

AP Literature and Composition
Unit 4 Terms (Drama/Tone/Diction/Poetry)

1. **antecedent:** Antecedent is an earlier clause, phrase or word to which a pronoun, another word or a noun refers back to. Broadly speaking, antecedent is a literary device in which a word or pronoun in a line or sentence refers to an earlier word, for instance, “while giving treats to *children* or *friends* offer them whatever *they* like.” In these lines, children and friends are antecedents, while *they* is a pronoun, referring to friends and children. It is a typical linguistic term and originates from grammar.

Often antecedents and their respective pronouns agree in numbers, which means if antecedents are singular, the pronouns that replace them will also be singular. However, sometimes writers might not follow this rule, and we see singular antecedents are replaced with plural pronouns. Likewise, antecedents and their following pronouns have the same gender.

Difference between Antecedent and Postcedent

Both of these terms are opposite to each other, as antecedent refers to *in front of* or *before*. It is an expression that gives meaning to a proform (a noun, pronoun, pro-adverb or pro-verb). Hence, proforms follow their respective antecedents such as “**Elizabeth** says, **she** likes coffee.” Sometimes these proforms or pronouns precede them that are called postcedents, meaning *behind* or *after* such as, “when it gets ready, I shall definitely get my cup of **tea**.”

2. **anachronism:** Anachronism is derived from a Greek word anachronous which means “against time”. Therefore, an anachronism is an error of chronology or timeline in a literary piece. In other words, anything that is out of time and out of place is an anachronism. Anachronisms appear in literature, paintings etc. and it is fascinating to explore them. Generally, they are considered errors that occur due to lack of research. For example, if a painter paints a portrait of Aristotle and shows him wearing a wrist watch, it would be an example of anachronism, as we all are aware that wristwatches did not exist during Aristotle’s time. Similarly, the presence of a wall clock in a stage setting that depicts the interior of a Roman fort is an anachronism.
3. **anaphora:** Anaphora is the literary device in which a phrase is repeated at the beginning of the following clauses or sentences. This repetition serves to emphasize the phrase while adding rhythm to the passage, making it more memorable and enjoyable to read. Anaphora, possibly the oldest literary device, has its roots in Biblical Psalms used to emphasize certain words or phrases. Gradually, Elizabethan and Romantic writers brought this device into practice. Examine the following psalm:

“O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

Have mercy upon me, O lord; for I am weak: O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed.

My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O Lord, how long?”

The repetition of the phrase “O Lord,” attempts to create a spiritual sentiment. This is anaphora.

Common Anaphora Examples

It is common for us to use anaphora in our everyday speech to lay emphasis on the idea we want to convey or for self affirmation. Read the following anaphora examples:

- “Every day, every night, in every way, I am getting better and better”
- “My life is my purpose. My life is my goal. My life is my inspiration.”

4. **antithesis:** In literature and in practice, antithesis can be used and identified in a variety of ways. 1. Antithesis is a person or thing that is the direct opposite of someone or something else; ie: “love is the

antithesis of selfishness". Used in a sentence: Friends of the actress say she is quite the antithesis of her giddy and frivolous character. 2. Anthesis is a contrast or opposition between two things; ie, "the antithesis between occult and rational mentalities" and 3. anthesis is a figure of speech in which an opposition or contrast of ideas is expressed by parallelism of words that are the opposites of, or strongly contrasted with, each other, such as "hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins"

5. **argument, literary:** An argument is the main statement of a poem, an essay, a short story, or a novel that usually appears as an introduction or a point on which the writer will develop his work in order to convince his readers. Literature does not merely entertain. It also intends to shape the outlook of the readers. Therefore, an argument does not intend to serve only as an introduction but it attracts the reader's focus to an issue that will be made clear gradually.
6. **aside:** A term used in drama and theater, an **aside** happens when a character's dialogue is spoken but not heard by the other actors on the stage. Asides are useful for giving the audience special information about the other characters onstage or the action of the plot.
7. **asyndeton:** Asyndeton is derived from a Greek word *asyndeton* which means unconnected. It is a stylistic device used in literature and poetry to intentionally eliminate conjunctions between the phrases and in the sentence, yet maintain the grammatical accuracy. This literary tool helps in reducing the indirect meaning of the phrase and presents it in a concise form. It started to be seen in Greek and Latin literature.

Types of Asyndeton

Asyndeton examples may be classified into two types **A. One type of asyndeton is used between words, phrases and a sentence.** For example: "Are all thy conquests, glories, triumphs, spoils, Shrunk to this little measure?" (*Julius Caesar, Act 3, Scene 1* by William Shakespeare)

B. Second type is used between sentences or clauses. For example: Without looking, without making a sound, without talking (*Oedipus at Colonus* by Sophocles)

Difference between Syndeton and Asyndeton

Syndeton and asyndeton are opposite to each other. Syndeton includes addition of multiple conjunctions such as in "He eats and sleeps and drinks." On the other hand, asyndeton is the elimination or leaving out of conjunctions such as in "He eats, sleeps, drinks." Both create a completely different effect. Syndeton slows down the rhythm of speech and makes it moderate whereas asyndeton speeds up the rhythm of the speech.

Examples of Asyndeton from Literature

Following excerpt is taken from *Othello* by William Shakespeare:

Iago:

Call up her father.
Rouse him. Make after him, Poison his delight,
Proclaim him in the streets. Incense her kinsmen,
And, though he in a fertile climate dwell,

In this extract, Shakespeare has eliminated conjunctions deliberately. There is shortage of "and, for, or, but" which are required to join the sentences. Due to this, the words have been emphasized and feelings of anger and jealousy are articulated explicitly.

8. **balanced sentence:** A *balanced sentence* is a sentence made up of two parts that are roughly equal in length, importance, and grammatical structure: a paired construction. A balanced sentence that makes a contrast is called antithesis. "Balance and parallelism do not communicate meaning by themselves," says Thomas S. Kane. "But balanced and parallel constructions do reinforce and enrich meaning" (*The New*

Oxford Guide to Writing). Basically, balanced sentences will have parallel structure in its construction.
Example: "Vision without action is daydream; action without vision is nightmare." (Japanese proverb)

9. **Ballad:** a type of poetry or verse which was basically used in dance songs in ancient France. Later on, during the late 16th and 17th centuries, it spread over the majority of European nations. Owing to its popularity and emotional appeal, it remained a powerful tool for poets and lyricists to prepare music in the form of lyrical ballads, and earn a handsome income from it. Ballads, no matter which category they fall into, mostly rely on simple and easy-to-understand language, or dialect from its origin. Stories about hardships, tragedies, love, and romance are standard ingredients of the ballad. This is irrespective of geographical origins. Another conspicuous element of any ballad is the recurrence of certain lines at regular intervals. Ballads can also be in interrogative form, with appropriate answers to every question asked. Ballads seldom offer a direct message about a certain event, character, or situation. It is left to the audience to deduce the moral of the story from the whole narration.
10. **Complaint:** insert complaint: also called plaint, in literature, a formerly popular variety of poem that laments or protests unrequited love or tells of personal misfortune, misery, or injustice. A plaintive poem; frequently the complaint of a lover to his inconstant, unresponsive or exacting mistress. For example, Surrey's "Complaint by Night of the Lover not Beloved". The theme or burden of complaint became a convention, and finally a cliché, of a great deal of love poetry, but it was still being worked successfully in the middle of the 17th century by the Cavalier poets, and particularly well by poets like Thomas Carew and Thomas Stanley. There are other types of complaint; most of them lament the state of the world, the vicissitudes of Fortune and the poet's personal griefs. An early and fine example is "Deor", an Old English poem about a minstrel who is out of favour and has been supplanted by another. To this may be added two of the best, both by Chaucer: "A Complaint Unto Pity", in which the poet seeks some respite for his unhappy state, and the more light-hearted "Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse".
11. **catharsis:** A Catharsis is an emotional discharge through which one can achieve a state of moral or spiritual renewal or achieve a state of liberation from anxiety and stress. Catharsis is a Greek word and it means cleansing. In literature it is used for the cleansing of emotions of the characters. It can also be any other radical change that leads to emotional rejuvenation of a person. Originally, the term was used as a metaphor in Poetics by Aristotle to explain the impact of tragedy on the audiences. He believed that catharsis was the ultimate end of a tragic artistic work and it marked its quality. He further said in Poetics: "Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude;...though pity [leôs] and fear [phobos] effecting the proper purgation [catharsis] of these emotions (c. 350 BCE, Book 6.2)

Catharsis Examples

"Macbeth" by William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare wrote two of the famous examples of catharsis. One of these catharsis examples is his tragic drama "Macbeth". This play presents a great example of catharsis. The audience and readers of Macbeth usually pity the tragic central figure of the play because he was blinded by his destructive preoccupation with ambition.

In Act 1 he is made the thane of Cawdor by King Duncan, which makes him a prodigy, well-regarded for his valor and talent. However, the era of his doom starts when he, like most people, gets carried away by ambition and the supernatural world as well. Subsequently, he loses his wife, his veracity and eventually his life. The temptation of ambition robs him of the essence of his existence as a human being and leaves behind nothing but discontent and a worthless life. In Act V, Macbeth (5.5.24-28) gathers this idea in his soliloquy. He says while speaking of his life:

"...a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing."

12. **chiasmus:** Chiasmus is a rhetorical device in which two or more clauses are balanced against each other by the reversal of their structures in order to produce an artistic effect. Example: "Never let a fool kiss You or a kiss fool you." Notice that the second half of the above mentioned sentence is an inverted form of the first half both grammatically and logically. In the simplest sense, the term chiasmus applies to almost all "criss-cross" structures and this is the concept that is common these days. In its strict classical sense, however, the function of chiasmus is to reverse grammatical structure or ideas of sentences given that the same words and phrases are not repeated.
13. **abstract and concrete language:** **Abstract language** refers to things that are intangible, that is, which are perceived not through the senses but by the mind, such as truth, God, education, vice, transportation, poetry, war, love. **Concrete language** identifies things perceived through the senses (touch, smell, sight, hearing, and taste), such as soft, stench, red, loud, or bitter.
14. **dramatic monologue:** In literature and drama, an extended speech by one person while others are on stage.. The term has several closely related meanings. A dramatic monologue is any speech of some duration addressed by a character to a second person. A soliloquy is a type of monologue in which a character directly addresses an audience or speaks his thoughts aloud while alone or while the other actors keep silent. In fictional literature, an interior monologue is a type of monologue that exhibits the thoughts, feelings, and associations passing through a character's mind. Dramatic monologue in poetry, also known as a persona poem, shares many characteristics with a theatrical monologue: an audience is implied; there is no dialogue; and the poet speaks through an assumed voice—a character, a fictional identity, or a persona. Because a dramatic monologue is by definition one person's speech, it is offered without overt analysis or commentary, placing emphasis on subjective qualities that are left to the audience to interpret.

Though the technique is evident in many ancient Greek dramas, the dramatic monologue as a poetic form achieved its first era of distinction in the work of Victorian poet Robert Browning. Browning's poems "My Last Duchess" and "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister," though considered largely inscrutable by Victorian readers, have become models of the form. His monologues combine the elements of the speaker and the audience so deftly that the reader seems to have some control over how much the speaker will divulge in his monologue. This complex relationship is evident in the following excerpt from "My Last Duchess":

Even had you skill
In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, 'Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark' -- and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
—E'en then would be some stooping...

15. **ennui:** a feeling of utter weariness and discontent resulting from satiety or lack of interest; boredom:
Example: The endless lecture produced an unbearable ennui. A persistent feeling of tiredness or weariness which often afflicts existential man, often manifesting as boredom.
16. **foil:** In literature, a foil is a character that shows qualities that are in contrast with the qualities of another character with the objective to highlight the traits of the other character. The term foil, though generally being applied for a contrasting character, may also be used for any comparison that is drawn to portray a difference between two things. What we observe in literature very often is that a foil is a secondary character who contrasts with the major character to enhance the importance of the major character.

17. **grotesque:** In fiction, characters are usually considered **grotesque** if they induce both empathy and disgust. (A character who inspires disgust alone is simply a villain or a monster.) This term originated from oddly shaped ornaments found within Roman dwellings, or grottoes, during the first century. From a literary standpoint, this term implies a mutation of the characters, plants and/or animals. This mutation transforms the normal features and/or behaviors into veritable extremes that are meant to be frightening and/or disturbingly comic (Cornwell 273). Example: An example of the term grotesque can be found within the short story "Rappaccini's Daughter." Within the tale, the flowers found within the garden of the inventor have been mutated into beautiful harbingers of death. While the physical features of the plants have grown more exquisite, their interior workings have become a frightening caricature of normal plant-life. (2) The term grotesque also defines a work in which two separate modes, comedy and tragedy, are mixed. The result is a disturbing fiction wherein comic circumstances prelude horrific tragedy and vice versa. Example: Within the short story "Revelation," penned by Flannery O'Connor, the author blends the comic aspects of the conversation between the two elder women within the tragic appearance and anger of the young girl. Comedy and tragedy continue to mix throughout the tale as the elder woman, Mrs. Turpin, comes to discover the "true" nature of God as a result of the young woman's outburst. A perfect example of the grotesquely sublime is her heavenly vision while standing in the hog-pen. --Lauren Gibson
18. **modify:** **1.** To change in form or character; alter. **2.** To make less extreme, severe, or strong: *refused to modify her stand on the issue.* **3. Grammar** To qualify or limit the meaning of. For example, *summer* modifies *day* in the phrase *a summer day*. **4. Linguistics** To change (a vowel) by umlaut.
19. **motivation:** When an author writes a book or a scriptwriter pens a screenplay, he must always consider why his characters behave in certain ways. Essentially, what makes them do what they do? A writer must also consider the character's goal or endgame. In order for a reader or spectator to believe the story, they must get to know the characters in the narrative. Several factors go into determining what motivates a character. A reader is often given pieces of a character's backstory, also known as exposition, in order to make him three-dimensional. Where was the character raised? What was his family life like? Was he rich or poor? Does he treat people well, or is he mean? Is the character intelligent? If we know that a character's father suddenly left one day when he was eight years old and the little boy cried every night for a year, then when the father returns to visit 20 years later, we can expect the character to be angry with his dad for abandoning him. So, if he yells at his father or refuses to see him, the reader understands the character's motivation, or the character's reason to act.
20. **occasion:** noun **1.** a particular time, especially as marked by certain circumstances or occurrences: *ex: They met on three occasions.* **2.** a special or important time, event, ceremony, celebration, etc. *His birthday will be quite an occasion.* **3.** a convenient or favorable time, opportunity, or juncture: *This slack period would be a good occasion to take inventory.* **4.** the immediate or incidental cause or reason for some action or result: *What is the occasion for this uproar?* **5.** (in the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead) the coincidence of the eternal objects forming a specific point-event.
21. **polysyndeton:** several conjunctions are used to join connected clauses in places where they are not contextually necessary. For example, consider the following sentence: "The dinner was so good; I ate the chicken, and the salad, and the turkey, and the wild rice, and the bread, and the mashed potatoes, and the cranberry sauce." In this sentence, the repetition of "and" is not necessary and could be omitted. However, the use of polysyndeton in this example adds a sense of the amazing abundance of the dinner and that the speaker could not stop from eating or describing all of these dishes. Another example: "Oh, my piglets, we are the origins of war – not history's forces, nor the times, nor justice, nor the lack of it, nor causes, nor religions, nor ideas, nor kinds of government – not any other thing. We are the killers." –Katherine Hepburn, *The Lion in Winter*

22. **prosody:** <http://literarydevices.net/prosody/>
23. **soliloquy:** a speech that a character makes in a work of drama only to him or herself (no other characters on stage). The soliloquy is presented for the audience to understand the character's inner thoughts and feelings as though they were not being spoken at all. Generally, no other characters hear a soliloquy and if they are onstage during a soliloquy the character who is giving it seems to disregard them; the other characters are involved in other actions. Throughout the ages, dramatists have written soliloquies to express characters thoughts and feelings that cannot be shared with other characters.
24. **spondee:** A metrical foot, spondee is a beat in a poetic line which consists of two accented syllables (stressed/stressed) or DUM-DUM stress pattern. Spondee is a poetic device that is not very common, as other metrical feet like iamb and trochee. We rarely find poems written in spondee alone; however, poets use spondee by combining other metrical feet. For instance, a word "faithful" contains spondee. If you say this word loudly, you would notice that you are putting an equal amount of stress on both syllables "faith" and "ful." Usually poets do not use spondaic meter in the entire poem, as it does not add a basis to metrical line. Therefore, they combine it with other metrical patterns – a combination which changes the pace of a poem. Since it is an irregular feet, it does not add high structure or rhythm to a verse. The purpose of using spondaic meter is to emphasize particular words and give heightened feelings, or provide emotional experience to the readers by converting a normal expression into dramatic form. It also makes sense more compact and compressed. Though spondee does not add much rhythm, it adds feelings of expectancy in a verse.

Example:

Break, break, break,
On thy cold grey stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

(Break, Break, Break by Alfred Lord Tennyson)

This is the most popular example of spondaic meter. Look at the first two lines of this stanza. Three consecutive spondaic meters are underlined. Read out these lines aloud, and you would notice both syllables are using equal stress pattern.

26. **synecdoche** is a literary device in which a part of something represents the whole, or it may use a whole to represent a part. Synecdoche may also use larger groups to refer to smaller groups, or vice versa. It may also call a thing by the name of the material it is made of, or it may refer to a thing in a container or packaging by the name of that container or packing.

Example: "Ozymandias" (By Percy Bysshe Shelley)

"Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them."

"The hand" in these lines refers to the sculptor, who carved the "lifeless things" into a grand statue.

Difference Between Synecdoche and Metonymy: Synecdoche examples are often misidentified as metonymy (another literary device). While they resemble one another to some extent, they are not the same.

Synecdoche refers to the whole of a thing by the name of any one of its parts. For example, calling a car “wheels” is a synecdoche because a part of the car, its “wheels,” stands for the whole car. However, in metonymy, the word used to describe a thing is closely linked to that particular thing, but is not necessarily a part of it. For example, using the word “crown” to refer to power or authority is a metonymy, used to replace the word “king” or “queen.”

27. **understatement (litotes):** a way of speaking which minimizes the significance of something. When using understatement, a speaker or writer often employs restraint in describing the situation at hand and uses an expression with less emphasis or strength than would be expected. **Litotes**—is a form of understatement which uses a negative to assert the opposite, positive quality. Litotes can also use double negatives. For example, if a person is very intelligent someone else might say, “He's not dumb.” This is understatement because the person is far from dumb. One could also say, “He's not unintelligent,” a double negative. Note that the understatement comes from context; if someone is just protesting another's assertion that the man in question is dumb then it might not come off as understatement.
28. **versification:**
<http://autocww.colorado.edu/~flc/E64ContentFiles/LiteraryGenres/Versification.html>

Additional Vocabulary:

29. **acerbic:** expressing harsh or sharp criticism in a clever way
30. **bombastic:** (of speech, writing, etc.) high-sounding; inflated; pretentious.
31. **dubious:** wavering or hesitating in opinion; inclined to doubt
32. **effusive:** expressing feelings of gratitude, pleasure, or approval in an unrestrained or heartfelt manner
33. **solace:** comfort or consolation in a time of distress or sadness
34. **evoke:** bring or recall to the conscious mind
35. **pretense:** an attempt to make something that is not the case appear true; a claim, especially a false or ambitious one
36. **curbing:** restrain or keep in check
37. **aesthetic:** concerned with beauty or the appreciation of beauty
38. **piety:** the quality of being religious or reverent
39. **scorn:** the feeling or belief that someone or something is worthless or despicable; contempt
40. **pastoral:** a work of literature portraying an idealized version of country life
41. **offspring:** a person's child or children
42. **asunder:** divided into pieces
43. **disdain** - *noun* a communication that indicates a lack of respect by patronizing the recipient; lack of respect accompanied by a feeling of intense dislike; *verb* reject with contempt; look down on with disdain
44. **lethargy** - *noun* a state of comatose torpor (as found in sleeping sickness); inactivity; showing an unusual lack of energy; weakness characterized by a lack of vitality or energy
45. **reciprocal** - *adj.* concerning each of two or more persons or things; especially given or done in return
46. **demean** - *verb* reduce in worth or character, usually verbally
47. **suitor** - *noun* a man who courts a woman
48. **remorse** - *noun* a feeling of deep regret (usually for some misdeed)
49. **vindictive** - *adj.* showing malicious ill will and a desire to hurt; motivated by spite; disposed to seek revenge or intended for revenge
50. **ambivalent** - *adj.* uncertain or unable to decide about what course to follow
51. **defiance** - *noun* a defiant act; intentionally contemptuous behavior or attitude; a hostile challenge

52. **lament** - *noun* a cry of sorrow and grief; a mournful poem; a lament for the dead; a song or hymn of mourning composed or performed as a memorial to a dead person; *verb* express grief verbally; regret strongly
53. **unthrift**-lack of thrift: extravagance, wastefulness
54. **autonomy** - *noun* immunity from arbitrary exercise of authority: political independence; personal independence
55. **folly** - *noun* foolish or senseless behavior; the trait of acting stupidly or rashly; the quality of being rash and foolish; a stupid mistake
56. **passivity** - *noun* the trait of remaining inactive; a lack of initiative; submission to others or to outside influences
57. **revel** - *noun* unrestrained merrymaking; *verb* celebrate noisily, often indulging in drinking; engage in uproarious festivities; take delight in
58. **spurn** - *verb* reject with contempt