

Terminology for AP Language and Composition

Some helpful sites for studying:

- <https://literarydevices.net/>
- <https://literary-devices.com/>

1. **Allusion:** An indirect reference, often to another text or an historic event.
2. **Analogy:** An extended comparison between two seemingly dissimilar things.
3. **Anaphora:** The repetition of words at the beginning of successive clauses. Example from the great Richard D. Bury: “In books I find the dead as if they were alive; in books I foresee things to come; in books warlike affairs are set forth; from books come forth the laws of peace.”)
4. **Anecdote:** A short account of an interesting event.
5. **Archaic diction:** The use of words common to an earlier time period; antiquated language.
6. **Assumption:** A belief or statement taken for granted without proof.
7. **Authority:** A reliable, respected source— someone with knowledge.
8. **Bias:** Prejudice or predisposition toward one side of a subject or issue.
9. **Cliché:** an expression that has been overused to the extent that its freshness has worn off (“the time of my life”, “at the droop of a hat”, etc.)
10. **Colloquial/ism:** An informal or conversational use of language.
11. **Common ground:** Shared beliefs, values, or positions.
12. **Concession:** A reluctant acknowledgment or yielding.
13. **Connotation:** That which is implied by a word, as opposed to the word’s literal meaning
14. **Context:** Words, events, or circumstances that help determine meaning.
15. **Counterargument:** A challenge to a position; an opposing argument.
16. **Deduction:** Reasoning from general to specific.
17. **Denotation:** The literal meaning of a word; its dictionary definition.
18. **Dialect:** a variety of speech characterized by its own particular grammar or pronunciation, often associated with a particular geographical region (“Y’all” = Southern dialect)
19. **Diction:** Word choice.
20. **Ethos:** A Greek term referring to the character of a person; one of Aristotle’s three rhetorical appeals (see logos and pathos).
21. **Euphemism:** an indirect, less offensive way of saying something that is considered unpleasant
22. **Figurative language:** The use of tropes or figures of speech; going beyond literal meaning to achieve literary effect.
23. **Hyperbole:** Exaggeration for the purpose of emphasis.
24. **Idiom:** an expression in a given language that cannot be understood from the literal meaning of the words in the expression; or, a regional speech or dialect (“fly on the wall”, “cut to the chase”, etc.)
25. **Imagery:** Vivid use of language that evokes a reader’s senses (sight, smell, taste, touch, hearing)
26. **Induction:** Reasoning from specific to general.
27. **Irony:** A contradiction between what is said and what is meant; incongruity between action and result.
28. **Jargon:** the specialized language or vocabulary of a particular group or profession

29. **Juxtaposition:** Placement of two things side by side for emphasis.
30. **Litotes:** a type of understatement in which an idea is expressed by negating its opposite (describing a particularly horrific scene by saying, “It was not a pretty picture.”)
31. **Logos:** A Greek term that means “word”; an appeal to logic; one of Aristotle’s three rhetorical appeals
32. **Maxim:** a concise statement, often offering advice; an adage
33. **Metaphor:** A figure of speech or trope through which one thing is spoken of as though it were something else, thus making an implicit comparison.
34. **Mood:** the emotional atmosphere of a work
35. **Non sequitur:** an inference that does not follow logically from the premises (literally, “does not follow”)
36. **Oxymoron:** A figure of speech that combines two contradictory terms.
37. **Paradox:** A statement that seems contradictory but is actually true.
38. **Parallelism:** The repetition of similar grammatical or syntactical patterns.
39. **Parody:** A piece that imitates and exaggerates the prominent features of another- comic effect/ ridicule.
40. **Pathos:** A Greek term that refers to suffering but has come to be associated with broader appeals to emotion; one of Aristotle’s three rhetorical appeals (see ethos and logos).
41. **Parenthetical:** a comment that interrupts the immediate subject, often to qualify or explain
42. **Persona:** The speaker, voice, or character assumed by the author of a piece of writing.
43. **Personification:** Assigning lifelike characteristics to inanimate objects.
44. **Propaganda:** A negative term for writing designed to sway opinion rather than present information.
45. **Purpose:** One’s intention or objective in a speech or piece of writing.
46. **Refute:** To discredit an argument, particularly a counterargument.
47. **Rhetorical devices:** literary techniques used to heighten the effectiveness of expression
48. **Rhetorical modes:** Patterns of organization developed to achieve a specific purpose; modes include but are not limited to narration, description, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, definition, exemplification, classification and division, process analysis, and argumentation.
49. **Rhetorical question:** A question asked more to produce an effect than to summon an answer.
50. **Satire:** An ironic, sarcastic, or witty composition that seems to argue for something, but actually argues against it.
51. **Simile:** A figure of speech that uses “like” or “as” to compare two things.
52. **Structure:** the arrangement or framework of a sentence, paragraph, or entire work
53. **Style:** The distinctive quality of speech or writing created by the selection and arrangement of words and figures of speech.
54. **Syllogism:** A form of deductive reasoning in which the conclusion is supported by a major and minor premise (see premise; major, and minor). (“All men are mortal; Socrates is a man; therefore, Socrates is mortal.”)
55. **Syntax:** Sentence structure.
56. **Tone:** The speaker’s attitude toward the subject or audience.
57. **Understatement:** Lack of emphasis; restraint in language often used for ironic effect.
58. **Vernacular:** the everyday speech of a particular country or region, often involving nonstandard usage