

# Literary Device Glossary

---

Every discipline employs a special vocabulary; literary criticism is no exception. Literary criticism is based in part on the assumption that writing is a **purposeful activity** and that excellent writing resulting in works of literary merit is not merely a *happy accident*. During the year you will familiarize yourself with some of the terminology that is used in literary criticism, and you will analyze specific instances when an author has employed a literary device. You will be creating a glossary of literary devices, complete with your **specific analysis of the effect of the device on the text as a whole**.

The specific devices you will need to use for your entries over the course of the year are discussed in more detail in a separate handout. To summarize: you must complete entries for the **five principle tropes**:

•Metaphor •Simile •Metonymy •Synecdoche •Personification

•Alliteration •Allusion •Ambiguity •Anaphora •Apostrophe •Aside •Assonance •Antithesis •Asyndeton  
•Metaphysical Conceit •Connotation •Cacophony •Caesura •Consonance •Chiasmus •Denotation  
•Enjambment •Euphony •Flashback •Form (poetic form) •Hyperbole •Litotes •Meiosis •Motif  
•Foreshadowing •Imagery •Paradox •Irony (Situational, Verbal, Dramatic) •Simple Metaphor •Extended Metaphor  
•Malapropism •Onomatopoeia •Oxymoron •Paradox •Paralipsis •Periphrasis •Polysyndeton  
•Rhyme •Symbol •Synesthesia •Tragic Flaw •Zeugma

---

Over the course of the year you'll be asked to complete a number of literary device entries. You will eventually accumulate a total of 100 points worth of terms for each semester if you want full credit. I will pull different devices from the list above and assign them to you. You may use your summer reading, poems from *Sound and Sense*, or examples from any short story, novel, or play that we have read together. **ALL analyses must come from AP quality literature; if you have any questions about a text, ask me before using it.**

## Guidelines

- You must turn in an electronic copy to Turnitin.com by 11:59 pm on the assigned day for credit. If you miss the deadline, you will receive a zero. A paper copy is turned in to me the next school day.
- You are responsible for keeping all of your lit devices once they have been graded.
- All entries must be typed, edited, and in MLA format.
- Texts from your previous English classes are not acceptable.
- Plagiarized entries will result in a zero (0)!
- The FUNCTION section of the assignment must be 20 lines minimum (Times New Roman 12 point font).
- Parenthetical references and a Works Cited section **MUST BE INCLUDED**.

The FUNCTION discussion is the most important part of your literary device. Unfortunately, it is also the most difficult (isn't that just typical?). However, if you are certain to include the **Three C's** in your function discussion, you will always find success.

**Every literary device function discussion needs to include:**

1. **C**ontext: This sets up the text portion you are about to discuss. In other words, you need to **BRIEFLY** introduce the general circumstances in your example. This does not mean you need to summarize the entire plot of a novel. For example, if you were using an example from the third chapter of *All the Pretty Horses* you would not need to explain the John Grady had left his home in Texas and had found work in Mexico as a rancher, etc., etc. You would merely need to say "When John Grady Cole hears the short pop of a gun, and Belvins fails to get back on the truck..."
2. **C**oncept: What is the specific device that you are addressing? Use it in the present tense and use the active voice (i.e. "This **symbolizes** the...") when referring to the literary device. Make certain you discuss it directly and are specific rather than general. Also make sure you have correctly identified the device.
3. **C**onnection: Discuss in clear and specific terms exactly how the literary device contributes to the passage/poem/novel as a whole. In other words, how does the literary device reinforce and contribute to what is occurring in the larger context? Make sure you address the artistic effect when appropriate. When discussing the connection, artistic or otherwise, make certain that you address how this language device operates within the passage.

For example, it is typical for students to say that a device gives a passage "flow." This is not a helpful comment unless that "flow" is connected to something specific in terms of the effect. All writing should "flow" to some extent -- addressing what there is about the "flow" that the shapes the text is the key.

**Remember that merely pointing out a literary device does not mean that you understand its effect on the passage as a whole. You have to be specific about its function. If you are certain to include the Three C's, then you will be successful.**

Format
--------

Term:	Definition of the literary device selected
Example:	Quotation, followed by source, including title, page/line number
Function:	Author's purpose in employing this language resource at this point in the work. How does this particular device enhance what the writer is conveying? You may comment on theme, character, setting, or whatever else is important in explaining how this device functions in this particular instance.