

## **KB AND SOLO COMPILED NOTES ON LITERARY DEVICES**

### **Allegory**

Extending a metaphor so that objects, persons, and actions in a text are equated with meanings that lie outside

**Alliteration:** The repetition of an initial consonant sound.

**Allusion:** A brief, usually indirect reference to a person, place, or event--real or fictional

**Ambiguity :**The presence of two or more possible meanings in any passage.

**Analogy:** Reasoning or arguing from parallel cases.

**Anaphora :** The repetition of the same word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses or verses.

**Antithesis:** The juxtaposition of contrasting ideas in balanced phrases.

**Aphorism:**(1) A tersely phrased statement of a truth or opinion. (2) A brief statement of a principle.

**Apostrophe:** A rhetorical term for breaking off discourse to address some absent person or thing.

### **Appeal to Authority**

A fallacy in which a rhetor seeks to persuade not by giving evidence but by appealing to the respect people have for the famous.

### **Appeal to Ignorance**

A fallacy that uses an opponent's inability to disprove a conclusion as proof of the conclusion's correctness.

**Argument:** A course of reasoning aimed at demonstrating truth or falsehood.

**Assonance:** The identity or similarity in sound between internal vowels in neighboring words.

**Asyndeton :**The omission of conjunctions between words, phrases, or clauses (opposite of "polysyndeton").

### **Chiasmus**

A verbal pattern in which the second half of an expression is balanced against the first but with the parts reversed.

**Circular Argument :** An argument that commits the logical fallacy of assuming what it is attempting to prove.

**Claim:** An arguable statement.

**Climax :**Mounting by degrees through words or sentences of increasing weight and in parallel construction with an emphasis on the high point or culmination of a series of events.

Colloquial Characteristic of writing that seeks the effect of informal spoken language as distinct from formal or literary English.

**Comparison :**A rhetorical strategy in which a writer examines similarities and/or differences between two people, places, ideas, or objects.

**Concession:** An argumentative strategy by which a speaker or writer concedes a disputed point or leaves a disputed point to the audience or reader to decide.

**Confirmation:** The main part of a text in which logical arguments in support of a position are elaborated.

**Connotation :** The emotional implications and associations that a word may carry.

**Deduction :** A method of reasoning in which a conclusion follows necessarily from the stated premises.

**Denotation :** The direct or dictionary meaning of a word, in contrast to its figurative or associated meanings.

**Dialect :** A regional or social variety of a language distinguished by pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary.

## **Diction**

(1) The choice and use of words in speech or writing. (2) A way of speaking, usually assessed in terms of prevailing standards of pronunciation and elocution.

**Encomium :** A tribute or eulogy in prose or verse glorifying people, objects, ideas, or events.

**Epiphora :** The repetition of a word or phrase at the end of several clauses.

**Ethos:** A persuasive appeal based on the projected character of the speaker or narrator.

**Euphemism :** The substitution of an inoffensive term for one considered offensively explicit.

## **Exposition**

A statement or type of composition intended to give information about (or an explanation of) an issue, subject, method, or idea.

## **Extended Metaphor**

A comparison between two unlike things that continues throughout a series of sentences in a paragraph or lines in a poem.

**Fallacy :** An error in reasoning that renders an argument invalid.

## **False Dilemma**

A fallacy of oversimplification that offers a limited number of options (usually two) when in reality more options are available.

## **Figurative Language**

Language in which figures of speech (such as metaphors, similes, and hyperbole) freely occur.

## **Figures of Speech**

The various uses of language that depart from customary construction, order, or significance.

## **Flashback**

A shift in a narrative to an earlier event that interrupts the normal chronological development of a story.

**Hasty Generalization** : A fallacy in which a conclusion is not logically justified by sufficient or unbiased evidence.

**Hyperbole** : A figure of speech in which exaggeration is used for emphasis or effect; an extravagant statement.

**Imagery**: Vivid descriptive language that appeals to one or more of the senses.

### **Induction**

A method of reasoning by which a rhetor collects a number of instances and forms a generalization that is meant to apply to all instances.

**Invective**: Denunciatory or abusive language; discourse that casts blame on somebody or something.

### **Irony**

The use of words to convey the opposite of their literal meaning. A statement or situation where the meaning is directly contradicted by the appearance or presentation of the idea.

**Isocolon** : A succession of phrases of approximately equal length and corresponding structure.

### **Jargon**

The specialized language of a professional, occupational, or other group, often meaningless to outsiders.

### **Litotes**

A figure of speech consisting of an understatement in which an affirmative is expressed by negating its opposite.

### **Metaphor**

A figure of speech in which an implied comparison is made between two unlike things that actually have something important in common.

### **Metonymy**

A figure of speech in which one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it is closely associated (such as "crown" for "royalty").

**Mood** : The quality of a verb that conveys the writer's attitude toward a subject.

**Narrative** : A rhetorical strategy that recounts a sequence of events, usually in chronological order.

### **Onomatopoeia**

The formation or use of words that imitate the sounds associated with the objects or actions they refer to.

**Oxymoron** : A figure of speech in which incongruous or contradictory terms appear side by side.

**Paradox** : A statement that appears to contradict itself.

**Parallelism**: The similarity of structure in a pair or series of related words, phrases, or clauses.

### **Parody**

A literary or artistic work that imitates the characteristic style of an author or a work for comic effect or ridicule.

**Pathos** : The means of persuasion that appeals to the audience's emotions.

### **Periodic Sentence**

A long and frequently involved sentence, marked by suspended syntax, in which the sense is not completed until the final word--usually with an emphatic climax.

### **Personification**

A figure of speech in which an inanimate object or abstraction is endowed with human qualities or abilities.

**Point of View** : The perspective from which a speaker or writer tells a story or presents information.

**Prose**: Ordinary writing (both fiction and nonfiction) as distinguished from verse.

**Refutation** : The part of an argument wherein a speaker or writer anticipates and counters opposing points of view.

**Rhetoric** : The study and practice of effective communication.

**Rhetorical Question** : A question asked merely for effect with no answer expected.

### **Running Style**

Sentence style that appears to follow the mind as it worries a problem through, mimicking the "rambling, associative syntax of conversation"--the opposite of periodic sentence style.

**Sarcasm** : A mocking, often ironic or satirical remark.

### **Satire**

A text or performance that uses irony, derision, or wit to expose or attack human vice, foolishness, or stupidity.

### **Simile**

A figure of speech in which two fundamentally unlike things are explicitly compared, usually in a phrase introduced by "like" or "as."

### **Style**

Narrowly interpreted as those figures that ornament speech or writing; broadly, as representing a manifestation of the person speaking or writing.

**Syllogism**: A form of deductive reasoning consisting of a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion.

**Symbol** A person, place, action, or thing that (by association, resemblance, or convention) represents something other than itself.

### **Synecdoche**

A figure of speech in which a part is used to represent the whole, the whole for a part, the specific for the general, the general for the specific, or the material for the thing made from it.

**Syntax:**(1) The study of the rules that govern the way words combineto form phrases, clauses, and sentences. (2) The arrangement of words in a sentence.

**Thesis:** The main idea of an essay or report, often written as a single declarative sentence.

## **Tone**

A writer's attitude toward the subject and audience. Tone is primarily conveyed through diction, point of view, syntax, and level of formality.

**Transition :** The connection between two parts of a piece of writing, contributing to coherence.

## **Understatement**

A figure of speech in which a writer deliberately makes a situation seem less important or serious than it is.

## **Zeugma**

The use of a word to modify or govern two or more words although its use may be grammatically or logically correct with only one.

**SOUND DEVICES:** assonance, consonance, alliteration, onomatopoeia, euphony, rhyme, meter.

**Literary devices** refers to specific aspects of literature, in the sense of its universal function as an art form which expresses ideas through language, which we can recognize, identify, interpret and/or analyze. Literary devices collectively comprise the art form's components; the means by which authors create meaning through language, and by which readers gain understanding of and appreciation for their works. They also provide a conceptual framework for comparing individual literary works to others, both within and across genres. Both literary elements and literary techniques can rightly be called literary devices.

**Literary elements** refers to particular identifiable characteristics of a whole text. They are not "used," per se, by authors; they represent the elements of storytelling which are common to all literary and narrative forms. For example, every story has a theme, every story has a setting, every story has a conflict, every story is written from a particular point-of-view, etc. In order to be discussed legitimately as part of a textual analysis, literary elements must be specifically identified for that particular text.

**Literary techniques** refers to any specific, deliberate constructions or choices of language which an author uses to convey meaning in a particular way. An author's use of a literary technique usually occurs with a single word or phrase, or a particular group of words or phrases, at one single point in a text. Unlike literary elements, literary techniques are not necessarily present in every text; they represent deliberate, conscious choices by individual authors.

**Allegory:** Where every aspect of a story is representative, usually symbolic, of something else, usually a larger abstract concept or important historical/geopolitical event.

Lord of the Flies provides a compelling allegory of human nature, illustrating the three sides of the psyche through its sharply-defined main characters.

**Alliteration:** The repetition of consonant sounds within close proximity, usually in consecutive words within the same sentence or line.

**Antagonist:** Counterpart to the main character and source of a story's main conflict. The person may not be "bad" or "evil" by any conventional moral standard, but he/she opposes the protagonist in a significant way. (Although it is

technically a literary element, the term is only useful for identification, as part of a discussion or analysis of character; it cannot generally be analyzed by itself.)

**Anthropomorphism:** Where animals or inanimate objects are portrayed in a story as people, such as by walking, talking, or being given arms, legs, facial features, human locomotion or other anthropoid form. (This technique is often incorrectly called personification.)

The King and Queen of Hearts and their playing-card courtiers comprise only one example of Carroll's extensive use of anthropomorphism in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.

**Blank verse:** Non-rhyming poetry, usually written in iambic pentameter.

Most of Shakespeare's dialogue is written in blank verse, though it does occasionally rhyme.

**Character:** The people who inhabit and take part in a story. When discussing character, as distinct from characterization, look to the essential function of the character, or of all the characters as a group, in the story as a whole.

Rather than focus on one particular character, Lord assembles a series of brief vignettes and anecdotes involving multiple characters, in order to give the reader the broadest possible spectrum of human behavior.

Golding uses his main characters to represent the different parts of the human psyche, to illustrate mankind's internal struggle between desire, intellect, and conscience.

**Characterization:** The author's means of conveying to the reader a character's personality, life history, values, physical attributes, etc. Also refers directly to a description thereof.

Atticus is characterized as an almost impossibly virtuous man, always doing what is right and imparting impeccable moral values to his children.

**Climax:** The turning point in a story, at which the end result becomes inevitable, usually where something suddenly goes terribly wrong; the "dramatic high point" of a story. (Although it is technically a literary element, the term is only useful for identification, as part of a discussion or analysis of structure; it cannot generally be analyzed by itself

*The journey of a thousand miles begins with*

**Life is not a joke so go hard or go home**