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A VOCABULARY FOR DESCRIBING LANGUAGE

TONE

TONE (POSITIVE)

Happiness

amiable*	cheery	contented*	ecstatic	elevated*
elevated*	enthusiastic	exuberant*	joyful	jubilant*
sprightly*				

Pleasure

cheerful	enraptured*	peaceful	playful	pleasant
satisfied	amused	appreciative	whimsical*	

Friendliness, Courtesy

accommodating*	approving	caressing	comforting	compassionate
confiding	cordial*	courteous	forgiving	gracious*
helpful	indulgent*	kindly	obliging*	pitying
polite	sociable	solicitous*	soothing	sympathetic
tender	tolerant	trusting		

Animation

ardent*	breathless	brisk	crisp	eager
excited	earnest*	ecstatic	energetic	exalted*
feverish*	hasty	hearty	hopeful	inspired
lively	passionate	rapturous*	vigorous*	impassioned*

Romance

affectionate	amorous*	erotic*	fanciful*	ideal*
lustful	sensual*	tender		

Tranquility

calm	hopeful	meditative*	optimistic	serene
relaxed	soothing	spiritual	dreamy	

TONE (NEUTRAL)

General

authoritative*	baffled*	ceremonial	clinical*	detached*
disbelieving	factual	formal	informative	learned
matter-of-fact	nostalgic*	objective*	questioning	reminiscent*
restrained*	sentimental*	shocked	urgent	

Rational/Logical

admonitory*	argumentative	candid*	coaxing	critical
curious	deliberate	didactic*	doubting	explanatory
frank*	incredulous*	indignant*	innocent	insinuating*
instructive	oracular*	pensive*	persuasive	pleading
preoccupied*	puzzled	sincere	studied*	thoughtful
uncertain	unequivocal*	probing*		

Self-Control

solemn*	serious	serene	simple	mild
gentle	temperate*	imperturbable*	nonchalant*	cool
wary*	cautious	prudent*		

Apathy

blasé*	bored	colorless	defeated	dispassionate*
dry*	dull	feeble*	helpless	hopeless
indifferent*	inert*	languid*	monotonous*	resigned*
sluggish*	stoical*	sophisticated*	vacant*	

TONE (HUMOR/IRONY/SARCASM)

amused	bantering*	bitter	caustic*	comical
condescending*	contemptuous*	cynical*	disdainful*	droll*
facetious*	flippant*	giddy*	humorous	insolent*
ironic*	irreverent*	joking	malicious*	mock-heroic*
mocking	mock-serious*	patronizing*	pompous*	quizzical*
ribald*	ridiculing	sarcastic	sardonic*	satiric*
scornful*	sharp	silly	taunting	teasing
whimsical*	wry*	belittling	haughty*	insulting
playful	hilarious	uproarious		

TONE(NEGATIVE)**General**

accusing	aggravated*	agitated*	angry	arrogant
artificial	audacious*	belligerent*	bitter	brash*
childish	choleric*	coarse*	cold	condemnatory
condescending	contradictory	critical	desperate	disappointed
disgruntled*	disgusted	disinterested	passive	furious
harsh	hateful	hurtful	indignant*	inflammatory*
insulting	irritated	manipulative*	obnoxious*	quarrelsome
shameful	superficial	surly*	testy*	
threatening	uninterested			

Sadness

despairing	despondent*	foreboding*	gloomy	bleak
melancholy*	maudlin*	regretful	tragic	

Pain

annoyed	biter	bored	crushed	disappointed
disgusted	dismal*	fretful*	irritable	miserable
mournful	pathetic	plaintive*	querulous*	sore
sorrowful	sour	sulky	sullen"	troubled
uneasy*	vexed*	worried		

Unfriendliness

accusing	belittling	boorish*	cutting	derisive*
disparaging*	impudent*	pitiless	reproving*	scolding
severe	spiteful	suspicious	unsociable	reproachful*

Anger

belligerent*	furious	livid*	wrathful*	savage
indignant*	enraged			

Passion

fierce	frantic*	greedy	voracious*	hysterical
insane	impetuous*	impulsive*	jealous	nervous
reckless	wild			

Arrogance/Self-Importance

boastful	bold	condescending	contemptuous	pretentious*
pompous*	supercilious*	pedantic*	didactic*	bombastic*
self-righteous*	assured	confident	defiant	dignified
domineering	egotistical	imperious*	impressive	smug*
knowing	lofty	peremptory*	profound*	proud
resolute*	sententious*	stiff	saucy*	

Sorrow/Fear/Worry

aggravated	anxious	apologetic*	apprehensive*	concerned
confused	depressed	disturbed	embarrassing	fearful
grave*	hollow*	morose*	nervous	numb
ominous*	paranoid*	pessimistic	poignant*	remorseful*
serious	staid*	enigmatic*		

Submission/Timidity

aghast*	alarmed	ashamed	astonished	astounded
awed	contrite*	self-deprecatory*	docile*	fawning*
groveling*	ingratiating*	meek*	modest*	obedient
obsequious*	resigned	respectful	reverent*	servile*
shy	submissive*	surprised	sycophantic*	terrified
timid	tremulous*	unpretentious*	willing	

VERBS

These verbs will be especially effective *when the subject is the author or a character*. They are excellent *replacements for "be" verbs* and instrumental in the formulation of *thesis* and *theme* statements. Careful use of these verbs can result in precise identification of an author's *purpose*.

VERBS FOR LITERARY ANALYSIS

accentuates	accepts	achieves	adopts	advocates*
affects	alleviates	allows	alludes*	alters*
analyzes	approaches	argues	ascertains*	assesses*
assumes	attacks	attempts	attributes*	avoids
bases	believes	challenges	changes	characterizes
chooses	chronicles	claims	comments	compares
compels*	completes	concerns	concludes	condescends
conducts	conforms	confronts*	considers	contends*
contests*	contrasts	contributes	conveys	convinces
defines	defies	demonstrates	depicts*	describes
delineates*	despises	details	determines	develops
deviates*	differentiates*	differs	directs	disappoints
discovers	discusses	displays	disputes	disrupts*
distinguishes	distorts*	downplays	dramatizes	elevates
elicits*	emphasizes	encounters	enhances	enriches
enumerates*	envisions	evokes	excludes	expands
experiences	explains	expresses	extends	extrapolates*
fantasizes	focuses	forces	foreshadows	functions
generalizes*	guides	heightens	highlights	hints
holds	honors	identifies	illustrates	illuminates
imagines	impels*	implies*	includes	indicates
infers*	inspires	intends	interprets	interrupts
inundates*	justifies	juxtaposes*	lambasts*	laments*
lampoons*	lists	maintains	makes	manages
manipulates	minimizes	moralizes*	muses*	notes
observes	opposes	organizes	overstates	outlines
patronizes*	performs	permits	personifies*	persuades
ponders*	portrays	postulates*	prepares	presents
presumes	produces	projects	promotes	proposes
provides	qualifies*	questions	rationalizes	reasons
recalls	recites	recollects	records	recounts
reflects	refers	regards	regrets	rejects
represents	results	reveals	ridicules	satirizes*
seems	sees	selects	specifies	speculates*
states	strives*	suggests	summarizes	supplies
supports	suppresses*	symbolizes	sympathizes	traces
understands	vacillates*	values	verifies*	

VERBS TO USE INSTEAD OF EXEMPLIFIES

appears	asserts	attests to	certifies	confirms
connotes*	corroborates*	defines	demonstrates	denotes*
depicts	discloses*	elucidates*	endorses*	establishes
evinces*	exhibits	expounds*	exposes	intimates*
manifests*	points to	proves	ratifies*	relates
shows	substantiates*	suggests	typifies*	upholds
validates*				

ADJECTIVES FOR USE IN LITERARY/RHETORICAL DISCUSSION

DESCRIBING THE AUTHOR

cultured	intellectual	erudite*	well-read	sagacious*
sensible	rational	philosophic*	analytical	imaginative
perceptive	visionary*	prophetic*	optimistic	broad-minded*
idealistic*	spiritual	orthodox*	unorthodox*	sympathetic
sophisticated*	original	whimsical*	humorous	conservative*
liberal*	progressive*	radical*	reactionary*	unprejudiced
realistic*	romantic*	shallow	superficial	bigoted
opinionated*	intolerant	hypocritical*	fanatical*	provincial*
narrow-minded*	sentimental	skeptical*	cynical*	

DESCRIBING STYLE/CONTENT

lucid*	graphic*	intelligible*	explicit*	precise
exact	concise*	succinct*	condensed*	pithy*
piquant*	aphoristic*	sylogistic*	allusive*	metaphorical
poetic	prosaic*	plain	simple	homespun*
pure	vigorous*	forceful	eloquent*	sonorous*
fluent	glib*	natural	restrained*	smooth
polished*	classical	artistic	bombastic*	extravagant
rhetorical*	turgid*	pompous*	grandiose*	obscure*
vague	diffuse*	verbose*	pedantic*	ponderous*
ungraceful	harsh	abrupt*	labored*	awkward
unpolished	crude*	vulgar*	formal	artificial
utilitarian*	humanistic*	pragmatic*	naturalistic*	impressionistic*
subjective*	melodramatic*	fanciful*	authentic*	plausible*
credible*	recondite*	controversial	mystical*	improbable*
absurd	trivial	commonplace	heretical*	

DESCRIBING DICTION

high or formal	low or informal	neutral	precise	exact
concrete	abstract*	plain	simple	homespun
esoteric*	learned	cultured	literal*	figurative*
connotative*	symbolic	picturesque*	sensuous*	literary
provincial*	colloquial*	slang*	idiomatic*	neologistic*
inexact	euphemistic*	trite*	obscure*	pedantic*
bombastic*	grotesque	vulgar*	jargon*	emotional
obtuse*	moralistic*	ordinary	scholarly	insipid*
proper	pretentious*	old-fashioned		

DESCRIBING SYNTAX

loose sentence	periodic*	balanced*	interrupted	simple*
compound*	complex*	compound-complex*	declarative*	interrogative*
imperative*	exclamatory*	telegraphic*	antithetic*	inverted*
euphonic*	rhythmical	epigrammatic*	emphatic	incoherent
rambling	tortuous	jerky	cacophonous*	monotonous
spare	austere*	unadorned*	jumbled	chaotic
obfuscating*	journalistic*	terse*	laconic*	mellifluous*
musical	lilting*	lyrical*	elegant	solid

DESCRIBING ORGANIZATION/STRUCTURE/POINT OF VIEW

spatial*	chronological	flashback	flash forward*	in media res*
step-by-step	objective*	subjective*	nostalgic*	reminiscent
contemplative*	reflective*	clinical*	impersonal*	dramatic*
omniscient*	limited*			

DESCRIBING IMAGERY (Substitute these precise adjectives for less precise ones such as *vivid*, *colorful*, and *powerful*.)

bucolic*	pastoral*	gustatory*	olfactory*	tactile*
kinetic*	kinesthetic*	sensual*	sacred	sexual
auditory*	religious	animal	war/military	chaotic

DESCRIBING CHARACTERS (Great substitutions for *pretty* and *ugly*!)**Physical Qualities**

manly	virile*	robust*	hardy*	sturdy
strapping*	stalwart*	muscular	brawny*	lovely
fair	comely*	handsome	dainty	delicate
graceful	elegant	shapely	attractive	winsome*
ravishing*	dapper*	immaculate	adroit*	dexterous*
adept*	skillful	agile*	nimble*	active
lively	spirited*	vivacious*	weak	feeble*
sickly	frail	decrepit*	emaciated*	cadaverous*
effeminate*	unwomanly	hideous	homely*	course*
unkempt*	slovenly*	awkward	clumsy	ungainly*
graceless	bizarre*	grotesque	incongruous*	ghastly
repellent*	repugnant*	repulsive	odious*	invidious*
loathsome*				

Mental Qualities (Great substitutions for *smart* and *stupid*! Which comments would you like to see on your papers?)

educated	erudite*	scholarly	wise	astute*
intellectual	precocious*	capable	competent	gifted
apt*	rational	reasonable	sensible	shrewd*
prudent*	observant	clever	ingenious*	inventive
subtle*	cunning*	crafty*	wily*	unintelligent
unschooled*	unlettered*	ignorant	illiterate*	inane*
irrational	puerile*	foolish	fatuous*	vacuous*
simple	thick-skulled*	idiotic	imbecilic*	witless*
deranged*	demented*	articulate*	eloquent*	

Moral Qualities (Great substitutions for *good* and *bad*!)

idealistic*	innocent	virtuous*	faultless	righteous*
guileless*	upright*	exemplary	chaste*	pure
undefiled*	temperate*	abstentious*	austere*	ascetic*
puritanical*	truthful	honorable	trustworthy	straightforward*
decent	respectable	wicked	corrupt*	degenerate*
notorious*	vicious	incorrigible*	dissembling*	infamous*
immoral*	unprincipled*	reprobate*	depraved*	indecent*
ribald*	vulgar*	intemperate*	sensual*	dissolute*
deceitful	dishonest	unscrupulous*	dishonorable*	base*
vile*	foul*	recalcitrant*	philandering*	opportunistic*

Spiritual Qualities (More great substitutions for *good* and *bad*!)

religious	reverent	pious*	devout*	faithful
regenerate*	holy	saintly	angelic	skeptical*
agnostic*	atheistic*	irreligious*	impious*	irreverent*
profane*	sacrilegious*	materialistic	carnal*	godless
diabolic*	fiendlike*	blasphemous*	unregenerate*	altruistic*
charitable				

Social Qualities (Terrific substitutions for *nice* and *mean!*)

civil*	amicable*	contentious*	unpolished*	sullen*
tactful*	courteous	cooperative	genial*	affable*
hospitable*	gracious*	amiable*	cordial*	congenial*
convivial*	jovial*	jolly	urbane*	suave*
anti-social*	acrimonious*	quarrelsome	antagonistic*	misanthropic*
discourteous	impudent*	impolite	insolent*	ill-bred
ill-mannered	unrefined	rustic*	provincial*	boorish*
brusque*	churlish*	fawning*	obsequious*	sniveling*
grumpy	fractious*	crusty*	peevish*	petulant*
waspish*	taciturn*	reticent*	gregarious*	garrulous*

NOUNS FOR USE IN LITERARY/RHETORICAL DISCUSSION**ANALYZING CHARACTERS**

foil*	nemesis*	adversary*	protagonist*	antagonist*
confidante*	doppelganger*	narrator (unknown, reliable, naïve)		

ANALYZING STRUCTURE/ORGANIZATION/POINT OF VIEW

foreshadowing	epiphany*	analogy*	extended metaphor*	shifts
parallel structure	comparison/contrast	transition	sequence	definition
juxtaposition*	anecdote*	frame story*	arrangement	classification
categorization	placement	person (first, second, third)*		
perspective (chronological, geographic, emotional, political)*				

ANALYZING SYNTAX

repetition	parallelism	anaphora*	asyndeton*	polysyndeton*
subject*	predicate*	object*	direct object*	indirect object*
phrase*	clause*	infinitive*	participle*	gerund*
modifier*	dependent clause*	independent clause*	subordinate clause*	preposition*
conjunction*	interjection*	deliberate fragment*	appositive*	emphatic
appositive*semicolon*	colon*	rhetorical question*	noun*	parenthetical expression
comma	pronoun*	proper noun*	common noun*	collective noun*
abstract noun*	concrete noun*	dialogue*	apostrophe*	chiasmus*
footnote	capitalization for effect	inversion*antecedent*	hyphen*	dash*
active voice*	passive voice*	tense	catalogue*	compound nouns/adjectives

IDENTIFYING GENRE/PURPOSE

novel	novella*	autobiography*	memoir*	biography
letter	sermon	speech	treatise*	abstract*
précis*	synopsis	critique*	personal narrative	journey
travelogue	essay*	diatribe*	polemic*	commentary*
farce*	conceit*	editorial*	tirade*	review
assessment	eulogy*	elegy*	parody*	allegory*
apology	soliloquy*	monologue*	portrayal	archetype*
fable*	argument	verse		

IDENTIFYING SOUND DEVICES

alliteration*	assonance*	consonance*	repetition*	rhyme*
end rhyme*	feminine rhyme*	masculine rhyme*	meter*	slant rhyme*
incremental rhyme*				

THE LANGUAGE OF ARGUMENT

VERBS

attack	charge	claim	propose	defend
challenge	qualify	counter	repudiate*	allege*
validate	confirm	affirm*	argue	assume
answer	agree/disagree	verify	resolve	concede*
grant*	generalize	specify	debate	dispute
assert				

NOUNS

warrant	validity	plausibility*	practicality	proposal
solution	resolution	bias	credibility	accountability
vested interest	conflict of interests	enthymeme*	pathos*	ethos*
logos*	counterargument	premise*	sylogism*	deduction*
induction*	fallacy*	ad hominem	exigence*	speaker
audience	purpose	message	precedent*	testimonial*
rebuttal*	antithesis*	non sequitur*	circular reasoning*	bandwagon*
refutation	slippery slope*	anecdote*	advocacy*	rhetoric*
invective*	proponent*	assertion	adherent*	red herring*
qualifier*	begging the question*	justification	cause/effect	

TRANSITION WORDS and PHRASES

Time	Place	Idea	Extending elaboration by <i>comparing</i>	Extending elaboration by <i>contrasting</i>	Extending elaboration by <i>emphasizing/clarifying</i>	Extending elaboration by <i>adding another example</i>
after, afterward, at first, as before, finally, immediately, later, next, now, previously, soon, then	above, ahead, among, beyond, down, elsewhere, farther, here, in front of, in the background, near, nearby, next to, there	first, second, third, similarly, as, in the same way, for instance, likewise, however	as, at the same time, by comparison, equally, in the same manner, likewise, similarly	although, and yet, as, as though, at the same time, but, in contrast, conversely, even so, unlike, even though, however, in spite of, instead of, neither, nevertheless, on the one hand, on the other hand, provided that, though, unfortunately, whereas, yet	especially, for instance, in fact, indeed, that is, in other words	moreover, most important, now, so, additionally again, also, especially, in addition, in fact, last, again, also, besides, equally important, furthermore, similarly, in contrast

Transition list from *Crafting Expository Argument* by Michael Degen

THEME VOCABULARY

Brendan Kenny's List of Abstract Ideas for Forming Theme Statements:

alienation	duty	identity	persistence/perseverance
ambition	education	illusion/innocence	poverty
appearance v. reality	escape	initiation	prejudice
betrayal	exile	instinct	prophecy
bureaucracy	faith/loss of faith	journey (literal or psychological)	repentance
chance/fate/luck	falsity/pretence	law/justice	revenge/retribution
children	family/parenthood	loneliness/solitude	ritual/ceremony
courage/cowardice	free will/willpower	loyalty/disloyalty	scapegoat/victim
cruelty/violence	game/contests/sports	materialism	social status (class)
custom/tradition	greed	memory/the past	the supernatural
defeat/failure	guilt	mob psychology	time/eternity
despair/discontent/disillusionment	heart v. reason	music/dance	war
domination/suppression	heaven/paradise/Utopia	patriotism	women/feminism
dreams/fantasies	home		

IDENTIFYING and EXPRESSING THEME

Method A (sample from *Writing Essays about Literature* by Kelley Griffith):

Subject

1. What is the work about? Provide a one to three word answer. See "Theme Vocabulary" above.

Theme

2. What is the author's message with regard to #1 as it pertains to the human condition? In other words, what comment does the work make on human nature, the human condition, human motivation, or human ambition?
3. In identifying and stating theme, be sure that the observation
 - (a) is not too terse to express the complexity of the human experience
 - (b) avoids moralizing words such as *should* and *ought*
 - (c) avoids specific reference to plot and characters
 - (d) avoids absolute words such as *anyone*, *all*, *none*, *everything*, and *everyone*
4. Using both dependent and independent clauses, write a complex sentence which fulfills the requirements above and which explains one of the major themes of the work.

Sample for *Anna Karenina*:

Subject: sacred versus profane love

Theme: Although people can, through no fault of their own, become entrapped in long-lasting and destructive relationships, "sacred" commitments, like marriage and parenthood, take precedence over extramarital "loves," no matter how passionate and deeply felt they may be.

IDENTIFYING THEME

Method B (adapted from material by Brendan Kenny):

1. Theme is an abstract idea (See “Theme Vocabulary” above.) coupled with a universal comment or observation which addresses one of the following: (a) human motivation (b) the human condition (c) human ambition.
2. A strategy for discovering a work’s theme is to apply questions about these areas to the work.
 - * What image of humankind emerges from the work? If people are good, what good things do they do? If people are “no damned good” (Mark Twain), how and to what extent are they flawed?
 - * What moral issues are raised in the work? Who serves as the “moral center” of the work? Who is the one person with whom the author vests right action and right thought? What values does the moral center embody?
 - * Is the society or social scheme portrayed by the author life-enhancing or life-destroying? What causes and perpetuates this society?
 - * What control over their lives do the characters have? Are there forces beyond their control?
 - * How do the title, subtitle, epigraph, and names of the characters relate to the theme?
3. In identifying and stating theme, be sure that the observation
 - (a) is not too terse to express the complexity of the human experience
 - (b) avoids moralizing words such as *should* and *ought*
 - (c) avoids specific reference to plot and characters
 - (d) avoids absolute words such as *anyone*, *all*, *none*, *everything*, and *everyone*
4. Sample for “The Most Dangerous Game”:

Men, when they are courageous and lucky, even in a hostile environment, can overcome the odds against their survival.

Sample for *The Catcher in the Rye*:
In the presence of corruption, escape may provide some hope of preserving our innocence but denies our responsibility to alter, rebel against or sometimes grow to accept what we see as threatening.

Developing an Analytical Voice

Level One: Identify how the situation is created; observe what you see
(collecting evidence)

Diction: what types of words are used or repeated?

Imagery: How is the image created? What are its parts? What senses are provoked?

Detail: What's the setting? Who are the characters? What are the facts of the text that don't require quoting its language?

Level Two: What abstract associations emerge from the language of the text?

This list of "Level Two" words is only a sample list. Any abstract noun that names what the evidence (Level One) conveys may be appropriate. See theme vocabulary for additional ideas or generate your own.

Fear?
Excitement?
Violence?
Chaos?
Order?
Arrogance?
Submission?
Confidence?
Confinement?
Freedom?
Benevolence?

Level Three: Identify the relationships to the rest of the text:

repetition [similarity, analogy, recurrence, echo, parallelism]

contrast [incongruity, antithesis, opposition, tension]

shift [turn, transformation, alteration]

juxtaposition [contiguity, adjacency]

The **association** may be part of a larger **Interpretive Perspective / CLAIM** about:
Tone
Attitude
Voice
Atmosphere
Character
Thematic idea

How to Connect Choices to Meaning

NOTE: In general, a connection of device to meaning should be 3-5 sentences long. The templates below are a starting place; you will eventually learn to vary them to suit your purposes. A connection must articulate the meaning a device *suggests* and **HOW** this suggestion is achieved.

Diction

- Identify the grammatical unit (phrase, noun, verb, adjective, adverb, etc.) and provide the context in which it appears in the text. Consider connotation as well as denotation. Do NOT write: *The writer uses diction.* That's like saying: *The writer uses words.*
- Connect the diction to the meaning of *this* text. Avoid generic commentary. Provide an original insight. Pay attention to *your own diction.* It enhances your analysis.

Model:

The phrase* _____ used to

describe/identify _____ conveys _____

since / because / in that _____.

This is significant because _____.

* or the noun, verb, adjective, adverb

Example:

The phrase, "a thin beard of ivy," used to describe Jay Gatsby's mansion conveys both intrigue and inexperience. Since the ivy is "thin," Fitzgerald suggests a wealth without lineage, newly formed and barely veiled; yet, the ivy as a "beard" suggests a worldly desire to conceal. This is significant because through the description of his mansion, Gatsby is portrayed as both ingénue and chameleon, alerting the reader to the protagonist's dual and perhaps contradictory nature.

Syntax

- Identify the syntactical choice the author has made and provide the context in which it appears in the text. Do NOT write: *The writer uses syntax.* Since syntax refers to the order and structure of words, phrases, etc, it always exists – even if you do not find it noteworthy.
- Connect the syntax to the meaning of *this* text. Avoid generic commentary. Provide an original insight. Pay attention to *your own diction.* It enhances your analysis.

Model:

The _____ function(s) to _____

_____. This structure

supports the author's purpose to _____.

Example:

Gatsby's interrupted sentences dramatize his nervousness and hesitation as he discusses his upcoming meeting with Daisy at Nick's bungalow. Stuttering, "Why, I thought – why, look here, old sport, you don't make very much money, do you," Gatsby reveals his true vulnerability and weakness showing a stark contrast to the "greatness" that has been established in the early chapters of the

novel. Fitzgerald continues to reveal chinks in Gatsby's armor as the novel progresses preparing the reader for protagonist's ultimate fall.

Helpful hint:

Some other examples of purposeful syntactical choices an author might make: **parallelism, anaphora, rhetorical question, appositives, polysyndeton, asyndeton, prepositional phrases**, etc. According to Jeff Sommers and Max Morenberg, authors of *The Writer's Options*, **appositives** define, summarize, and clarify. **Prepositional phrases** may elaborate and clarify by indicating how, where, when, why.

Imagery

(word pictures appealing to one of the 6 senses (visual, auditory, gustatory, olfactory, tactile, kinesthetic) – if you can't identify which one, it isn't a valid example of imagery)

- Identify the image and provide the context in which it appears in the text.
- Connect the image to the meaning of *this* text. Avoid generic commentary. Provide an original insight. Pay attention to *your own diction*. It enhances your analysis.

Model:

The image of _____ depicts a (picture, sense, state, etc.) of _____ because the reader (sees, envisions, realizes) that _____.

This is significant because _____.

Example:

The image of an “argument . . . pull[ing]” Nick back to the party “as if with ropes” conveys his helpless struggle to get away from the gathering in Tom and Myrtle's apartment at the same time that it dramatizes his fascination with the inebriated and adulterous events that are occurring. The reader can see that much as ropes confine, restrain, and render one helpless, Nick, due perhaps to a lack of experience or a flawed moral code, remains discomfited yet seems unable to confront or reject the lies and pretenses of the party guests. This is significant because the reader must question Nick's declaration that he is tolerant and honest.

Figurative Language: Metaphor or Simile

- Identify the metaphor or simile and provide the context in which it appears in the text.
- Connect the metaphor or simile to the meaning of *this* text. Avoid generic commentary. Provide an original insight. Pay attention to *your own diction*. It enhances your analysis.

Model:

The subject of (x) _____ is compared to (y) _____. This is fitting because (x) _____ and (y) _____ share these characteristics: (a) _____ and (b) _____. This is significant because _____.

Example:

In his “I Have a Dream” speech, Martin Luther King, Jr. compares the condition of poverty to a “lonely island.” This is a fitting comparison because poverty and a lonely island share these characteristics: (a)isolation and alienation from the “vast ocean of material prosperity” which surrounds them and (b) both are small, singled out, vulnerable, and surrounded by something they don’t possess. This comparison causes the audience to consider the tangible social barriers created by an invisible financial limitation to feel sympathy for the isolated poor.

Figurative Language: Personification

(a figure of speech in which animals, abstract ideas, or inanimate things are referred to as if they were human)

- Identify the animal, abstract idea, or inanimate thing and provide the context in which it appears in the text. Identify the human characteristic that is ascribed to it.
- Connect the effect of the personification to the meaning of *this* text. Avoid generic commentary. Provide an original insight. Pay attention to *your own diction*. It enhances your analysis.

Model:

In _____, _____ is personified as possessing the human characteristic(s) of _____. The author employs personification in order to_____.

Example:

"Today, we begin a new chapter in the history of Louisiana. I've said throughout the campaign that there are two entities that have the most to fear from us winning this election. One is **corruption** and the other is **incompetence**. **If you happen to see either of them, let them know the party is over.**"

– Bobby Jindal, *Louisiana Governor-Elect victory Speech (as posted on americanrhetoric.com)*

In Bobby Jindal’s victory speech, the abstract ideas of corruption and incompetence are personified as possessing human form and consciousness. The governor-elect suggests that members of his audience might encounter or “see” them and should inform them that their “party” is over. Through this characterization, Jindal simultaneously emphasizes his strength as a leader and sends a strong message, without naming specific perpetrators, that those who may possess those qualities will be driven out of the state’s government.

Figurative Language: Hyperbole

(deliberate exaggeration used to heighten effect or create humor – remember that this is a figure of speech not meant to be interpreted literally – e.g., I’m so hungry I could eat a horse.)

- Identify what is being exaggerated and provide the context in which it appears in the text.
- Connect the effect of the hyperbole to the meaning of *this* text. Avoid generic commentary.
- Provide an original insight. Pay attention to *your own diction*. It enhances your analysis.

Model:

The deliberate exaggeration of _____ serves to express _____. Through this heightened image, the reader_____.

Example:

The detail of the string of polo ponies Tom Buchanan brought east with him from Chicago conveys his vast wealth and hedonism. Moving the ponies is expensive and unnecessary, suggesting that Tom does not need to concern himself with cost but does concern himself with appearing more powerful than his peers. Fitzgerald wants the reader to see Tom as spoiled and self-indulgent so that Tom will appear distasteful even before the reader learns of his current affair.

Allusion

- Identify the allusion (*indirect* reference by an author to another text, historical occurrence, or to myths and legends) and provide the context in which it appears in the text.
- Describe the function of the allusion in *this* text. Avoid generic commentary. Provide an original insight. Pay attention to *your own diction*. It enhances your analysis.

Model:

The author or speaker alludes to _____ in order to _____ . Through this reference, the reader connects _____ to _____ and can more fully understand the author's purpose to _____ .

Example:

“For us, they fought and died, in places like Concord and Gettysburg; Normandy and Khe Sahn.”
Barack Obama

Obama's allusions to Concord, Gettysburg, Normandy, and Khe Sahn offer examples of struggles that Americans have faced in the past which parallel the unique struggles Americans believe they are currently facing with our economy, environment, and world conflict. Even though the references are meant to show these struggles, the president's desired effect is to provide hope and resolve to the listener since these battles resulted in victories for America. Citizens are reminded that they can be victorious in our modern struggles.

Examples of “generic” commentary: <i>gets the reader's attention, draws the reader in, etc.</i>

Writing Errors to Avoid

#1: Incorrect Punctuation of Two Independent Clauses

(An independent clause has a subject and a verb and can stand alone as a sentence.)

Good writers know that correct punctuation is important to writing clear sentences. If you misuse a mark of punctuation, you risk confusing your reader and appearing careless. Notice how the placement of commas significantly affects the meaning of these sentences:

Mr. Jones, says Ms. Moore, is a boring old fool.

Mr. Jones says Ms. Moore is a boring old fool.

Writers often combine independent clauses in a single compound sentence to emphasize the relationship between ideas. The punctuation of compound sentences varies depending upon how you connect the clauses.

The rules are:

- (a) Separate independent clauses with a comma when using a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, for, nor, so, yet).
- (b) Separate independent clauses with a semi-colon when no coordinating conjunction is used.
- (c) Separate independent clauses with a semi-colon when using a conjunctive adverb (e.g., however, therefore, thus, consequently, finally, nevertheless).

Examples of Correct Punctuation, Rule a:

1. We all looked worse than usual, for we had stayed up studying for the exam.
2. This room is unbelievably hot, and I think that I am going to pass out.

Examples of Correct Punctuation, Rule b:

1. We all looked worse than usual; we had stayed up all night studying for the exam.
2. This room is unbelievably hot; I think I am going to pass out.

Examples of Correct Punctuation, Rule c:

1. We all looked worse than usual; however, we were relieved we had studied.
2. The discussion is really interesting; nevertheless, I think I am going to pass out.

#2: Misuse of the Apostrophe

Use the apostrophe to indicate possession and to mark omitted letters in contractions. Writers often misuse apostrophes when forming plurals and possessives. The basic rule is quite simple: **use the apostrophe to indicate possession, not a plural**. Yes, the exceptions to the rule may seem confusing: *hers* has no apostrophe, and *it's* is not possessive. Nevertheless, with a small amount of attention, you can learn the rules and the exceptions of apostrophe use.

Possessives

- Form the possessive case of a singular noun by adding 's (even if the word ends in s).
Hammurabi's code, Dickens's last novel, James's cello
- Form the possessive case of a plural noun by adding an apostrophe after the final letter if it is an s or by adding 's if the final letter is not an s.
the students' desks, the children's toys
- Remember: the apostrophe never designates the plural form of a noun. A common error is the use of the apostrophe to form a non-possessive plural. Compare the following correct sentences:
The *student's* disk was missing.
Several *students'* disks were missing.
The *students* searched for their missing disks.
- Possessive pronouns, such as *yours*, *hers*, *its*, and *ours*, take no apostrophe.
The decision is yours.

- Indefinite pronouns, such as *anyone*, *everybody*, *no one*, *somebody*, use the singular possessive form.
Somebody's dog stayed in our suite last night.

Contractions

- The apostrophe is used to mark omitted letters in contractions.
(Note: contractions are often considered too informal for academic writing.)
- **Avoid the dreadful *it's/its* confusion.**
It's is a contraction for *it is*. *It's* is never a possessive.
Its is the possessive for *it*.

As Professors Strunk and White remind us in *Elements of Style*,
“It's a wise dog that scratches its own fleas” (1).

#3: Pronoun Problems

Pronouns are useful as substitutes for nouns, but a poorly chosen pronoun can obscure the meaning of a sentence. Common pronoun errors include:

- **Unclear Pronoun Reference**

A pronoun must refer to a specific noun (the antecedent). Ambiguous pronoun reference creates confusing sentences.

Poor Example: Writers should spend time thinking about their arguments to make sure *they* are not superficial.
(Unclear antecedent: who or what are superficial?)

If a whiff of ambiguity exists, use a noun:

A key difference between banking crises of today and yesterday is that today's crises have greater global impact.

- **Vague Subject Pronoun**

Pronouns such as *it*, *there*, and *this* often make weak subjects.

Poor Example: Pope Gregory VII forced Emperor Henry IV to wait three days in the snow at Canossa before granting him an audience. *It* was a symbolic act. (To what does it refer? Forcing the Emperor to wait? The waiting? The granting of the audience? The audience? The entire sentence?)

Use a pronoun as subject only when its antecedent is crystal clear.

RUBRIC (GENERIC) FOR AP ASSIGNMENTS

9: Papers earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for 8 papers and, in addition, are especially full or apt in their analysis, sophisticated in their explanation and argument, or impressive in their control of language.

8: Papers earning a score of 8 respond to the prompt effectively, answering all parts of the question completely and demonstrating clear understanding of the passage; recognizes complexities of attitude or tone; demonstrates stylistic maturity through an effective command of sentence structure, diction, and organization; insightful thesis clearly linked to the evidence or assertions presented; seamless incorporation of quotations; consistent focus

7: Papers earning a score of 7 fit the description of 6 papers, but provide a more complete analysis, explanation, or argument OR demonstrate a more mature prose style.

6: Papers earning a score of 6 respond to the prompt adequately, accurately answering all parts of the question and using appropriate evidence, but they are less fully or effectively developed than essays in the top range;. discussion of techniques used in a passage may be less thorough and less specific; well-written in an appropriate style, but with less maturity than the top papers; demonstrates sufficient control over the elements of writing to present the writer's ideas clearly; clear, accurate thesis

5: Papers earning a score of 5 analyze, explain, or argue in response to the prompt, but do so unevenly, inconsistently, or insufficiently. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but it usually conveys the writer's ideas. May be simplistic, imprecise, overly general or vague. Organization is attempted, but not fully realized.

4: Papers earning a score of 4 respond to the prompt inadequately. They may analyze or explain incorrectly, merely paraphrase, or offer little discussion. The prose generally conveys the writer's ideas but may suggest immature control of writing. The writer attempts to answer the question, but does so either inaccurately or without the support of specific, persuasive evidence; may misinterpret or misrepresent the passage.

3: Papers earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for a score of 4, but demonstrate less success in analyzing, explaining, arguing, or providing specific textual evidence. They are less consistent in controlling the elements of writing.

2: Papers earning a score of 2 demonstrate little success in analyzing, explaining, or arguing. They may misunderstand the prompt or the passage, offer vague generalizations, substitute simpler tasks such as summarizing the passage or simple listing rhetorical strategies. The prose often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing. may be unacceptably brief or poorly written on several counts; response lacks clarity

1: Papers earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for a 2 but are undeveloped, especially simplistic in their explanation and /or argument, or weak in their control of language.

0: Indicates an on-topic response that receives no credit, such as one that merely repeats the prompt.

_ : Indicates a blank response or one that is completely off-topic.

8: Demonstrates competence 9 = an enhanced eight

6: Suggests competence 7 = an enhanced six

4: Suggests incompetence 3 = a diminished four

2: Demonstrates incompetence 1 = a diminished 2

5: Goes in and out like static when you're trying to tune in a radio station

UPPER HALF PAPERS employ an "enriched" vocabulary. The writer "does the work" of guiding the reader through effective organization and fluid syntax.

LOWER HALF PAPERS demonstrate an "impoverished" vocabulary. The reader "does the work" trying to make sense out of what the writer has written.

POETRY FOCUS STATEMENTS

DEFINITION:

- A one to two-sentence summary of the narrative situation, theme, and tone of a poem.

USE:

- As a potential thesis for a free-response poetry question on the AP Literature exam

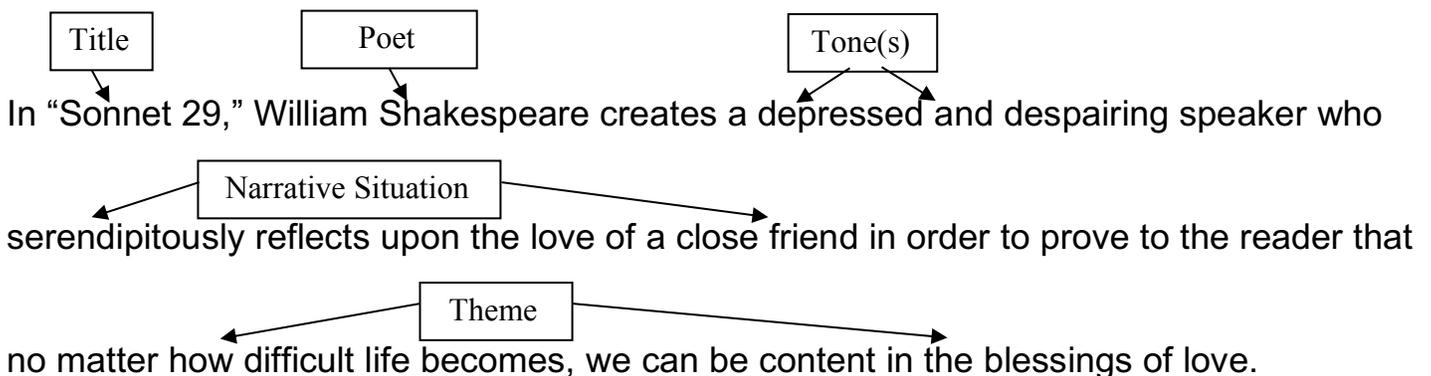
CRITICAL ATTRIBUTES:

- ✓ Includes the title of the poem and the name of the poet
- ✓ Is written in literary present tense
- ✓ Specifies the narrative situation of the poem
- ✓ Includes a thoughtful but concise indication of theme
- ✓ Identifies the tone(s) of the poem. These may be differing but complementary. Shifts in tone may be identified as well.
- ✓ The syntax of poetry focus statements is compound or complex because you are addressing both the literal (the narrative situation) and the thematic.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Draw a straight line under the literal part of the statement. It should be subordinated to the thematic. That is, it should be found in the dependent clause.
2. Draw a “squiggly” line under the thematic part of the statement. It should be found in the main or independent clause.
3. Articulate yourself in a scholarly manner. See “Verbs for Literary Analysis” and “Tone Words” in the Yellow Pages.

Model:



GLOSSARY of LITERARY and RHETORICAL TERMS

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
Ad hominem		
Adjective		
Adverb		
Aestheticism		
Allegory		
Alliteration		
Allusion		
Ambiguity		
Anachronism		
Anadiplosis		
Analogy		
Anaphora		
Anecdote		
Antagonist		
Antecedent		
Anti-hero		
Antithesis		
Appeal to authority		
Apostrophe		
Aphorism		
Archetype		

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
Argument		
Aside		
Assonance		
Asyndeton		
Ballad		
Bildungsroman		
Blank verse		
Canon		
Catharsis		
Characterization		
Chiasmus		
Circular argument		
Claim		
Classical		
Clause		
Climax		
Colloquial(ism)		
Comedy		
Comic relief		
Conceit		
Concession		
Conflict		

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
Conjunction		
Connotation		
Consonance		
Counterargument		
Couplet		
Denotation		
Denouement		
Deus ex machine		
Dialect		
Dialogue		
Diction		
Didactic		
Dramatic Monologue		
Dystopia		
Elegiac		
Elegy		
Elision/Epenthesis		
Enjambment		
Epic		
Epigram		
Epigraph		
Epistrophe		

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
Epitaph		
Epithet		
Ethos		
Evidence		
Euphemism		
Exposition		
Extended metaphor		
External conflict		
Fallacy		
Falling action		
Farce		
Fiction		
Figurative language		
Flashback		
Flashforward		
Foil character		
Foreshadowing		
Free verse		
Genre		
Gothic		
Hubris		
Hyperbole		

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
Hypophora		
Idiom		
Imagery		
Inference		
In medias res		
Innuendo		
Internal conflict		
Intertextuality		
Inversion		
Irony		
Jargon		
Juxtaposition		
Litotes		
Local color		
Loose sentence		
Lyric		
Magical realism		
Malapropism		
Metaphor		
Meter		
Metonymy		
Minimalism		

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
Mood		
Motif		
Myth		
Narrative		
Narrative poem		
Narrator		
Naturalism		
Nemesis		
Non sequitur		
Octave		
Onomatopoeia		
Oxymoron		
Paradox		
Parallelism		
Parody		
Pastoral		
Pathos		
Pedantic		
Periodic sentence		
Persona		
Personification		
Point of view		

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
Polysyndeton		
Protagonist		
Quatrain		
Realism		
Rebuttal		
Refutation		
Repetition		
Reversal		
Rhetoric		
Rhetorical question		
Rhyme		
Rhyme scheme		
Romance		
Romanticism		
Sarcasm		
Satire		
Sestet		
Setting		
Simile		
Short story		
Slant rhyme		
Soliloquy		

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
Sonnet		
Stanza		
Stream of consciousness		
Syllogism		
Symbol		
Synecdoche		
Syntax		
Tautology		
Thesis		
Tone		
Theme		
Tragedy		
Tragic flaw		
Tragicomedy		
Transcendentalism		
Understatement		
Unreliable narrator		
Voice		
Zeugma		

PERSONAL VOCABULARY LIST

WORD

DEFINITION

CONTEXT

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WORD

DEFINITION

CONTEXT

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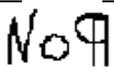
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Editing Symbols and Abbreviations

In the following chart, I've included a list of symbols and abbreviations that I may use in evaluating your writing; you should also use them during peer editing activities.

	Transpose elements (Switch words or phrases)
	Delete
	Begin new paragraph
	No new paragraph (Connect to preceding paragraph.)
	Insert (a missing word, phrase, or punctuation mark)
	Close space (Join two words into one.)
	Superfluous Comma (Delete comma.)
	Incorrect or missing punctuation
Agr	Agreement problem: subject/verb or pronoun/antecedent
Awk	Awkward expression or construction (of phrase or sentence)
Frag	Fragment
R-O or CS	Run-on sentence (CS refers to a Comma Splice, a run-on created by separating two independent clauses with only a comma)
Rep	Unnecessary Repetition
 	Problem in Parallel Form (of phrases, etc.)
SP	Spelling Error (This includes incorrect use of homonyms.)
T	Verb Tense problem
V	Weak Verb (Improve Verb Choice)
WW	Wrong Word (including a word form that does not exist)
PWC	Poor Word Choice
GWC	Good Word Choice
DEV	Develop Idea/Claim with Specifics
U	Unclear - indicates that the meaning of the phrase or sentence is unclear in meaning – OR Unfounded – indicates that interpretation that cannot be substantiated by the text
T.W. or T.S.	Transition Word / Sentence - indicates need for a smoother transition by using a key transitional phrase / sentence
LOG	Illogical Reasoning (or a logical progression that has not been fully formed)
TAG	Title, Author, Genre (These should be included in the introduction of a timed writing.)
QS	Incomplete or Poor Quotation Sandwich
TE	Insufficient or Missing Textual Evidence
COM	Insufficient Commentary – Link to Meaning has not been fully formed
So?	So What? -- a statement within the work (or discussion of a particular piece of evidence) lacks clear significance
*	Indicates an insightful and/or well-articulated statement