

AP Lit/Comp Lit Terms List

1. **abstract** – unable to be touched; not concrete
2. **abstraction** - a concept or value that can not be seen (love, honor, courage, death, etc.) which the writer usually tries to illustrate by comparing it metaphorically to a known, concrete object. Sometimes this knowledge is hidden or esoteric because it is only known by or meant for a select few.
3. **ad hominem**- Latin for “to the man”; attacking the arguer and not the argument; mud-slinging
4. **alliteration** – sound device; repetition of initial (beginning) consonant sounds
5. **allusion**—figure of speech which makes brief reference to an historical or literary figure, event, or object; a reference in one literary work to a character or theme found in another literary work. T. S. Eliot, in “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” alludes (refers) to the biblical figure John the Baptist
6. **ambiguity**—the expression of a idea in language which gives more than one meaning and leave uncertainty as to the meaning
7. **anachronism** - something out of its place in time or history: Julius Caesar riding a motorcycle
8. **analogy** - the comparison of two things, which are alike in several respects, for the purpose of explaining or clarifying some unfamiliar or difficult idea or object by showing how the idea or object is similar to some familiar one. While simile and analogy often overlap, the simile is generally a more artistic likening, done briefly for effect and emphasis, while analogy serves the more practical purpose of explaining a thought process or a line of reasoning or the abstract in terms of the concrete, and may therefore be more extended
9. **anapest** - meter having two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed syllable (– – /)
a-RETTE
10. **anaphora** - the repetition of a word or expression at the beginning of successive phrases for rhetorical or poetic effect, as in Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address: *We cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow this ground*
11. *And whisper to their souls, to go,*
12. **antagonist** - the character in a narrative or play who is in conflict with the main character; an antagonist may not even be a person -- or may be the same person as the main character.
13. **anticlimax** - The intentional use of elevated language to describe the trivial or commonplace, or a sudden transition from a significant thought to a trivial one in order to achieve a humorous or satiric effect; an anticlimax also occurs in a series in which the ideas ascend toward a climactic conclusion but terminate instead in a thought of lesser importance. (see bombast and bathos)
14. **anti-hero**—a protagonist who is the antithesis of the hero – graceless, inept, stupid, sometimes dishonest
15. **antithesis** - figure of speech in which a thought is balanced with a contrasting thought in parallel arrangements of words and phrases, such as *“He promised wealth and provided poverty,”* or *“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. . .”* or *“Give me performance, not promises.”* Also, the second of two contrasting or opposing constituents, following the thesis.
16. **aphorism** - brief statement which expresses an observation on life, usually intended as a wise observation. Benjamin Franklin’s “Poor Richard’s Almanac” contains numerous examples, one of which is *“Drive thy business; let it not drive thee,”* which means that one should not allow the demands of business to take control of one’s moral or worldly commitments.
17. **apollonian** – refers to the noble qualities of human beings and nature as opposed to the savage and destructive forces
18. **apostrophe**— addressing someone or something, usually not present, as though present. EX: Death, be not Proud. A figure of speech wherein the speaker speaks directly to something non-human. Often, apostrophe is to a god, ghost, or some supernatural thing, like Death, Night, or Fate. It may also be to a person, if the person isn’t there, or if the speaker doesn’t think the person is there
19. **apotheosis** – a larger-than-life presence; a godlike paragon worthy of respect and reverence
20. **appeal to ignorance** - the claim that whatever has not been proved
21. **aside** - a statement delivered by a actor in such a way that the other characters on stage are presumed not to have heard him
22. **arguments** - assertions made based on facts, statistics, logical or objective reasoning, hard evidence, etc.
23. **assonance**—similarity or repetition of a vowel sound in two or more words, especially in a line of verse. Edgar Allen Poe’s “The Bells” contains numerous examples: short e in “Hear the mellow wedding bells...” and the long o in “...the molten-golden notes”
24. **asyndeton** - the omission of conjunctions that ordinarily join coordinate words and phrases, as in *“see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil.”*
25. **aubade** – a poem about morning
26. **auditory imagery**—word choices that appeal to the ear, that help you “hear” the words
27. **autobiography**—author’s own life story; first-person account
28. **ballad**—a form of verse to be sung or recited and characterized by a dramatic or exciting episode in fairly short narrative; poem written in a song-like stanza form.
29. *Carpe diem.* (Latin--“seize the day”) A theme, especially common in lyric poetry, that emphasize that life is short, time is fleeting, and that one should make the most of present pleasures.
30. **bathos** - an anticlimax which is unintentional; an unintentional shift from the sublime to the ridiculous which can result from the use of overly elevated language to describe trivial subject

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matter, or from an exaggerated attempt at pathos which misfires to the point of being ludicrous.

31. begging the question - also called assuming the answer: We must assume the death penalty to end violent crime or I don't like the death penalty because it's killing; circular reasoning. A persuasive fallacy in which the writer assumes the reader will automatically accept an assertion without proper support.

32. bildungsroman (German: growth novel)—a novel showing the development of its central character from childhood to maturity. . . psychological approach and movement toward a goal

33. blank verse - unrhymed iambic pentameter; metrical verse with no ending rhyme (Shakespeare)

34. bombast—elevated language, often pompous and overdone.

35. cacophony - a combination of harsh, unpleasant sounds which create an effect of discordance. Its opposite is euphony.

36. caesura—a pause for effect in the middle of a line of poetry; (period, dash, semicolon, etc.) it may or may not affect the meter. In scansion, a caesura is usually indicated by the following symbol (/). Here's an example by Alexander Pop: The proper study of Mankind//is Man

37. Canon - works generally considered by scholars, critics, and teachers to be the most important to study or read, which collectively constitute the "masterpieces" or "classics" of literature.

38. carpe diem - a Latin phrase which translated means "Seize (Catch) the day," meaning "Make the most of today."

39. catharsis—Aristotle's word for the pity and fear an audience experiences upon viewing the downfall of a hero

40. cause and effect relationships - a dominant technique (also called rhetorical device) in which

the author analyzes reasons for a chain of events. This causal analysis can also be the writer's main method of organization, or it can be one paragraph used to support a point in an essay developed through another pattern.

41. characterization - the method a writer uses to reveal the personality of a character in a literary work. Personality may be revealed (1) by what the character says about himself or herself; (2) by what others reveal about the character; and (3) by the character's own actions.

42. chiasmus – repetition in successive clauses which are usually parallel in **syntax**, as in Pope's "*A fop their passion, but their prize a sot,*" or Goldsmith's "*to stop too fearful, and too faint to go.*" An inverted parallelism; the reversal of the order of corresponding words or phrases (with or without exact repetition) in successive clauses which are usually parallel in syntax, as in Pope's "*A fop their passion, but their prize a sot,*" or Goldsmith's "*to stop too fearful, and too faint to go.*"

43. classicism - an approach to literature which emphasizes reason, harmony, balance, proportion, clarity, and the imitation of ancient writers and philosophers

44. climax—the turning point, or crisis, in a play or other piece of literature

45. colloquial expressions - informal, not always grammatically correct expressions that find acceptance in certain geographical areas and within certain groups of people—ex: Southerners saying "Ya'll"

46. comedy—a work which strives to provoke smiles and laughter

47. comic relief – something of humor interrupts an otherwise serious, often tragic, literary work; a humorous scene or incident that alleviates tension in an otherwise serious work. In many instances these moments enhance the thematic significance of the story in addition to providing laughter.

48. complication—the part of a plot in which the entanglement caused by the conflict is developed

49. conceit - an extended metaphor - two unlike things are compared in several different ways

50. concrete poetry - where the actual typeset layout of the poem suggests the topic. For example, a poem about trees might be shaped like a tree on the page.

51. conflict - a struggle between opposing forces

52. connotation—the emotional implications that a word may carry; implied or associated meaning for a particular word. Compare the connotations and denotations (dictionary meanings) of the words house and home. House is quite standard, while home can have many meanings, especially emotional.

53. consonance— the repetition of consonant sounds with differing vowel sounds in words near each other in a line or lines of poetry. EX: But yet we trust

54. couplet - a pair of rhyming lines written in the same meter; may be a separate stanza

55. crisis - the climax or turning point of a story or play (may have more than one crisis when there are several almost-equal major characters)

56. dactyl—three syllable foot consisting of an accented syllable followed by the unaccented syllables. EN: MUR-mur-ing

57. denotation—the specific, exact meaning of a word; a dictionary definition

58. denouement - the resolution of a plot after the climax

59. deus ex machina—an unexpected, artificial, or improbable character, device, or event introduced suddenly in a work of fiction or drama to resolve a situation or untangle a plot

60. dialect - speech peculiar to a region; exhibits distinctions between two groups or even two persons.

61. Dialects in this country are peculiar to various regions - - "Eastern" vs. "Southern."

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62. **dialogue** – conversation between two or more characters, usually set off with quotation marks
63. **diction** - an author's choice of words—i.e., simple, sophisticated, colloquial, formal, or informal.
64. **didactic verse** - a term for a poem that teaches, almost preaches. It often discusses the "proper" way to behave. The lesson being taught is more important to the writer than the artistic quality of the work
65. **dionysian** – pertaining to the base side of man
66. **drama** – story performed by actors on a stage
67. **dramatic irony**—irony in which the character use words which mean one thing to them but another to those who understand the situation better
68. **dramatic monologue**—a poem that reveals a "soul in action" through the speech of one character in a dramatic situation
69. **dystopia** – the opposite of a utopia; a controlled world where pain exists instead of pleasure
70. **elegy** – lyrical poem about death; a serious poem, usually meant to express grief or sorrow. The theme is serious, usually death.
71. **empathy** – feelings of pity and understanding for a character
72. **end rhyme** – schematic rhyme that comes at the ends of lines of verse (such as *aa,bb* or *ab, ab*)
73. **end stop line**—line of verse in which both the grammatical structure and the sense reach completion at the end of a line; denoting a line of verse in which a logical or rhetorical pause occurs at the end of the line, usually marked with a period, comma, or semicolon; line in poetry that ends with a complete pause created by punctuation (; or .)
74. **enjambment**—line of verse that carries over into next line without a pause of any kind
75. **envelope method – (frame)** Begins and ends with same setting and/or narrator(s); middle is flashback
76. **epic**—a long narrative, usually written in elevated language, which related the adventures of a hero upon whom rests the fate of a nation
77. **epigram** – a witty saying, usually at the end of a poem, about 2 lines long; a brief, witty observation about a person, institution, or experience
78. **epigraph** - A brief quotation at the beginning of a book or chapter.
79. **epiphany** – an awakening; a sudden understanding or burst of insight; key moment in Greek plays
80. **epitaph** – an engraving on a tombstone
81. **epithet** – *nickname or appellation, i.e., "Helen of the white arms" in the Iliad*
82. **euphemism** – substitute word(s) that sounds better than another (lingerie instead of underwear); the use of inoffensive or neutral words to describe a harsher, more serious concept. IT reduces the risk that the listener will be upset or offended. Example: people "pass away", instead of "Die". Euphemisms soften the blow of unhappy news or truths.
83. **euphony** - a quality of style marked by pleasing, harmonious sounds, the opposite of cacophony
84. **existentialism**—a term applied to a group of attitudes which emphasize existence rather than the essence, and sees the inadequacy of human reason to explain the enigma of the universe
85. **exposition**—the introductory material which sets the tone, gives the setting, introduces the characters, and supplies necessary facts; may be the first section of the typical Plot, in which Characters are introduced, the Setting is described, and any necessary background information is given. Sometimes there is a lot, and the exposition stretches out; sometimes and the expository information is tucked in unobtrusively as people talk to each other or inside the narrator's descriptions.
86. **eye rhyme** - a form of rhyme wherein the look rather than the sound is important. "*Cough*" and "*tough*" do not sound enough alike to constitute a rhyme. However, if these two words appeared at the ends of successive lines of poetry, they would be considered eye rhyme.
87. **fable** – a story written to make a moral point, using animals as characters
88. **fairy tale** - a fictional tale, marked by fantasy and magic, often appealing to the imagination
89. **falling action**—everything that happens in plot between the climax or crisis and the denouement
90. **false dichotomy** - two extremes in a continuum of intermediate possibilities. Sure, take his side; my husband's perfect; I'm always wrong. OR either you love your country or you hate it. OR If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem
91. false must be true and vice versa. There is no compelling evidence that UFOs **fantasy**—imaginative writing; writing in which the author breaks away from reality
93. **farce** – a totally ridiculous comedy
94. **feminine rhyme** - Double rhyme (feminine rhyme): two syllables rhyme. Ex. resenting/consenting triple rhyme - 3 syllables rhyme. Ex. Pollution/solution
95. **figurative language** - writing or speech not meant to be taken literally figure of speech; states something that is not literally true in order to create an effect. Similes, metaphors and personification are figures of speech based on comparisons. Metonymy, synecdoche, synesthesia, apostrophe, oxymoron, and hyperbole are other **figures of speech**
96. **first person** – subjective point of view when a character relays a narrative using "I"

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97. **flashback**—a device by which an author can present action or scenes that occurred before the opening scene in a work

98. **flat character** —a character who is not fully developed by an author; character who has only one outstanding trait or feature, or at the most a few distinguishing marks.

99. **foil** - character who provides a contrast to another character, thus emphasizing the other's traits; a character in a play who sets off the main character or other characters by comparison.

100. **folk tale** - a story which has been composed orally and then passed down by word of mouth

101. **foot**—a unit of meter; a metrical foot can have two or three syllables; the basic unit of measurement in a line of poetry. In scansion, a foot represents one instance of a metrical pattern and is shown either between or to the right or left of vertical lines. The most common foot is the iamb—two syllables with accent on the last. The most widely used meter is iambic pentameter. A foot is the smallest repeated pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a poetic line. A line of meter is described by the kind of meter and the number of feet.

102. **Iamb**. (u') A metrical foot consisting of one unaccented syllable followed by one accented syllable.

103. **Trochee**. ('u) A metrical foot consisting of one accented syllable followed by one unaccented syllable (bar-ter).

104. **Anapest**. (uu') A metrical foot consisting of two unaccented syllables followed by one accented syllable (un-der-stand).

105. **Dactyl**. ('uu) A metrical foot consisting of one accented syllable followed by two unaccented syllables (mer-ri-ly).

106. **Pyrrhic**. (uu) A metrical foot consisting of two unaccented syllables.

107. **Dipod**. The basic foot of dipodic verse, consisting (when complete) of an unaccented

syllable, a lightly accented syllable, an unaccented syllable, and a heavy accented syllable, in that succession. However, dipodic verse accommodates a tremendous amount of variety.

108. **Spondee**. (") A metrical foot consisting of two syllables equally or almost equally accented (true-blue).

109. **Monometer. A line of one metrical foot.**

110. **Dimeter. A line of two metrical feet.**

111. **Trimeter. A line of three metrical feet.**

112. **Tetrameter. A line of four metrical feet.**

113. **Pentameter. A line of five metrical feet.**

114. **Hexameter. A line of six metrical feet.**

115. **foreshadowing**—the arrangement and presentation of events and information in such a way that prepare for later events in a work

116. **form** - the structure, shape, pattern, organization, or style of a piece of literature

117. **frame** - a narrative constructed so that one or more stories are embedded within another story

118. **free verse** - unrhymed poetry with lines of varying lengths, containing no specific metrical pattern.

119. **genre** — a specific kind or category of literature, e.g., mystery story, sonnet, romance novel

120. **gothic**—a form of novel in which magic, mystery, horrors and chivalry abound

121. **grotesque** —focuses on physically or mentally (warped, deluded, retarded) impaired characters

122. **haiku** - popular Japanese form of poetry developed in 17th century. It usually had three lines, respectively, with 5, 7, then 5 syllables. Haiku often contrasts two opposing images and presents an implied comment of nature.

123. **half rhyme** - occurs when the final consonants rhyme, but the vowel sounds do not (*chill-Tulle; Day-Eternity*)

124. **hamartia** - a tragic flaw or error in judgment. In literature, the tragic hero's error of judgement or inherent defect of character, usually less

literally translated as a "fatal flaw." This, combined with essential elements of chance and other external forces, brings about a catastrophe. Often the error or flaw results from nothing more than personal traits like probity, pride, and overconfidence, but can arise from any failure of the protagonist's action or knowledge ranging from a simple unwittingness to a moral deficiency.

125. **hero / heroine** - main character who has strength or moral character, a noble cause

126. **heroic couplet** - two successive lines of rhymed poetry in iambic pentameter

127. **hexameter**- a stanza of 6 lines.

128. **homily** — a long speech denouncing someone or something; a story or lecture on a religious or moral theme; a didactic lecture

129. **hubris** - the pride or overconfidence which often leads a hero to overlook divine warning or to break a moral law

130. **humor**—writing whose purpose it is to evoke some kind of laughter

131. **hyperbole** — exaggeration for effect and emphasis, overstatement; figure of speech in which an overstatement or exaggeration occurs, as in the following lines from Act 2, scene 2 of Shakespeare's Macbeth. In this scene, Macbeth has murdered King Duncan. Horrified at the blood on his hands, he asks: Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood /Clean from my hand?

132. **iambic** - 1 unaccented, 1 accented - "trapeze" - very Shakespearean

133. **iambic pentameter** - A metrical pattern in poetry which consists of five iambic feet per line. (An iamb, or iambic foot, consists of one unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable, i.e. "away.")

134. **idioms** - expressions that do not translate exactly into what a speaker means; idioms are culturally relevant; when a person uses an idiomatic expression, he or she truly "thinks" in the language.

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135. **imagery**—devices which appeal to the senses: visual, tactile, auditory, gustatory, olfactory, kinetic; a group of words that create a mental “picture” (ie., animal, water, death, plant, decay, war, etc.); devices which appeal to the senses: visual, tactile, auditory, olfactory, kinetic.

136. **auditory imagery** – sound imagery. It appeals to the sense of hearing. Ex: “The tremor of far-off drums, sinking, swelling, a tremor vast, faint; a sound weird, appealing...as profound a meaning as the sound of bells in a Christian church community.”

137. **gustatory imagery** – imagery appealing to the sense of taste.

138. **kinetic energy** – imagery that appeals to movement. Ex: The flies flew around our heads methodically, never ceasing their obnoxious spinning and swirling.

139. **olfactory imagery** – appeals to the sense of smell. Ex: The rotten hippo-meat filled the jungle air with its sour, putrid smell.

140. **tactile imagery** – type of imagery pertaining to the sense of touch. Ex: The fuzzy puppy’s warm wet tongue covered my face.

141. **visual imagery** – type of imagery that appeals to the sense of sight. Ex: From the lighthouse tower shone a glowing beam that streaked across the black waters.

142. **in medias res** - the story starts in the middle

143. **intercalary chapters** – expository chapters that come between chapters of plot to relay outside information

144. **internal rhyme** – rhyming within lines of verse instead of at the ends of lines

145. **inverted sentence** - reversing the normal subject - verb - complement order. Poets do this sometimes to conform to normal rhyme and rhythm patterns. Prose writers sometimes do this for emphasis. example- "Still grows the vivacious lilac a generation after the door . . . and sill are gone, unfolding its sweet-scented flowers each

spring, to be plucked by the musing traveler." Henry David Thoreau

146. **irony** - surprising, amusing, or interesting contrast between reality and expectation. In irony of situation, the result of an action is the reverse of what the actor expected. In dramatic irony, the audience knows something that the characters in the drama do not. In verbal irony, the contrast is between the literal meaning of what is said and what is meant. A character may refer to a plan as "brilliant," while actually meaning that (s)he thinks the plan is foolish. Sarcasm is a form of verbal irony.

147. **juxtaposition** – the positioning of ideas or images side by side for emphasis or to show contrast—ex: In *Romeo & Juliet*, love and hate are juxtaposed as the two teenagers’ love is forced into the same arena as the families’ hatred.

148. **lampoon** – a biting satire that makes its subject appear ludicrous

149. **legend** - a widely told tale about the past, one that may have a foundation in fact

150. **limerick** –a type of poem that consists of two lines of rhymed anapestic trimeter, two lines of rhymed anapestic dimeter, and an additional line of anapestic trimeter, the last word of which is the same as, or rhymes with, the last word of the first line.

151. **line** – unit of poetic verse. When writing verse in prose, use a / to indicate when lines change.

152. **litotes** – a type of meiosis (understatement) in which an affirmative is expressed by the negative of the contrary, as in "not unhappy" or "a poet of no small stature."

153. **local color** – the descriptions of the setting, people, and dialect, etc., of a particular region

154. **loose or cumulative sentence** – has independent clause first, followed by a series of phrases and clauses—ex. The family used to gather around the hearth, doing such chores as polishing

155. shoes, mending ripped clothing, reading, chatting, always warmed by one another’s presence as much as by the flames.

157. **lyric verse** - one of the main groups of poetry, the others being narrative, dramatic and didactic poetry. In modern usage the term lyric includes all brief poems in which the author's ardent expression of a (usually single) emotional element predominates, ranging from complex thoughts to the simplicity of playful wit; the power and personality is of far greater importance than the subject treated. The melodic imagery of skillfully written lyric poetry invokes in the reader the recall of similar emotional experiences.

158. **masculine rhyme** - Single rhyme (masculine rhyme): last syllable only rhymes. Ex. crime/grime

159. **mask (persona)** - a character with a distinct identity created by an author to achieve a particular effect of to deliver a particular message which reflect the author’s viewpoint

160. **melodrama**—a play based upon a dramatic plot and developed sensationally; a type of drama related to tragedy but featuring sensational incidents, emphasizing plot at the expense of characterization, relying on cruder conflicts (virtuous protagonist versus villainous antagonist), and having a happy ending in which good triumphs over evil.

161. **metaphor**—a figure of speech wherein a comparison is made between two unlike quantities without the use of the words "like" or "as." Jonathan Edwards, in his sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," has this to say about the moral condition of his parishioners: There are the black clouds of God’s wrath now hanging directly over your heads, full of the dreadful storm and big with thunder.

162. **metaphysical** - of, from, of relating to forces or being outside the natural world

163. **metaphysical poetry** - although sometimes used in the broad sense of philosophical poetry,

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the term usually applies to the work of seventeenth-century poets, such as John Donne. Metaphysical poetry is characterized by the use of conceits, condensed metaphorical language, unusual comparisons between medicine, love, death, and religion, and complex imagery.

164. **meter** - the rhythmical pattern of a poem; classified according both to its pattern and the number of feet to the line. Below is a list of classifications: monometer = one foot to a line; Dimeter = two feet; Trimeter = three feet ; Tetrameter = four feet; and Pentameter = five feet to a line. Meter is a patterned repetition of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry. Any of the first four listed below--anapestic, dactylic, iambic, and trochaic--may predominate in a given poem: in a poem written in anapestic verse, for example, the majority of the feet will be anapestic. The poet may also choose to vary the meter (to create emphasis and variety). In doing so, the poet may make use of the remaining two kinds of meter--pyrrhic and spondaic--which, by their very nature, rarely predominate in a poem. Generally, pyrrhic feet speed a poem up, while spondaic feet slow a poem down.

165. **Anapestic**. A meter composed of feet that are short-short-long (or unaccented-unaccented-accented): afternoon, in a tree. Often, anapestic meter occurs in light verse (such as limericks).

166. **Dactylic**. A meter composed of feet that are long-short-short: emphasis, juniper.

167. **Iambic**. A meter composed of feet that are short-long: propose, delete. Iambic is the predominant meter of verse written in English.

168. "That time of the year thou mayst in me behold / When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang / Upon those boughs which shake against the cold . . ." --William Shakespeare, Sonnet 73

169. **Trochaic**. A meter composed of feet that are long-short: single, enter.

170. "Come with rain, O loud Southwester! / Bring the singer, bring the nester . . ." --Robert Frost, "To the Thawing Wind "

171. **Pyrrhic**: Two unstressed syllables: in a, of the.
172. **Spondaic**. A foot in which both syllables are stressed: taut skin.

173. "It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?" --Gerard Manley Hopkins, "God's Grandeur" (Here the first line is mostly iambic, while the second line is mostly or entirely spondaic.)

174. **metonymy**--substituting a word naming an object for another word closely associated with it. EX: Pay tribute to the *crown*; figure of speech in which a word represents something else which it suggests. For example in a herd of fifty cows, the herd might be referred to as fifty head of cattle. The word "head" is the word representing the herd.

175. **microcosm** -- a small "world" that stands for the larger one: In *Lord of the Flies*, the island is representative of the world's political realm; in *One Flew...Cuckoo's Nest*, the hospital is representative of totalitarian authority and/or technological control.

176. **mixed metaphor** -- a metaphor whose elements are either incongruent or contradictory by the use of incompatible identifications, such as "*the dog pulled in its horns*" or "*to take arms against a sea of troubles.*"

177. **monologue**--a written or oral composition presenting the discourse of one speaker only

178. **montage** -- a series of images that appear one after another

179. **motif (leitmotiv)** - a recurring concept or story element in literature. It includes concepts such as types of incident or situation, as in the parting of lovers at dawn; plot devices; patterns of imagery; or archetypes and character types, such as the despairing lover, conquering hero, or wicked stepmother.

180. **Myth** - a fictional tale, originally with religious significance, that explains heroes, gods, nature, and/or natural phenomenon

181. **narrative** - a story

182. **narrative point of view** -- see **point of view**

183. **narrator** -- speaker or persona, the one who tells a story (see **point of view**). Reliable narrator: everything this narrator says is true, and the narrator knows everything that is necessary to the story. Unreliable narrator: may not know all the relevant information; may be intoxicated or mentally ill; may lie to the audience

184. **naturalism**--writing that demonstrates a deep interest in nature (often sees nature as indifferent to the plight of man); also used to describe any form of extreme realism

185. **near rhyme (also eye, half, slant, or sight rhyme)** - a rhyme in which the sounds are similar, but not exact, as in *home* and *come* or *close* and *lose*. Emily Dickinson uses this a great deal.

186. **neoclassicism** - Restoration literary movement in which writers turned to Greek/Roman models for inspiration

187. **non-sequitur** - Latin for "It doesn't follow" e.g., "Our nation will prevail if we eat more eggs"

188. **novel**--an extended prose narrative

189. **octave** - an eight-line stanza
190. **ode** - a long, formal lyric poem with a serious theme; a form of lyric poetry using elaborate, sophisticated vocabulary in iambic pentameter. It usually focuses upon a single object or person. Ex: "Ode on a Grecian Urn" - the poet is talking to a piece of pottery in a museum (apostrophe)

191. **omniscient** -- see **narrator point of view**

192. **onomatopoeia**--the use of a word to represent or to imitate natural sounds. EN: sizzle, buzz, pop, hiss; **oxymoron**-- technique used to produce an effect by a seeming self-contradiction. EX: cruel kindness, make haste slowly

194. **parable** -- a short story to prove a point with a moral basis (New Testament stories by Christ)

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195. paradox - a statement which contains seemingly contradictory elements or appears contrary to common sense, yet can be seen as perhaps true when viewed from another angle, such as Alexander Pope's statement that a literary critic would "*damn with faint praise*" Or "*That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow me.*" (a statement that is seemingly impossible at first, but very logical once it is explained. Ex. The child is father to the man)

196. paralipsis --the suggestion, by deliberately concise treatment of a topic, that much of significance is being omitted, as in "not to mention other faults"; withholding to the end—in stories—some piece of information crucial to the reader's understanding.

197. parallel structure – a **repetition of sentences using the same structure.**

198. parallelism - the repetition of syntactical similarities in passages closely connected for rhetorical effect. The repetitive structure lends wit or emphasis to the meanings of the separate clauses, thus being particularly effective in antithesis.

199. paraphrase—a restatement of an idea in such a way as to retain the meaning while changing the diction and form

200. Parnassian - of or related to poetry, after Parnassus, a mountain in Greece with two summits; one summit was consecrated to Bacchus, the other to Apollo and the Muses, thus Parnassus was regarded as the seat of poetry and music.

201. parody - ludicrous imitation, usually for comic effect but sometimes for ridicule, of the style and content of another work. The humor depends upon the reader's familiarity with the original. A literary work that imitates the style of another literary work. A parody can be simply amusing or it can be mocking in tone, such as a poem which exaggerates the use of alliteration in order to show the ridiculous effect of overuse.

202. pastoral – a literary work that has to do with shepherds and rustic settings. Christopher Marlowe's "The Passionate Shephard to His Love" and Robert Burns' "Sweet Afton" are examples.

203. pathetic fallacy - overdone writing that sees the inadequacy of human reason to explain the enigma of the universe --*And the Wild Winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.* Writing that uses clichés to show nature mirroring what happens in real life. Evil always happens on dark and stormy nights, while spring days are when new lovers meet.

204. pathos - Greek term for deep emotion, passion, or suffering. When applied to literature, its meaning is usually narrowed to refer to tragic emotions, describing the language and situations which deeply move the audience or reader by arousing sadness, sympathy, or pity. Pathos which seems excessive or exaggerated becomes melodramatic or sentimental, and when its disproportion to its subject results from anticlimax, pathos becomes bathetic. (see **bathos**)

205. pentameter – poetic line that has 5 metrical feet (usually 10 syllables)

206. periodic sentence - saves the subject and verb of the independent clause until the end of the sentence—ex: If you can keep your head when everyone around you is panicking, you probably don't understand the situation.

207. persona - the mask worn by an actor in Greek drama. In a literary context, the persona is the character of the first-person narrator in verse or prose narratives, and the speaker in lyric poetry. The use of the term "persona" (as distinct from "author") stresses that the speaker is part of the fictional creation, invented for the author's particular purposes in a given literary work.

209. personification – figure of speech in which inanimate objects are given qualities of speech and/or movement. EX: Carl Sandburg's Chicago:

"Stormy, husky, brawling, / City of the big shoulders."

210. playwright – a person who writes a play

211. plot – the structure of a story or the sequence in which the author arranges events. The structure of a five-act play often includes the rising action, the climax, the falling action, and the resolution. The plot may have a protagonist who is opposed by antagonist, creating conflict. A plot may include flashback, or it may include a subplot, which is a mirror image of the main plot.

212. point of view - the narrator or speaker perspective from which story is told—personal, objective, omniscient, partial or limited omniscient. Point of view is the perspective from which a narrative is presented; it is analogous to the point from which the camera sees the action in cinema. The two main points of view are those of the third-person (omniscient) narrator, who stands outside the story itself, and the first-person narrator, who participates in the story. The first type always uses third-person pronouns ("he," "she," "they"), while the latter narrator also uses the first-person ("I").

213. polysyndeton - The repetition of a number of conjunctions in close succession, as in, "*We have men and arms and planes and tanks.*"

214. post hoc, ergo propter hoc - Latin for "It happened after, so it was caused by. e.g., "I know of a 26- year-old who looks 60 because she takes contraceptive pills... OR "Before women got the vote, there were no nuclear weapons."

215. prose—all for of written expression not having a regular rhythmical pattern

216. protagonist—the main character in a story; more than one character may be important enough to be called "main," or NO character seems to qualify. In those cases, figuring out whether there is a main character and who it is may be an interesting and even difficult interpretive job.

pun – a play on words wherein a

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word is used to convey two meanings at the same time. The line below, spoken by Mercutio in Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet," is an example of a pun. Mercutio has just been stabbed, knows he is dying and says: "Ask for me tomorrow and you shall find me a grave man."

218. **pyretic** - a metrical foot having two unstressed syllables (--)

219. **quatrain**—a four-line stanza

220. **quintet** – a five-line stanza

221. **realism**—fidelity to actuality in literature

222. **refrain** - a phrase or line, usually pertinent to the central topic, which is repeated at regular intervals throughout a poem, usually at the end of a stanza.

223. **resolution** - the part of a story or drama which occurs after the climax and which establishes a new norm, a new state of affairs - the way things are going to be from then on

224. **rhetoric** - The art of speaking or writing effectively; skill in the eloquent use of language.

225. **rhetorical device** – device used to produce effective speaking or writing

226. **rhetorical question** – a question solely for effect, with no answer expected. By the implication that the answer is obvious, it is a means of achieving an emphasis stronger than a direct statement.

227. **rhyme scheme** - a pattern of rhyming words in a stanza

228. **rhyme**—similarity or likeness of sound; may be internal (within a segment of writing) or at the ends of lines of verse in poetry

229. **Double Rhyme**. A rhyme in which the repeated vowel is in the second last syllable of the words involved (politely-rightly-sprightly); one form of feminine rhyme.

230. **End Rhyme**. Rhymes are end-rhymed when both rhyming words are at the end of the lines.

231. **Feminine Rhyme**. Rhymes are feminine when the sounds involve more than one syllable (turtle-

fertile, spitefully-delightfully). A rhyme in which the repeated accented vowel is in either the second or third last syllable of the words involved (ceiling-appealing or hurrying-scurrying).

232. **Identical Rhyme**. If the preceding consonant sound is the same (for example, manse-romance, style-stile), or if there is no preceding consonant sound in either word (for example, aisle-isle, alter-altar), or if the same word is repeated in the rhyming position (for example, hill-hill).

233. **Internal Rhyme**. An internal rhyme occurs when one or both rhyming words are within the line.

234. **Masculine (or Single) Rhyme**. Rhymes are masculine when the sounds involve only one syllable (decks-sex or support-retort). A rhyme in which the repeated accented vowel sound is in the final syllable of the words involved (dance-pants, scald-recalled).

235. **Triple rhyme**. A rhyme in which the repeated accented vowel sound is in the third last syllable of the words involved (gainfully-disdainfully)

236. **rhythm** - the metrical or rhythmical pattern in a poem

237. **rising action** - the development of conflict leading to a crisis; the second section of the typical plot, in which the main character begins to grapple with the story's main conflict; the rising action contains several events which usually are arranged in an order of increasing importance.

238. **romance**—works having extravagant characters, remote or exotic settings, adventure, magic, chivalry, and love

239. **round character** - a fully developed character; character who is complex, multi-dimensional, and convincing.

240. **run-on-line**—the carrying over of sense and grammatical structure from one to line to the next

241. **sarcasm** - the caustic and heavy use of apparent praise

242. **satire** - a piece of literature designed to ridicule the subject of the work. While satire can be funny, its aim is not to amuse, but to arouse contempt. Jonathan swift's Gulliver's Travel satirizes the English people, making them seem dwarfish in their ability to deal with large thoughts, issues, or deeds. Satire arouses laughter or scorn as a means of ridicule and derision, with the avowed intention of correcting human faults.

243. **scan** - to mark off lines of poetry into rhythmic units, or feet, so as to show their metrical structure

244. **scansion**—a system for describing more or less conventional poetic rhythms by dividing the lines into feet; the process of measuring verse, that is, of marking accented and unaccented syllables, dividing the lines into feet, identifying the metrical pattern, and noting significant variations from that pattern.

245. **scene** – short division within an act in a play; a particular setting in any work of literature

246. **second person** – the narrator uses "you" as the narrator telling the story (uncommon!)

247. **septet** – a seven-line stanza

248. **sestet** - a six-line stanza

249. **setting** - the place(s) and time(s) of the story, including the historical period, social milieu of the characters, geographical location, descriptions of indoor and outdoor locales, etc.

250. **short story** – also called tale. Has many of the same characteristics as the novel but details are arranged to achieve a single effect, with action moving rapidly and with minimal complication or detail of setting. The significant characteristics of the protagonist's life are revealed economically through a central incident.

251. **simile**— a figure of speech which takes the form of a comparison between two unlike quantities for which a basis for comparison can be found, and which uses the words "like" or "as" in

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the comparison, as in the following: "clear as frost on the grass-bade"

252. **slang** - expressions that are usually fleeting and may or may not be particular to a certain region or group

253. **soliloquy** - a long speech made by a character who is alone on the stage in which he reveals his innermost thoughts & feelings

254. **sonnet** –The **English, or Shakespearean sonnet** is divided into three quatrains (four-line groupings) and a final couplet (14 lines). The rhyme scheme is. The meter is iambic pentameter, with a set rhyme scheme-- abab cdcd efef gg. The change of rhyme in the English sonnet is coincidental with a change of theme in the poem. The structure of the English sonnet explores variations on a theme in the first three quatrains and concludes with an epigrammatic couplet. A **Spenserian sonnet** is a nine-line stanza, with the first eight lines in iambic pentameter and the last line in iambic hexameter

255. **sound device** – assonance, alliteration, consonance, onomatopoeia

256. **spondee**– two stressed syllables. EN: child-hood, foot-ball

257. **stanza** – a related group of lines in a poem, equivalent to a paragraph in prose

258. **stanza forms** - the names given to describe the number of lines in a stanzaic unit, such as: couplet (2), tercet (3), quatrain (4), quintet (5), sestet (6), septet (7) and octave (8). Some stanzas follow a set rhyme scheme and meter in addition to the number of lines and are given specific names

259. **static character** - a character who is the same sort of person at the end of a story as s/he was at the beginning.

260. **statistics of small numbers** - a close relative of observational selection e.g., "They say 1 out of every 5 people is Chinese. How is this possible? I

know hundreds of people, and none of them is Chinese"

261. **stereotype** - a characterization based on conscious or unconscious assumptions that one aspect (such as gender, age, ethnicity, religion, race) determines what humans are like and so is accompanied by certain traits, actions, and even value.

262. **stock character** - stereotyped character: one whose nature is familiar from prototypes in previous fiction.

263. **stream of consciousness** - narrative technique which presents thoughts as if they were coming directly from a character's mind

264. **stress** - saying certain syllables or words in a line with more emphasis or volume.

265. **structure**–the planned framework for a piece of literature

266. **style** - a writer's typical way of expressing him- or herself

267. **Subtext** - a term denoting what a character means by what (s)he says when there is a disparity between diction and intended meaning. In irony a character may say one thing and mean something entirely different. The real meaning of the speech is the subtext.

268. **Syllogism** – the underlying structure of deductive reasoning, having a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion based on logic. Syllogisms are either valid or invalid.

269. **symbol** - anything that stands for or represents anything else.

270. **Symbolism** - using an image to represent an idea. Ex. Storms often symbolize impending disaster, red rose=love, dove=peace, black cat=bad luck

271. **synecdoche** – a figure of speech in which a part of something stands for the whole or the whole for a part, as *wheels* for automobile or *society* for high society (see **metonymy**).

272. **synesthesia** - the perception or description of one kind of sense impression in words normally used to describe a different sense, like a "sweet voice" or a "velvety smile." It can be very effective for creating vivid imagery. One sensory experience described in terms of another sensory experience. Emily Dickinson, in "I Heard a Fly Buzz-When I Died," uses a color to describe a sound, *the buzz of a fly:with blue, uncertain stumbling buzz*

273. **syntax**–the arrangement of words in a sentence, the grammar of a sentence

274. **tetrameter** – poetic line with 4 metrical feet (therefore, 8 or 12 syllables in the line)

275. **tercet** – a three-line stanza in poetry

276. **Theater of the Absurd** – play written to show the absurdity of life by having absurd situations

277. **theme** - an ingredient of a literary work which gives the work unity. The theme provides an answer to the question, "What is the work about?" Each literary work carries its own theme(s). Unlike plot, which deals with the action of a work, theme concerns itself with a work's message or contains the general idea of a work and is worded in a complete sentence.

278. **third-person narration – Objective narrator:** not a character in the story; refers to the story's characters as "he" and "she" but does not reveal thoughts. **Limited (partial omniscient) narrator:** can only tell what one person is thinking or feeling. **Omniscient narrator:** can tell what all characters are thinking and feelings

279. **tone** - expresses the author's attitude toward his or her subject. Since there are as many tones in literature as there are tones of voice in real relationships, the tone of a literary work may be one of anger or approval, pride or piety; the entire gamut of attitudes toward life's phenomena.

280. **tragedy** - depicts the downfall or destruction of a character

281. **tragic flaw**–a tragic flaw or error in judgment

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282. **trimeter** – a poetic line with three metrical feet (therefore, 6 or 9 syllables)

283. **trochaic** – poetic line created with 1 accented, 1 unaccented syllable

284. **trope** - another name for figurative language

285. **understatement** – statement in which the literal sense of what is said falls short of the magnitude of what is being talked about (a litote is a type of understatement. Understatement: where we deliberately say less than we mean, and let the audience understand the real meaning -- Ex. A British 747 pilot lost power to all 4 engines during a flight and quite calmly radioed this message in to the control tower: "Spot of bother, but we seem to have lost all 4 engines on the aircraft...")

286. **verbal irony** - a kind of irony in which words are used to suggest the opposite of their actual meaning

287. **verisimilitude** – the semblance of truth; the degree to which a writer creates the appearance of truth

288. **villanelle** - a poem with five triplets and a final quatrain; only two rhyme sounds are permitted in the entire poem, and the first and third lines of the first stanza are repeated, alternately, as the third line of subsequent stanzas until the last, when they appear as the last two lines of the poem.

289. **voice** - the "speaker" in a piece of literature

290. **zeugma** - any of several similar rhetorical devices, all involving a grammatically correct linkage (or yoking together) of two or more parts of speech by another part of speech. Thus examples of zeugmatic usage would include one subject with two (or more) verbs, a verb with two (or more) direct objects, two (or more) subjects with one verb, and so forth. The main benefit of the linking is that it shows relationships between ideas and actions more clearly. In one form (prozeugma), the yoking word precedes the words

yoked. Pride oppresses humility; hatred love; cruelty compassion.

291. **Ballad**. This is a narrative poem describing a past happening that is sometimes romantic but always ends catastrophically. The saga described is usually in an impersonal voice with the speaker some distance from the action. Ordinarily a ballad is written in quatrains with four accented syllables in the first and third lines and three accented syllables in the second and fourth lines; the shorter lines usually rhyme.

292. **Concrete poetry or shaped verse**. An attempt to supplement (or replace) verbal meaning with visual devices from painting and sculpture. An example is a poem in the shape of an apple or bottle.

293. **Elegy**. A poem, usually personal, of grief or mourning.

294. **Epic**. A long narrative poem about a hero, usually starting with an invocation to the muse and beginning *in medias res* (in the middle of the story).

295. **Haiku**. This form consists of seventeen separate syllables arranged in three lines according to a 5-7-5 count. It usually has a plain style and everyday language.

296. **Occasional poetry**. This is poetry written for a particular event or happening, the event being usually ceremonial or honorific.

297. **Sonnet--Italian**. A fixed form consisting of fourteen lines of iambic pentameter. An Italian sonnet has an octave with a rhyme scheme of abbaabba and a sestet rhyming variously, but usually cdecde or cdccdc. The octave typically introduces the theme or problem, with the sestet providing the resolution.

298. **Sonnet--Shakespearean**. A fixed form consisting of fourteen lines of iambic pentameter. The lines are grouped in three quatrains with alternating rhymes (ababcdcdefef) followed by an heroic couplet (gg) that is usually epigrammatic.

299. **Villanelle**. A poem with five triplets and a final quatrain; only two rhyme sounds are permitted in the entire poem, and the first and third lines of the first stanza are repeated, alternately, as the third line of subsequent stanzas until the last, when they appear as the last two lines of the poem.

300. **The End**.