

**Sentence Types:** sentences are divided into types based on their function

# MY LITTLE BLACK BOOK OF RHETORIC

*Definitions and examples of Literary Terms for AP Language and Composition*



- Learn these words
- Know these words
- Live and Breathe these words
- Apply these words and techniques to your summer reading assignments
- Score 100% on the Rhetorical Terms Test!

(statement, question, command, exclamation)

**Subject Complement:** the word (with any accompanying phrases) or clause that follows a linking verb and complements or completes the subject of the sentence by renaming it or describing it

Example: Bronze grows beautiful as it ages.

**Subject/Verb Agreement:** subjects and verbs should agree in number and person

Example: My favorite aunts are Aunt Peggy and Aunt Ruth.

**Subordinate Clause:** a word group containing both a subject and a verb, but cannot stand alone, express a complete thought, without an independent clause

Example: because my favorite shoes are sandals

**Subordination:** the use of words or word groups to indicate that some elements in a sentence are less important than others

Example: because, although, after, if, while

## Additional Terms

Questions????

Please contact the AP Lang and Comp Instructor at your school.

o visit the CCPS Website to download a copy of the summer assignment and the list of words to know for your TEST!

**Passive Voice:** when a verb expresses what is *done* to the subject rather than what the subject *does*

Example: Her latest book was completed in four months (Passive Voice). She completed her latest book in four months (Active Voice).

**Periodic Sentence:** a sentence in which the main clause is at the end of the sentence, near the period

Example: Ecstatic with my AP scores, I let out a shout of joy!

**Predicate Adjective:** one type of subject complement—an adjective, group of adjectives, or an adjective clause that follows a linking verb. It is in the predicate of a sentence and modifies or describes the subject of the sentence

Example: My house is small and cozy.

**Predicate Nominative:** one type of subject complement—a noun, group of nouns, or a noun clause that renames the subject. It follows a linking verb and is located in the predicate

Example: Abe Lincoln was a man of integrity.

**Prepositional Phrase:** a word group consisting of a preposition and its object plus any modifiers. A prepositional phrase usually functions as an adjective or as an adverb

Example: The boy in green stood up. (Adjective)

He walked to the playground. (Adverb)

**Relative Clause:** a subordinate clause beginning with a relative pronoun such as *who* or *that* and functioning as an adjective

Example: The dog who ate my tulips belongs to our neighbors.

**Sentence Structure:** four basic sentence structures are possible:

simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex      Example: I'm leaving. (Simple-1 independent clause)      I'd like to stay, but I'm leaving. (Compound-2 independent clauses)

If you let me go now, you'll be sorry. (Complex-1 independent clause and 1 subordinate clause)

I'm leaving because you want me to, but I'd rather stay. (Compound-Complex—2 independent clauses and 1 subordinate clause)

**Adverb Clause:** a clause that begins with a subordinating conjunction (e.g. when, because), and, like adverbs, usually tells how, why, when, where, under what conditions, or with what result

## Grammatical Devices

Example: My favorite part of *Pride and Prejudice* is when Darcy confesses his love for Elizabeth.

**Antecedent:** the word, phrase, or clause referred to by a pronoun  
Example: The boy picked up his favorite baseball bat.

**Clause:** a grammatical unit that includes a subject and a verb  
Example: The ceremony, which several celebrities attended, received intense coverage.

**Coordination:** the linking of two or more elements in a sentence that are equally important in meaning, usually with words such as *and*, *but* and *or*

**Gerund:** the name given to the -ing form of the verb when it serves as a noun  
Example: Running around the track is good exercise.

**Infinitive:** the name given to the 'to' form of a verb. Infinitives may function as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs  
Example: The question to answer is why shoppers endure mall fatigue. (Adjective)  
The solution for mall fatigue is to leave. (Noun)  
Still, shoppers find it difficult to quit. (Adverb)

**Loose Sentence:** type of sentence in which the main idea (independent clause) comes first, followed by dependent grammatical units such as phrases and clauses  
Example: Jane ran to the store.

**Participial Phrase:** a word group consisting of the -ing or -ed verb form plus any objects or modifiers that functions as an adjective  
Example: Shopping malls can frustrate shoppers. (-ing)  
Shoppers may feel trapped. (-ed)

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## Contact Information:

Please email your English instructor with your questions at (last name first initial@calvertnet.k12.md.us>. You can also check out the county website at <[www.calvertnet.k12.md.us](http://www.calvertnet.k12.md.us)> to download the summer assignment and the list of terms.

## LITERARY AND RHETORICAL DEVICES

### A

**Abstract:** that which is intangible, not of the physical world

Example: Honor, Courage

**Ad Hominem (to the man):** distorts the argument by attacking the opponent's character, sometimes through the use of labels, stereotypes, etc. to arouse emotions, prejudices

Example: How can you elect such a man to serve as your mayor! He is divorced, an alcoholic, and a member of Weight Watchers.

**Allegory:** a form of extended metaphor in which characters and /or story elements are used to convey symbolic meaning in addition to literal meaning

Example: *The Pilgrim's Progress*

**Alliteration:** repetition of initial consonant sounds

Example: Rubber baby buggy bumpers

**Allusion:** a casual and brief reference to a famous historical event, literary figure, etc.

Example: Benedict Arnold

**Ambiguity:** the multiple meanings, intentional or not, of a word, phrase, sentence, or passage

Example: a pun

**Analogy:** comparison between two different things or the relationship between them

Example: Pencil is to eraser as pen is to white-out.

**Anecdote:** a story or illustration used to arouse reader interest and to develop author's purpose

**Tone:** the speaker's/author's attitude towards the reader or subject matter; adjective describing the mood or atmosphere of the work

**Tongue-in-cheek:** meant or expressed ironically or facetiously

**Transition:** words and phrases used to convey movement from one place/time/idea to another

### U

**Understatement:** to minimize for effect

**Unifying Image:** pervading and recurring sensory appeal which conveys and connects meaning

### V

**Voice:** a vague metaphorical term referring to characteristics displayed by the narrator/poetic speaker assessed in terms of tone, style, and personality

### W

**Witticism:** an invention, in speech or writing, of clever and skillful invention, usually humorous

## Additional Terms



**Semantics:** the philosophical or linguistic study of meanings in language

**Simile:** direct, expressed comparison between two things essentially unlike each other, but resembling each other in at least one way  
Example: Your smile is like a rainbow!

**Style:** the manner of expression of a particular writer, produced by choice of words, grammatical structures, syntax, imagery, use of literary devices, and all the possible parts of language use  
Example: Scientific, Ornate, Emotive, Formal, Informal

**Syllogism:** a form of logical argument that derives a conclusion from two propositions sharing a common term. The conclusion is reliable if the two propositions are true  
Example: All poets are insane. Jane is a poet. Jane is insane.

**Synecdoche:** figure of speech in which something is referred to indirectly, either by naming some part to it, or by naming some more comprehensive quality of which it is a part  
Example: 'hands' to mean manual laborers.

**Syntax:** the way in which words and clauses are ordered and connected so as to form sentences: or the set of rules governing such order

## **T**

**Theme:** an abstract meaning, lesson, or moral that emerges from a literary work. The theme may be announced explicitly, but more often it emerges indirectly through the recurrences of motifs

**Thesis:** an argument or proposition which is argued  
Example: In the novel The Scarlet Letter, the author, Nathaniel Hawthorne, uses the symbols of the forest and light/dark to show the true nature of Hester Prynne and Rev. Dimmesdale.

**Time Shifts:** changes in time achieved through verb tense

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**Anti-climax:** an abrupt lapse from growing intensity to triviality in writing  
Example: "A Better Cavalier ne'er mounted horse/ or, being mounted, e'er got down again." (Don Juan 1819-24; Lix)

**Antithesis:** compares two things, which are alike in several respects, for the purpose of explaining or clarifying some unfamiliar or difficult idea by showing how the 'difficult' idea or object is similar to the familiar one  
Example: "To err is human, to forgive is divine."

**Antithetical Construction:** can convey some sense of complexity in a person or idea by admitting opposite or nearly opposite truths  
Example: "One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws." Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Aphorism:** a statement of some general principle, expressed memorably by condensing much wisdom into a few words  
Example: "Give a man a mask and he will tell you the truth."  
—Wilde

**Apostrophe:** interrupts the discussion or discourse and addresses directly a person or personified thing, either present or absent. Its most common purpose in prose is to give vent to or display intense emotion, which can no longer be held back  
Example: *Ode to a Grecian Urn*

**Appeals:** persuasive techniques to influence the audience:  
Emotional (pathos): influences through feelings, instincts, opinions, dramatic examples.  
Ethical (ethos): the character of the writer (not the morality) is used to reach the audience. It suggests that the writer is someone to be trusted, of sterling reputation, competent.  
Logical (logos)-influences through argument, facts, probability to establish the most reliable case.

**Argument:** the set of opinions expounded in a work and capable of being paraphrased as a logical sequence of propositions

**Authorial Persona:** the person created by the author to tell a story. Whether the story is told by an omniscient narrator or by a character in it, the actual author of the work often distances himself from what is said or told by adopting a persona-a personality different from his real one  
Example: Huck Finn in The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.

## B

**Begging the Question:** occurs when part of what has to be proved is assumed to be true, or when there is a circular argument  
Example: Polygraphs aren't reliable because they can't be trusted.

## C

**Cause/effect relationships:** relationships in which something happens (cause) to produce a result (effect)

**Colloquialism:** the use of informal expression appropriate to everyday speech rather than to the formality of writing  
Example: "ya'll"

**Conceit:** a fanciful expression, usually in the form of an extended metaphor or surprising analogy between dissimilar objects. A conceit usually displays intellectual cleverness due to the unusual comparison being made

**Concession:** in argument, to agree to or to surrender to an opponent's point

**Concrete:** that which is tangible, of the physical world  
Example: a desk, book, clothes

**Connotation:** the non-literal, associative meaning of a word: the implied, suggested meaning which may involve ideas, emotions, or attitudes

**Contrast:** differences between two things

**Repetition:** the duplication, exact or approximate, or any element of language-sound, word, phrase, sentence, grammatical pattern. Effects may be to unify or emphasize

**Rhetoric:** from the Greek for 'orator', this term describes the principles governing the art of writing effectively, eloquently, and persuasively. The usual modern meaning of 'rhetoric' implies empty and ineffectual grandness in public speaking

**Rhetorical Devices/Features:** those aspects of a work that persuade or guide the responses of the audience

**Rhetorical Modes:** this flexible term describes the variety, the conventions, and the purposes of the major kinds of writing. The four most common are: exposition, argumentation, description, and narration

**Rhetorical Question:** question asked for the sake of persuasive effect rather than as a genuine request for information. It is also used for emphasis, or provocation, or for drawing a conclusionary statement from the facts at hand

**Romanticism:** poetry or prose that related improbable adventures of highly glorified and idealized characters in an enchanted or remote setting. Emphasizes individual self-expression, originality, heroism, imagination

## S

**Sarcasm:** a form of verbal irony, expressing sneering, personal disapproval in the guise of praise

**Satire:** manner of writing that mixes a critical attitude with wit and humor in an effort to improve mankind and human institutions

Example: Swift's *A Modest Proposal*

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**Poetry:** language sung, chanted, spoken or written according to some pattern of recurrence that emphasized the relationships between words on the basis of sound as well as sense

**Point-of-View:** the position or vantage point from which the events of a story seem to be observed and presented to us

Example: First Person

**Polemic:** a thorough written attack on some opinion or policy

**Post hoc, ergo propter hoc** (after this, therefore because of this): asserts a direct cause and effect relationship which may or may not be true

Example: There is at least 1 big fight after every school dance. I think that is reason enough to discontinue the dances.

**Pot-boiler:** a derogatory term for a work written solely to make money

Example: Plath's *Bell Jar*

**Prose:** referring to all forms of fiction and nonfiction because they are written in ordinary language and most closely resemble everyday speech. Technically, anything that isn't drama or poetry is prose

**Pun:** an expression that achieves emphasis or humor by creating an ambiguity (two distinct meanings being suggested by the same word or by two similarly sounding words)

Example: "Ask for me tomorrow and you will find me a grave man" (*Romeo and Juliet* III. i. 101).

**Purple Patch:** an over-written passage in which the author has strained too hard to achieve an impressive effect

## R

**Realism:** a mode of writing that gives the impression of 'recording' or 'reflecting' faithfully an actual way of life. It is based on detailed accuracy of description (verisimilitude) and rejects 'romance'-escapism, idealism, heroism, extravagant qualities

Example: Dickens' *Bleak House*

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## D

**Deduction:** begins with a general statement/major premise, is restricted by a minor premise, which leads to a specific conclusion

**Defend, challenge, or qualify:** support, attack, or determine conditions

**Denotation:** the strict, literal, dictionary meaning of a word

**Diction:** the choice of words used in a literary work

**Didactic:** instructive; designed to impart information, advice, morality, or philosophy



**Discourse:** any extended use of speech or writing; or a formal exposition or dissertation

**Digression:** a temporary departure from one subject to another subject more or less distantly related before the first subject is resumed

**Dramatic Monologue:** kind of poem in which single fictional or historical character other than the poet speaks to a silent “audience” of one or more persons. Such poems reveal not the poet’s own thoughts but the mind of the impersonated character, whose personality is revealed unwittingly

## E

**Ellipsis:** the omission from a sentence a word or words that would be required for complete clarity but can usually be understood from the context AND the sequence of ... used to indicate the omission of text

**Epigram:** a short poem with a witty turn of thought; a wittily condensed expression in prose

**Equivocation:** to deliberately use misleading or confusing language with the intent to deceive

Example: Everyone should receive a liberal education. That would guarantee that more liberalism would become evident in our political system.

**Ethos:** argument based on the writer's credibility and character

**Euphemism:** the substitution of a mild or less negative word or phrase for a harsh or blunt word

Example: 'Pass away' instead of 'Die'

**Extended Definition:** qualify or limit the meaning of abstract, disputed, or complex words

**Extended Metaphor:** comparison developed throughout the text

## F

**Fallacies:** error in reasoning, unintentional or intentional (to influence the reader), which simplify or distort evidence

Example: Equivocation, Non Sequitur, Ad Hominem

**False/Faulty Analogy:** argues that because two things are alike in some ways, they are alike in all ways

Example: Crack cocaine should be legalized because Prohibition didn't work.

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**Parallel Syntax:** recurrent syntactical similarity. In this structural arrangement several parts of a sentence or several sentences are developed and phrased similarly to show that the ideas in the parts or sentences are equal in importance. It also adds balance and rhythm and, most importantly, clarity to the sentence

**Parody:** satiric imitation of a work or of an author with the idea of ridiculing the author, his ideas, or work

**Pathos:** the emotionally moving quality or power of a literary work which appeals especially to the feelings of sorrow, pity, and compassionate sympathy

**Pedantic:** overly concerned with the narrow, bookish set of rules or learning

**Persona:** the assumed identity or fictional "I" (literally a mask) assumed by a writer

Example: Mark Twain

**Personification:** metaphorically represents an animal or inanimate object as having human attributes—attributes of form, character, feelings, behavior, and so on. Ideas and abstractions can also be personified

Example: The wind whispered in my ear.

**Picaresque:** a novel in which the hero, rogue or scoundrel, recounts in a first-person narrative his/her escapades. Noted for its episodic structure and its low-life descriptions

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Example: Robinson Crusoe, Moll Flanders, or The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

**Platitude:** a trite or banal remark spoken as if it were original or significant

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## N

**Naturalism:** a more deliberate kind of realism involving human beings as passive victims of social environment

**Non sequitur:** a statement or inference that does not follow logically from the previous statement

Example: Randy behaves in class and pays attention. Don't you think Randy deserves a good grade?

## O

**Onomatopoeia:** the use of words which in their pronunciation suggest their meaning

Example: Pop, Bam, Sizzle

**Ornate:** stylistically complex.

**Overgeneralization:** to make vague or indefinite statements; conclusion misleadingly presented to be true when it is, in fact, based on limited evidence

**Oxymoron:** a paradox reduced to two words, usually in an adjective-noun or adverb-adjective relationship, and is used for effect, complexity, emphasis, or wit

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Example: eloquent silence, inertly strong

## P

**Paradox:** a statement or expression so strikingly self-contradictory that it forces the reader to seek another sense or context in which it would have meaning

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**Faulty Dilemma/Either-or:** wrongly ignores the possibility of alternatives

Example: Either you are with me, or you are against me.

**Figure of Speech/Figurative Language:** an expression that departs from the literal sense

Example: Put your nose to the grindstone.

## G

## H

**Hasty Generalization:** conclusion drawn from inadequate or atypical evidence      Example: Blondes have more fun.

**Homily:** a sermon or morally instructive lecture

**Hyperbole:** Exaggeration used for emphasis; it can be used to heighten effect, to catalyze recognition, or to create a humorous perception

Example: All of this AP work is KILLING me!

## I

**Idiomatic Structure:** a word or phrase that cannot be literally translated into another language because its meaning is not equivalent to its components

Example: Follow suit

**Induction:** begins by presenting specific evidence and then moves to a general conclusion. Often called the scientific method: hypothesis, patterns, inductive leap to probable conclusion

**Interior Monologue:** the written representation of a character's memories or impressions

**Inverted Syntax:** departure from normal word order

Example: Yoda speak

**Irony:** a mode of expression, through words (verbal irony) or events (situational irony), conveying a reality different from and usually opposite to appearance or expectation

## J

**Juxtaposition:** a sharp contrast

## K

## L

**Lampoon:** an insulting written attack on a person

**Language:** a broad term encompassing figures of speech, rhetorical techniques, and mode of discourse

**Local Color:** a kind of fiction devoted to the capturing of the unique customs, manners, speech, folklore, etc. of a particular area

Example: Their Eyes Were Watching God; Huck Finn

**Logos:** argument which influences through logic and rationality, facts, statistics

Example: 95% of all households in America have 3 or more televisions.

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## M

**Malapropism:** a confused, comically inaccurate use of a long word or words

Example: Sheridan's "the very pine-apple of politeness" rather than "pinnacle"

**Metalinguage:** any use of language about language

**Metaphor:** is a comparison which imaginatively identifies one thing with another, dissimilar thing, and transfers or ascribes to the first thing (the tenor or idea) some of the qualities of the second (vehicle, or image). Unlike a simile or analogy, metaphor asserts that one thing IS another thing, not just that one is like another

Example: Her hair is the color of the sun.

**Metonymy:** another form of metaphor, very similar to synecdoche (and, in fact, some rhetoricians do not distinguish between the two), in which a closely associated object is substituted for the object or idea in mind Example: The order came directly from the White House.

**Maxim:** a short memorable statement of a general principle  
Example: Carpe Diem

**Modes of Discourse:** strategies to achieve purpose  
Example: Definition

**Mood:** the atmosphere or feeling OF THE READER within a literary work  
Example: Sad, Upset, Joyful

**Motif:** a situation, idea, image, character-type or any element found in many literary types which is elaborated into a more general theme  
Example: Romeo was the perfect boyfriend.