**Rhetorical Terms**

1. **Abstract** refers to language that describes concepts rather than concrete images ( ideas and qualities rather than observable or specific things, people, or places). The observable or “physical” is usually described in concrete language.
2. **Allegory** an extended narrative in prose or verse 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.
3. **Anecdote** a short, simple narrative of an incident; often used for humorous effect or to make a point.
4. **Annotation** Explanatory notes added to a text to explain, cite sources, or give bibliographical data.
5. **Antithesis** the presentation of two contrasting images. The ideas are balanced by word, phrase, clause, or paragraphs. “To be or not to be…” “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country….”
6. **Aphorism** a short, often witty statement of a principle or a truth about life: “Early bird gets the worm.”
7. **Cacophony; Dissonance** harsh, awkward, or dissonant sounds used deliberately in poetry or prose; the opposite of euphony.
8. **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)
9. **Concrete Language** Language that describes specific, observable things, people, or places, rather than ideas or qualities.
10. **Connotation** implied or suggested meaning of a word because of its association in the reader’s mind.
11. **Consonance** repetition of identical consonant sounds within two or more words in close proximity, as in boost/best; it can also be seen within several compound words, such as fulfill and ping- pong
12. **Conundrum** a riddle whose answer is or involves a pun; it may also be a paradox or difficult problem
13. **Denotation** literal meaning of a word as defined
14. **Diction** word choice, 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 much less colorful, but perhaps more precise than street slang.
15. **Emotional Appeal; Pathos** When a writer appeals to readers’ emotions (often through pathos) to excite and involve them in the argument.
16. **Ethical Appeal; Ethos** When a writer tries to persuade the audience to respect and believe him or her based on a presentation of image of self through the text. Reputation is sometimes a factor in ethical appeal, but in all cases the aim is to gain the audience’s confidence.
17. **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.
18. **Euphony** a succession of harmonious sounds used in poetry or prose; the opposite of cacophony
19. **Explication** The art of interpreting or discovering the meaning of a text. Explication usually involves close reading and special attention to figurative language.
20. **Exposition** the immediate revelation to the audience of the setting and other background information
21. necessary for understanding the plot; also, explanation; one of the four modes of discourse
22. **Generalization** When a writer bases a claim upon an isolated example or asserts that a claim is certain
23. rather than probable. Sweeping generalizations occur when a writer asserts that a claim
24. applies to all instances instead of some.
25. **Hyperbole** deliberate exaggeration in order to create humor or emphasis (Example: He was so
26. hungry he could have eaten a horse.)
27. **Image** A word or words, either figurative or literal, used to describe a sensory experience or an object perceived by the sense. An image is always a concrete representation.
28. **Imagery** words or phrases that use a collection of images to appeal to one or more of the five senses in order to create a mental picture
29. **Inversion** reversing the customary (subject first, then verb, then complement) order of elements in a sentence or phrase; it is used effectively in many cases, such as posing a question: “Are you going to the store?” Usually, the element that appears first is emphasized more than the subject.
30. **Jargon** The special language of a profession or group. The term jargon usually has pejorative Associations with the implication that jargon is evasive, tedious, and unintelligible to outsiders. The writings of the lawyer and the literary critic are both susceptible to jargon.
31. **Logical Appeal; Logos** When a writer tries to persuade the audience based on statistics, facts, and reasons. The process of reasoning
32. **Lyrical** Songlike; characterized by emotions, subjectivity, and imagination.
33. **Mode** the method or form of a literary work; the manner in which a work of literature is written
34. **Mood** similar to 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.
35. **Narration** the telling of a story in fiction, nonfiction, poetry, or drama; one of the four modes of discourse
36. **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. Hard news journalism is frequently prized for its objectivity, although even fictional stories can be told without a writer rendering personal judgment.
37. **Oversimplification** When a writer obscures or denies the complexity of the issues in an argument
38. **Oxymoron** a figure of speech composed of contradictory words or phrases, such as “wise fool,” bitter-sweet, “pretty ugly,” “jumbo shrimp,” “cold fire”
39. **Parable** a short tale that teaches a moral; similar to but shorter than an allegory
40. **Paradox** a statement that seems to contradict itself but that turns out to have a rational meaning, as in this quotation from Henry David Thoreau; “I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude.”
41. **Parallelism** the technique of arranging words, phrases, clauses, or larger structures by placing them side by side and making them similar in form. Parallel structure may be as simple as listing two or three modifiers in a row to describe the same noun or verb; it may take the form of two or more of the same type of phrases (prepositional, participial, gerund, appositive) that modify the same noun or verb; it may also take the form of two or more subordinate clauses that modify the same noun or verb. Or, parallel structure may be a complex bend of singe-word, phrase, and clause parallelism all in the same sentence.
    * 1. Example (from Churchill): “We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields.”
42. **Parody** a work that ridicules the style of another work by imitating and exaggerating its elements. It can be utterly mocking or gently humorous. It depends on allusion and exaggerates and distorts the original style and content.
43. **Pathetic Appeal; Pathos** When a writer tries to persuade the audience by appealing to their emotions. The aspects of a literary work that elicit sorrow or pity from the audience. An appeal to emotion that can be used as a means to persuade. Over-emotionalism can be the result of an excess of pathos.
44. **Regionalism** an element in literature that conveys a realistic portrayal of a specific geographical locale, using the locale and its influences as a major part of the plot
45. **Repetition** Word or phrase used two or more times in close proximity
46. **Rhetorical modes** exposition, description, narration, argumentation
47. **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.
48. **Sarcasm** harsh, caustic personal remarks to or about someone; less subtle than irony
49. **Satire** A work that reveals a critical attitude toward some element of human behavior by portraying it in an extreme way. Satire doesn’t simply abuse (as in invective) or get personal (as in sarcasm). Satire targets groups or large concepts rather than individuals.
50. **Speaker** the voice of a work; an author may speak as himself or herself or as a fictitious persona
51. **Stereotype** a character who represents a trait that is usually attributed to a particular social or racial group and who lacks individuality; a conventional patter, expression or idea.
52. **Style** an author’s characteristic manner of expression – his or her diction, syntax, imagery, structure, and content all contribute to style
53. **Subjectivity** a personal presentation of evens and characters, influenced by the author’s feelings and opinions
54. **Synecdoche** a figure of speech in which a part of something is used to represent a whole, such as using “boards” to mean a stage or “wheels” to mean a car – or “All hands on deck.”
55. **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).
56. **Theme** the central idea or “message” or a literary work
57. **Tone** the characteristic emotion or attitude of an author toward the characters, subject, and audience (anger, sarcastic, loving, didactic, emotional, etc.)
58. **Transition** a word or phrase that links one idea to the next and carries the reader from sentence to sentence, paragraph to paragraph.
59. **Understatement** the opposite of exaggeration. It is a technique for developing irony and/or humor where one writes or says less than intended.
60. **Voice** refers to two different areas of writing. One refers to the relationship between a sentence’s subject and verb (active