



IDX G10 EnglishH
Study Guide Issue 1
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Part 1 Glossary of Literary and Rhetorical Devices

Key: The most important literary devices were highlighted.

- 1. Allusion** - An indirect reference to something (usually a literary text, although it can be other things commonly known, such as plays, songs, historical events) with which the reader is supposed to be familiar.
- 2. Alter-ego** – A character that the author uses to speak the author's own thoughts, when an author speaks directly to the audience through a character. In Shakespeare's last play, *The Tempest*, the author addresses his audience about his own impending retirement through the main character, Prospero. Do not confuse with persona, which is the narrative voice an author adopts for a story and may not reflect their personal views.
- 3. Anecdote** – A brief recounting of a relevant episode. Anecdotes are often inserted into fictional or non-fictional texts as a way of developing a point or injecting humour.
- 4. Diction** - Word choice, particularly as an element of style. Different types of words have significant effects on meaning. An essay written in academic diction would be much less colourful, but perhaps more precise than street slang. You should be able to describe an author's diction. You **SHOULD NOT** write in your thesis, “The author uses diction...” This is essentially saying, “The author uses words to write.” (Duh.) Instead, describe the type of diction (for example, formal or informal, ornate or plain).
- 5. Didactic** - A term used to describe fiction, nonfiction or poetry that teaches a specific lesson or moral or provides a model of correct behaviour or thinking. This can range from moralistic fables to persuasive essays.

6. Aphorism - A terse statement which expresses a general truth or moral principle. An aphorism can be a memorable summation of the author's point. Ben Franklin wrote many of these in Poor Richard's Almanack, such as "God helps them that help themselves," and "A watched pot never boils."

7. Symbol - Anything that represents or stands for something else. Usually, a symbol is something concrete, such as an object, actions, character, that represents something more abstract. Examples of symbols include the Whale in Moby Dick, the river and the jungle in Heart of Darkness, and the Raven in "The Raven."

8. Tone - A writer's attitude toward his subject matter revealed through diction, figurative language and organisation. To identify tone, consider how the piece would sound if read aloud (or how the author wanted it to sound aloud). Tone can be: playful, serious, businesslike, sarcastic, humorous, formal, sombre, etc.

9. Understatement - The ironic minimising of fact, understatement presents something as less significant than it is. The effect can frequently be humorous. "Our defence played valiantly and held the other team to merely eight touchdowns in the first quarter."

10. Foreshadowing – When an author gives hints about what will occur later in a story.

11. Imagery - Word or words that create a picture in the reader's mind. Usually this involves the five senses. Authors often use imagery in conjunction with metaphors, similes, or figures of speech.

12. Juxtaposition - Placing things side by side for comparison. Authors often use juxtaposition of ideas or examples to make a point (For example, an author may juxtapose the average day of a typical American with that of someone in the third world to make a point of social commentary).

13. Mood - The atmosphere or feeling created in the reader by the literature and accomplished through word choice (diction). Syntax is often a creator of mood since word order, sentence length, and strength and complexity also affect pacing and therefore mood. Setting, tone, and events can all affect the mood. Remember: Tone is the author's attitude; Mood is what the reader feels.

14. Motif – a recurring idea, image, or symbol in a piece of literature. In To Kill a Mockingbird, the idea that "you never really understand another person until you consider things from his or her point of view" is a motif, because the idea is brought up several times over the course of the novel.

15. Pacing – The speed or tempo of an author's writing. Writers can use a variety of devices (syntax, polysyndeton, asyndeton, anaphora) to change the pacing of their words. An author's pacing can be fast, sluggish, staccato, measured, etc.

16. Parallelism – (Also known as parallel structure or balanced sentences.) Sentence construction which places equal grammatical constructions near each other or repeats identical grammatical patterns. Parallelism is used to add emphasis, organisation, or sometimes pacing to writing.

“Cinderella swept the floor, dusted the mantle, and beat the rugs.”

Part 2 Figurative Language

1. Figurative Language – “Figurative Language” is the opposite of “Literal Language.” Literal language is writing that makes complete sense when you take it at face value. “Figurative Language” is the opposite: writing that is not meant to be taken literally.

- a) Hyperbole: Exaggeration. “My mother will kill me if I am late.”
- b) Metaphor: Making an implied comparison, not using “like”, “as”, or other such words. “My feet are popsicles.” An extended metaphor is when the metaphor is continued later in the written work. If I continued to call my feet “my popsicles” in later paragraphs, that would be an extended metaphor.
- c) Simile: Using words such as “like” or “as” to make a direct comparison between two very different things. “My feet are so cold they feel like popsicles.”
- d) Synaesthesia: a description involving a “crossing of the senses.” Examples: “A purplish scent filled the room.” “I was deafened by his brightly-colored clothing.”
- e) Personification: Giving human-like qualities to something that is not human. “The tired old truck groaned as it inched up the hill.”

Part 3 Irony

1. Irony - When the opposite of what you expect to happen does.

- a) Verbal irony - When you say something and mean the opposite/something different: for example, if your gym teacher wants you to run a mile in eight minutes or faster, but calls it a “walk in the park” it would be verbal irony. If your voice tone is bitter, it’s called sarcasm.
- b) Dramatic irony - When the audience of a drama, play, movie, etc. knows something that the character doesn’t and would be surprised to find out. For example, in many horror movies, we (the audience) know who the killer is, which the victim-to-be has no idea who is

doing the slaying. Sometimes the character trusts the killer completely when (ironically) he/she shouldn't.

c) Situational irony - Found in the plot (or story line) of a book, story, or movie.

Sometimes it makes you laugh because it's funny how things turn out. For example, Johnny spent two hours planning on sneaking into the movie theater and missed the movie. When he finally did manage to sneak inside he found out that kids were admitted free that day.

Part 4 Poetic device

1. Poetic device – A device used in poetry to manipulate the sound of words, sentences or lines.

a) Alliteration - The repetition of the same consonant sound at the beginning of words. "Sally sells sea shells by the sea shore"

b) Assonance - The repetition of identical or similar vowel sounds. "From the molten-golden notes"

c) Consonance - The repetition of the same consonant sound at the end of words or within words. "Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door" or "The lumpy, clumpy bump."

d) Onomatopoeia - The use of a word which imitates or suggests the sound that the thing makes. Snap, rustle, boom, murmur

e) Internal rhyme - When a line of poetry contains a rhyme within a single line. "To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells"

Part 5 Rhetorical Question

Rhetorical Question - Question not asked for information but for effect. "The angry parent asked the child, 'Are you finished interrupting me?'" In this case, the parent does not expect a reply, but simply wants to draw the child's attention to the rudeness of interrupting.

Part 6 Quotes from Antigone

1. Human Law vs. Divine Law

"It wasn't Zeus, not in the least, who made this proclamation - not to me. Nor did that justice, dwelling with the gods beneath the earth, ordain such laws for men. Nor did I think your edict had such force that you, a mere mortal, could override the gods, the great unwritten, unshakable

traditions. They are alive, not just today or yesterday: they live forever, from the first of time, and no one knows when they first saw the light." (Lines 483 - 489)

"The grave then you've robbed the gods below the earth, keeping a dead body here in the bright air, unburied, unsung, unhallowed by the rites." (Line 1186-1190)

2. Civil Disobedience

"Of course I did. It wasn't Zeus, not in the least, who made this proclamation - not to me. Nor did that justice, dwelling with the gods beneath the earth, ordain such laws for men. Nor did I think your edict had such force that you, a mere mortal, could override the gods, the great unwritten, unshakable traditions." (Lines 483 - 489)

"Great hatred rises against you— cities in tumult all whose mutilated sons the dogs have graced with burial, or the wild beasts or a wheeling crow that wings the ungodly stench of carrion back to each city, each warrior's hearth and home." (Line 1201-1205)

3. Blindness and Excessive Pride (Hubris)

"The man who rears a brood of useless children, what has he brought into the world, I ask you? Nothing but trouble for himself, and mockery from his enemies laughing in his face. Oh Haemon, never lose your sense of judgment over a woman. The warmth, the rush of pleasure, it all goes cold in your arms, I warn you... a worthless woman in your house, a misery in your bed. What wound cuts deeper than a loved one turned against you? Spit her out, like a mortal enemy - let the girl go. Let her find a husband down among the dead." (Lines 701 - 713)

"All men make mistakes, it is only human. But once the wrong is done, a man can turn his back on folly, misfortune too, if he tries to make amends, however low he's fallen, and stops his bullnecked ways. Stubbornness brans you for stupidity—pride is a crime." (Line 1132-1135)

4. Fate vs Free Will

"The gods have rocked a house to its foundations, the ruin will never cease, cresting on and on from one generation on throughout the race like a great mounting tide, driven on by savage northern gales, surging over the dead black depths roiling up from the bottom dark heaves of sand and the headlands, taking the storm's onslaught full - force, roar, and the low moaning echoes on and on. And now, as in ancient times I see the sorrows of the house, the living heirs of the old ancestral

kings, piling on the sorrows of the dead and one generation cannot free the next some god will bring them crashing down, the race finds no release." (Lines 656 - 670)

"And so the avengers, the dark destroyers late but true to the mark, now lie in wait for you, the Furies sent by the gods and the god of death to strike you down with the pains that you perfected." (Line 1193-1196)

"You will never escape their burning, searing force." (Line 1208-1209)

5. **Citizenship vs Family Loyalty**

"I was born to join in love, not hate - that is my nature. Brother, yes, by the same mother, the same father. Then how can you render his enemy such honors, such impieties in his eyes? He will never testify to that, Eteocles dead and buried. But it was his brother, not some slave that died. Ravaging our country! but Eteocles died fighting in our behalf. No matter - Death longs for the same rites for all. Never the same for the patriot and the traitor." (Lines 573 - 586)

"Well I know, since the hair on this old head went gray, he's never lied to Thebes." (Line 1215-1216)

6. **Hamartia or Xenia**

Hamartia (Tragic Flaw):

"I am not the man, not now; she is the man if this victory goes to her and she goes free. Never! Sister's child or closer in blood than all my family clustered at my altar worshiping Guardian Zeus - she'll never escape, she and her blood sister, the most barbaric death. Yes, I accuse her sister of an equal part in scheming this, this burial." (Lines 527 - 534)

Xenia (Hospitality and Guest - Host Relations, though not as directly shown as hamartia in the text):

"The grave then you've robbed the gods below the earth, keeping a dead body here in the bright air, unburied, unsung, unhallowed by the rites." (Line 1186-1190)