

AP Lit. Summer Assignment 2009



Valencia High School
English Literature and Composition
Advanced Placement
Mr. Rosenast

Dear AP English Literature students,

Congratulations on your choice of the senior AP course in Literature for your senior year. I am looking forward to working with you this coming semester on what is sure to be a challenging but rewarding year together. In preparation for your class next semester, you are going to need to familiarize yourself with a number of literary terms and devices. The list attached contains the majority of the terms that you will need to be successful on your AP exam in literature. Please learn these terms and definitions; you will be given an exam on these the day you return to class in August. Your exam will consist of definitions that you identify with the terms you have learned. There will be no word bank. I hope you enjoy your Summer and I wish you the best for your senior year of high school.

THE GLOSSARY OF LITERARY TERMS FOR THE AP ENGLISH TEST

The following terms are ones that *you absolutely must know* to do well on the AP English test. You must memorize the definitions of all of these terms!

You will be tested on your knowledge of these terms on your first day back to class.

Abstract An abstract style (in writing) is typically complex, discusses intangible qualities like good and evil, and seldom uses examples to support its points.

Academic As an adjective describing style, this word means dry and theoretical writing. When a piece of writing seems to be sucking all the life out of its subject with analysis, the writing is *academic*.

Accent In poetry, *accent* refers to the stressed portion of a word. In “To be, or not to be,” accents fall 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.

Aesthetic, Aesthetics *Aesthetic* can be used as an adjective meaning “appealing to the senses.” Aesthetic judgment is a phrase synonymous with artistic judgment. As a noun, an aesthetic is a coherent sense of taste. The kid whose room is painted black, who sleeps in a coffin, and listens only to funeral music has an aesthetic. The kid whose room is filled with pictures of kittens and daisies but who sleeps in a coffin and listens to polka music has a confused aesthetic. The plural noun, *aesthetics*, is the study of beauty. Questions like *what is beauty?* or, *is the beautiful always good?* fall into the category of aesthetics.

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 the 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 or famous figure is an *allusion*. A classical allusion is a reference to a famous older text such as the Bible, *the Illiad*, or *Paradise Lost*. 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.

Anachronism The word *anachronism* is derived from Greek. It means “misplaced in time.” If the actor playing Brutus in a production of Julius Caesar forgets to take off his wrist-watch, the effect will be anachronistic (and probably comic).

Anecdote An anecdote is a short narrative.

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 wing above their heads, so does Acme Insurers 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.

Anticlimax An anticlimax occurs when an action produces far smaller results than one had been led to expect. Anticlimax is frequently comic. *Sir, your snide manner and despicable arrogance have long been a source of disgust to me, but I've overlooked it until now. However, it has come to my attention that you have fallen so disgracefully deep into that mire of filth which is your mind as to attempt to besmirch my wife's honor and my good name. Sir, I challenge you to a game of badminton!*

Antihero A protagonist (main character) who is markedly unheroic: morally weak, cowardly, dishonest, or any number of other unsavory qualities.

Aphorism A short and usually witty saying, such as: "A classic? That's a book that people praise and don't read."

Apostrophe

A figure of speech wherein the speaker speaks directly to something nonhuman or to someone or something that simply cannot reply; a dead person, for instance. . In these lines from John Donne's poem "The Sun Rising" the poet scolds the sun for interrupting his nighttime activities:

Busy old fool, unruly sun,
Why dost thou thus,
Through windows, and through curtains call on us?

Archaism The use of deliberately old-fashioned language. Authors sometimes use archaisms to create a feeling of antiquity. Tourist traps use archaisms with a vengeance, as in "Ye Olde Candle Shoppe"—Yeech!

Archetype: A symbol, usually an image, which recurs often enough in literature to be recognizable as an element of one's literary experience as a whole. Carl Jung used the term "archetype" to refer to the generalized patterns of images that form the world of human representations in recurrent motifs, passing through the history of all culture. Since archetypes are rooted in the collective unconscious, they may be conceived through the psychic activity of any individual, be it in the form of dreams, art works, the ancient monuments of religious activity, or the contemporary images of commercial advertising.

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*.)

Assonance The repeated use of vowel sounds, as in, "Old king Cole was a merry old soul."

Atmosphere The emotional tone or background that surrounds a scene.

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.

Bathos, Pathos When the writing of a scene evokes feelings of dignified pity and sympathy, pathos is at work. When writing strains for grandeur it can't support and tries to jerk tears from every little hiccup, that's bathos.

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.

Blank Verse

A poem written in unrhymed iambic pentameter. Consider the following from "The Ball Poem" by John Berryman:

What is the boy now, who has lost his ball,
What, what is he to do? I saw it go
Merrily bouncing, down the street, and then
Merrily over-there it is in the water!

Bombast This is pretentious, exaggeratedly learned language. When one tries to be eloquent by using the largest, most uncommon words, one falls into bombast.

Burlesque A burlesque is broad parody, one that takes a style or a form, such as tragic drama, and exaggerates it into ridiculousness. A parody usually takes on a specific work, such as *Hamlet*. For the purposes of the AP test, you can think of the terms *parody* and *burlesque* as interchangeable.

Cacophony In poetry, cacophony is using deliberately harsh, awkward sounds.

Cadence The beat or rhythm of poetry in a general sense. For example, *iambic pentameter* is the technical name for a rhythm. One sample of predominantly iambic pentameter verse could have a gentle, pulsing cadence, whereas another might have a conversational cadence, and still another might have a vigorous, marching cadence.

Caesura

A pause within a line of poetry which may or may not affect the metrical count (see #62. meter). In scansion, a caesura is usually indicated by the following symbol (/). Here's an example by Alexander Pope:

Know then thyself, // presume not God to scan;
The proper study of Mankind // is Man

Canto The name for a section division in a long work of poetry. A canto divides a long poem into parts the way chapters divide a novel.

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.

Classic What a troublesome word! Classic, and classical, have a number of different uses. Classic can mean typical, as in *oh, that was a classic blunder*. It can also mean an accepted masterpiece, for example, *Death of Salesman*. Finally, classical can also refer to the arts of ancient Greece and Rome, and the qualities of those arts.

Coinage (neologism) A coinage is a new word, usually one invented on the spot. An author might, in a moment of creative need, coin the term *pretarded* to convey the sense that someone has been pretentious in an exceptionally stupid way. People's names often become grist for coinages, as in, *Oh, man, you just pulled a major Wilson*. Of course, you'd have to know Wilson to know what that means, but you can tell it isn't a good thing. The technical term for coinage is *neologism*.

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*.

Conceit, controlling image In poetry, *conceit* doesn't mean stuck-up. It refers to a startling or unusual metaphor, or to a metaphor developed and expanded upon over several lines. When the image dominates and shapes the entire work, it's called a **metaphysical conceit**, or a *controlling image*.

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 *the 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 has been used so often in the context of extreme anger that many people have come to use *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 flock of sick, black-checked, ducks.

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

Decorum In order to observe decorum, a character's speech must be styled according to her social station, and in accordance with the occasion. A bum should speak like a bum about bumly things, while a princess should speak only about higher topics (and in a delicate manner).

Denouement

Pronounced Dee-noo-ma, the denouement is that part of a drama which follows the climax and leads to the resolution, sometimes synonymous with resolution.

Diction 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.

Dirge This is a song for the dead. Its tone is typically slow, heavy, depressed, and melancholy.

Dissonance This refers to the grating of incompatible sounds.

Doggerel Crude, simplistic verse, often in sing-song rhyme. Limericks are a kind of doggerel.

Elegy A type of poem that meditates on death or mortality in a serious, thoughtful manner. Elegies often use the recent death of a noted person or loved one as a starting point.

Empathy: The imaginative projection into another's feelings, a state of total identification with another's situation, condition, and thoughts. The action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another of either the past or present without explicitly articulating these feelings. Fern empathizes with Wilbur; Charlotte empathizes with Wilbur.

Enjambment: The practice named by Ronsard in the 16th century of breaking the sense of a line by placing part of the phrase on the second line. A device in which the phrase end is no longer the end of the line. The practice of the enjambment causes a slight distress in the audience because the reader wants the phrase break to come in the familiar place for the rhythm of the poem but it doesn't. Often the sense of the poem can be changed or emphasis given by creating an enjambment.

Epic In a broad sense, an epic is simply a very long narrative poem on a serious theme in a dignified style. Epics typically deal with glorious or profound subject matter: a great war, a heroic journey, the fall of man from Eden, a battle with supernatural forces, a trip into the underworld, etc. The mock-epic is a parody form that deals with mundane events and ironically treats them as worthy of epic poetry.

Epitaph Lines that commemorate the dead at their burial place. An epitaph is usually a line or handful of lines, often serious or religious, but sometimes witty and even irreverent.

Euphemism A word or phrase that takes the place of a harsh, unpleasant, or impolite reality. The use of *passed away* for died, and *passed gas* for farted are two examples of euphemisms.

Euphony When sounds blend harmoniously, the result is euphony.

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.

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.

Iamb A light stress followed by a heavy stress (*the winds*)

Trochee A heavy stress followed by a light stress (*flow – er*)

Spondee two heavy stresses (*Ex, the last two syllables of the line below*)

When, in / dis – grace / with for – / tune and / men’s eyes

Pyrrhic Two unstressed syllables (*See “on their” in the following line*)

Now sleep – / ing flocks / on their / soft fleec – / es lie.

Anapest Two light stresses followed by a heavy (*by the dawn’s / ear – ly light*)

Dactyl A heavy stress followed by two light ones (*Ex below*)

green as our / hope in it, / white as our / faith in it

Foreshadowing An event or statement in a narrative that in miniature suggests a larger event that comes later.

Free verse 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.

Gothic, Gothic novel Gothic is the sensibility derived from gothic novels, a form that first showed up in the middle of the eighteenth century, had a hey-day of popularity for about sixty years, and hasn’t really gone away. The sensibility? Think mysterious gloomy castles perched high upon sheer cliffs. Paintings with sinister eyeballs that follow you around the room. Weird screams from the attic each night. Diaries with a final entry that trails off the page and reads something like, No, NO! *IT COULDN’T BE!!*

Hubris The excessive pride or ambition that leads to the main character’s downfall (another term from Aristotle’s discussion of tragedy).

Hyperbole Exaggeration or deliberate overstatement.

In medias res Latin for “in the midst of things.” One of the conventions of epic poetry is that the action begins *in medias res*. For example, when *The Iliad* begins, the Trojan war has already been going on for seven years.

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 character were actually talking. Stream of consciousness is looser and much more given to fleeting mental impressions.

Inversion Switching the customary order of elements in a sentence or phrase. When done badly it can give a stilted, artificial, look-at-me-I’m-poetry feel to the verse, but poets do it all the time. This type of messing with syntax is called *poetic license*. *I’ll have one large pizza with all the fixin’s—presto chango instant poetry—A pizza large I’ll have one with the fixin’s all.*

Irony This is one term you need to be very comfortable with for the AP test. Irony comes in a variety of forms, and you need to be able to recognize and be sensitive to it. Actually being able to name the specific type of irony involved is not important. ETS doesn't care if you can see an example of tragic irony and call it by name, they just want you to be able to see that it's irony. The reason irony shows up so much on the AP test is that it's a powerful verbal tool, and so good writers use it all the time. ETS also loves irony because ironic writing makes for good questions: strong readers detect irony, weak readers do so less clearly. One definition of irony is *a statement that means opposite of what it seems to mean*, and while that isn't a bad definition, it doesn't get at the delicacy with which the authors on the AP test 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 the 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.

Lament A poem of sadness or grief over the death of a loved one or over some other intense loss. Lampoon
A satire.

Loose and periodic sentences A *loose sentence* is complete before its end. A *periodic sentence* is not grammatically complete until it has reached its final phrase. (The term *loose* does not in any way imply that the sentences are slack or shoddy.)

Loose sentence: *Jack loved Barbara despite her irritating snorting laugh, her complaining, and her terrible taste in shoes.*

Periodic sentence: *Despite Barbara's irritation at Jack's peculiar habit of picking between his toes while watching MTV and his terrible haircut, she loved him.*

Lyric A type of poetry that explores the poet's personal interpretation of and feelings about the world (or the part that his poem is about). When the word *lyric* is used to describe a tone it refers to a sweet, emotional melodiousness.

Masculine rhyme A rhyme ending on the final stressed syllable (a.k.a., regular old rhyme).

Melodrama A form of cheesy theater in which the hero is very, very good, the villain mean and rotten, and the heroine oh-so-pure. (It sounds dumb, but melodramatic movies make tons of money every year.)

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 fullout 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*.

Meter The measure of a poetic line. There are many types of meter, designated by the number of *feet* in a line.

Pentameter five feet in a line

Tetrameter four feet in a line

Trimeter three feet in a line

Dimeter two feet in a line

Hexameter six feet in a line

Heptameter seven feet in a line

Octameter eight feet in a line

Ode

A poem in praise of something divine or expressing some noble idea. In "Ode on a Grecian Urn," English poet John Keats expresses his appreciation of the beauty and agelessness of a work by a Grecian artisan:

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?

Metonymy Metonymy refers to the substitution of one thing for another closely identified thing, like "the White House" signifying the activities and policies of the president.

Nemesis The protagonist's arch enemy or supreme and persistent difficulty.

Objectivity and Subjectivity An *objective* treatment of subject matter is an impersonal or outside view of events. A *subjective* treatment uses the interior or personal view of a single observer and is typically colored with that observer's emotional responses.

Onomatopoeia Words that sound like what they mean are examples of onomatopoeia. *Boom. Splat. Arrgh. Scritch scritch scritch.*

Oxymoron A phrase composed of opposites; a contradiction. *Bright black. A calm frenzy. Jumbo shrimp. Dark light. A truthful lie.* Some folks claim that military intelligence and House (of Congress) Ethics Committee are oxymorons.

Parable Like a fable, or an allegory, a parable is a story that instructs.

Paradox

A situation or a statement that seems to contradict itself, but on closer inspection, does not. This line from John Donne's "Holy Sonnet 14" provides an example:

That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow me,
The poet paradoxically asks God to knock him down so that he may stand. What he means by this is for God to destroy his present self and remake him as a holier person.

Parenthetical phrase A phrase set off by commas that interrupts the flow of a sentence with some commentary or added detail. *Jack's three dogs, including that miserable, yapping little spaniel, were with him that day.*

Parody The work that results when a specific work is exaggerated to ridiculousness.

Pastoral A poem set in tranquil nature or even more specifically, one about shepherds.

Pathos See *bathos*.

Periodic sentence See *loose sentence*.

Persona The narrator in a non first-person novel. In a third person novel, even though the author isn't a character, you get some idea of the author's personality. However, it isn't really the author's personality because the author is manipulating your impressions there as in other parts of the book. This shadow-author is called the author's *persona*.

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.*

Plaint A poem or speech expressing sorrow.

Plot. This is *the sequence of the main events in a narrative*. There are several important elements of plot:

Conflict. *The opposition of the main character with one or more opposing forces.* Conflict is essential to resolution. You can't resolve something that doesn't exist.

Polysyndeton: the repetition of conjunctions in a series of coordinate words, phrases, or clauses.

*I said, "Who killed him?" and he said, "I don't know who killed him but he's dead all right," and it was dark and there was water standing in the street and no lights and windows broke and boats all up in the town and trees blown down and everything all blown and I got a skiff and went out and found my boat where I had her inside Mango Bay and she was all right only she was full of water.
Hemingway, After the Storm

Protagonist. *The main character.*

Antagonist. *The character or force(s) that opposes the protagonist.*

Exposition. *The narration that introduces the reader to the situation.*

Rising Action. *The action during which the conflict emerges and builds.*

Crisis. *That moment when the reader understands that the conflict will be resolved.* This is the *turning point* in the plot.

Falling Action. *The portion of the plot that includes the consequences of the crisis.*

Denouement. (Unraveling) *This event or sequence of events completes the resolution and closes the story.*

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. Be sensitive to point of view, because ETS likes to ask questions about it, and they also like to you to mention point of view in your essays. 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 a narrator who is a character in the story and tells the tale from his or her point of view. When 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 of the character's thoughts as they scroll through her consciousness.

Prelude An introductory poem to a longer work of verse.

Quatrain A four-line stanza. Quatrains are the most common stanzaic form in the English language; they can have various meters and rhyme schemes. See also meter, rhyme, stanza.

Refrain A line or set of lines repeated several times over the course of a poem.

Requiem A song of prayer for the dead.

Rhapsody An intensely passionate verse or section of verse, usually of love or praise.

Rhetorical question A question that suggests an answer. In theory, the effect of a rhetorical question is that it 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?*

Satire This is an important term for the AP test. ETS is fond of satirical writing, again because it lends itself well to multiple choice questions. *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.

Simile See *metaphor*.

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.

Stanza A group of lines roughly analogous in function in verse to the paragraph's function in prose.

Stock characters Standard or cliched character types: the drunk, the miser, the foolish girl, etc. Stream of consciousness See *point of view*.

Subjective See *objectivity*.

Suspension of disbelief The demand made of a theater audience to accept the limitations of staging and supply the details with their imagination. Also, the acceptance on an audience's or reader's part of the incidents of plot in a play or story. If there are too many coincidences or improbable occurrences, the viewer/reader can no longer suspend disbelief and subsequently loses interest.

Synecdoche (taking one thing out of another) Synecdoche is a device in which a part stands for the whole, or a whole for the part, like the expression “All hands on board” to signify that a ship’s crew should return to the ship.

Syntax Word order and sentence structure.

Thesis The main position of an argument. The central contention that will be supported. 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.

Travesty A grotesque parody.

Unreliable narrator See *point of view*.

Utopia An idealized place. Imaginary communities in which people are able to live in happiness, prosperity, and peace. Several works of fiction have been written about utopias.

Verisimilitude Verisimilitude is achieved by a writer or storyteller when he presents striking details which lend an air of authenticity to a tale. For example, a teenager (not you of course) goes somewhere without her parents permission and tells her parents that she was really at the library. If the teenager adds creative details about what happened while she was there (even though she is making the details up), she is attempting to add verisimilitude to her story. Writers of fiction also do this.