

GLOSSARY OF MAJOR STYLISTIC TERMS

Abstract and concrete are ways of describing important qualities of language. Abstract words are not associated with real, material objects that are related directly to the five senses. Such words as "love," "wisdom," "patriotism," and "power" are abstract because they refer to ideas rather than to things. Concrete language, on the other hand, names things that can be perceived by the five senses. Words like "table," "smoke," "lemon," and "halfback" are concrete.

Alliteration (Consonance) is the repetition of consonant sounds, but not vowels, as in assonance. It is a phonetic stylistic device which aims at imparting a melodic effect to the utterance.

Allusion is a reference to some literary, biographical, or historical event.

Analogy is a form of figurative comparison that uses a clear illustration to explain a difficult idea or function. It is unlike a formal comparison in that its subjects of comparison are from different categories or areas.

Antonomasia is the substitution of any epithet or phrase with a proper name. It is the interplay between the logical and nominal meanings of a word.

Antonym is a word that is opposite in meaning to that of another word: "hot" is an antonym of "cold"; "fat" is an antonym of "thin"; "large" is an antonym of "small."

Apokoinu construction presents a blend of two clauses into one, which is achieved at the expense of the omission of the connecting word and the double syntactical function acquired by the unit occupying the linking position between both form clauses.

Aposiopesis is a rhetorical ellipsis used to indicate strong emotions paralyzing the character's speech or his deliberate stop in the utterance to conceal its meaning.

Argumentation is a form of writing in which you offer reasons in favor of or against something.

Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds in non-rhyming words as in, "*some ship in distress that cannot live.*" The i's in those words have same vowel sounds but they do not have to rhyme. It doesn't have to rhyme and usually only the vowels rhyme.

Causal analysis is a form of writing that examines causes and effects of events or conditions as they relate to a specific subject.

Chaotic/heterogeneous enumeration is the deliberate piling in a homogeneous syntactical line words so different semantically that they produce a humorous effect or express the idea of chaos.

Characterization is the description of people. As a particular type of description in an essay, characterization attempts to capture as vividly as possible the features, qualities, traits, speech, and actions of individuals.

Chiasmus is reversed parallelism in which the repeated syntactical construction is reversed, compared to preceding sentence or clause. It can be the word order that is reversed, or the sequence of the main and subordinate clauses, or the form and the meaning of the statement.

Chronological order is the arrangement of events in the order that they happened. One might use chronological order to trace the history of the Vietnam War, to explain a scientific process, or to present the biography of a close relative or friend. When you order an essay by chronology, you are moving from one step to the next in time.

Classification is a pattern of writing where the author divides a subject into categories and then groups elements in each of those categories according to their relationships to each other.

Clichés are expressions that were once fresh and vivid, but have become tired and worn from overuse. "I'm so hungry that I could eat a horse" is a typical cliché. People use clichés in conversation, but writers should generally avoid them.

Coherence is a quality in effective writing that results from the careful ordering of each sentence in a paragraph, and each paragraph in the essay. If an essay is coherent, each part will grow naturally and logically from those parts that come before it. Coherence depends on the writer's ability to organize materials in a logical way, and to order segments so that the reader is carried along easily from start to finish. The main devices used in achieving coherence are *transitions*, which help to connect one thought with another.

Comparison/contrast is a pattern of writing that treats similarities and differences between two subjects.

Composition is a term used for any piece of writing that reveals a careful plan.

Connotation/denotation are terms specifying the way a word has meaning. Connotation refers to the "shades of meaning" that a word might have because of various emotional associations it calls up for writers and readers alike. Words like "American," "physician," "mother," "pig," and "San Francisco" have

strong connotative overtones to them. With denotation, however, we are concerned not with the suggestive meaning of a word but with its exact, literal meaning. Denotation refers to the "dictionary definition" of a word – its exact meaning.

Context clues are hints provided about the meaning of a word by another word or words, or by the sentence or sentences coming before or after it. Thus in the sentence, "Mr. Rome, a true *raconteur*, told a story that thrilled the guests," we should be able to guess at the meaning of the italicized word by the context clues coming both before and after it. (A "raconteur" is a person who tells good stories.)

Description is a type of writing that uses details of sight, color, sound, smell, and touch to create a word picture and to explain or illustrate an idea.

Dialogue is the exact duplication in writing of something people say to each other. Dialogue is the reproduction of speech or conversation; it can add concreteness and vividness to an essay, and can also help to reveal character.

Division is that aspect of classification where the writer divides some large subject into categories. For example, one might divide "fish" into salt water and fresh water fish; or "sports" into team and individual sports.

Emphasis suggests the placement of the most important ideas in key positions in the essay. Writers can emphasize ideas simply by placing important ones at the beginning or at the end of the paragraph or essay.

Epithet is an EM device based on the interplay of emotive and logical meaning in an attributive word/phrase/sentence.

Euphemism is the use of a word or phrase simply because it seems less distasteful or less offensive than another word. For instance, "mortician" is a euphemism for "undertaker"; "sanitation worker" for "garbage collector."

Euphony is the sound arrangement of the utterance which intensifies its logical meaning. The phonetic aspect of the word corresponds to the idea expressed. If the message is pleasant & mild, the mild & pleasant sounds increase the impression, e.g. *She is like a beautiful exotic flower that must be sheltered from bitter winds.*

Fable is a narrative with a moral. The story from which the writer draws the moral can be either true or imaginary. It is important that a writer clearly presents the moral to be derived from the narrative.

Gap-Sentence Link is a peculiar type of connection of sentences that is not immediately apparent but requires a certain mental effort to bridge a semantic gap.

General and specific words are necessary in writing, although it is wise to keep your vocabulary as specific as possible. General words refer to broad categories and groups, while specific words capture with more force and clarity the nature of a term. The distinction between general and specific language is always a matter of degree. "A woman walked down the street" is more general than "*Mrs. Walker walked down Fifth Avenue,*" while "*Mrs. Webster, elegantly dressed in a muslin suit, strolled down Fifth Avenue*" is more specific than the first two examples.

Gradation/climax is an arrangement of words in a sentence or sentences in a paragraph which secures a gradual increase in logical significance, importance, or emotional tension in the utterance.

Hyperbole/exaggeration/overstatement is a figure of speech in which statements are obviously exaggerated or extravagant. It may be used due to strong feelings or is used to create a strong impression and is not meant to be taken literally.

Illustration is the use of several examples to support our idea.

Introductions are the beginning or openings of literary works. Introductions should perform a number of functions. They alert the reader to the subject, set the limits of the essay, and indicate what the thesis (or main idea) will be. They arouse the reader's interest in the subject, so that the reader will want to continue reading. There are many techniques that can be used to develop introductions. It can be a single sentence or a much longer paragraph, but it must accomplish its purpose – to introduce readers to the subject, and to engage them so that they want to explore the essay further.

Irony is the use of language to suggest the opposite of what is stated. Writers use irony to reveal unpleasant or troublesome realities that exist in life, or to poke fun at human weaknesses and foolish attitudes.

Jargon is the use of special words associated with a specific area of knowledge or a specific profession. It is similar to "shop talk" that members of a certain trade might know, but not necessarily people outside it.

Litotes is a negative construction that carries no negative meaning.

Metaphor is a type of figurative language in which an item from one category is compared briefly and imaginatively with an item from another area. Writers create metaphors to assign meaning to a word in an original way.

Metonymy is a SD based on a different type of relation between the dictionary and contextual meanings, where a part of a notion substitutes the notion itself, e.g. the word *crown* may stand for *king or queen*.

Metre is the type of poetic rhythm of the line.

Narration is telling a story in order to illustrate an important idea.

Objective/subjective writing refers to the attitude that writers take toward their subject. When writers are objective, they try not to report their own personal feelings about their subject. They attempt to control, if not eliminate, their own attitude toward the topic.

Onomatopoeia is imitation of sounds produced in nature (wind, sea, thunder, etc.), by things (machines, tools, etc.), by people (singing, laughter), by animals.

Order is the manner in which you arrange information or materials in an essay. The most common ordering techniques are *chronological order* (involving time sequence); *spatial order* (involving the arrangement of descriptive details); *process order* (involving a step-by-step approach to an activity); *deductive order* (in which you offer a thesis and then the evidence to support it); and *inductive order* (in which you present evidence first and build toward the thesis). Some rhetorical patterns such as comparison and contrast, classification, and argumentation require other ordering techniques.

Oxymoron is a combination of two words in which the meanings of the two clash, being opposite in sense. There is no true word-combination, but only the juxtaposition of two non-combinative words, e.g. *sweet sorrow*, *horribly beautiful*, *a deafening silence*.

Paradox is a statement that *seems* to be contradictory but actually contains an element of truth. Writers use it in order to call attention to their subject.

Parallelism is a variety of sentence structure in which there is "balance" or coordination in the presentation of elements. "I came, I saw, I conquered" is a good example of parallelism, presenting both pronouns and verbs in a coordinated manner. Parallelism can also be applied to several sentences and to entire paragraphs. It can be an effective way to emphasize ideas.

Paronyms are words similar though not identical in sound, but different in meaning, e.g. *raven*, *never*.

Periphrasis/circumlocution is a figure of speech where the meaning of a word or phrase is indirectly expressed through several or many words.

Personification is giving an object, thing, or idea lifelike or human qualities. Like all forms of figurative writing, personification adds freshness to description, and makes ideas vivid by setting up striking comparisons.

Point of view is the angle from which a writer tells a story. Many personal or informal essays take the *first-person* (or "I") point of view. The first-person "I" point of view is natural and fitting for essays when the writer wants to speak in a familiar and intimate way to the reader. On the other hand, the *third-person* point of view ("he," "she," "it," "they") distances the reader somewhat from the writer. The third-person point of view is useful where writers are not talking exclusively about themselves, but about other people, things, and events. Occasionally, the second-person ("you") point of view will appear in texts, notably involving process analysis where the writer directs the reader to do something. Other point-of-view combinations are possible when a writer wants to achieve a special effect.

Polysyndeton is a stylistic device of connecting sentences, or phrases, or syntagms, or words by using connectives (mostly conjunctions and prepositions) before each component part.

Proposition is the main point in an argumentative essay. It is like a *thesis* except that it usually presents an idea that is debatable or can be disputed.

Pun is a SD based on contrast and the interaction of two well-known meanings of a word or phrase. It consists of a deliberate confusion of similar words or phrases for rhetorical effect, whether humorous or serious.

Purpose refers to what a writer hopes to accomplish in a piece of writing. For example, the purpose may be *to convince* the reader to adopt a certain viewpoint, *to explain* a process or to allow the reader *to feel a dominant impression*. Purpose helps a writer to determine which expository technique will dominate the text's form, as well as what kinds of supporting examples will be used. Purpose and *audience* are often closely related.

Rhetorical question is a figure of speech in the form of a question posed for rhetorical effect rather than for the purpose of getting an answer.

Rhyme is the repetition of identical or similar terminal sound combination of words.

Rhythm is a flow, procedure, characterized by basically regular recurrence of elements or features, as beat, or accent, in alternation with opposite or different elements or features.

Sarcasm is a sneering or taunting attitude in writing. It is designed to hurt by ridiculing or criticizing. Basically, sarcasm is a heavy-handed form of irony, as when an individual says.

Satire is the humorous or critical treatment of a subject in order to expose the subject's vices, follies, stupidities, and so forth. Satire is a better weapon than sarcasm in the hands of the writer because satire is used to correct, whereas sarcasm merely hurts.

Simile is a figure of speech in which the subject is compared to another subject with the help of formal elements (*like, as if, etc.*).

Slang is a level of language that uses racy and colorful expressions associated more often with speech than with writing. Slang expressions are used when a writer is reproducing dialogue or striving for a special effect.

Stanza/strophe is the largest unit in verse consisting of two or more verse lines. It is a verse segment composed of a number of lines having a definite measure and rhyming system which is repeated throughout the poem.

Stylistic device is a conscious and an intentional intensification of some typical structural and/or semantic property of a language unit (neutral or expressive) promoted to a generalized status and thus becoming a generative model. A SD is an abstract pattern, a mould into which any pattern can be poured.

Suspense is a compositional device which consists in arranging the less important parts at the beginning, the main idea being withheld till the end of the sentence.

Synonym is a word that means roughly the same as another word. In practice, few words are exactly alike in meaning. Careful writers use synonyms to vary word choice, without ever moving too far from the shade of meaning intended.

Theme is the central idea in a text; it is also often termed the *thesis*. Everything in a written work should support the theme in one way or another.

Title a short, simple indication of the contents of a text.