**Advanced Placement Language and Composition Vocabulary**

**Abstract:** Opposed to concrete, not quantifiable

**Adjective:** modifies, alters, changes a noun

**Adverb:** modifies, alters, changes a verb

**Aesthetic:** the study or philosophy of beauty in art, literature and nature

**Allegory:** form of a metaphor, the meaning of a person, object, or action resides outside the story, the concrete is within the story

**Alliteration:** repetition of initial consonant sounds

**Allusion:** an indirect reference, often to another text or an historic event

**Ambiguity:** having more than one meaning, used in verbal, written, and nonverbal communication

**Anachronism:** out of time, placing something in a time where it does not belong

**Analogy:** the comparison of two things alike in some respects

**Analysis:** to separate into parts for inspection and evaluation

**Anaphora:** the repetition of words at the beginning of successive clauses

**Anecdote:** a short narrative detailing the particulars of an event

**Annotation:** explanatory or critical notes added to a text

**Antagonist:** the force against the protagonist, a person, nature, or the person’s psyche

**Antecedent:** the noun to which the pronoun refers

**Antimetabole:** the repetition of words in an inverted order to sharpen a contrast

**Antihero:** a protagonist who is particularly graceless, inept, stupid, or dishonest

**Antithesis:** figure of speech, using strongly contrasting words, clauses, sentences or ideas
**Aphorism**: a short witty statement

**Apology**: a written or spoken defense

**Appositive**: a word or phrase that renames a nearby noun or pronoun

**Archaic Diction**: the use of words common to an earlier time period; antiquated language

**Archetype**: a blocked off memory or our past or of pre-human experience, a type of struggle or character to which a culture relates without prior knowledge

**Argument**: a statement put forth and supported by evidence

**Aristotelian triangle**: a diagram that represents a rhetorical situation as the relationship among the speaker, the subject, and the audience

**Artificial Setting**: man made settings

**Assertion**: an emphatic statement; declaration. An assertion supported by evidence becomes an argument

**Assumption**: a belief or statement taken for granted without proof

**Asyndeton**: leaving out conjunctions between words, phrases, clauses

**Attitude**: the author’s or speaker’s feelings toward the subject, attend to distance when discussing attitude

**Audience**: the intended receiver/s for a speaker or writer’s message

**Authority**: a reliable, respected source – someone with knowledge

**Begging the Question**: a fallacy in reasoning which omits the minor premise and goes directly to the conclusion

Ex. First time drivers are reckless. Major Premise

Steven is a first time driver. Minor Premise

Steven will be reckless conclusion

To beg the question you must omit the minor premise, therefore the syllogism breaks down.

**Bias**: prejudice or predisposition toward one side of a subject or issue

**Bildungsroman**: a coming of age novel, the story of a persons’ development, *Catcher in the Rye*
**Canon:** an accepted list. Religious canon = Mathew, Mark, Luke, John, etc.

**Carpe Deim:** literally “Seize the day,” a philosophy of living for the day and not thinking of tomorrow

**Catharsis:** a moral and spiritual cleansing you receive when watching a protagonist overcome great odds to survive

**Character:** a person described as an individual with reference to characterization, **characterization**: an imaginary person who seems life-like

**Chronological:** in the order of time. First, second, third. The simplest way to structure a narrative

**Claim:** an assertion, usually supported by evidence

**Clause:** any combination of subject and verb which makes a complete sentence, Independent/Dependent

**Colloquial:** informal conversation, it differs in grammar, vocabulary, syntax, imagery, or connotation

**Common Ground:** Shared beliefs, values, or positions

**Complex Sentence:** a sentence that includes one independent clause and at least one dependent clause.

**Conceit:** a type of metaphor that is strikingly odd and thoughtful, ex. Love compared to a motorcycle

**Concession:** a reluctant acknowledgment or yielding

**Concrete:** opposed to abstract, quantifiable

**Concrete Detail:** details used in a persuasive paper which attempt to convince the reader: proof or evidence

**Confidant (male)/Confidante(female):** A person who partakes little in the action, is very close to the protagonist, and hears all of the intimate secrets of the protagonist

**Conflict:** Protagonist/ Antagonist clash, anytime these two come into the same arena there is some form of conflict
**Connotation**: that which is implied by a word, as opposed to the word’s literal meaning

**Context**: words, events, or circumstances that help determine meaning

**Controlling Image**: an image or metaphor which runs throughout the work

**Coordination**: grammatical equivalence between parts of a sentence, often through a coordinating conjunction such as *and*, *or*, *but*

**Counterargument**: a challenge to a position; an opposing argument

**Credible**: worthy of belief; trustworthy

**Crisis**: The point of the highest clash

**Criticism**: analysis, study, and evaluation of individual works of literature

**Cumulative Sentence**: an independent clause followed by subordinate clauses or phrases that supply additional detail

**Declarative Sentence**: a sentence that makes a statement

**Deductive**: reasoning from the general of the specific

Ex. Students are bad drivers
    Aaron drives recklessly
    Aaron hits small animals daily

**Denotation**: the literal meaning of a word; its dictionary definition

**Descriptive Detail**: Details in an essay which use sensory description (the five senses) therefore you analyze these descriptions by each sense.

**Detail**: specifically described items placed in a work for effect and meaning

**Deus Ex Machina**: literally “God in the machine” Greek idea from when the gods would come on stage to rescue the hero, now it applies to anytime the hero is saved by a miraculous or improbably event

**Devices**: speech, syntax, diction. These stylistic elements collectively produce and effect

**Diction**: word choice: denotation = dictionary definition, connotation = all the emotions the word brings
**Didactic**: a teaching type of tone, usually lesson-like or boring in nature

**Digression**: insertion of material not closely related to the work or subject

**Dilemma**: 2 choices – both bad, or 2 choices either one producing a bad outcome

**Doppelganger**: literally double goer” a mysterious twin or double fighting against your good work

**Dystopia**: “bad place” An imaginary world which was constructed to be perfect yet failed. Present tendencies are carried out to their intensely unpleasant end.

**Elegiac**: mournful over what has passed or been lost; often used to describe tone

**Ellipsis/Ellipse**: the omission of one or more words

**Epigram**: a brief witty statement

**Epiphany**: a sudden understanding or realization which prior to this was thought of or understood

**Ethos**: the character or emotions of the writer reflected in the speech or writings

**Euphemism**: a device where being indirect replaces directness to avoid unpleasantness

**Explication of text**: explanation of a text’s meaning through an analysis of all of its constituent parts, including the literary devices used; also close reading

**Expository**: a mode of writing which is used to explain something

**Fantasy**: from fancy” usually the breaking away from reality

**Figurative language**: the use of tropes or figures of speech; going beyond literal meaning to achieve literary effect

**Figure of Speech**: uses of language which depart from customary construction. Metaphors, similes, personification, hyperboles, etc.

**Fragment**: a word, phrase, or clause that does not form a full sentence
**Generic Conventions**: from “genre” or type, each type of writing editorial, biography, narrative, persuasive, etc.; uses particular conventions. The persuasive mode of writing uses the technique of syllogism to prove a point

**Genre**: A particular type or category of writing; tragedy, comedy, epic, short story, historical fiction, didactic, etc.

**Hamartia**: from Greek and translated in the New Testament as “sin” literally it means an error, mistake, frailty, or misstep. The protagonist’s hamartia will cause his/her downfall

**Hyperbole**: to overstate an issue, exaggeration

**Imagery**: literally, the collection of images within a work. Specifically, descriptive details which use figures of speech to explain a concept, person, or thing.

**Imperative sentence**: a sentence that requests or commands

**In Medias Res**: “in the midst of things” starting a story the middle of the action. Later the first part will be revealed.

**Independent/Dependent Clause**:  
Independent – A sentence which stands alone  
Dependent - a sentence which needs to be joined with another sentence in order to make sense

**Inductive**: reasoning from the specific to the general

**Inference**: to conclude by reason an idea, attitude, tone which is not directly stated by the author

**Invective**: a violent verbal attack

**Inversion**: a sentence in which the verb precedes the subject

**Irony**: a recognition of reality different from the appearance. **Verbal Irony** – the actual intent is the opposite of what is said, something like sarcasm but not as harsh.

**Juxtaposition**: placement of two things side by side for emphasis

**Kitsch**: “gaudy trash” shallow flashy art designed to have a mass appeal
**Language:** the style of the sentence and vocabulary used in conversation and written communication. Slang, formal, parental, didactic, common, etc.

**Linking Verb:** a being verb; is, are, was, were, have been, had been, has been, will have been; which joins a subject to a predicate nominative or predicate adjective.

**Logos:** a Greek term that means “word”; an appeal to logic; one of Aristotle’s three rhetorical appeals

**Mechanics:** any form of sentence regulation which aids in interpretation; period, comma, hyphen, question mark, italics, capitalization, etc.

**Metaphor:** saying one thing in terms of something else

**Metonymy:** figure of speech. The substitution of the name of an object with a word closely associated with it. Ex. The White House for the presidency, the crown for the royal family or the queen.

**Microcosm:** “small world” representing an entire idea through a small situation or conflict

**Modifier:** a word, phrase, or clause that qualifies or describes another word, phrase, or clause

**Mood/Atmosphere:** the emotional feeling of the setting, something like tone, but specifically related to setting.

**Motif:** a simple device that serves as a basis for an expanded narrative, the motif is a recurring feature in the work

**Narrative Devices:** the ordering of events, withholding information until a climactic moment, and all tools the storyteller uses to progress the story line

**Narrative Technique:** The “style” of the story, concentrate on the writer’s order of events and details

**Natural Setting:** all setting that is produced through nature including weather and light/darkness

**Nominalization:** turning a verb or adjective into a noun

**Noun:** any name of a person, place, thing, or idea
**Objective:** a tone of fairness and even discussion of a subject, it usually suggests that there is distance between the author and the subject being discussed. Be careful, this tone can also be cold and impersonal.

**Occasion:** an aspect of context; the clause or reason for writing

**Omniscient narrator:** an all knowing, usually third-person narrator

**Oxymoron:** a self-contradictory combination or words.

**Paradox:** A statement that seems to be contradictory or absurd, however it is found to be true

**Parallelism:** the coordination of sentence syntax, word order, and ideas. It is used for effect and emphasis

**Parody:** a writing which imitates another serious piece and pokes fun at the original. Mad Magazine’s rewritten movies is an example of parody.

**Pathos:** a Greek term that refers to suffering but has come to be associated with broader appeals to emotion; one of Aristotle’s three rhetorical appeals

**Pedantic:** bookish and scholarly in tone, often boring and dull due to little interest on the part of the listener

**Periodic Sentence:** a sentence not grammatically complete until the end. It has the dependent clause’s at the beginning and ends with the independent clause

**Persona:** the speaker, voice, or character assumed by the author of a piece of writing

**Personification:** human-like qualities are given to inanimate objects

**Persuasive Devices:** devices used in the writing mode of persuasion; strong connotations, order of intensity from lesser to greater, the logic of the argument

**Plagiarism:** Literary theft. Using someone’s ideas and style and passing the off as your own.

**Plot:** the framework upon which a story is placed; chronological, flashback, in medias res, or others. Once the story is finished a definite beginning, middle, and end can be found.

**Point of View:** point from which an author presents a story. It can be close, distant, within a character, or others.

**Polemic:** an argument against an idea, usually regarding philosophy, politics, or religion
**Polysyndeton:** the deliberate use of a series of conjunctions

**Predicate:** the part of the sentence beginning with the verb or the first verb in a verb phrase

**Predicate Adjective:** an adjective in the predicate which modifies the subject of the sentence, the predicate adjective must follow a linking verb, and “tall” is an adjective modifying the subject “She”.

**Predicate Nominative:** a noun in the predicate which renames the subject, It must follow a linking verb. Ex. He is President. “President” renames the subject.

**Premise; major, minor:** two parts of a syllogism. The concluding sentence of a syllogism takes its predicate from the major premise.
Major premise: All mammals are **warm-blooded**
Minor premise: All **horses** are mammals
Conclusion: All **horses** are **warm-blooded**

**Pronoun:** a word which takes the place of a noun to prevent repetition or to act as the subject of a clause.
- Personal: he, she, you, they, etc.
- Demonstrative: this, that, those, these
- Reflexive: himself, herself, etc.
- Relative: that which, who, whom

**Propaganda:** A negative term for writing designed to sway opinion rather than present information

**Protagonist:** “pro” first, “agon” contest; the main character of a work who has some type of contest; mental, spiritual, physical, natural; to complete

**Purpose:** One’s intention or objective in a speech or piece of writing

**Realism:** being as close to reality as possible. Realistic works depict the reality of the harsh world and the effect upon the luckless protagonist.

**Refute:** To discredit an argument, particularly a counterargument

**Repetition:** word, sound, phrase, idea; used for emphasis. An excellent technique in persuasive speeches. Always pay attention to repetition in writing. The author is trying to tell you something.

**Resource of Language:** an author’s use of diction, syntax, sentence structure, and figures of speech to produce an effect
Rhetoric: the art of persuasion and employing the devices to persuade. Persuasion extends to the construction of a work so that you believe it to be true even though it is fiction.

Rhetorical Features: all of the parts of tone; diction, imagery, details, language, and sentence structure.

Rhetorical Question: A question used by the speaker or writer to achieve an awareness in the listener or reader. No reply to the question is expected.

Rhetorical Shift: changing from one tone, attitude, or distance to another, Look for little words like but, however, even though, although, yet, etc..

Rhetorical Structure: to analyze, study, and evaluate rhetorical structure you must examine images, details and arguments.

Sarcasm: a bitter expression of disapproval, sometimes intended to be harsh and hurtful, levels of intensity exist

Satire: a way or writing or speaking which censures things, activities, persons, or ideas; it is accomplished with humor and wit.

Scheme: a pattern of words or sentence construction used for rhetorical effect

Sentence Structure: analyzing sentence structure asks that you look at sentence length; simple, compound, complex; unusual phrases, repetition, altered word order.

Simile: a comparison of two things using “like” or “as”

Simple Sentence: a sentence containing subject and verb with little else in the subject or predicate

Spatial: the distance between characters, ideas, and things within the story. Careful, a character can be close physically to a person, but emotionally distant. Therefore; language, and in movies and theater body language, explains the difference.

Stylistic Devices: when analyzing stylistic devices the reader must find the best combination of the elements of language to discuss: tone, syntax, attitude, figures of speech, repetition, in tone especially connotations

Subjective: expressing in a personal manner your convictions, beliefs, and ideas; when this subjective response occurs it is likely to be emotional.
**Subordinate clause:** created by a subordination conjunction, a clause that modifies an independent clause

**Subplot:** a secondary story within a story, Soap Operas use various subplots within a story.

**Syllogism:** a formula for presenting a logical argument  
  Ex. Assertion, Proof, Commentary  
  Ex. Major Premise, Minor Premise, Conclusion

**Symbol:** a thing that in and of itself it stands for something else. All symbols have vehicle and tenor.

**Synopsis:** a summary of the main points of a story or essay

**Syntax:** the physical arrangement of words in a sentence.

**Synthesis:** the joining of two or more idea, arguments, abstracts to produce a new idea, argument, or abstract; result of thesis and antithesis

**Tenor and Vehicle:** terms used when referring to a symbol. The Vehicle is the physical thing or person; the tenor is the abstraction.  
  Ex. #1 vehicle = American Flag  
  Tenor = freedom  
  Ex. #2 vehicle = dove  
  Tenor = peace  
  Ex. #3 Vehicle = black veil  
  Tenor = sin covering the heart  
  Ex. #4 Vehicle = The Usher’s House  
  Tenor = the ugliness and evil of the decaying family

In your varied readings, symbols will be in the form of objects, particular places, events, time, weather, people, etc.

**Theme:** the central idea of a story or essay. The Scarlet Letter theme = paying for your mistakes.

**Thesis:** An attitude or position taken by the speaker or writer. Dostoevsky’s thesis was that Hegel and Nietzsche were totally wrong

**Tone:** the speaker’s attitude toward the subject or audience

**Topic Sentence:** a sentence, most often appearing at the beginning of a paragraph, that announces the paragraph’s idea and often unites it with the work’s thesis.

**Trancendental:** reliance upon conscience and intuition, a form of idealism, romanticism
**Transition**: a body or phrase that links different ideas

**Trope**: artful diction; the use of language in a nonliteral way; also called a figure of speech

**Understatement**: an actual statement which false under the magnitude of the actual event.

**Utopia**: a perfect world, Utopias usually become dystopias

**Verb**: the word in the sentence which gives action or being to the subject. Verbs can become adjectives “the running machine” and nouns “running is an exercise”

**Voice**: in grammar, a term for the relationship between a verb and a noun (active or passive voice). In rhetoric, a distinctive quality in the style and tone of writing

**Wit**: intellectual humor

**Zeugma**: a construction in which one word (usually a verb) modifies or governs – often in different, sometimes incongruent ways – two or more words in a sentence