrible smoking was and how much influence I had over my children, so I stopped smoking.”

This sudden feeling of knowledge that brings to light what was so far hidden and changes one’s life is called epiphany.

**Flashback-** a writer presents past events during current events; provides the reader with insight into a character's motivation and or background to a conflict through narration, dream sequences, and memories.

**Foreshadowing-** the use of a hint or clue to suggest a larger event that occurs later in the work.

**Inference-** a conclusion reached on the basis of evidence and reasoning.

e.g., “It was after we started with Gatsby toward the house that the gardener saw Wilson’s body a little way off in the grass, and the holocaust was complete.”

The above extract is one of the examples of inference from literature. After reading this line from “The Great Gatsby” by F. Scott Fitzgerald, a reader who is smart enough to make a quick inference will simultaneously understand that Gatsby’s life has ended. The most significant part of this sentence is that the protagonist in the novel Mr. Gatsby has been murdered.

**Elements of Speech and Persuasive Essay and nonfiction**

**Diction –** author’s word choice.

**Ethos- (ethical appeal):** appealing to ethics. An ethical appeal makes use of what an audience values and believes to be good or true.

i.e., Knowing right and wrong and stating an argument that “all” would believe to be true based on ethics.

**Logos- (logical appeal):** appealing to reason in a measured, logical way. Induction and deduction are both reasoned arguments.

e.g., citing statistics, research, financial costs, authority figures, historical events, etc.

**Pathos- (emotional appeal):** appealing to the emotions;

e.g., “I remember when Grandma died of lung cancer. It was the first time I had ever seen you cry Dad. I remember that you also made me promise not to start smoking.”

**Repetition** – using the same words frequently to reinforce concepts.  
 i.e., Martin Luther King, Jr. repeats “I have a dream” throughout his speech

**Thesis-** the main idea of a text; it presents the author’s assertionor claim. The rest of the piece should develop and support the thesis.

**Satire-** the use of humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people's stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and other topical issues. Satire is something spoken in humor without reproducing the subject directly.

**Jargon-** a literary term that is defined as a use of specific phrases and words by writers in a particular situation, profession or trade. These specialized terms are used to convey hidden meanings accepted and understood in that field.

Examples of Medical Jargon

BP - Medical shorthand for blood pressure

NPO - A patient should not take anything by mouth

Examples of Business Jargon

Bang for the buck - A term that means, to get the most for your money

The 9-to-5 - Business jargon meaning a standard work day

Examples of Police Jargon

Suspect - A person whom the police think may have committed a crime

10-4 - Radio jargon meaning Okay or I understand

Examples of Military Jargon

AWOL - Absent without leave

**Elements of Drama**

**Monologue** – a speech presented by a single character, most often to express their thoughts aloud, though sometimes also to directly address another character or the audience.

**Aside –** when a character speaks directly to the audience (not meant to be heard by other characters on stage)

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**Parody-** A **Parody** (sometimes referred to as a spoof) is essentially imitative work. It uses the skeleton of an original work and adds its own comedic elements that strive towards either exaggerating the flaws of the original work or trivializing it, or in some cases both.

e.g., “Robin Hood: Men in Tights” parodies Robin Hood”; “Space Balls” parodies “Star Trek”; all the scary movies, or “funny” movies that take concepts from other movies but make them humorous- it’s the same for literature if you understand the concept.

**Soliloquy –** device often used in drama whereby a character speaks to himself or herself, relating his or her thoughts and feelings, thereby also sharing them with the audience. Other characters however are not aware of what is being said**.**