

11th Grade IB: Language and Literature

The Language of Literary Study

*You need to be familiar with these terms **BEFORE** you enter class in August.*

Allegory: a story in which people, things and actions represent an idea about life; allegories often have a strong moral or lesson.

Alliteration (a-LIT-uh-RAY-shuhn): the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words (tongue twisters)

Allusion (a-LOO-zhuhn): a reference in a literary work to a person, place, or thing in history or another work of literature. Allusions are often indirect or brief references to well-known characters or events.

Analogy: a comparison of two or more like objects that suggests if they are alike in certain respects, they will probably be alike in other ways as well.

Anecdote: a brief account of an interesting incident or event that usually is intended to entertain or to make a point.

Apostrophe: In poetry, an **apostrophe** is a term used when a speaker directly addresses someone or something that isn't present in the poem. The speaker could be addressing an abstract concept like love, a person (dead or alive), a place, or even a thing, like the sun or the sea.

Aside: an actor's speech, directed to the audience, that is not supposed to be heard by other actors on stage. An aside is used to let the audience know what a character is about to do or what he or she is thinking.

Assonance: repetition of vowel sounds within a line of poetry.

Author's purpose: an author's purpose is his or her reason for creating a particular work. The purpose can be to entertain, explain or inform, express an opinion, or to persuade.

Blank Verse: Unrhymed iambic pentameter.

Caesura: a pause or a sudden break in a line of poetry

Catharsis: The purging of the feelings of pity and fear that, according to Aristotle, occur in the audience of tragic drama. The audience experiences catharsis at the end of the play, following the catastrophe.

Character: a person who is responsible for the thoughts and actions within a story, poem, or other literature. Characters are extremely important because they are the medium through which a reader interacts with a piece of literature. Every character has his or her own personality, which a creative author uses to assist in forming the plot of a story or creating a mood.

Terms Associated with Character:

Antagonist (an-TAG-uh-nist): a character in a story or poem who deceives, frustrates, or works against the main character, or protagonist, in some way. The antagonist doesn't necessarily have to be a person. It could be death, the devil, an illness, or any challenge that prevents the main character from living "happily ever after."

Caricature: a picture or imitation of a person's habits, physical appearance or mannerisms exaggerated in a comic or absurd way.

Foil: a character who serves as a contrast or a conflict to another character

Hero/Heroine: a character whose actions are inspiring or noble; often but not always the main character in a story.

Main Characters: the characters who are central to the plot of a story; main characters are usually dynamic and round.

Minor Characters: a less important character who interacts with the main characters, helping to move the plot along and providing background for the story. Minor characters are usually static and flat. novel, play, story, or poem. He or she may also be referred to as the "hero" of a work.

Protagonist: The main/central character. Not necessarily the hero or "good guy."

Characterization: all of the techniques that writers use to create characters.

Terms Associated with Characterization:

1. Character trait: a character's personality; a trait is not a physical description of a character.
2. Direct characterization: the author directly states a character's traits or makes direct comments about a character's nature.
3. Dynamic character: a character who changes throughout the course of the story.
4. Flat character: a character about whom little information is provided.
5. Indirect Characterization: the author does not directly state a character's traits; instead the reader draws conclusions and discovers a character's traits based upon clues provided by the author.
6. Round Character: is a character who is fully described by the author (several character traits, background information, etc.)
7. Static Character: a character who does not change or who changes very little in the course of a story.

Concrete poetry: a type of poetry that uses its physical or visual form to present its message.

Conflict: the tension or problem in the story; a struggle between opposing forces.

Terms Associated With Conflict:

1. Central conflict: the dominant or most important conflict in the story.
2. External conflict: the problem or struggle that exists between the main character and an outside force. (ex: person vs. person, person vs. society, person vs. nature, person vs. the supernatural, person vs. technology, etc.)
3. Internal conflict: the problem or struggle that takes place in the main character's mind (person vs. self).

Connotation (KAH-nuh-TAE-shun): the idea and feeling associated with a word as opposed to its dictionary definition or denotation.

Consonance: the repetition of consonant sounds anywhere within a line of poetry. Alliteration is a specific type of consonance.

Couplet (KUP-let): a rhymed pair of lines in a poem. One of William Shakespeare's trademarks was to end a sonnet with a couplet, as in the poem "Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day":

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long as lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Denotation (DEE-no-TAE-shuhn) is the opposite of connotation in that it is the exact or dictionary meaning of a word.

Dialect: a form of language that is spoken in a particular place or by a particular group of people.

Dramatic Monologue: a literary device that is used when a character reveals his or her innermost thoughts and feelings, those that are hidden throughout the course of the story line, through a poem or a speech. This speech, where only one character speaks, is recited

while other characters are present onstage. This monologue often comes during a climactic moment in a work and often reveals hidden truths about a character, their history and their relationships.

Elegy (EL-e-je): a type of literature defined as a song or poem that expresses sorrow or lamentation, usually for one who has died.

Enjambment: in poetry, the running over of a line or thought into the next of verse

Epigram (ep-e-gram): a short poem or verse that seeks to ridicule a thought or event, usually with witticism or sarcasm.

Epic: a long narrative poem about the adventures of a hero whose actions reflect the ideals and values of a nation or group.

Epiphanly: a sudden moment of understanding that causes a character to change or to act in a certain way.

Epitaph: a short poem or verse written in memory of someone

Extended Metaphor: a figure of speech that compares two essentially unlike things in great length.

Figurative Language or Figure of Speech: expressions that are not literally true. see simile, metaphor, hyperbole, understatement, irony, oxymoron, cliché, metonymy

Flashback: an interruption of the chronological sequence (as in a film or literary work) of an event of earlier occurrence. A flashback is a narrative technique that allows a writer to present past events during current events, in order to provide background for the current narration.

Foot: a unit of meter within a line of poetry

Foreshadowing: when the writer provides clues or hints that suggest or predict future event in a story.

Free Verse: poetry without regular patterns of rhyme and rhythm. Often used to capture the sounds and rhythms of ordinary speech.

Genre (ZHAHN-ruh): a type or category of literature. The four main literary genres include: fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama.

Haiku: a traditional form of Japanese poetry, usually dealing with nature. A haiku has three lines and describes a single moment, feeling or thing. The first and third lines contain five syllables and the second line contains seven syllables.

Heroic Couplet or closed couplet: a couplet consisting of two successive rhyming lines that contain a complete thought.

Hyperbole (hi-per-bo-lee): a figure of speech in which the truth is exaggerated for emphasis or humorous effect.

Idiom: a phrase or expression that means something different from what the words actually say (for example, using the phrase “over his head” instead of “He doesn’t understand”).

Imagery: the use of words and phrases that appeal to the five senses. Writers use sensory details to help readers imagine how things look, feel, smell, sound, and taste.

Irony (i-RAH-nee): a contrast between what is expected and what actually exists or happens. Irony spices up a literary work by adding unexpected twists and allowing the reader to become more involved with the characters and plot.

Types of Irony:

1. Verbal irony: occurs when the speaker means something totally different than what he or she is saying and often times the opposite of what a character is saying is true.
2. Dramatic irony: occurs when facts are not known to the characters in a work of literature but are known by the audience.
3. Cosmic irony: suggests that some unknown force brings about dire and dreadful events.
4. Situational irony: the difference between what is expected to happen and the way events actually work out.

Lyric (LEER-ick) poetry: a song-like poem written mainly to express the feelings or emotions of a single speaker.

Memoir: a specific type of autobiography; like autobiography, a memoir is about the author's personal experiences. However, a memoir does not necessarily cover the author's entire life.

Metaphor (met-AH-for): a type of figurative language in which a comparison is made between two things that are essentially unlike but may have one quality in common. Unlike a simile, a metaphor does not contain an explicit word of comparison, such as "like" or "as."

Meter: the regular pattern of accented and unaccented syllables. Although all poems have rhythm, not all poems have regular meter. Each unit of meter is known as a foot. The conventional symbols used to identify accented and unaccented syllables are: "/" to indicate an accented syllable; and an "X" or a small symbol shaped like a "U" to indicate an unaccented symbol. The metrical foot is the basic unit of meter. The most common metrical feet and their patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables are as follows:

- iamb: X /
- trochee: / X
- anapest: X X /
- dactyl: / X X
- spondee: //
- pyrrhic: X X 0

The meter of a poem is determined by the predominant metrical foot, and by the number of feet per line that predominates in the poem. The following terms indicate the number of feet per line:

- monometer: one foot per line
- dimeter: two feet per line
- trimeter: three feet per line
- tetrameter: four feet per line
- pentameter: five feet per line
- hexameter: six feet per line
- heptameter: seven feet per line
- octameter: eight feet per line

A poem written in predominantly iambic meter, with five feet per line, would be called "iambic pentameter." One written in primarily trochaic meter, with four feet per line, would be "trochaic tetrameter." One written in anapestic meter, with three feet per line, would be "anapestic trimeter."

Metonymy: the metaphorical substitution of one word or phrase for another related word or phrase. Example: "The pen is mightier than the sword." The word "pen" is used in place of "words" and the word "sword" is used to represent the idea of fighting or war.

Modes of Persuasion: Aristotle defines the three modes of persuasion that work together to create the rhetorical situation:

Ethos is an appeal based on the reputation or character of the speaker. Can also be an appeal based on shared values or shared ethics—speaker tries to establish credibility and trustworthiness/likeability.

Logos is an appeal based on facts and logic. The speaker uses reasoning, logical organization, or data, etc.

Pathos is an appeal to emotion. ("pulling the heartstrings")

Mood: a mood or atmosphere is the feeling that a literary work conveys to readers. Mood is created through the use of plot, character, the author's descriptions, etc.

Motif (moh-TEEF): a recurring object, concept, or structure in a work of literature. A motif may also be two contrasting elements in a work, such as good and evil. A motif is important because it allows one to see main points and themes that the author is trying to express, in order that one might be able to interpret the work more accurately.

Myth: a traditional story that attempts to explain how the world was created or why the world is the way that it is. Myths are stories that are passed on from generation to generation and are of unknown authorship. Also see folklore.

Narrative: any writing that tells a story. Most novels and short stories are placed into the categories of first-person and third-person narratives, which are based on who is telling the story and from what perspective.

Terms that Relate to "Narrative":

1. **Narrative Poetry:** poetry that tells a story. A narrative poem can come in many forms and styles, both complex and simple, short or long, as long as it tells a story. Like fiction, narrative poetry contains characters, settings and plots.
2. **Narrator:** one who tells a story; the speaker or the "voice" of an oral or written work. The narrator is not usually the same person as the author. The narrator is the direct window into a piece of work. Who the author chooses to narrate establishes the point of view in the story.
3. **Unreliable Narrator:** one who gives his or her own understanding of a story, instead of the explanation and interpretation the author wishes the audience to obtain. This type of action tends to alter the audience's opinion of the conclusion.

Ode: a lyric poem of some length, usually of serious or meditative nature and having an elevated style and formal structure.

Onomatopoeia: the use of words whose sound suggest their meaning (ex. buzz, bang, hiss).

Oxymoron: a form of figurative language combining contradictory words or ideas (ex. jumbo shrimp, bittersweet).

Paradox: a statement that seems to contradict itself but is, nevertheless, true.

Parallelism: the use of similar grammatical constructions to express ideas that are related or equal in importance. For example: The sun rises. The sun sets.

Paraphrasing: the restatement of a text by readers in their own words or in another form.

Parody: a literary or artistic work that imitates the characteristic style of an author's work for comic effect or ridicule.

Personification {PER-son-E-fih-ka-shEn): a figure of speech where animals, ideas or inanimate objects are given human characteristics.

Persuasion: persuasive writing is meant to sway readers' feelings, beliefs, or actions. Persuasion normally appeals to both the mind and the emotions of readers. See ethos, logos, pathos, and Kairos.

Plot: the sequence of related events that make up a story.

Terms Associated with Plot:

1. Exposition: introduces the characters and the conflicts they face.
2. Inciting incident: occurs after the exposition and introduces the central conflict within the story.
3. Rising action: following the introduction of the central conflict; complications arise as the characters struggle with the conflict.
4. Climax: the turning point, point of maximum interest, and highest tension in the plot of a story, play, or film. The climax usually occurs towards the end of story after the reader has understood the conflict and become emotionally involved with the characters. At the climax, the conflict is resolved, and the outcome of the plot becomes clear.
5. Falling action: the end of the central conflict in a story, when the action starts to wind down.
6. Resolution or denouement: occurs after the climax and is where conflicts are resolved and loose ends are tied up.
7. Subplot: an additional minor plot that involves a secondary conflict in the story; the subplot may or may not affect the main plot.

Poetry/verse: a type of literature in which ideas and feelings are expressed in compact, imaginative, and often musical language. Poets arrange words in ways designed to touch readers' senses, emotions, and minds. Most poems are written in lines that may contain patterns of rhyme and rhythm. These lines may in turn be grouped in stanzas. See narrative, epic, ballad, lyric, haiku, limerick and concrete poetry.

Point of View: perspective from which a story is told. Understanding the point of view used in a work is critical to understanding literature; it serves as the instrument to relay the events of a story, and in some instances the feelings and motives of the character(s).

Terms Associated with Point of View:

1. First person point of view: the person telling the story is one of the characters in the story. It is the "I" point of view. It is the most limited among the types because the narrator can only state what he or she sees, feels, and hears. He or she cannot go into the minds of the other characters.
2. Second person point of view: refers to the use of "you" in explanations or arguments. It is not frequently used, but is appropriate in certain circumstances. Most second person points of view occur within instructions that are meant to be followed.
3. Third person limited or third person objective: the person telling the story is not one of the characters in the story. He or she is an outside observer. The reader can only know what one character learns through interaction with other characters or through overheard conversations. The narrator cannot supply the thoughts or feelings of other characters in the story.
4. Third person omniscient: the narrator is not a character in the story, but the events in the story are seen through the eyes of more than one of the characters. The narrator is considered to be "all knowing" and cannot only see and hear everything that is happening to all characters in the story, but can also enter their minds and tell the reader what each is thinking and feeling. This is the least limited point of view because the narrator has knowledge of all the characters.

Primary Source: a first-hand account of an event; primary sources include: diaries, journals, letters, speeches, news stories, photographs, and pieces of art.

Propaganda: text that uses false or misleading information to present a slanted point of view.

Prose: the ordinary form of spoken and written language; that is, language that lacks the special features of poetry. Examples of prose include: essays, stories, articles, speeches, etc.

Repetition: a technique in which a sound, word, phrase, or line is repeated for effect or emphasis.

Rhetoric: the art of writing and speaking effectively. (*see Modes of Persuasion*)

Rhyme (rime): repetition of an identical or similarly accented sound or sounds in a work. Rhyme gives poems flow and rhythm, helping the lyricist tell a story and convey a mood.

Some Terms Associated with Rhyme:

1. End or terminal rhymes: words that rhyme at the end of a verse-line.
2. Eye rhymes: are words that when written appear to rhyme, but when spoken do not (ex: dog/fo cough/enough/bough, etc).
3. Internal rhyme: rhyme found within a line of poetry (alliteration, assonance, and consonance).
4. Slant rhyme (slant rime) is also known as near rhyme, half rhyme, off rhyme, imperfect rhyme, oblique rhyme, or pararhyme. A distinctive system or pattern of metrical structure and verse composition in which two words have only their final consonant sounds and no preceding vowel or consonant sounds in common. Instead of perfect or identical sounds or rhyme, it is the repetition of near or similar sounds or the pairing of accented and unaccented sounds that if both were accented would be perfect rhymes (stopped and wept, parable and shell). Alliteration, assonance, and consonance are accepted as slant rhyme due to their usage of sound combinations (spilled and spoiled, chitter and chatter).

Rhyme Scheme: the pattern of end rhyme used in a poem, generally indicated by matching lowercase letters to show which lines rhyme. The letter "a" notes the first line, and all other lines rhyming with the first line. The first line that does not rhyme with the first, or "a" line, and all others that rhyme with this line, is noted by the letter "b", and so on. The rhyme scheme may follow a fixed pattern (as in a sonnet) or may be arranged freely according to the poet's requirements.

Rhythm (see also meter): refers to the pattern of flow of sounds created by the arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry. The accented or stressed syllables are marked with:

stressed or accented syllables: /

unstressed or unaccented syllables: X or U

Sarcasm: the use of praise to mock someone or something; the use of mockery or verbal irony

Satire: a literary technique in which ideas or customs are ridiculed for the purpose of improving society.

Scanning: the process of searching through writing for a particular fact or piece of information.

Scansion: The act of scanning a lines of poetry in order to determine the overall metre, the process of marking the stresses in a poem, and working out the metre from the distribution of stresses

Secondary source: a secondary source presents information compiled from or based on other sources.

Setting (set-ting): the time, place, physical details, and circumstances in which a story occurs. Settings include the background, atmosphere or environment in which characters live and move, and usually include physical characteristics of the surroundings. Settings enables the reader to better envision how a story unfolds by relating necessary physical details of a piece of literature.

Simile (sim-EH-lee): a simile is a type of figurative language that makes a comparison between two otherwise unlike objects or ideas by connecting them with the words "like" or "as."

Soliloquy: a speech delivered by a character who is alone on the stage.

Sonnet (sonn-IT): a sonnet is a distinctive poetic style that uses a system or pattern of metrical structure and verse composition usually consisting of fourteen lines, arranged in a set rhyme scheme or pattern. There are two main styles of sonnet, the Italian sonnet and the English sonnet.

1. The Italian or Petrarchan sonnet is usually written in iambic pentameter. It consists first of an octave, or eight lines, which asks a question or states a problem or proposition and follows the rhyme scheme a-b-b-a, a-b-b-a. The sestet, or last six lines, offers an answer, or a resolution to the proposed problem, and follows the rhyme scheme c-d-e-c-d-e.
2. In the English or Shakespearean sonnet the octave and sestet were replaced by three quatrains, each having its own independent rhyme scheme typically rhyming every other line, and ending with a rhyme couplet. Instead of the Italianic break between the octave and the sestet, the break comes between the twelfth and thirteenth lines. The ending couplet is often the main thought change of the poem, and has an epigrammatic ending. It follows the rhyme scheme a-b-a-b, c-d-c-d, e-f-e-f, g-g.

Sound Devices: see alliteration, onomatopoeia, repetition, rhyme and rhythm.

Speaker: the voice that talks to the reader in a poem, as the narrator does in a work of fiction. The speaker in the poem is not necessarily the poet.

Stanza: a grouping of two or more lines within a poem. A stanza is comparable to a paragraph in prose. Some common stanza forms include:

- two line stanza: couplet
- three line stanza: triplet or tercet
- four line stanza: quatrain
- five line stanza: cinquain or quintet
- six line stanza: sestet or sextet
- seven line stanza: septet
- eight line stanza: octave
- fourteen line stanza: sonnet

Stereotype: a broad generalization or an oversimplified view that disregards individual differences.

Style: how a writer says something; many elements contribute to style, including word choice, sentence length, tone and figurative language

Summarizing: the process of briefly recounting the main ideas of a piece of writing in a person's own words, while omitting unimportant details.

Symbolism: using something specific to stand for something else, especially an idea. A symbol is an image or object that is charged with meaning beyond its denotative value. Symbols of literature fall into three categories: *natural*, *conventional*, and *literary*.

1. Natural symbols: These present things not for themselves but for the ideas which people commonly associate with them. Eg: a star for hope, a cloud for despair, night for death, spring for a new beginning.
2. Conventional symbols: These present things for the meaning people within a particular group have agreed to give them (a national flag for the ideas of home or patriotism, a Christian cross or Star of David for associations with a particular religion)
3. Literary symbols- which are sometimes built upon natural or conventional symbols, adding meaning appropriate within a work at hand, but which sometimes also create meanings within a work for things that have no natural or conventional meaning outside it (Melville's white whale in *Moby Dick*; the Scarlet Letter A of Hester Prynne; the fire escape in *The Glass Menagerie*)

Synecdoche: a literary technique in which the whole is represented by naming one of its parts (genus named for species), or vice versa (species named for genus). Example: "You've got to come take a look at my new set of wheels." The vehicle here is represented by its parts, or wheels.

Theme: a common thread or repeated idea that is incorporated throughout a literary work. A theme is a thought or idea the author presents to the reader about life or human nature. Generally, a theme has to be extracted as the reader explores the passages of a work. The author utilizes the characters, plot, and other literary devices to assist the reader in this endeavor. The author often intertwines the theme throughout the work, and the full impact is slowly realized as the reader processes the text. The ability to recognize a theme is important because it allows the reader to understand part of the author's purpose in writing the book. The underlying idea, relatively abstract, that is given concrete expression in the literary work. The thematic material helps to give work focus and the thematic idea gives the work meaning.

Tone: the writer's attitude or feeling about his or her subject.

Tragedy: a dramatic work that presents the downfall of a dignified character or characters who are involved in historically or socially significant events. The events in a tragic plot are set in motion by a decision that is often an error in judgment. Succeeding events inevitably lead to a disastrous conclusion, usually death.

Understatement: a statement that is restrained in ironic contrast to what might have been said; the opposite of hyperbole. Understatement is usually used for a humorous effect.

Unreliable Narrator: (*see narrative*)

Voice: an author or narrator's distinctive style or manner of expression. Voice can reveal much about the author or narrator's personality.