

Tools of Language & Expression

Curriculum: NOVICE

Created by: Dar Bagby

Definition: Tools of language & expression are devices employed by a writer to express ideas, create mood, develop characters, introduce conflicts, entertain the reader, etc.

Goals: 1) Be able to recognize tools of language in others' writing.
2) Be able to use some of the tools of language in their own writing.

Tools: a copy of the HANDOUTS (#1 & #2) for each enthusiast

Ice Breaker: (There will not be time for an ice breaker in this lesson. As much time as possible should be spent helping the enthusiasts recognize and understand the devices.)

Lesson

- Distribute a copy of HANDOUT #1 to the enthusiasts and ask them to follow along as you discuss the tools and their definitions (using the HANDOUT). Encourage the enthusiasts to take notes on the HANDOUT pages.
- Use the “Literary Terminology – Glossary” in the back of this curriculum as a reference to help explain terms as necessary.
- It is important to explain that, though this is a long lesson and has a *huge* amount of information to swallow, HANDOUT #1 contains a wealth of information and should be kept as a reference sheet.

Activity 1: Distribute HANDOUT #2 to the enthusiasts. Read aloud each of the examples and help them identify the tool that appears in **boldface** in each example.

Answer key:

1. The truth was **like** a bad taste on his tongue. simile
2. Each blade of grass **was a tiny bayonet** pointed firmly at our bare feet.
metaphor
3. An **ambulance driver** arrived at the nighttime bike accident scene and **ran over the accident victim** because the victim had crawled to the center of the road with his bike. irony
4. The **store clerk stood** in a **stupor** and **stared** at me. alliteration

5. “Whadda ya think of my wheels?” “Dude! Total awesome sauce!”
“Whadda ya” *slang*
“wheels” and “Dude” and “awesome sauce” *vogue words*
6. When he sat down, the young boy **squished** the unfortunate critter in his pocket.
onomatopoeia
7. Catherine did her best to put up a fence around her vegetable garden to keep the **brontosaurus** from getting in and destroying her cabbages. *anachronism*
8. Emily knew she had to do a lot of running to be prepared for the **marathon** that was coming up in six months. *toponym (named after Marathon, Greece)*

Activity 2: Ask each enthusiast to choose one of the tools of language—**other than the ones used above**—and write a sentence (or more, if necessary) demonstrating that tool. Have each one read his/her example and see if the other enthusiasts can determine the tool used.

- Discussion:**
- 1) Why do you think it is important to use tools of language and expression in your writing?
 - 2) Do you think you would enjoy reading if authors ignored the use of tools of language and expression? Why or why not?

Tools of Language & Expression

Handout #1: NOVICE

Created by: Dar Bagby

All terms that appear below with their definitions are included in this lesson; all the others found at the end of this lesson are either less prevalent, or they have been (or will be) covered in another lesson.

ab ovo (Latin, “from the egg”): story that starts at the beginning of the plot then moves chronologically to the story’s conclusion, as opposed to starting the story in the middle, or *in media res*.

acronym (Greek *acron* + *onyma*, “tip [or end] of a name”): word formed from the initial letters in a phrase (e.g., **laser** is pronounced as a single word standing for *light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation*); quite common in governmental bureaucracies, political jargon, businesses, and high-tech products. Usually acronyms first appear as abbreviations (e.g., L.A.S.E.R.), but as the term becomes more widespread, the periods fall away, and eventually so does the capitalization as the term is used more commonly.

alliteration: to repeat a consonant sound in close proximity to others or beginning several words with the same vowel sound (e.g., **pecks of pickled peppers**). Contrast with head rhyme. (NOTE: alliteration is not considered “good” writing, but it is an excellent tool, if used properly and not overused, for grabbing a reader’s attention, developing a particular type of character, expressing exasperation, etc.)

American English: North American language as it developed from British English, especially in terms of diction, spelling, and differences in the use of grammar.

anachronism: placing a person, event, item, or verbal expression in the wrong historical period (e.g., one would be hard-pressed to hear an Irishman in 1920 saying, “*That’s like totally awesome, dude!*”)

anagram (Greek, “writing back or anew”): shuffling the letters (or syllables) in a name, word, or phrase to form a new word (e.g., in J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series, *I am Lord Voldemort* is an anagram of the character’s birth name, Tom Marvolo Riddle). Anagrams were at their most popular during the Renaissance. An anagram that consists of a name written backwards is known specifically as an *anonym* (e.g., Samuel Butler’s *Erehwon* is an anonym of “nowhere”).

anapodoton: Deliberate omission of a clause to create a sentence fragment. Very often used in dialogue.

“*Are you going to make the trip?*”

"Not sure. Depends."

"On what?"

"Lots of things."

anathimeria: use of a different part of speech to act as another in violation of the normal rules of grammar (i.e., a verb might be treated like a noun or a noun like a verb; an adjective might be treated like a verb; etc). Instead of saying, "I was born..." a character might say, "I was birthed..." or instead of "I'm telling the truth..." a character might say, "I's truthin'..."

aposiopesis: an author has a character's dialogue break off, unable to continue. (e.g., "The freezing water closed in around—I can't go on.")

asyndeton: used to create a specific effect by eliminating conjunctions in a sentence (e.g., "You can cry and scream all you want, but I will not give the toy back to you.")

British English: the English language in the British Isles. Contrast with North American or Australian English.

circumlocution: indirect or roundabout writing as opposed to brief, clear writing.

climax (Greek, "ladder): the point at which the story reaches its greatest intensity and begins the resolution; the turning point in the action. It must evoke an emotional response from a reader, as it generally follows (or overlaps) the crisis of the story.

collocation: a natural tendency to put certain words together. For instance, it sounds strange to a native English-speaking person to hear, "There is a *high person* scaling the *tall mountain*," as opposed to, "There is a *tall person* scaling the *high mountain*."

colloquialism: a word or phrase used often in daily, relaxed speech but seldom found in formal writing.

creole: a native language that combines traits of multiple languages allowing some basic communication within a group. Over time, the mixed speech becomes the native tongue of the children—creoles. Contrast with pidgin.

dead language: a language that no longer changes over time, usually because it is no longer used in everyday discourse. It is learned only for ritual use, scholarly study, or the preservation of an ancient literature (e.g., Latin, Sanskrit).

dialect: the language of a particular class or group of people; it contains spelling, grammar, sounds, and diction that distinguishes it from that of other people, either geographically or socially. It is a major technique used in characterization to reveal

the status of a character. It often employs the use of misspelled words to create a special effect. For example, in literature taking place in the American West, a character who resides there might greet a woman by saying, "Howdy, ma'am" as opposed to an Eastern greeting such as, "Hello, Madam."

diction: the art of choosing a particular word from a variety of words in order to create a specific effect. Word choice determines the reader's reaction and contributes to the author's style and tone. Diction may also be separated into *high* or *formal diction* (elaborate, technical, polysyllabic) and *low* or *informal diction* (relaxed, familiar, conversational, slang).

echoic words: the actual sound of an action is represented by a word (e.g., *splash*, *hiss*, *ding-dong*); another term for onomatopoeia.

ethnic dialect: a dialect used by a racial or national group.

euphemism: a gentle phrase used in place of a blunt or painful one; to refer to something bad or embarrassing in an inoffensive light. (e.g., "I must excuse myself" would be a euphemism to replace the less eloquent "I have to use the can.")

eye dialect: the use of conventional spellings to convey conventional pronunciation. For example, *She **shud uh** gone to the doctor*, as opposed to the correct spelling, *She **should have** gone to the doctor*.

geographical dialect: a dialect that represents a specific geographical location (also called "regional dialect"). Contrast with ethnic or social dialects.

head rhyme: a form of alliteration, but only the first letters of words are the same; contrasts with alliteration in that consonants do not alliterate in the middle of or at the ends of words. Contrast with alliteration.

hyperbole: a trope; exaggeration, overstatement (e.g., His gut-rumbling roar could move mountains.)

idiom (also called *idiomatic expression*): an expression in one language that cannot be directly translated word-for-word into another language (e.g., He was green with envy.)

in media res (Latin, "in the middle[s] of things"): the practice of opening a story in the middle of the chronological order and filling in the reader throughout the remainder of the story concerning the events that led up to that point, usually through dialogue. The technique is used to heighten dramatic tension and/or create a sense of mystery. Contrast with *ab ovo*

irony: “saying one thing and meaning another” (Cicero). Irony comes in various forms: *verbal* irony (sarcasm), **DRAMATIC IRONY** involves “a situation in a narrative in which the reader knows something about present or future circumstances that the character does not know. In that situation, the character acts in a way we recognize to be grossly inappropriate to the actual circumstances, or the character expects the opposite of what the reader knows that fate holds in store, or the character anticipates a particular outcome that unfolds itself in an unintentional way. Probably the most famous example of dramatic irony is the situation facing Oedipus in the play *Oedipus Rex*. (Wheeler), and **SITUATIONAL IRONY** (also referred to as *universal irony* or *cosmic irony*) “in which accidental events occur that seem oddly appropriate, such as the poetic justice of a pickpocket getting his own pocket picked. However, both the victim and the audience are simultaneously aware of the situation in situational irony--which is not the case in dramatic irony.” (Wheeler).

jargon: words and phrases used in a field of study or an occupation that are usually confusing to the general public (e.g., medical jargon, police jargon, military jargon, etc.). Unless an author has experience in a particular field, it is unwise to try to write about that field without knowing the correct jargon.

language: a set of signs (verbal, gestural, or written) used to communicate within a group.

Late Modern English: English as spoken from approximately 1800 to the present.

loanword: a word borrowed from another language (e.g., *étagère*, *duvet*)

malapropism: a comic effect created by the misuse of words. (e.g., “I resemble that remark!” and “I sho’ nuff don’t want to be eaten by no river allegories, no sir!”) The best malapropisms sound similar to the correct word.

metaphor: a comparison implied by using one object as another (without using the words “like” or “as” (e.g., We can indicate that a child often repeats the actions of his/her parents by saying, “The acorn doesn’t fall far from the tree.”) Contrast with simile.

metaplasms: a technique wherein a word is intentionally misspelled to create a rhetorical effect; a neologism. (see **neologism**) For example, a writer might spell can’t as *cain’t* in order to specify a type of dialect. A writer might use a metaplasms to emphasize something of little importance by adding *-let* or *-ling* at the end of a word (e.g., *piglet* or *princeling*). The feminine nature of something normally considered to be masculine can be achieved by adding *-ette* to the end of a word (e.g., *burglarette*), and something old can be modernized (e.g., Jason becomes *the Jasonator*).

Modern English: the English language as spoken between approximately 1450 and 1800.

monosyllabic: a word having only one syllable.

O. Henry ending: a surprise or trick ending, totally unexpected; a turn of events that alters the action in a story. The term originated from the short stories of O. Henry (pen name for William Sidney Porter) whose stories' conclusions are completely unprepared for by readers. The endings are usually positive in that they praise the author's cleverness. Contrast with deus ex machine ending.

onomatopoeia: words that mimic the sounds they represent (e.g., gulp, murmur, buzz, etc.)

oxymoron (plural **oxymora**; also called *paradox*): a contradiction of terms that actually makes sense in an odd sort of way (e.g., jumbo shrimp, cold hotdog, Little Big Man, etc.). Some oxymora are used to reveal a deeper truth. For instance, in *Julius Caesar* Shakespeare wrote, "Cowards die many times before their deaths."

palindrome: a word or sentence that reads the same way forwards and backwards (e.g., words: radar, level, civic; sentences: "Able was I ere I saw Elba." "Madam, I'm Adam." "A man, a plan, a canal: Panama!") Probably the most excessive use of palindromes is by Ambrose Pamperis in an 1802 collection celebrating Catherine the Great's military campaigns (contains 416 palindromic verses).

paraphrase: to restate, in one's own words, all or part of a literary work. Contrast with quotation.

pidgin: a language that combines features from many languages; it is used among people who share no common language. It is not a native language; it is one used *between* ethnic groups rather than *within* any single ethnic group.

rebus: a common feature in Egyptian hieroglyphs and Babylonian cuneiform wherein a written sign stands for a word. In today's language, it usually occurs when two signs have two different meanings but sound alike. For instance, the letters "R" and "U" sound like "are" and "you" and are sometimes used as such (e.g., *R U going with us?* OR:

"Those aren't spiders."
"S M R. C M B-D I's?"

sarcasm: verbal irony—saying one thing but meaning another.

semantics: the study of word meanings in a language, not to be confused with grammar, etymology, or syntax.

simile: a trope used to compare items or ideas using the adverbs “like” or “as.” Contrast with metaphor.

slang: the use of informal vocabulary (i.e., other than preferred formal wording among the educated and elite in a culture). For example, one might use the slang phrase, “How’s it goin’?” instead of “How is everything going?”

social dialect: a dialect used by a specific social group as opposed to an entire culture or region.

spoonerism: the act of transposing initial sounds of words. (e.g., saying “As Cinderella ran down the stairs, she slopped her dripper,” instead of “...dropped her slipper.”)

surprise ending: another term for the O. Henry ending.

synthetic language (also referred to as a *declined language*): a language that allows a great deal of freedom of syntax (e.g., Latin, German, Greek, Welsh, and Anglo-Saxon) by using special endings attached to the ends of nouns (called declensions) that indicate which noun in the sentence is actually the subject, which is the direct object, which is the indirect object, etc. Contrast with artificial language.

tautology: the use of unnecessary repetition or redundancy in writing.

translation: converting words from one language into words of another language in an attempt to say the same thing.

trick ending: another term for an O. Henry ending.

vocabulary: all the words in a given language.

vogue word: a word used in pop culture; a fashionable word. Vogue words usually are short-lived, lasting only a few years or so. (e.g., “Cool,” “Ya big palooka,” “Dude!” “Wassup?”)

acrostic

allegory

allusion

ambiguity

amelioration

anaphora

anthropomorphizing

antithesis

aporia

archaism

artificial language

black vernacular

cacophony

cadence

cataphoresis

cliffhanger

commonization

connotation

double *entendre*
ellipsis
epanalepsis
epistolary novel
eponym
erotema
etymon
euphony
exposition
familiar address
figurative language
figure of speech
frame narrative
glosa
humility *topos*
hyperbaton
invective writing
ivory tower
lampoon
learned word
lexis
malapropism
maxim
meiosis
monody
morpheme
morphosyntax
neologism
onomastic
paradox
parallelism
periphrasis
personification
phatic communication
prolixity
prosopopoeia
pun
riddle
ridicule
satire

scatology
scheme
semantic bleaching
semantic change
semantic contamination
social satire
stichomythy
syncope
synecdoche
tmesis
toponym
travesty
trope
verisimilitude
vernacular

Tools of Language & Expression

Handout #2: NOVICE

Created by: Dar Bagby

What tool of language or expression is represented by each boldfaced example?

1. The truth was **like** a bad taste on his tongue. _____

2. Each blade of grass **was a tiny bayonet** pointed firmly at our bare feet.

3. An **ambulance driver** arrived at the nighttime bike accident scene and **ran over the accident victim** because the victim had crawled to the center of the road with his bike.

4. The **store clerk** stood in a stupor and **stared** at me. _____

5. “**Whadda ya** think of my **wheels**?” “**Dude!** Total **awesome sauce!**”
“**Whadda ya**” _____
“**wheels**” and “**Dude**” and “**awesome sauce**” _____

6. When he sat down, the young boy **squished** the unfortunate critter in his pocket.

7. Catherine did her best to put up a fence around her vegetable garden to keep the **brontosaurus** from getting in and destroying her cabbages. _____

8. Emily knew she had to do a lot of running to be prepared for the **Marathon** that was coming up in six months. _____

Choose one of the tools of language from HANDOUT #1—other than the ones represented above—and write a sentence (or more, if necessary) below to represent that tool.

Tools of Language & Expression

Curriculum: **ADVANCED**

Created by: **Dar Bagby**

Definition: Tools of language & expression are devices employed by a writer to express ideas, create mood, develop characters, introduce conflicts, entertain the reader, etc.

Goals: 1) Be able to recognize tools of language in others' writing.
2) Be able to use some of the tools of language in their own writing.

Tools: a copy of the HANDOUTS (#1 & #2) for each enthusiast

Ice Breaker: (There will not be time for an ice breaker in this lesson. As much time as possible should be spent helping the enthusiasts recognize and understand the tools and their definitions.)

Lesson

- Distribute a copy of HANDOUT #1 to the enthusiasts and ask them to follow along as you discuss the tools and their definitions (using the HANDOUT). Encourage the enthusiasts to take notes on the HANDOUT pages.
- Use the “Literary Terminology – Glossary” in the back of this curriculum as a reference to help explain any terms as necessary.
- It is important to explain that, though this is a long lesson and has a *huge* amount of information to swallow, HANDOUT #1 contains a wealth of information and should be kept as a reference sheet. (If the enthusiasts have been through the NOVICE course, they will have a NOVICE HANDOUT from the lesson of the same name; the ADVANCED HANDOUT should be kept with the NOVICE HANDOUT.)

Activity

- Distribute HANDOUT #2 and, allowing the enthusiasts to use HANDOUT #1, have them circle the letter of the word that best describes the tool represented in boldface type in the examples. Give them about 10 minutes to finish the quiz.

Answer Key:

1. I lived in **Menominee**, Michigan, when growing up; my ancestors were members of the local tribe.

- A. travesty
- B. toponym
- C. stichomythy
- D. prolixity

2. Bert is going to **jump all the way to Jupiter and back** when he hears about the newest discovery at the meteorite site.

- A. *catachresis*
- B. satire
- C. *tnesis*
- D. amelioration

3. **Seven pairs of shoes**, still covered with thick ash, **tramped into the elevator** eleven days following the volcanic eruption.

- A. aporia
- B. vernacular
- C. frame narrative
- D. *synecdoche*

4. Her **long, horsey face haloed by limp, greasy, uncombed hair and sporting a ridiculously huge bow constructed of something similar to burlap** made her appear more comical than pathetic. But even though I knew she had been through a rough couple of months, I didn't care, so **I laughed right out loud at the sight of her.**

- A. *lampoon*
- B. trope
- C. scatology
- D. paradox

5. I am both amazed and bewildered at the same time when someone seriously refers to **military intelligence.**

- A. morphosyntax
- B. personification
- C. semantic bleaching
- D. *paradox (also known as an oxymoron)*

Discussion: 1) Why do you think it is important to use tools of language and expression in your writing?
2) Do you think you would enjoy reading if authors ignored the use of tools of language and expression? Why or why not?

Tools of Language & Expression

Handout #1: ADVANCED

Created by: Dar Bagby

All terms that appear below with their definitions are included in this lesson; all the others found at the end of this lesson are either less prevalent, or they have been (or will be) covered in another lesson.

acrostic: the first letters of each line form a single word when read downwards.

*B*ruce, in typical seven-year-old style, didn't like playing with girls at recess.

*O*nly his male friends' games made him happy.

*Y*et there was something about that little blond-haired girl that appealed to him.

*S*he had certainly sparked his interest.

allegory (Greek *allegoria*, "speaking otherwise"): in the loosest, any writing that has a double meaning. Persons, events, or abstract ideas represent not only themselves on the literal level, but they also stand for something else on the symbolic level. These kinds of writings usually center around moral or spiritual concepts that may be more significant than the actual literal events described. More often than not, an allegory involves the interaction of multiple symbols which create a moral or spiritual (or even political) meaning. Be careful not to consider it a genre but rather an act of interpretation or way of understanding something. A work can be all allegorical or only partly so; it can be as short as a single sentence or as long as a work consisting of multiple volumes. Probably the most famous allegory in English literature is John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) in which the hero, Christian, flees the City of Destruction and travels through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, Vanity Fair, Doubting Castle, and finally arrives at the Celestial City, making the entire story a representation of a human soul's pilgrimage through temptation and doubt to reach salvation in Heaven. Other, more recent allegorical stories include Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.

allusion: in literature, a casual reference to a person, place, event, or other passage without explicit identification. The origin of allusions comes from mythology, Biblical references, historical events, legends, geography, or earlier literary works. Authors assume their readers will recognize the original sources and relate the meaning to the new context. For instance, a football coach might refer to his team as "a field full of Paul Bunyans." He assumes they know about the giant lumberman, but the team members may not be aware of this character and might not, therefore, know if they are being praised or vilified. Because allusion in literature assumes that its audience contains a certain level of awareness, it is normally taken as a compliment and should be used in that context when writing for a mixed variety of readers rather than used as an attempt at obscurity.

ambiguity: a term applied to vague or equivocal expression when it would be more useful to use precision. Sometimes intentional ambiguity can be a powerful device in literature, as it leaves something undetermined in order to open up multiple possible meanings. It consists of any wording, action, or symbol that can be read and interpreted in various ways. It is used to present the opportunity for alternative reactions to the same bit of language. It is especially useful in writing mysteries.

amelioration (Latin *melior*, “better”): a change during which a word gains increasingly favorable connotation. For example, in Middle English the word *knight* meant “servant.” Through amelioration, the word grew to mean “a servant of the king,” and it later took on the meaning “a minor nobleman.” The opposite term is *pejoration*, during which a word becomes increasingly negative over time.

anaphora (Greek, “carried again;” also called **epanaphora**): intentionally repeating a beginning clause in order to create an artistic effect (e.g., Winston Churchill declared, “We shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France. We shall fight on the seas and oceans. We shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air. We shall defend our island, whatever the cost shall be.”) Anaphora is the opposite of *epistrophe*, in which the concluding phrase is repeated over and over for effect. The two can also be combined effectively.

anthropomorphizing: placing human qualities in animistic religions, sometimes with derogatory overtones. Contrast with personification.

antithesis (pl. **antitheses**): the use of opposite phrases in close conjunction, the best of which are expressed in a balanced sentence, for example, “*She is white as sunlight, black as midnight*” or “*I burn, and I freeze.*” It can also be expressed as a contrast of opposites, such as, “*Evil men fear authority; good men cherish it.*” Alternatively, it can be a contrast of degrees, such as, “*One small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind.*” Contrast with oxymoron.

aporia: a trope where the writer talks about not being able to talk about something. (e.g., “I can’t tell you how often writers use aporia.”)

archaism: a word, expression, spelling, or phrase that is out of date in the common speech of an era but is still deliberately used by a writer for artistic purposes; most commonly used in period pieces. For example, Coleridge, in his “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,” writes, “*Hold off! Unhand me, grey-beard loon!*” Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

artificial language: a deliberately “made-up” language; usually concocted by a small number of individuals for some specific purpose, not a language that develops

naturally over a period of centuries. These might include Tolkein's Elvish, *Avatar's* Navi, and *Star Trek's* Klingonese. Artificial languages contrast with synthetic languages.

black vernacular: ethnic dialect(s) associated with Americans of African ancestry; also called "Black English" or "African-American Vernacular English" and is abbreviated AAVE in scholarly texts.

cacophony: the harsh grouping of words wherein the writer makes a phrase intentionally unpleasant to the ear when the spoken aloud. This practice is used to jar the dialogue or make a phrase particularly difficult to speak aloud. Contrast with euphony.

cadence: the natural rhythm of language. It can be described as a melodic pattern just before the end of a sentence or phrase and depends on the position of stressed and unstressed syllables.

catagchresis: a trope wherein an author uses a totally impossible figure of speech, especially one breaking the limits of realism (or grammar); something biologically or physically impossible. (e.g., "Honnah will probably **bust a hole in the sky** when she finds out about this.")

commonization: a commonly used word made up from the proper name of a place or a person. It is used in reference to an event or a situation. For example, "lynch" is taken from Captain William Lynch, who, along with his vigilante minions, hanged hobos and bums; a "herculean" task comes from Hercules, etc.

connotation: an extra meaning of a word carrying beyond that found in a dictionary. For instance, *house* and *home* both refer to a domicile, but *home* evokes more emotional qualities than *house*.

double entendre (French, "double meaning"): deliberate use of ambiguous phrases or images, especially involving sexual humorous meanings.

ellipsis (plural, **ellipses**): in recent writing, it is a punctuation mark using three dots (...) to refer to material missing from a quotation. (see **dash** and **hyphen**) In earlier times, an ellipsis was not indicated by the three dots, only inferred. For example, the sentence, "I was given three warnings, my partner, two" demonstrates that the ellipsis is the missing words "*was given*" after "partner" and the word "*warnings*" after "two" without using the "... " punctuation.

epanalepsis: the practice of repeating a word from the beginning of a phrase or clause at the end of that phrase or clause. For example, "*Common sense is not so common.*" "Man's inhumanity to man." It can also be an entire sentence repeated at

the beginning of each new paragraph of an essay or each new section of a novel to raise thematic concern or establish a mood.

epistolary novel: a novel that takes the form of a series of letters between two characters. This form of writing allows the author to switch between the points of view of several characters throughout the narrative.

eponym: a word derived from a person's or place's proper name. (e.g., *saxophone*: named after Sax, the surname of a 19th-century instrument-making family in Belgium)

erotema: a trope wherein the author asks a question of the reader. (e.g., "The entire town is in an uproar. Have you ever seen such blatantly inappropriate behavior?")

etymon (plural **etyma**): an older word that is a source for a newer one.

euphony (from the Greek "good sound"): putting words together in a harmonious group for a pleasant flow of sounds when spoken. Contrast with cacophony.

exposition: an explanation or summary of background material presented by the author as opposed to revealing the information through gradual details in narrative form. It is generally considered bad writing (except in essays) because it *tells* instead of *shows*. An example of *telling* through exposition would be, *Roger was angry and declared that he did not want to be a part of this. Then he turned and walked toward the door.* An example of the same scenario that *shows* (through details) rather than *tells* would be, *Roger slammed his fist on the table then flung himself around and stomped toward the door as he clenched his teeth and muttered, "I refuse to be a part of this!"* The second example is *showing* Roger's anger rather than using exposition to tell the reader about it.

familiar address: informal pronouns used to speak to someone.

figurative language: a trope; moving away from an ordinary language in order to accomplish a special effect or meaning. The two most common are simile and metaphor.

figure of speech: a scheme or trope; a technique using language to achieve an artistic effect.

frame narrative: a small story(s) inserted within a bigger one; also called "embedded narratives" or "periscopes." In *The 1001 Arabian Nights* Scheherazade keeps putting off her execution by telling her Caliph a story each night that ends with

a cliffhanger which he must find the answer to the following night, thus delaying her death. Each of her stories is a frame narrative within the story of her imprisonment.

glosa: a synthetic language used among scientists around the globe; attributed to Lancelot Hogben of Gr. Britain who first published it in 1943 and called it *interglosa*. But the name was shortened to *glosa* when the language was modified and republished in 1978, three years following Hogben's death.

humility topos: a strategy in which an author purports to be less intelligent or clever than he/she actually is in order to gain a more congenial response from readers. (e.g., Benjamin Franklin, in his autobiography, makes self-references regarding his limitations and inadequacies so he appears "charming" rather than "scornful," all the while discreetly instructing his audience in practical wisdom without them feeling as though they are being directed to learn it.

hyperbaton: a generic term for changing the normal or expected order of words. The term comes from the Greek for "overstepping" because one or more words "overstep" their normal position and appear elsewhere, for example in *Paradise Lost* Milton writes, "High on a throne of royal gold, Satan exalted sat."

invective writing: writing that insults or attacks a person, topic, or institution, doing so by involving negative emotional language.

ivory tower: a popular American phrase meaning a place, situation, or philosophy that ignores practical worldly affairs; hiding from the "real" world and putting all one's ideals into impractical meanings and efforts.

lampoon: a satire, coarse or crude, that ridicules another person's appearance or character.

learned word (pronounced learn-ed): a word that is primarily used in technical contexts rather than in everyday life. Contrast with conversational word.

lexis: a complete set of all of the units of potential meaning of all of the idioms, morphemes, and words used in a language.

maxim: a short proverb containing insight into human nature. The Viking sagas often contain dialogue wherein one character quotes a maxim to another character(s) to show wisdom and make a point.

meiosis: understatement; the opposite of exaggeration (e.g., Carl Sagan knows a little bit about the cosmos.) A writer can also use a negative statement to achieve the effect (e.g., Schubert didn't write unbeautiful songs.)

monody: a single speaker uttering an elegy or dirge.

morpheme: Linguistically, the smallest collection of sounds or letters in a spoken or written word that has importance or significance--a unit of meaning that cannot be divided into tinier units of meaning. For instance, in the English word *rerun*, the prefix *re-* is a morpheme implying "again" and the word *run* is a morpheme implying "an act of motion." If we try to cut the prefix *re-* into smaller collections of sounds (r and e), these sounds no longer have meaning attached to them, and they are no longer morphemes. Likewise, the morpheme *run* cannot be further subdivided into meaningful morphemes...Typically, in English, individual syllables tend to be morphemes. (Wheeler)

morphosyntax: a word meaning "grammar" and used by scholars when discussing how parts of a sentence relate to one another.

neologism (1790-1800 French *néologisme*) newly coined word or phrase; a familiar word used in a new sense.

onomastic: related to names. A character's name might contain an onomastic symbol (e.g., in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Lucy's last name is Westenra, which means "the light of the west").

paradox: another term for oxymoron

parallelism: a scheme wherein an author establishes like patterns of grammatical structure and length. For instance, "She drank, danced, and passed out." If the grammatical pattern is changed to "She had a drink, then she danced and promptly passed out," is NOT parallelism. Using two parallel structures results in ISOCOLON PARALLELISM (e.g., The bigger they are, the harder they fall.), and three structures is TRICOLON PARALLELISM. (e.g., "...the government of the people, by the people, and for the people.")

periphrasis (Greek, "roundabout speech"): the expression of an idea using many more words than necessary; the idea could be expressed simply and briefly. Contrast with euphemism. Though most literature is sufficient, and even admired, when using fewer words, some rhetorical situations may call for the use of periphrasis. For instance, saying simply, "I have to pee," would be more acceptable if expressed as, "Excuse me. I need to take a comfort break."

personification: a form of writing in which animals, inanimate objects, ideas, abstractions, etc. are given the abilities and character traits of humans. Personification appears in almost all types of writing (especially poetry). Contrast with anthropomorphizing.

phatic communication: conversation that transmits no information but rather reinforces social bonds, signals the beginning or end of a conversation, or engages

ritual activities. It often represents nothing more than politeness that eases the transition to and from ritual activity.

prolixity: a type of periphrasis using rambling or excessive detail. A writer who has the propensity to use this style of writing is referred to as a *prolix*.

prosopopoeia (Greek *prosopon*, “face”): a type of personification wherein an inanimate object gains the attribute of being able to speak (e.g., a hockey player’s game might be expressed through the view of the ice).

pun (also called *paronomasia*): two words that are alike in sound but different in meaning were widely used by authors to create a trope in serious literature. (e.g., Shakespeare used the words *vile* and *vial* when referring to “Romeo’s *vile* death” in *Romeo and Juliet*. In today’s practice, however, the pun is considered the lowest sense of humor.

riddle (Old English *roedel*, from *roedan*, “to give council” or “to read”): a type of literature that is universal in its distinguishable property of either a puzzling question or a conundrum being presented to the reader. The reader is then expected to try to solve the riddle. A riddle may include a pun, symbolism, synecdoche, personification, *prosopopoeia*, or imagery. The earliest recorded riddles probably date back to the 8th century and can be found in the *Exeter Book*, but earlier examples have been found in Greek, Sanskrit, Chinese, Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, and other languages

ridicule: a tactic wherein a writer attempts to arouse laughter by making an object or person seem suitable only for mockery.

satire: became a popular writing technique during the Enlightenment when authors felt they could use their art as a mirror to reflect society. They used humor to critique religion, politics, morality, and social standards. The technique distorted society’s faults in a manner that made them so obvious, readers could see how ridiculous they appeared. This, in turn, caused them to alter that trait in themselves and, thus, become a model citizen for others to copy and improve the entire society. Today’s society is presented with satire in a myriad of ways via the media, especially through television sit coms. “Conventionally, **formal satire** involves a direct, first-person-address, either to the audience or to a listener mentioned within the work. An example of formal satire is Alexander Pope’s *Moral Essays*. **Indirect satire** conventionally employs the form of a fictional narrative--such as Byron’s *Don Juan* or Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*. Ridicule, irony, exaggeration, and similar tools are almost always used in satire. **Horatian satire** tends to focus lightly on laughter and ridicule, but it maintains a playful tone. Generally, the tone is sympathetic and good humored, somewhat tolerant of imperfection and folly even while expressing amusement at it. The name comes from the Roman poet Horace (65 BCE-8 CE), who preferred to ridicule human folly in general rather than condemn specific persons. In contrast, **Juvenalian satire** uses withering invective, insults, and a slashing attack. The name comes from the Roman poet Juvenal (60-140 CE), who frequently employed

the device, but the label is applied to British writers such as Swift and Pope as well.” (Wheeler)

scatology (do not confuse with *eschatology*): humor dealing with feces. It is also referred to as “potty humor.” The topic is supposed to draw either laughter or disgust. This type of humor occurs in nearly every culture and has been present in almost all time periods throughout history.

scheme: syntax, word order. Letters and sounds—NOT meanings of words—are dealt with in various types of schemes. Types of schemes include: parallelism, antithesis, antimetabole, chiasmus, alliosis, ellipsis, asyndeton, polysyndeton, climax, enallage, anapodoton, neologism, metaplasmus, prosthesis, epenthesis (fixation), proparalepsis, aphaeresis, syncope, apocope, hyperbaton, alliteration, anaphora, epanalepsis, anadiplosis, gradatio, diacope, epistrophe, simproce. Contrast with tropes.

semantic bleaching: a word that has lost its original meaning has undergone semantic bleaching. This quite common with personal names and toponyms. For instance, even though the name Acapulco originally meant “port,” people don’t think of Acapulco as that; instead, it has become known as a fashionable resort city on the Pacific coast of southern Mexico, known for its beaches and water sports.)

semantic change: a change over time in what a word or phrase comes to mean.

semantic contamination: When two words sound alike, the meaning of one often becomes attached to the other, especially regarding foreign loan words.

social satire: writing aimed at society rather than a specific individual.

stichomythy: a form of dialogue wherein one-liners are delivered and/or exchanged rapidly. Because of the rapidity of delivery, this is used as an effective means of creating tension and conflict. This technique was of paramount importance in some of Shakespeare’s works (*Hamlet*, *Richard III*) and in Molière’s *Les femmes savants*.

synecdoche: a trope that represents either a part of a whole object or the whole object representing a part. For example, *Fifty fingers traveled over the five keyboards at the same time as a thousand eyes watched and marveled*. This does not mean that fifty disconnected fingers were playing the pianos, but instead five people (each with ten fingers) played while 500 people (each with two eyes) watched the performance.

tmesis: a scheme wherein a word is broken into two parts to emphasize a point. (e.g., That is Im Possible.) *Tmesis* is also represented when two parts of a phrase are split apart and other words are inserted. (e.g., I’m from West—by God—Virginia.)

toponym: a place-name taken from aboriginal words or phrases. (e.g., many city names in the United States come from Native American words: Milwaukee, Negaunee,

Piqua, Oglala)

travesty (Latin *trans* + *vestis*, “switched clothing”): the treatment of a serious subject in an inappropriate manner. Travesty in literature can happen either accidentally or intentionally. At times, an author creates an intentional travesty by deliberately altering his tone so that it comes across as “mock-seriousness.”

trope: a figure of speech that has a surprising twist in the *meanings* of words as opposed to the *patterns* of words. Contrast with schemes. Various types of tropes include: anthimeria, apostrophe, meiosis, metaphor, metonymy, onomatopoeia, oxymoron, personification, prosopopoeia, pun, scheme, simile, sinaesthesia, synecdoche, zeugma.

verisimilitude: something that is construed as believable, realistic; the author captures the reader’s imagination in a way that makes the incident appear believable, even if generally considered impossible. For example., in the *Hidden Earth Series, Volume 2, PLANET LAND: The Adventures of Cub and Nash*, author Janet Beasley makes sparks shoot from the end of Cub’s index finger, explaining it well enough that it becomes believable within the context of the story.

vernacular (Latin *vernaculus*, “native, indigenous”): common, everyday language of people indigenous to a particular geographic area. Contrast with a dead language that is maintained only in schools or literary texts. For instance, Latin is a dead language, not a vernacular one, since around the late 700s; Sanskrit has not been a vernacular language for more than 2000 years. Classical languages, on the other hand, though generally no longer understood by common citizens, are still used by the government in documentation, scriptures, etc. However, Dante and Chaucer (along with some other less well known authors) made it acceptable to write in vernacular languages.

<i>ab ovo</i>	climax	hyperbole
acronym	collocation	idiom
alliteration	colloquialism	<i>in media res</i>
American English	creole	irony
anachronism	dead language	jargon
anagram	dialect	language
anapodoton	diction	Late Modern English
anthimeria	echoic words	loanword
aposiopesis	ethnic dialect	metaphor
asyndeton	euphemism	metaplasmus
British English	eye dialect	Modern English
circumlocution	geographic dialect	monosyllabic
cliffhanger	head rhyme	O. Henry ending

onomatopoeia
oxymoron
palindrome
paraphrase
pidgin
rebus
sarcasm

semantics
simile
slang
social dialect
spoonerism
surprise ending
synthetic language

tautology
translation
trick ending
vocabulary
vogue word

Tools of Language & Expression

Handout #2: ADVANCED

Created by: Dar Bagby

Circle the letter of the word that best describes the tool represented in boldface type in the examples below.

1. I lived in **Menominee**, Michigan, when growing up; my ancestors were members of the local tribe.

- A. travesty
- B. toponym
- C. stichomythy
- D. prolixity

2. Bert is going to **jump all the way to Jupiter and back** when he hears about the newest discovery at the meteorite site.

- A. catachresis
- B. satire
- C. *tnesis*
- D. amelioration

3. **Seven pairs of shoes**, still covered with thick ash, **tramped into the elevator** eleven days following the volcanic eruption.

- A. aporia
- B. vernacular
- C. frame narrative
- D. synecdoche

4. **Her long, horsey face haloed by limp, greasy, uncombed hair and sporting a ridiculously huge bow constructed of something similar to burlap** made her appear more comical than pathetic. But even though I knew she had been through a rough couple of months, I didn't care, so **I laughed right out loud at the sight of her.**

- A. lampoon
- B. trope
- C. scatology
- D. paradox

5. I am both amazed and bewildered at the same time when someone seriously refers to **military intelligence.**

- A. morphosyntax
- B. personification
- C. semantic bleaching
- D. paradox