

AP LITERATURE TERMS

CHSN REVIEW PROJECT

- allegory:** story conveying a meaning other than the literal; abstract principles represented by characters or figures
- alliteration:** repetition of initial consonant sounds
- anagnorisis:** discovery; hero suddenly becoming aware of a situation or true character
- anaphora:** repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of neighboring clauses for emphasis
- antecedent:** word, phrase, or clause that a pronoun replaces
- apologue:** short story with a moral, often involving talking animals or objects; a fable; short allegory
- apostrophe:** speaker addresses an inanimate object
- assonance:** repetition of vowel sounds
- ballad:** relatively short narrative poem written in song-like stanza form
- bildungsroman:** novel tracing the spiritual, moral, psychological, or social development and growth of the main character usually from childhood to maturity
- blank verse:** unrhymed iambic pentameter
- cacophony:** deliberate use of harsh and awkward sounds
- caesura:** pause or interruption in a poem; opposite of enjambment
- canon:** works of a writer
- caricature:** portrait that exaggerates a human trait
- catharsis:** emotional release of an audience at the end of a successful tragedy
- clerihew:** rhyme of four lines, usually regarding a subject mentioned in the first line
- colloquialism:** informal speech
- comedy of manners:** play that satirizes the manners and affectations of a social class, often using stereotypes
- conceit:** extended metaphor that compares two seemingly dissimilar things
- connotation:** implied meaning of a word
- consonance:** repetition of consonant sounds within words
- controlling image:** metaphor that dominates an entire work
- couplet:** rhyming pair of lines
- dactyl:** poetical foot with three syllables, one stressed and two short or unstressed
- denotation:** literal meaning of a word; dictionary definition
- deus ex machina:** literally "god out of a machine;" sudden artificial or improbable resolution to a story, often implying a lack of skill on the part of the writer
- diction:** word choice
- dramatic monologue:** poem in which a character delivers a speech explaining his/her feelings, actions, or motives
- elegy:** mournful or melancholic poem
- English sonnet:** sonnet divided into 3 quatrains and a final couplet, using the rhyme scheme *abab cdcd efef gg*; Shakespearean sonnet
- enjambment:** continuation of a phrase or clause to another line without pause (punctuation); opposite of caesura
- epigram:** short, clever poem with a witty turn of thought
- farce:** extremely broad humor
- foil:** character that contrasts with another character, usually the protagonist, to emphasize the other character's traits
- foot:** combination of stressed and unstressed syllables
- foreshadowing:** event or statement that suggests a future event
- free verse:** poetry without a regular rhyme scheme or metrical pattern
- hamartia:** fatal flaw of a tragic hero
- hubris:** excessive pride that leads to a protagonist's downfall
- hyperbole:** exaggeration or overstatement; opposite of understatement
- iamb:** poetical foot with two syllables— first unstressed and second stressed
- implicit:** implied meaning; opposite of explicit
- lyric:** expression of observations and feelings of a single speaker
- magical realism:** combination of realistic details with surreal, dreamlike, or magical elements
- metaphor:** analogy that states one thing is another
- metonymy:** use of a part to mean a whole object (i.e. hands to mean laborers); related to synecdoche
- motif:** recurring or dominant element in a work
- objectivity:** impersonal view of events
- onomatopoeia:** word that sounds like what it represents
- opposition:** contrasting pairs of elements
- paradox:** seemingly apparent contradiction which is accurate on closer inspection
- parallelism:** repeated words, phrases, clauses, or grammatical structure used for effect
- pastoral:** work idealizing the simple life of shepherds or of tranquil nature
- peripeteia:** reversal of fortune or character
- persona:** narrator in a non-first-person novel
- personification:** giving human qualities or form to inanimate objects
- protagonist:** main character
- quatrain:** four-line stanza
- satire:** genre which ridicules its subject by exposing flaws, often to provoke or prevent change
- sestina:** poem consisting of six six-line stanzas followed by a tercet (three-line stanza), for a total of thirty-nine lines (same set of six words ends the lines of each of the six-line stanzas, but in a different order)
- simile:** "weak" metaphor, often uses "like" or "as"
- stanza:** group of lines in verse; poetical equivalent of a paragraph
- subjectivity:** personal view of events
- subjunctive mood:** mood (grammar) that sets up a hypothetical situation (i.e. if __ were __)
- symbol:** word, place, character, or object that means something beyond what it is on a literal level
- synecdoche:** metaphor in which a part is spoken of as the whole object; related to metonymy
- synesthesia:** one kind of sensation is described in the terms of another; mixing of senses
- syntax:** word order
- theme:** central idea of a work
- terza rima:** poem with verses of three lines and rhyme scheme *aba bcb cdc*
- tragic flaw:** weakness of an otherwise good or great individual that leads to his/her downfall