**Rhetorical Devices/Terms:**

**Abstraction:** An idea disassociated from any specific instance; expresses a quality apart from an object.

**Aesthetic:** A guiding principle in matters of artistic beauty and taste; artistic sensibility.

**Allegory:** An extended metaphor in which characters, events, and settings represent abstract qualities and in which the writer intends a second meaning to be read beneath the surface of the story; the underlying meaning may be moral, religious, political, social, or satiric.

**Alliteration:** The repetition of the same sound at the beginning of successive words.

**Allusion:** A reference, explicit or implicit, to something in previous literature or history.

**Ambiguous:** A word, phrase, or sentence whose meaning can be interpreted in more than one way.

**Analogy:** An extended comparison between two things/instances/people etc. that share some similarity to make a point.

**Anaphora:** Repetition of the same word or group of words at the beginning of successive clauses, sentences, or lines.

**Anastrophe:** Normal word order is reversed or rearranged.

**Anecdote:** A short, simple narrative or an incident; often used for humorous effect or to make a point.

**Antithesis:** The rhetorical contrast of ideas by means of parallel arrangements of words, clauses, or sentences.

**Aphorism:** A brief saying embodying a moral, a concise statement of a principle or precept given in pointed words.

**Apostrophe:** When an absent person, an abstract concept, or an important object is directly addressed.

**Assonance:** The repetition of vowel sounds but not consonant sounds.

**Audience:** Part of your rhetorical situation (speaker, subject, audience); the person or persons to whom comments are directed (affects tone, meaning).

**Colloquialism:** A word or phrase (including slang) used in everyday conversation and informal writing but that is often inappropriate in formal writing (y’all, ain’t)

**Coherence:** Quality of a piece of writing in which all the parts contribute to the development of the central idea, theme, or organizing principle.

**Concrete Language:** Language that describes specific, observable things, people, or places, rather than ideas or qualities.

**Connotation:** Implied or suggested meaning of a word because of its association in the reader’s mind.

**Consonance:** The repetition of consonant sounds.

**Deduction:** The process of moving from a general rule to a specific example.

**Denotation:** The literal meaning of a word as defined.

**Diction:** The writer or speaker’s choice of words; an element of style. Diction creates tone, attitude, and style, as well as meaning. Different types and arrangements of words have significant effects on meaning. An essay written in academic diction would be must less colorful, but perhaps more precise than street slang.

**Discourse:** Spoken or written language, including literary works; the four traditionally classified modes of discourse are description, exposition, narration, and persuasion.

**Epigraph:** The use of a quotation at the beginning of a work that hints at its theme.

**Euphemism:** A more acceptable and usually more pleasant way of saying something that might be inappropriate or uncomfortable. “He went to his final reward” is a common euphemism for “he died.” Euphemisms are also often used to obscure the reality of a situation. The military uses “collateral damage” to indicate civilian deaths in a military operation.

**Explication:** The art of interpreting or discovering the meaning of a text.

**Hyperbole:** Deliberate exaggeration in order to create humor or emphasis. Example: He was so hungry that he could have eaten a horse!

**Imagery:** Words or phrases that use a collection of images to appeal to one or more of the five sense in order to create a mental picture.

**Induction:** The process that moves from a given series of specifics to a generalization.

**Inference:** A conclusion one can draw from the presented details.

**Invective:** A verbally abusive attack.

**Jargon:** The special language of a profession or group.

**Juxtaposition:** Placing two or more things side by side for comparison or contrast.

**Mood:** Set by tone, mood is the primary emotional attitude of a work (the feeling of the work; the atmosphere). Syntax is also a determiner of mood because sentence strength, length, and complexity affect pacing.

**Narration:** The telling of a story in fiction, nonfiction, poetry, or drama; one of the four modes of discourse.

**Objectivity:** An impersonal presentation of events and characters. It is a writer’s attempt to remove himself or herself from any subjective, personal involvement in a story.

**Onomatopoeia:** The use of words whose sound reinforces their meaning.

**Oxymoron:** A figure of speech composed of contradictory words or phrases, such as “wise fool,” “bitter-sweet,” “pretty ugly,” or “jumbo shrimp.”

**Pacing:** The movement in a literary piece from one point to another.

**Parable:** A short tale that teaches a moral; similar to but shorter than an allegory.

**Paradox:** A statement that seems to contradict itself but that turns out to have rational meaning.

**Parody:** Mimicking someone else’s work or style in a humorous or satirical way.

**Pedantic:** A terms used to describe writing that borders on lecturing. It is scholarly and academic and often overly difficult and distant.

**Persuasion:** A form of argumentation, one of the four modes of discourse; language intended to convince through appeals to reason or emotion (Logos, Pathos, Ethos).

**Picaresque Novel:** An episodic, often autobiographical novel about a rogue or picaro (a person of low social status) wandering and living off his wits. The wandering hero provides the author with the opportunity to connect widely different pieces of plot; these novels tend to be satiric and filled with petty detail.

**Point of View:** The perspective from which a story is told (first, third omniscient, limited).

**Pun:** A humorous play on words.

**Repetition:** Using the same word or phrase over and over; takes forms such as

* Anaphora – The repetition of the same word or group of words at the beginnings of successive clauses
* Epanalepsis – Repetition at the end of a clause of a word that occurred at the beginning
* Epistrophe – Repetition of the same word or group of words at the ends of successive clauses

**Rhetorical Question:** One that does not expect an explicit answer. It is used to pose an idea to be considered by the speaker or audience.

**Sarcasm:** Verbal irony, saying one thing but meaning another.

**Satire:** A composition ridiculing human vice or folly; a keen or severe exposure of what in public or private morals deserves rebuke.

**Stereotype:** A character who represents a trait that is usually attributed to a particular social or racial group and who lacks individuality.

**Style:** An author’s characteristic manner of expression – his or her diction, syntax, imagery, structure, and content all contribute to style.

**Subjectivity:** A personal presentation of events and characters influenced by the author’s feelings and opinions.

**Symbol:** A person, place, thing, or event used to stand for or represent something else.

**Syntax:** The grammatical structure of a sentence; the arrangement of words in a sentence. Syntax includes length of sentence, kinds of sentences (questions, exclamations, declarative sentences, rhetorical questions, simple, complex, or compound).

**Thesis:** A statement of purpose, intent, or main idea in a literary work.

**Tone:** The characteristic emotion or attitude of an author toward the characters, subject, and audience (anger, sarcastic, loving, emotional, etc.). Diction creates tone. Tone sets mood.

**Voice:** Refers to two different areas of writing. One refers to the relationship between a sentence’s subject and verb (active and passive voice). The second refers to the total “sound” of a writer’s style.