



*The definitions in this glossary are intended to help the teachers of Texas develop a deeper understanding of the 2008 ELAR and SLAR TEKS. Many of the terms and definitions included in this glossary are specific to the content of the TEKS. These terms may have additional meanings in other contexts.*



# A

## academic English words

- 1) Words used in the learning of academic subject matter in a formal schooling context that are associated with literacy and academic achievement, including specific academic terms, technical language, and speech registers related to each field of study.
- 2) Words used during instruction, exams, and in textbooks. These could include words that are specific to content (e.g., *hyperbole*, *metaphor*, and *meter*) or that are related to learning tasks (e.g., *compare/contrast*, *differentiate*, and *infer*).

## accessible language

Language that is written so that readers who are unfamiliar with the subject can comprehend the text with ease.

## active voice

Voice in which the subject performs the action of the verb (e.g., *The dog bit the boy*), rather than being acted upon (e.g., *The boy was bitten by the dog*).

## ad hominem

A rhetorical fallacy in which the intent is to attack the character or circumstance of the proponent of the position in order to distract from the argument. This personal attack is intended to devalue the claim without regard for the evidence provided. For example, consider the following interchange:

Person A: It is important to give vaccines to children.

Person B: Of course you would say that. You are a nurse.

Person A: I provided research and evidence to support my opinion. Did you read that?

Person B: That doesn't matter. You are a nurse, and just like everyone else in the medical world, you are trying to make a buck.

## adjectival clause

A group of words with a subject and a verb that acts as an adjective by describing a noun or pronoun. Relative pronouns (*who*, *whom*, *whose*, *which*, *that*) usually introduce the adjectival clause, but they may also begin with relative adverbs (*when*, *where*, *why*). An example of an adjectival clause is: The young man *who is sitting near the door* is my son.

## adjectival phrase

A prepositional or participle phrase that acts like an adjective and modifies a noun or a pronoun (e.g., The dog, *showing off*, is mine).

## adverbial clause

A dependent clause beginning with a subordinate clause that acts as an adverb by modifying a verb, adjective, or other adverb (e.g., I will go home *when the party is over*).

**adverbial phrase**

A prepositional phrase that modifies a verb, adjective, or other adverb (e.g., The tennis courts stay open late *into the evening*).

**aesthetic effects**

The use of language as an artistic medium to create imagery that evokes sensory perception. Writing in which language can be used aesthetically includes fiction, drama, films, and poetry.

**affix**

A word element, such as a prefix or suffix, that occurs before or after a root or base word to modify its meaning (e.g., the prefix *un-* and the suffix *-able* in *unbelievable*).

**allegory**

A story that has both a literal meaning and symbolic meaning, in which characters or objects often embody abstract ideas (e.g., John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* or George Orwell's *Animal Farm*).

**alliteration**

The repetition of the same sounds at the beginning of two or more adjacent words or stressed syllables (e.g., *furrow followed free* in Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*).

**allusion**

A reference within a literary work to another work of literature, art, or real event. The reference is often brief and implied. A **mythological allusion** is a direct or indirect reference to a character or event in mythology (e.g., Shakespeare's frequent allusions to Hercules in his plays). A **biblical allusion** is a reference to a character or event from the bible. For example, John Steinbeck makes biblical allusions throughout *The Grapes of Wrath*.

**analogy**

- 1) A vocabulary exercise in which an association between a concept and its attribute is present (e.g., hot:cold as north:\_\_\_\_\_).
- 2) Figurative language that makes comparisons in unexpected ways. A literary analogy is often an extended comparison. The purpose is to show similarities in process or in structure. For example, an author might compare a visit to a flea market to an all-you-can-eat buffet, carrying this comparison through a paragraph, a section of the work, or an entire piece.

**analytical essay**

An essay that analyzes and interprets a work of literature by using specific examples from the text to build a logical argument beyond a summary or description of the work.

**anecdotal**

Based on personal observation, as opposed to scientific evidence.

**anecdote**

A short narrative that relates an interesting or amusing incident, usually in order to make a larger point.

**antecedent**

A noun that a pronoun refers to (e.g., *Iris* is the antecedent of *she* in *Iris tried, but she couldn't find the book*).

**antithesis**

The direct opposite; the rhetorical contrast by use of parallels within a sentence (e.g., *Give me liberty or give me death*).

**aphorism**

A concise statement of a general truth or principle (e.g., *A penny saved is a penny earned*).

**appeal**

In rhetoric, the means of persuasion in an argument. According to Aristotle, there are three fundamental appeals to convince a person: reason (*logos*), ethics (*ethos*), and emotion (*pathos*).

**appositive phrase**

A phrase that appears directly after a noun or pronoun to describe or rename the noun or pronoun (e.g., Mr. Jones, *the Nobel Prize winner for literature*, is teaching the class).

**archetype**

A model image, personage, or theme that recurs in stories and myths throughout history and literature.

**argumentative essay**

An essay in which the writer develops or debates a topic using logic and persuasion.

**assertion**

An opinion or declaration stated with conviction.

**audience**

The intended target group for a message, regardless of the medium.

**autobiography**

The life story of a person, as told by himself or herself.

**automaticity**

Reading fluently and without difficulty or attention to decoding.

## B

**bandwagon appeal**

A persuasive technique used in media messages that appeals to the “everyone is doing it” mentality.

**bibliographic information**

The locating information about a source (i.e., book, journal, periodical, or Web site). For example, a book’s bibliographic information consists of author, title, place of publication, publisher, and date of publication. See a style guide for specific formatting rules (e.g., MLA, Chicago, APA).

**blending**

Combining spoken phonemes to form syllables and words (e.g., /m//a//n/ to make *man*; in Spanish, /s//o//l/ to make *sol*).

**blog**

A contraction of the term *Web log*, a blog is an online personal journal that often contains commentary, reflections, and hyperlinks to other Web content.

**brainstorming**

A technique in which many ideas are generated quickly and without judgment or evaluation in order to solve a problem, clarify a concept, or inspire creative thinking. Brainstorming may be done in a classroom, small group, or individually.

## C

**caricature**

A distortion of characteristics or defects of a person or thing, either in a picture or in words.

**case study**

A form of qualitative research that focuses on a particular participant or small group. Information gained through this descriptive research applies only to the group studied. No universal truth or discovery can emerge from the study.

**categorical claim**

A rhetorical fallacy in which a claim is based on the often faulty logic of relating two things solely because they are in the same category.

**character foil**

A secondary character who contrasts with the protagonist in order to highlight aspects of the main character’s personality. Foils may be sidekicks (e.g., Han Solo to Luke Skywalker) or enemies (e.g., The Joker to Batman).

**circle story**

A convention in myths and epic tales in which the story begins and ends in the same place. The “place” is usually a physical setting.

**circular logic**

A logical fallacy in which an assumption is made in a definition or argument that includes the very point that one is trying to prove (e.g., *I love Mr. Johnson’s class because I’m always happy in there*).

**classical literature**

Literature that is widely acknowledged for its outstanding and enduring qualities.

**classical play**

A play that is widely acknowledged for its outstanding and enduring qualities (e.g., *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare).

**closure**

A sense of certainty or completeness; a bringing to an end.

**cognate**

A word related in meaning and form to a word in another language or languages because of a common origin, e.g., *mother* (English), *moeder* (Dutch), *moder* (Danish), *mater* (Latin), *matr* (Sanskrit), etc.

**coherent**

Logically ordered, with consistent relations of parts to the whole (e.g., *a coherent essay*).

**coherent argument**

A logical argument that is clear, precise, and ordered.

**comparative**

An adjective used to compare two or more things. Comparatives are formed using *-er* (e.g., *taller*), *-ier* (e.g., *happier*), or the word *more* (e.g., *more traditional*).

**complex consonant**

A cluster or blend of two or more consonants (e.g., *scr-*, *bl-*, and *-tch*).

**complex sentence**

A sentence with an independent clause and at least one dependent clause, e.g., *I cleaned the room* (independent clause) *when the guests left* (dependent clause).

**compound sentence**

A sentence composed of at least two independent clauses linked with a conjunction or semicolon (e.g., *Sam talked, and Emma listened*).

**compound-complex sentences**

A compound sentence with at least one dependent clause, e.g., *Dogs bark and birds sing* (compound independent clauses) *when they are happy* (dependent clause).

**conceit**

An extended metaphor in poetry or literature that is often fanciful or elaborate (e.g., *Our eye-beams twisted, and did thread/Our eyes upon one double string* in John Donne's *The Extasie*).

**conflict**

In literature, conflict is the opposition of persons or forces that brings about dramatic action central to the plot of a story; conflict may be internal, as a psychological conflict within a character, or external (e.g., man versus man, man versus nature, or man versus society).

**conjunctive adverb**

An adverb (e.g., *however, nonetheless, therefore*) that introduces or connects independent clauses and that shows cause and effect, comparison, contrast, or some other relationship between clauses.

**connotative meaning**

The emotions or set of associations attached to a word that is implied rather than literal (e.g., feeling *blue*).

**consistent tenses**

Using the same verb tense throughout a sentence, paragraph, or essay. Shifting from one verb tense to another should be done only when demonstrating a shift in time.

**consonant blend**

A sequence of two or more consonants (e.g., *bl-* in *black*; in Spanish, *br-* in *brazo*).

**consonant digraph**

A combination of two consonant letters to stand for a single speech sound (e.g., *gn* for /n/ in *gnaw* or *gh* for /f/ in *tough*).

**contemporary folktale**

A folktale that is set in a contemporary context (e.g., *Cinder Edna*).

**content vocabulary**

Language that is specific to a discipline.



**context**

The background or circumstances of various settings and/or time periods in literary texts.

**controlling idea**

The main point or underlying direction of a piece of writing. A controlling idea makes the reader ask a question that will be answered by reading more or helps the reader understand the author's purpose for writing the paragraph or essay.

**controlling image**

An image or metaphor that is repeated throughout a literary work.

**cultural diversity**

Regional, economic, social, and ethnic differences that may be represented through subject matter and/or characters.

## D

**decodable text**

Text in which the majority of words (80%–90%) contain sound-symbol relationships that have already been taught. Decodable texts are used to practice specific decoding skills and to apply phonics in early reading.

**decoding**

Applying knowledge of letter-sound relationships in order to sound out a word. In reading practice, the term is used primarily to refer to word identification rather than word comprehension.

**deductive reasoning**

The process of logical reasoning from general principles to specific instances based on the assumed truth of the principle; reasoning from wholes to parts. An essay that begins with a main thesis and is then supported by details is an example of deductive reasoning.

**denotative meaning**

The dictionary definition of a word; the literal or cognitive meaning.

**dependent adverbial clause**

See “adverbial clause.”

**dependent clause**

A clause that modifies a main or independent clause to which it is joined (e.g., *until you leave* in *I will wait until you leave*); also called a subordinate clause.

**diacritical accent**

An accent mark used to differentiate homographs or modify pronunciation (e.g., *se/sé, el/él, tu/tú*).

**dialogue**

The lines spoken between characters in fiction or a play. Dialogue in a play is the main vehicle in which plot, character, and other elements are established.

**diction**

- 1) Choice of words in speaking or writing for clear and effective expression.
- 2) Clarity of speech; enunciation.

**digital media**

Electronic media that work on digital codes (as opposed to analog media). Examples include e-mail, digital video, e-book, Internet, video game, and interactive media.

**digraph**

Two successive letters that represent a single speech sound (e.g., *th* in *thing*, *oo* in *moon*, *ou* in *out*, and *ow* in *how*; in Spanish, *ll* in *llave*).

**diphthong**

A combination of two vowel sounds in one syllable to form a new phoneme (e.g., /ow/ in *howl*, /ou/ in *cloud*, and /oi/ in *boil*; in Spanish, /ui/ in *fui*, /ie/ in *viernes*, and /oi/ in *oigan*).

**docudrama**

A dramatization (as for television) of recent or historical events based on fact.

**dramatic convention**

A set of rules the actor, writer, and/or director employs to create a desired dramatic effect that is understood by the audience. For example, when a character recites a soliloquy in a play by moving downstage, the audience understands that the other characters on the stage cannot hear him or her.

**dramatic irony**

See “irony.”

**drawing conclusions**

A form of inference in which the reader gathers information, considers the general thoughts or ideas that emerge from the information, and comes to a decision. The conclusion is generally based on more than one piece of information.

## E

**elements of fiction**

Narrative elements including setting, characters, plot, and theme.

**embedded quotations**

A writer's technique of incorporating a direct quotation into the text of a composition, such as the following: *Susa (2006) describes sarcasm as "language of the weak and fearful" (p. 26).*

**empirical**

Based on observation or experience, as opposed to theory.

**epic poetry**

A long narrative poem, usually chronicling the deeds of a folk hero and written using both dramatic and narrative literary techniques (e.g., Homer's *Iliad* or John Milton's *Paradise Lost*).

**epigraph**

A quotation at the beginning of a literary work to introduce its theme.

**etymology**

The origin and history of a word; the study of word derivation.

**exaggeration**

A rhetorical fallacy in which there is an overstatement or a representation of more than is true.

**explicit theme**

See "theme."

**expository text**

A type of informational text that clarifies or explains something.

**extended metaphor**

See "metaphor."

**extended simile**

See "simile."

**external coherence**

Organizing the major components of a written composition—introduction, body, conclusion, or, in the case of a multiparagraph essay, the paragraphs—in a logical sequence so that they flow easily and progress from one idea to another while still holding true to the central idea of the composition.

**external response of the characters**

A response demonstrated by the character through speech or actions.

**eye rhyme**

A rhyme scheme in which two words are used with similar spelling but different sounds (e.g., *laughter* and *slaughter*).

## F

**false assumption**

Flawed ideas that emerge when a reader pieces information together solely by inference and fails to consider other possible interpretations.

**figurative language**

Language layered with meaning by word images and figures of speech, as opposed to literal language.

**first-person point of view**

See “point of view.”

**fluency**

Reading text at an appropriate rate, and with accuracy, expression, and appropriate phrasing; not hurried reading. **Accuracy** is reading words in text with no errors. **Oral reading accuracy** is the ability to identify or decode words with appropriate pronunciation and is measured as a percentage of words read correctly.

**formal presentation**

A speech, symposium, or other presentation that is produced for an audience after careful planning.

**frustrational reading level**

The level at which a reader reads at less than 90% accuracy (i.e., no more than one error per 10 words read). Frustrational-level text is difficult for the reader.

## G

**genre**

The type or class of a work, usually categorized by form, technique, or content. Some examples of literary genres are epic, tragedy, comedy, poetry, novel, short story, and creative nonfiction.

**gerund**

A word derived from a verb that is used as a noun; in English, a gerund is formed by adding *-ing* to a verb (e.g., reading in *reading is fun*).

**graphic art**

A form of communication in which visual images are used to convey a message.

**graphic elements of poetry**

Capital letters, line length, and word position; also called the “shape” of a poem.

**graphophonemic knowledge**

The recognition of the letters of the alphabet and the understanding of sound-symbol relationships and spelling patterns.

## H

**hasty generalization**

A conclusion drawn from limited or insufficient evidence and often the result of bias, whether intentional or not.

**hero’s tasks, the**

A convention in myths and epic tales in which the hero embarks on a journey and must complete a series of tests or challenges along the way.

**hiatus**

The brief pause between two consecutive vowels pronounced in different syllables (e.g., in Spanish, *fideo* and *poeta*).

**hierarchic structure**

An expository, organizational structure used by a writer to present the most important piece of information and work down to the least important.

**high-frequency words**

A small group of words (300–500) that account for a large percentage of words in print; can be regular or irregular words. Often, they are referred to as “sight words” because automatic recognition of these words is required for fluent reading.

**homograph**

A word that is spelled the same as another word but that has a different meaning, e.g., *read* (present tense) and *read* (past tense); in Spanish, *vino* (la bebida) and *vino* (del verbo venir), *saco* (del verbo sacar) and *saco* (la vestimental).

**homonym**

A word that is pronounced and usually spelled the same way as another word but that has a different meaning, e.g., *fair* (unbiased) and *fair* (light-colored).

**homophone**

A word that is pronounced the same, but not spelled the same, as another word and that has a different meaning (e.g., *bear* and *bare*, *week* and *weak*; in Spanish, *tubo* and *tuvo*, *deshecho* and *desecho*).

**hyperbole**

An intentionally exaggerated figure of speech for emphasis or effect (e.g., *This book weighs a ton*).

# I

**idiom**

An expression that has a different meaning from the literal meaning of its individual words (e.g., *have the upper hand* or *under the weather*). Idioms are particular to a given language and usually cannot be translated literally.

**imagery**

The use of language to create mental images and sensory impressions (e.g., the imagery of the phrase *such sweet sorrow*). Imagery can be used for emotional effect and to intensify the impact on the reader.

**implicit assumption**

An assumption that is not directly expressed but nonetheless understood either consciously or unconsciously.

**implicit theme**

See “theme.”

**incorrect premise**

A faulty idea that is used as the foundation of an argument.

**indefinite pronoun**

A pronoun that does not refer to a specific person or thing (e.g., *whoever*, *anything*).

**independent clause**

A clause containing a subject and a verb that can stand alone as a complete sentence; also called a main clause.

**inductive reasoning**

The process of determining general principles by logic or observation from specific data; reasoning from parts to whole (e.g., *This ice is cold; therefore, all ice is cold*).

**inference**

Connecting bits of information to make a logical guess. Readers make inferences by drawing conclusions, making generalizations, and making predictions. A **subtle inference** is one in which the bits of information are not as easily connected.

**infinitive**

The uninflected or base form of the verb, usually preceded by *to* (e.g., *to go*).

**inflectional ending/suffix**

Letters that combine with a base word to express tense, number, mood, or person (e.g., *-s*, *-ing*, and *-ed*).

**informal play**

An activity in which students invent and enact dramatic situations for themselves rather than for an outside audience; also referred to as informal classroom drama.

**informal presentation**

Conversations, discussions, and dialogues that occur without preparation.

**informational text**

Text that presents information, including expository, persuasive, and procedural text.

**internal coherence**

The logical organization and fluid progression of ideas and/or sentences; a piece of writing with internal coherence does not contradict itself.

**internal response of a character**

A response demonstrated by a character through inner thoughts and feelings.

**internal rhyme**

A rhyme within the same line of verse (e.g., *dreary* and *weary* in Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven: Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary*).

**interpretative response**

An analysis of a piece of literature in which the writer takes apart what was written by another author and explains it.

**irony**

**Verbal irony** is the use of words in which the intended meaning is contrary to the literal meaning (e.g., *I could care less*). **Situational irony** is a literary technique for implying, through plot or character, that the actual situation is quite different from that presented. **Dramatic irony** is a dramatic device in which a character says or does something that he or she does not fully grasp but is understood by the audience.

**irregular verb**

A verb that does not follow the normal rules of conjugation (e.g., *go*, *went*, *gone* as forms of *to go*).

**J****journey of a hero**

An example of an archetype, most commonly seen in mythology, in which an adventure is presented to the would-be hero. During this adventure, the hero encounters challenges that must be overcome. Once these are overcome, the hero returns to share the benefits of his or her learning.

**L****leading question**

A question worded to suggest the desired response (e.g., *What do you think of the horrible effects of socialism?*).

**level of formality**

Writing format determined by the writer's purpose and the intended audience. Formality levels exist on the scale of formal, semi-formal, and informal.

**limited point of view**

See "point of view."

**literary device**

A specific convention or structure that is employed by the author to produce a given effect, such as imagery, irony, or foreshadowing. Literary devices are important aspects of an author's style.

**literary nonfiction**

The use of literary styles and techniques to create narratives based on actual persons, places, and things. In literary nonfiction, a writer may construct text in any number of ways and is not limited to the organizational patterns normally associated with nonfiction texts.

**literary technique**

The conscious choice of words or construction by an author to convey meaning; an author's style.

**literary text**

Written works that are generally recognized as having artistic value. Basic forms of literary text are prose fiction, drama, poetry, and literary nonfiction.



**loaded term**

A term or phrase that has strong emotional overtones and that is meant to evoke strong reactions beyond the specific meaning (e.g., *tax relief* instead of *tax cut* or *death tax* instead of *estate tax*).

**logical fallacy**

An incorrect or problematic argument that is not based on sound reasoning.

**logical order**

How a writer organizes text when building an argument. The writer presents ideas or information in a sequence that makes sense to him or her and addresses the audience's needs.

**lyric poetry**

A short poem expressing personal feelings and emotions that may be set to music and often involves the use of regular meter.

## M

**magic helper**

A stylistic element used by the author in the genre of fantasy to introduce magic into the story (e.g., the fairy godmother in *Cinderella*).

**main clause**

See “independent clause.”

**mechanics**

In writing, the use of standard rules of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage, as opposed to expressive or artistic considerations.

**metacognition**

An awareness of one's own thinking processes and how they work. The process of consciously thinking about one's learning or reading while being engaged in learning or reading, metacognitive strategies can be taught to students to help them learn and read better.

**metaphor**

A subtle comparison in which the author describes a person or thing using words that are not meant to be taken literally (e.g., *Time is a dressmaker specializing in alterations*). An **extended metaphor** is a metaphor in which the comparison is carried through several lines or even the entire literary work.

**meter**

The basic rhythmic structure in verse, composed of stressed and unstressed syllables. The most common meter in English verse is iambic pentameter.

**metrics**

The study of the rhythm or meter in verse; also called prosody.

**monologue**

A dramatic convention in which a speech is given by a single character, either alone or to others.

**mood**

The atmosphere or feeling created by the writer in a literary work or passage. Mood can be expressed through imagery, word choice, setting, voice, and theme. For example, the mood evoked in Edgar Allen Poe's work is gloomy and dark.

**morpheme**

The smallest part of a word that has meaning and cannot be divided into smaller parts (e.g., *in*, *-ed*; in Spanish, *-mente*).

**morphological analysis**

The analysis of language based on the segmentation of words into morphemes and with a focus on the patterns of word formation.

**motif**

The recurring or dominant structure of a literary work; the intentional repetition of a word, phrase, event, or idea as a unifying theme.

**multi-layered media**

See "multimedia."

**multimedia**

The use of several different media (i.e., text, audio, graphics, video, and/or animation) integrated to convey a single message.

**multisyllabic word**

A word having more than one syllable.

**mythic literature**

A body of traditional or sacred stories to explain a belief or a natural happening.

**mythological allusion**

See "allusion."

**mythology**

The body of myths from a particular culture.

## N

### **non-count noun**

A singular form noun that cannot be made plural because it is considered as a whole unit rather than parts. Non-count nouns also include abstractions (e.g., *progress*) or words that have collective meaning (e.g., *furniture*). Examples of non-count nouns include: *anger*, *courage*, *advice*, *homework*, *water*, *air*, *clothing*, *coffee*, *warmth*, and *rice*.

### **nonrestrictive relative clause**

A phrase or clause that adds descriptive detail to a noun without limiting its meaning (e.g., *who likes ice cream* in the sentence *Claire, who likes ice cream, is from Ohio*). In English, a nonrestrictive clause is usually set off by commas.

### **non-sequitur**

A logical fallacy in which an inference is made that does not follow from its premise (e.g., *If I buy this car, everyone will love me*).

### **nuance**

A subtle distinction or fine detail.

## O

### **objective point of view**

See “point of view.”

### **omniscient point of view**

See “point of view.”

### **onomatopoeia**

The use of words that sound like what they mean (e.g., *buzz* and *purr*); a poetic device to produce this effect.

### **onset**

The initial sound of a word (e.g., /c/ in *cat*; in Spanish, /p/ in *papa*).

### **open-ended research question**

A type of question used to encourage many possible responses rather than a single directed one (e.g., *What are the effects of watching TV while studying?*).

### **oral reading accuracy**

See “fluency.”

**organization of a paper**

In a well-organized paper, writers develop ideas in a coherent manner. Main points should be supported, each idea should flow sequentially and logically to the next idea, transitions should connect ideas, and extraneous sentences should not be included.

**organizational pattern**

The pattern an author constructs as he or she organizes his or her ideas and provides supporting details. Examples of commonly used patterns are cause and effect, problem and solution, description, and order of importance.

**organizational schema**

See “organization of a paper.”

**organizational strategy**

See “organization of a paper.”

**organizing structure**

See “organization of a paper.”

**orthographic accent**

In Spanish, the graphic accent mark used to indicate a stressed syllable (*silaba tonica*)(e.g., *avión*).

**orthographic pattern**

The visual representation of the arrangement of letters in a given language.

**overstatement**

A rhetorical device in which an exaggerated statement is made; also called hyperbole.

## P

**palabra aguda**

A Spanish word that has a prosodic or orthographic accent on the last syllable (e.g., *feliz*, *canción*).

**palabra esdrújula**

A Spanish word that has an orthographic accent on the third-to-last syllable (e.g., *ultimo*).

**palabra grave**

A Spanish word that has a prosodic or orthographic accent on the second-to-last syllable (e.g., *casa*, *árbol*).

**palabra sobresdrújula**

A Spanish word that has an orthographic accent on the fourth-to-last syllable (e.g., *cuidámelo*).

**paradox**

A seemingly contradictory statement that on closer scrutiny reveals a deeper truth (e.g., *Life is but a dream*).

**parallel structure**

A rhetorical device in which the same grammatical structure is used within a sentence or paragraph to show that two or more ideas have equal importance.

**paraphrase**

To restate the meaning of something in different words. Paraphrasing alters the exact wording of the source and transmits its ideas or information without evaluation or interpretation.

**parenthetical information**

Information that is amplifying or explanatory and is usually set off from the main passage by commas, dashes, or parentheses.

**parody**

A work created to make fun of or spoof an original work. A **visual parody**, for example, would be Marcel Duchamp's addition of a mustache to the Mona Lisa. Jonathan Swift's *A Modest Proposal* is an example of **textual parody** (in which he proposes that the Irish eat children to solve the problem of starvation).

**participle**

A verb form incorporating the use of *-ed* or *-ing* for regular verbs and using the third principle part of the verb for irregular verbs. These verb forms are used to form the perfect tenses (e.g., *speaking* in *Jim was speaking*) or to serve as modifiers (e.g., *writing* in *the writing assignment*).

**passive voice**

The grammatical voice in which the subject of the verb is being acted upon by the verb (e.g., *He was hit by the ball*).

**pattern of verse**

The regular or predictable arrangement of sections or lines of poetry.

**perfect tenses**

Verb forms that indicate an act that has been completed. In the present perfect tense, the auxiliary verb *has* or *have* is used (e.g., *has taken*). In the past perfect tense, the auxiliary verb *had* is used (e.g., *had taken*). In the future perfect tense, the auxiliary verb *shall have* or *will have* is used (e.g., *shall have taken*).

**personal narrative**

An expressive literary piece written in first person that centers on a particular event in the author's life and may contain vivid description as well as personal commentary and observations.

**personification**

Figurative language in which nonhuman things or abstractions are represented as having human qualities (e.g., *Necessity is the mother of invention*).

**persuasive text**

Text written with the intent to persuade or convince the reader of something.

**phoneme**

The smallest unit of sound in speech (e.g., the /s//a//d/ of *sad*; in Spanish, /l//a/ and /d//a/).

**phonemic awareness**

The ability to identify, distinguish, and manipulate the individual sounds (phonemes) and/or syllables in words.

**phonics**

A method of reading instruction that helps students build understanding of sound-symbol relationships and spelling patterns.

**phonogram**

In word recognition, a graphic sequence that shares the same letter combination and sound, such as rhyming words (e.g., *-ed* in *red*, *bed*, *fed* or *-ake* in *bake*, *cake*, *lake*).

**phonological awareness**

An “umbrella” term that is used to refer to a student's sensitivity to the sound structure in language. It encompasses awareness of individual words in sentences, syllables, and onset-rime segments, as well as awareness of individual phonemes.

**plagiarize**

To present the ideas or words of another as one's own without crediting the source.

**plot**

The basic sequence of events in a story. In conventional stories, plot has three main parts: rising action, climax, and falling action.

### point of view

The perspective from which the events in the story are told. The author may choose to use any of the following:

- 1) **Omniscient/third-person omniscient:** The narrator tells the story in third person from an all-knowing perspective. The knowledge is not limited by any one character's view or behavior, as the narrator knows everything about all characters.
- 2) **Omniscient/third-person limited:** The narrator restricts his knowledge to one character's view or behavior.
- 3) **Objective:** The narrator reveals only the actions and words without the benefit of the inner thoughts and feelings.
- 4) **First person/subjective:** The narrator restricts the perspective to that of only one character to tell the story.
- 5) **Limited:** a narrative mode in which the story is told through the point of view of a single character and is limited to what he or she sees, hears, feels, or is told.

### predicate adjective

An adjective used with a linking verb that describes the subject (e.g., *beautiful* in *Mary is beautiful*).

### preposition

A word that relates its object to another word in the sentence (e.g., *at* in *at school* or *of* in *of your writing*).

### prepositional phrase

A phrase that begins with a preposition and is followed by an object (e.g., *on the road* and *by her*).

### primary source

A source from the time in which an event being studied occurred. Researchers may collect primary source documents through letters, speeches, diaries, surveys, field work, or personal interviews.

### print awareness

In emergent literacy, the understanding of the characteristics of print. Examples of print awareness include the understanding that:

- Environmental print conveys meaning.
- Books are read from front to back.
- Print is read from left to right and top to bottom.
- Words consist of letters.
- Spaces appear between words.

**problem-and-solution**

An organizational structure in which the author introduces the situation or conflict and then proceeds to explain how to correct the situation or resolve the conflict.

**procedural text**

A type of informational text that is written with the intent to explain the steps in a procedure, as in a recipe.

**progressive tense**

A verb tense that indicates an action is ongoing (e.g., *is taking*). The progressive tense may also be combined with the perfect tense to indicate an ongoing action that will be completed some time in the future.

**proposition-and-support**

An organizational structure in which the writer first asserts an idea or opinion and then provides information to support the idea or opinion.

**prosodic accent**

A stressed syllable (*sílaba tónica*) with no graphic accent mark (e.g., *calor*).

**prosody**

The vocal intonation and meter of spoken language. When reading with prosody, readers sound as if they are speaking the part they are reading.

**purpose**

The intended goal of a piece of writing; the reason a person writes.

## Q

**quest, the**

A convention in myths and epic tales in which the hero embarks on a journey and works to reach a goal (e.g., Jason's search for the Golden Fleece) in the course of his or her journey.

**quote**

To repeat the exact words from a source; credit should be given to the original source.

## R

**r-controlled**

A vowel that is followed by the consonant *r*, such that its pronunciation is influenced by the /r/ and is neither a long or short vowel sound (e.g., *farm*, *her*, *first*).



**reaction shot**

A visual technique in film and video in which the camera moves away from the main scene to show the reaction of a character.

**reciprocal pronoun**

A pronoun expressing a mutual relationship (e.g., *each other* and *one another*).

**relative pronoun**

A pronoun that refers to an antecedent (e.g., *whom* in *the man whom you were talking to*). Relative pronouns link a dependent clause to a main clause in a sentence.

**reliable source**

A credible or believable source. Some questions to evaluate credibility might be: Is the author a respected authority on the subject? Does the author support opinions with strong argumentation and reasoning? How current is the information?

**resolution**

The point in a literary work at which the story's problem is worked out.

**restrictive relative clause**

A phrase or clause that limits the essential meaning of the noun or noun phrase it modifies (e.g., *who had a camera* in *The man who had a camera took our picture*).

**rhetorical device**

A technique that an author or speaker uses to influence or persuade an audience.

**rhetorical fallacy**

An argument that is not sound but may still be convincing. Rhetorical fallacies may be divided into three categories:

- 1) Emotional fallacies appeal to the audience's emotions.
- 2) Ethical fallacies unreasonably advance the writer's own authority or character.
- 3) Logical fallacies depend upon faulty logic.

**rhetorical purpose**

The author's primary aim in a piece of writing. The rhetorical purpose could be to narrate, to argue, to review, to explain, or to examine.

**rhetorical technique**

See "rhetorical device."

**rhyme scheme**

The pattern of rhyming lines (e.g., ABAB, ABBA).

**rime**

The terminal syllable of a word that can be rhymed (e.g., /at/ in *cat* and *fat*).

**rule of three**

A principle that states that things grouped or presented in threes create a more effective, satisfying, and memorable pattern. Examples include the three little pigs, the three Musketeers, or Aristotle's three types of speeches.

## S

**sarcasm**

A bitter form of irony, intended to taunt or hurt.

**scheme**

A figure of speech that concerns word order, syntax, letters, and sounds, as opposed to the meaning of words. Some types of schemes include: parallelism/parallel structure, antithesis, inverted word order, repetition of words, and reversed structures.

**script**

- 1) A written version of the speech and actions of performers, as in a play or film.
- 2) Handwriting.

**secondary source**

A source that is a step removed from the original accounts of an event or experience.

**sensory detail**

A detail in writing that describes what is seen, heard, smelled, tasted, or touched.

**sensory language**

Words an author uses to help the reader experience the sense elements of the story. Sensory words are descriptions of the five senses: sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste.

**setting**

The time and place in which a narrative occurs. Elements of setting may include the physical, psychological, cultural, or historical background against which the story takes place.

**sight word**

A word that is recognized immediately. *Note:* Sometimes sight words are thought to be only words that are irregular or high-frequency words (e.g., on the Dolch and Fry lists). However, any word that is recognized automatically is a sight word. These words may be phonetically regular or irregular.

**simile**

A comparison of two things that are essentially different, usually using the words *like* or *as* (e.g., *O my love is like a red, red rose* from Robert Burns, *A Red, Red Rose*).

**simple sentence**

A sentence with one subject and one predicate (e.g., *The chicken crossed the road*).

**slant rhyme**

An imperfect rhyme that usually has the same end consonant sound but not the same vowel sound; also called a half rhyme (e.g., *found* and *kind*, *grime* and *game*, *ill* and *shell*, *dropped* and *wept*).

**soliloquy**

A dramatic convention in which a speech is given by a character while or as if alone; literally, “talking to oneself.”

**standard format for citations**

A uniform way in which citations are recorded and listed. A standard format for citation depends on the stylebook the writer uses (e.g., APA, MLA, Turabian, or Chicago).

**stated assumption**

Persuasive works are based on statements that are assumed to be accurate. When an author clearly states the premise in the persuasive work, it is a stated assumption.

**stereotyping**

A rhetorical fallacy in which one classifies a person or group according to a common aspect that is oversimplified, rigidly applied, and often uncomplimentary.

**story line**

The plot of a story or drama.

**structural element**

The basic form of a poem, including its visual presentation (e.g., line, stanza, or verse).

**structural pattern**

The pattern that emerges when the various literary parts (i.e., character, setting, theme, and plot) come together to form the whole.

**structure of fiction**

How a literary work is constructed or put together.

**style**

The way something is written, in contrast to its content (e.g., Hemingway’s writing style is terse, blunt, and conversational).

**stylistic device**

A technique used by an author to express meaning, ideas, or feelings in a written work (e.g., metaphor, simile, alliteration, etc.). The use of these techniques are related to the tone of the piece and the style of the author.

**subjective point of view**

See “point of view.”

**subjunctive mood**

A verb mood expressing a wish, command, or hypothetical or anticipated condition (e.g., *If I were finished eating, I would go to the party*).

**subordinate clause**

A clause containing a subject and a verb that modifies a main or independent clause but cannot stand alone; also called a dependent clause (e.g., *until he goes* in *I will wait until he goes*).

**subordinating conjunction**

A conjunction that introduces a dependent clause and connects it to an independent clause (e.g., *because, when, unless*).

**subtle inference**

See “inference.”

**summarize**

To reduce large sections of text to their essential points and main ideas. *Note:* It is still important to attribute summarized ideas to the original source.

**superlative**

An adjective indicating the greatest degree of something; a superlative is usually formed using *-est* (e.g., *the best and the brightest*).

**suspense**

The sustained interest created by the buildup of events and delayed resolution of the plot’s conflict.

**sustained evidence**

Textual evidence or argumentation in support of the thesis that is unflawed and remains strong throughout the paper.

**symbolism**

The use of symbols to represent abstract ideas in concrete ways.

**syntax**

The arrangement and sequence of words in sentences, clauses, and phrases.

**synthesize**

To combine elements and parts to form a coherent whole.

## T

**technical vocabulary**

Specialized vocabulary that is used within a particular context and usually by a limited group of people who know and understand the specialized terms.

**testimonial**

A statement in support of a particular truth, fact, or claim; a recommendation. Testimonials are often used in advertising.

**textual parody**

See “parody.”

**thematic link**

A logical connection made between or among texts that share similar themes.

**theme**

The central or universal idea of a piece of fiction or the main idea of a nonfiction essay. A **universal theme** transcends social and cultural boundaries and speaks to a common human experience. A theme may be explicit or implicit. In a work with an **explicit theme**, the author overtly states the theme somewhere within the work. **Implicit theme** refers to the author’s ability to construct a piece in such a way that through inference the reader understands the theme.

**thesis**

- 1) A statement or premise supported by arguments.
- 2) The subject or theme of a speech or composition.

**third-person limited**

See “point of view.”

**third-person omniscient**

See “point of view.”

**tone**

The author’s particular attitude, either stated or implied in the writing.

**traditional literature**

Stories that were originally oral and later became written text.

**tragic flaw**

A flaw or defect in a tragedy’s hero or heroine that eventually causes his or her downfall.

**transitional words and phrases**

Words or phrases that help to sustain a thought or idea through the writing. They link sentences and paragraphs together smoothly so that there are no abrupt jumps or breaks between ideas.

**trope**

Nonliteral or figurative language. The following literary devices are examples of tropes: metaphors, similes, analogies, hyperbole, understatement, rhetorical questions, and irony.

## U

**understatement**

A rhetorical technique, often incorporating irony or humor, in which something is represented as less than it actually is.

**universal theme**

See “theme.”

**unreliable source**

See “reliable source.”

## V

**valid source**

A correct and truthful source. Some questions useful for evaluating validity of a source might be:

- Does the author present facts with supporting evidence?
- Does the information in this source match information in other sources?

**visual parody**

See “parody.”

**voice**

Articulation or expression in coherent form, either verbally or in a piece of writing.

**vowel digraph or vowel pair**

Two vowels that together represent one phoneme or sound (e.g., *ea*, *ai*, *oa*).

## W

**word boundary**

The boundary or division between two words.

**word choice**

The author’s thoughtful use of precise vocabulary to fully convey meaning to the reader.

**word segmentation**

The division of words into syllables or segments; also called syllabication.

