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
apologia: 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
comedies of manners: play that satirizes the manners and affections of a social class, often using stereotypes
concept: 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: poetic 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: poetic 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; poetic 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 abab cdcd efef gg