

An Introduction to Grammar and Writing Style

Haywards Heath & District Probus Club



Starting at the Beginning: What is Grammar?

Grammar is the study of words, how they are used in sentences, and how they change in different situations. I subscribe to an online app called **Grammarly** and find it very useful in my writing exploits. It's an all-in-one writing assistant that works on your desktop and in your browser and prompts me when it thinks I have used the wrong word (how dare they?) or what I have written is not clear enough, or if there are any misspellings, grammatical and punctuation mistakes in what I have written, and so on. Each week, the people at Grammarly tell me how I'm doing. My conclusion (admittedly, based on their scores) is that I'm doing pretty well, often (almost all the time) saying my writing is better than 99% of other Grammarly users. Or maybe it's a clever way to combat any feelings I might have of something called *post-purchase dissonance*.¹

Leaving self-adulation on one side, generally accepted rules and examples show us how language should be used. Grammar is the structure of our language, as marked by word order and choice. The Ancient Greeks used to call it *grammatikē tékhnē*, the craft of letters. When we speak to another person, we use the native person's grammar, or as near as possible. But, when we write, we try to write with correct grammar. So, speaking and writing a language each have their own distinctive style.²

Different languages

All languages have their own grammar and rules. Most **European** languages are somewhat similar to each other. The English language makes only a few changes to its word endings ('**suffixes**'). In the Latin or 'Romance' languages (such as **French**, **Italian**, and **Spanish**), word endings carry many meanings. In English, we have just a few: plurals and possessives (*John's*) are the most common. In our verbs, we have dropped most endings except one: I love, you love, but *she loves*. That final 's' comes from the **Anglo-Saxon**, which had more suffixes. Verbs do have endings that show changes in the **tense**, such as: **walked**, **walking**.



Word order is the other big difference when comparing English with other languages. Romance languages normally put **adjectives** after the **nouns** to which they refer. For example, in English, a person may say *I like fast cars*, but in **Spanish**, it is *Me gustan los coches rápidos*. The order of the words has changed: if just the words, without the grammar, are translated into English, it would mean 'to me they please the cars fast'. This is because Spanish and English have different rules about word order. In **German**, verbs often come near the end of sentences (such as *Die Katze hat die Nahrung gegessen*), whereas in English, we usually put verbs between **subject** and **object**, as *the cat has eaten the food*.

Changing language

Written grammar changes or evolves slowly, but spoken grammar is more **fluid** and is quicker to change. Sentences that English speakers find normal today might have seemed strange 100 years ago. And yet, on the other hand, they might not be so odd because many of our favourite sayings come from the **Authorised King James Version** of the **Bible** and from **Shakespeare**.

Picture Credit: "William Shakespeare, playwright" by Huntington Theatre Company is licensed under **CC BY-NC-SA 2.0**

¹ Post Purchase Dissonance is when the customer's state of the mind and perception is quite uneasy after purchasing a product or subscribing to a service.

² This section is sourced and excerpted from <https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammar>

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Different people speak with grammar that differs from that of other people. For example, people who use the dialects called General **American English** and **BBC English** might say, *I didn't do anything*, while someone who speaks what is called **African American Vernacular English** (or AAVE) might say, *I didn't do nothing*. **London working-class** version: *I ain't done nuffink!* These are called *double negatives* and are found almost entirely in spoken English but are seldom written. These differences are called **dialects**. The dialect a person uses is usually decided by where they live. Even though the dialects of English use different words or word order, they still have grammar rules. However, when writing in American English, grammar uses the rules of General American English. When people talk about using 'proper English', they usually mean using the grammar of general British English, as described in standard reference works.³ The models for *spoken* English in Britain are often called **Received Pronunciation** or BBC English.

Parts of speech

Grammar incorporates the proper use of **nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, sentences, phrases, clauses, interjections**. Each of these is explained below:

- **Nouns** are 'thing' words like 'table' and 'chair'. They are **objects**, things you see in everyday life. Proper nouns are names of specific places, people, or other things such as days of the week. Proper nouns are the names of people, places or companies, such as *Mary, John, Volvo, and London*, and are always capitalised. Nouns can also be **abstract** things, such as 'suffering', 'feelings', 'emotions' or 'happiness'.
- **Pronouns** are words used in the place of a noun to avoid it being named twice. For example, *Suzy threw the boomerang, and it returned to her*. In that sentence, "it" is a pronoun that represents the boomerang, and "her" is a pronoun that refers to Suzy. Without pronouns, we'd have to say *Suzy threw the boomerang, and the boomerang returned to Suzy*. People use pronouns all the time. Even if you don't know what pronouns are, you use them—and in this sentence alone, I have used pronouns four times. Pronouns are so important that there is a separate section on them in this paper.
- **Verbs** are words that describe **actions**: "Ryan threw the ball". State: "I am worried". The basic verb form is called the **infinitive**. The infinitive for existence is "to be". A famous example is the speech of **Hamlet**: *To be or not to be, that is the question*.

Variations of the infinitive create **verb tenses**:

Past tense = was

Present tense = is

Future tense = will/shall

- **Adjectives** describe nouns. For example, the pretty in "pretty bicycle" says that the bicycle is pretty. In other words, the "pretty" is describing the bicycle. This can also happen with a place. For example, the word *tall* in "that's a *tall* building" is describing the building.
- **Adverbs** are words or expressions that modify a verb, adjective, another adverb, determiner, clause, preposition, or sentence. Adverbs typically express manner, place, time, frequency, degree, level of certainty, etc., answering questions such as *how? in what way? when? where? and to what extent?*
- **Prepositions** are words that tell you where or when something is in relation to something else. Examples of prepositions include words such as *after, before, on, under, inside* and *outside*. *The house was on the hill, in front of a large oak tree*.
- **Conjunctions** are words that link other words, phrases, or clauses together. Conjunctions allow you to form complex, elegant sentences and avoid the choppiness of multiple short sentences. Make sure that the phrases joined by conjunctions are parallel – that is, they share the same structure. For example, *I work quickly and careful* is incorrect. It should, of course, be: *I work quickly and carefully*.⁴
- **Sentences** link or group words together in the right way to make your writing easy to understand and interesting to read. A sentence needs a capital letter at the beginning and a punctuation mark at the end (see below), like a full stop or, as Americans say, a period (.), a question mark (?) or an exclamation mark (!). A sentence must have a verb, and it must make complete sense all on its own.
- **Phrases** are a collection of words working together as a unit. Grammatical phrases add meaning to sentences by giving detail about one or more of the parts of speech in use.⁵

³ Source: https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammar#cite_note-Nash-4

⁴ According to Grammarly, [HERE](#).

⁵ According to Grammarly, [HERE](#).

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- **Punctuation** is the system of signs or symbols given to a reader to show how a sentence is constructed and how it should be read and makes the meaning clear: the *comma*, *full stop*, *exclamation mark!*, *question mark?*, *semi-colon*; *colon*; *apostrophe*, *quotation marks* “ ” *hyphen* - *brackets* () or [] and *slash /*.⁶
- **Clauses** are a group of words that contains a subject and a verb that have a relationship. This relationship is crucial; a clause conveys information about what that subject is or is doing, rather than simply being a random grouping of words. Because a clause expresses an action or a state of being, a clause can often—but not always—function as an independent sentence.⁷
- **Interjections:** If you've ever uttered any of the following words, you've used an *interjection*, whether you knew it at the time or not: *Ouch!* *Oh my!* *Wow!* *Yikes!* The word *interjection* comes from the Latin words *inter* (between) and *jacere* (to throw). So, an *interjection* is a word that you throw in between sentences or thoughts to express a sudden feeling.⁸

Grammar Problems

Dangling Modifiers²

Dangling modifiers are grammatical errors where the modifying word or phrase is attached to the wrong subject or where the subject is missing in a sentence. It is a common problem and is said to plague even the best writers. When you start a sentence with words like *It's* or *This*, it should set off an alarm that a dangling modifier is at play.

There are two common reasons for dangling modifiers. The first is because the modifying word or phrase is placed too far from the word or group of words it's meant to modify. The second happens when the sentence doesn't include a logical subject to modify. In both situations, dangling modifiers make the sentence's meaning unclear, confusing the reader.

- **Distant Modifier:** "*Taylor was upset with Fred when he returned her damaged car with an air of nonchalance.*" Who had an air of nonchalance? From this sentence, it appears the car did. We all know that cars do not have emotions. "*With nonchalance*" dangles because it is too far away from the subject the writer intends to modify, which in this case is Fred.
- **Missing Subject:** "*Walking into the room, the smell was overpowering.*" This sentence makes it sound like the smell walked into the room, a physical impossibility. In this case, there is no subject for the participial phrase, "*walking into the room,*" to modify. Hence, it dangles.

Most cases of dangling modifiers can be fixed by identifying the subject you want to modify, making sure it's present, and placing the Modifier immediately before or after it in the sentence: "*Walking into the room, they encountered an overpowering smell.*"

Putting the Modifier close to the word or phrase it modifies will usually fix the problem: Consider this sentence: "*When you call the apartment manager, tell him that you won't pay any more rent until he fixes your toilet firmly.*" From the structure of this sentence, it is unclear what the adverb "*firmly*" is supposed to modify. Is this tenant's toilet coming loose, or does he need to be firm with the apartment manager about getting it fixed? Rearranging the sentence so the adverb appears next to the word that the writer intends to modify will fix the problem: "*When you call the apartment manager, firmly tell him that you won't pay any more rent until he fixes your toilet.*"

Turning two clauses into one cohesive sentence will also fix the problem: observe the following sentence: "*To improve his score, the test was taken again.*" It isn't clear who wanted better test scores. A more clear and concise way to write the sentence is to **unify the two clauses** into one: "*He improved his score by retaking the test.*" Or, "*He retook the test to improve his score.*" Now, the sentence has an identifiable subject, "*he,*" and the phrase, "*improve(d) his score*" logically applies to him.

⁶ See: Punctuation, Signs and Symbols, [HERE](#).

⁷ According to Grammarly, [HERE](#).

⁸ According to Grammarly, [HERE](#).

⁹ Source: Grammarly, [HERE](#).

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Subject-Verb Disagreement

Disagreement happens when subjects and verbs disagree in number when one is singular, and the other is plural. The problems here usually arise from confusion around the noun's number, and indefinite pronouns are a common problem:

- For example, pronouns such as everybody, either, neither, none, and nothing are singular, while plurals include both, some, most, several, many, and few.
- Another common distractor is a phrase or clause that sits between the sentence and the verb. For example, in the sentence "*None of our puppies is named Frank,*" the verb's number must match that of the singular subject "none," rather than any part of the intervening clause, including the plural "*puppies.*" The key is identifying the noun or pronoun representing the ultimate subject and then determining its grammatical number (using a dictionary for reference if needed).

Unclear Pronoun References

Pronouns take the place of nouns, but in some cases, it's not clear which nouns they represent. For example, in the sentence "Bob told David that nobody would replace him," the antecedent for "him" could be either Bob or David. Rewording the sentence (perhaps as "*Nobody will replace me, Bob told David.*") is one potential fix. Another mix-up tends to arise when possessives are included and create confusion about the true subject. For example, in the sentence "*In Drake's songs, he sounds really sad,*" it's linking "songs" with "he", which doesn't make sense. A fix could be to rewrite the sentence as: "*In his songs, Drake sounds really sad.*"

Faulty Parallelism

Parallelism problems happen by taking two or more pieces of a sentence that are similar in meaning but are grammatically dissimilar in form. For example, "*My name is Katie, and I like to nap, to eat vegetables, roller coasters, and dancing by the light of the moon*" could be made parallel by remaking the list as "*to nap, eat vegetables, ride roller coasters, and dance by the light of the moon.*" Fixing faulty parallels makes writing less confusing and more pleasing to the ear.

Case Confusion

Differentiating between "who" and "whom" is just like telling "she" from "her" or "he" from "him." In each case, the former represents a subject and the latter an object. We wouldn't write "*Whom ate my turkey sandwich?*" because we also wouldn't answer "*Her ate my sandwich*". In both cases, we need a subject: a who or she. Consider a sentence like "*To whom should I report this deluge in the basement?*" When the sentence is rearranged as "*I should report this deluge in the basement to him,*" it proves that the objective case is correct.

Punctuation Problems

So often, punctuation — or those little symbols like full stops or question marks that we use to separate sentence elements and clarify their meaning — gets conflated with grammar. But along with spelling, capitalisation, and style, punctuation is an example of mechanics or the rules for written (rather than spoken) language. If punctuation still seems indistinct from grammar, consider that oral communication can be analysed for grammatical clarity, not for proper comma placement. To put it another way, (apologies about the dangling modifier), punctuation comes into play only when our thoughts are transcribed. Accurately translating these thoughts onto paper (or a screen) means taking care to avoid the following:

- **Em dash disasters:** The versatile em dash is often treated like the Swiss Army knife of punctuation, as it can pinch-hit for a variety of other punctuation marks. The Em dash is a punctuation mark consisting of a long horizontal line similar to the hyphen and minus sign but longer and sometimes higher from the baseline. The em dash is ideal for highlighting parenthetical information in a lively way. It's adept at setting off appositives — or phrases like this one that rename the nouns they sit beside — especially if those phrases contain lists, commas, or any other punctuation glut. And inserting an em dash is the best way to mark an abrupt turn in thought. But its utility has limits. You should be careful when swapping in the em dash for a colon or a semicolon, as this choice instantly informalises your writing. In general, overuse of em dashes gives prose an overdramatic effect.¹⁰

¹⁰ Grammar Girl generally advises limiting their use to two per paragraph.

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- **Colon catastrophes:** A colon can separate independent clauses if two conditions are met: The second clause **must directly relate** to the first and must also be the sentence's point of emphasis. A colon can also do the following: introduce a list, signpost a clarification, or introduce a quotation. The critical thing to remember is that Colons always precede the most crucial information that will illustrate or expand upon the information before it.
- **Comma splices:** A comma splice is when two independent clauses (aka standalone clauses that can act as full sentences) are joined by a comma and no conjunction. For example: "You're really bad with punctuation, you need to hire an editor." We have three options to fix the splice: add a conjunction (and, but, so, etc.) to connect the clauses, replace the comma with a semicolon, or separate the clauses into two discrete sentences.

Pronouns

In English, pronouns are the part of speech used as a substitute for an antecedent noun that is clearly understood and with which it agrees in person, number, and gender. Pronouns are classified as **personal** (*I, we, you, he, she, it, they*), **demonstrative** (*this, these, that, those*), **relative** (*who, which, that, as*), **indefinite** (*each, all, everyone, either, one, both, any, such, somebody*), **interrogative** (*who, which, what*), reflexive (*myself, herself*), **possessive** (*mine, yours, his, hers, theirs*). There are also **pronominal adjectives**, sometimes called **possessive adjectives** (*my, your, his, her, our, their*). Here they are:

Personal Pronouns / Subject Pronouns

You already know subject pronouns, even if you didn't know that's what they were called. Subject pronouns are used to replace the subject in a sentence. You might also see them called "personal" pronouns, as they designate the person speaking (*I, me, we, us*), the person spoken to (*you*), or the person or thing spoken about (*he, she, it, they, him, her, them*). The following commonly used words are subject pronouns:

- I
- we
- you (singular and plural)
- he
- she
- it
- they

Personal Pronoun Examples

- **I** will be leaving soon.
- **You** are welcome.
- **She** is the new teacher.
- **He** speaks three languages.
- **They** are very friendly neighbours.

Object Pronouns

Object pronouns are used as the object of a verb or a preposition.

- me
- us
- you (singular and plural)
- her
- him
- it
- them

Object Pronoun Examples

- They offered **me** a ride. ("Me" is the object of the verb "offered.")
- This letter is addressed to **me**. ("Me" is the object of the preposition "to.")
- They gave **us** free tickets to the show. ("Us" is the object of the verb "gave.")

Possessive Pronouns

A possessive pronoun designates ownership and can substitute for noun phrases.

- mine
- ours
- yours (singular and plural)
- hers
- his
- theirs

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Possessive Pronoun Examples

- The green gloves are **mine**.
- That cat is **hers**.
- The red house is **theirs**.

Possessive Adjectives / Pronominal Adjectives

"Pronominal" describes something that resembles a pronoun, as by specifying a person, place, or thing, while functioning primarily as another part of speech. A pronominal adjective is an adjective that resembles a pronoun. "Her" in "her car" is a pronominal adjective.

- my
- our
- your
- her
- his
- their

Reflexive Pronouns

Reflexive pronouns might be the easiest group to remember because they all have one thing in common: the ending "self" or "selves." That's because reflexive pronouns show how the actions of an aforementioned person or group affects him or her (or them).

- myself
- yourself
- herself
- himself
- itself
- ourselves
- yourselves
- themselves

Reflexive Pronoun Examples

- I bought **myself** a new car.
- That man thinks a great deal of **himself**.
- We may be deceiving **ourselves**.

Intensive Pronouns

Intensive and reflexive pronouns are the same words (ending with "self" or "selves"), but they function differently in a sentence. Intensive pronouns not only refer back to a previously mentioned person or people, but they also emphasise. As their name suggests, they intensify.

- myself
- yourself
- herself
- himself
- itself
- ourselves
- yourselves
- themselves

Intensive Pronoun Examples

- I **myself** was certain of the facts.
- The trouble is in the machine **itself**.
- The cooks **themselves** eat after all the guests have finished.

Indefinite Pronouns

As the word "indefinite" suggests, these pronouns do not specify the identity of their referents. They are more vague than other pronouns.

- all
- another
- any
- anybody
- anyone
- anything
- both
- each
- either
- everybody
- everyone
- everything
- few
- many
- most
- neither
- nobody
- none
- no one
- nothing
- one
- other
- others
- several
- some
- somebody
- someone
- something
- such

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Indefinite Pronouns Examples

- **Both** were candidates.
- **No one** is home.
- **Several** of the workers went home sick.

Demonstrative Pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns specify a particular person or thing.

- such
- that
- these
- this
- those

Demonstrative Pronoun Examples

- I don't much care for **these**.
- Who's **that**?
- **Such** are the fortunes of war.

Interrogative Pronouns

This group of pronoun question which the rest of the sentence intends individual referent or referents.

- what
- whatever
- which
- whichever
- who
- whoever
- whom
- whomever
- whose

Interrogative Pronoun Examples

- **Who** left?
- **Which** of these is yours?
- Do **whatever** you please.

Relative Pronouns

Relative pronouns introduce a dependent clause and refer to an antecedent (simply the word or phrase to which a pronoun refers). For instance, *who* in *the child who is wearing a hat* or *that* in *the house that you live in*.

- as
- that
- what
- whatever
- which
- whichever
- who
- whoever
- whom
- whomever
- whose

Relative Pronoun Examples

- The car **that** has a flat tyre needs to be towed.
- The visitor **who** came yesterday left his phone number.
- Do **whatever** you like.

Archaic Pronouns and Examples

Several pronouns have fallen out of common usage but pop up now and then in older texts, so there is still a good chance that you will come across them. "Thee" is an old word for "you" used only when addressing one person, while "thy" is an old word for "your." "Thine" indicates the one or ones belonging to "thee". "Ye" is the plural form of "thou."

- **Thou** shalt not kill.
- With this ring, I **thee** wed.
- To **thine** own self be true.
- **Thy** name is more hateful than **thy** face.
- Gather **ye** rosebuds while **ye** may.

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Full Pronoun List

A list¹¹ of every word considered a pronoun or *pronominal adjective*¹² is set out below. Are any missed?

- all
- another
- any
- anybody
- anyone
- anything
- as
- aught
- both
- each
- each other
- either
- enough
- everybody
- everyone
- everything
- few
- he
- her
- hers
- herself
- him
- himself
- his
- I
- idem
- it
- its
- itself
- many
- me
- mine
- most
- my
- myself
- neither
- no one
- nobody
- none
- nothing
- nought
- one
- one another
- other
- others
- ought
- our
- ours
- ourself
- ourselves
- several
- she
- some
- somebody
- someone
- something
- somewhat
- such
- suchlike
- that
- thee
- their
- theirs
- theirself or their self
- thereselves or their selves
- them
- themselves
- there
- these
- they
- thine
- this
- those
- thou
- thy
- thyself
- us
- we
- what
- whatever
- whatnot
- whatsoever
- whence
- where
- whereby
- wherefrom
- wherein
- whereinto
- whereof
- whereon
- wherever
- wheresoever
- whereto
- whereunto
- whereupon
- wherewith
- wherewithal
- whether
- which
- whichever
- whichsoever
- who
- whoever
- whom
- whomever
- whomso
- whomsoever
- whose
- whosever
- whosoever
- whoso
- whosoever
- ye
- yon
- yonder
- you
- your
- yours
- yourself
- yourselves

¹¹ Derived from list at: <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/List-of-pronouns.htm>

¹² From A New English Grammar for Schools, by Thomas Harvey: A *pronominal adjective* is a definitive adjective that would be a pronoun if it stood by itself. But attached to a noun without an article, it limits the noun by denoting "which" and represents a noun understood: all men; each soldier; yonder mountain. Some pronominal adjectives are: *this, that, these, those, former, latter, both, same, yon, yonder, all, any, another, certain, divers, enough, few, little, many, much, no, none, one, own, other, several, some, sundry, which, whichever, whichsoever, what, whatever, whatsoever, each, every, either, neither.*

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Glossary of Literary Terms

Literary terms refer to the technique, style, and formatting used by writers and speakers to masterfully emphasise, embellish, or strengthen their compositions. Literary terms can refer to playful techniques employed by comedians to make us laugh or witty tricks that wordsmiths use to coin new words or phrases. They can also include the tools of persuasion that writers use to convince and drive audiences to action. With their carefully crafted speeches geared towards logical and emotional thinking, they challenge our everyday modes of thought.¹³

The following glossary explains many literary terms and concepts¹⁴ (but not all, I hasten to add) used in the discussion, classification, analysis, and criticism of all types of literature, such as poetry, novels, and picture books, as well as of grammar, syntax, and language techniques. I have compiled this mostly from Wikipedia but also other reference points:

- **Abecedarius:** This is a particular type of acrostic in which the first letter of every word, strophe or verse follows the order of the alphabet. Although often regarded as childish, there is a long history of quite serious abecedarian poetry, including several biblical Psalms (in Hebrew). There are also examples in Classical and Hellenistic Greek, Medieval Latin (St. Augustine), Byzantine Greek, and Middle English (Chaucer).
- **Acatalexis:** An acatalectic line of verse has the metrically complete number of syllables in the final foot. When talking about poetry written in English, the term is arguably of limited significance or utility, at least by comparison to its antonym (*catalectic*), for the simple reason that acatalexis is considered to be the "usual case" in the large majority of metrical contexts and therefore explicit reference to it proves almost universally superfluous.
- **Adage:** An adage is a short pearl of wisdom in the form of philosophical and memorable saying and expresses a well-known and simple truth in a few words. Example: "*a penny saved is a penny earned.*"



- **Allegory:** As a literary device or artistic form, an allegory is a narrative or visual representation in which a character, place, or event can be interpreted to represent a hidden meaning with moral or political significance.

Picture Credit: "Detail of Concordia from Ambrogio Lorenzetti's Allegory of Good Government" by profzucker is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/)

- **Alliteration:** In literature, alliteration is the conspicuous repetition of identical initial consonant sounds in successive or closely associated syllables within a group of words, even those spelt differently. As a method of linking words for effect, alliteration is also called head rhyme or initial rhyme.
- **Allusion:** Allusion is a figure of speech in which an object or circumstance from an unrelated context is referred to covertly or indirectly. It is left to the audience to make the direct connection. When the author directly and explicitly states the connection, it is usually termed a reference instead.
- **Anachronism:** An anachronism is a chronological inconsistency in some arrangement, especially a juxtaposition of people, events, objects, language terms and customs from different time periods.
- **Anadiplosis:** Anadiplosis is the repetition of the last word of one clause to the beginning of the following clause to gain a special effect. For example: "*Labour and care are rewarded with success, success produces confidence, confidence relaxes industry, and negligence ruins the reputation which diligence had raised.*"¹⁵

¹³ Source: <https://literaryterms.net/>

¹⁴ Compiled by Martin Pollins, December 2021, mostly from Wikipedia, with other sources as stated.

¹⁵ Source: (The Rambler No. 21, Samuel Johnson)

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- **Analogy:** An analogy is a literary technique in which two unrelated objects are compared for their shared qualities. Unlike a simile or a metaphor, an analogy is not a figure of speech, though the three are often quite similar. Instead, analogies are strong rhetorical devices used to make rational arguments and support ideas by showing connections and comparisons between dissimilar things. Example: "*Life is like a box of chocolates—you never know what you're going to get.*"
- **Anaphora:** In rhetoric, an anaphora is a device that consists of repeating a sequence of words at the beginnings of neighbouring clauses, thereby lending them emphasis. An epistrophe is repeating words at the clauses' ends. The combination of anaphora and epistrophe results in symplece.
- **Anastrophe:** Anastrophe is a figure of speech in which the normal word order of the subject, the verb, and the object is changed. For example, *subject-verb-object* might be changed to *object-subject-verb*. Example: *Bright he was not.* (Normal order: *He was not bright.*)
- **Analepsis:** An interjected scene that takes the narrative back in time from the current point the story has reached.
- **Anecdote:** An anecdote is a short story, usually making the listeners laugh or ponder over a topic. Generally, the anecdote will relate to the subject matter that a group of people is discussing.
- **Antagonist:** The adversary of the hero or protagonist of a drama or other literary work; e.g. Iago is the antagonist in William Shakespeare's *Othello*. Iago was possibly the most heinous villain in all of Shakespeare's works and is fascinating for his most terrible characteristic: his utter lack of convincing motivation for his actions.
- **Antecedent:** A word or phrase referred to by any relative pronoun.
- **Anthimeria:** In rhetoric, *anthimeria* or *antimeria* (from Greek: *anti*, 'against, opposite', and *méros*, 'part'), means using one part of speech as another, such as using a noun as a verb: "The little old lady turtled along the road." In linguistics, this is called conversion; when a noun becomes a verb, it is a *denominal verb*, when a verb becomes a noun, it is a *deverbal noun*. In English, many nouns have become verbs. For example, the noun "book" is now often used as a verb, such as "*Let's book the flight.*"
- **Antithesis:** The word comes from the Greek for "setting opposite" and is used in writing or speech as a proposition that contrasts with or reverses some previously mentioned proposition or when two opposites are introduced together for contrasting effect. It can be defined as "a figure of speech involving a seeming contradiction of ideas, words, clauses, or sentences within a balanced grammatical structure. Parallelism of expression serves to emphasise opposition of ideas". An antithesis must always contain two ideas within one statement. The ideas may not be structurally opposite but serve to be functionally opposite when comparing two ideas for emphasis.¹⁶
- **Antonomasia:** In rhetoric, antonomasia is a kind of metonymy in which an epithet or phrase takes the place of a proper name, such as "*the little corporal*" for Napoleon I; or, conversely, the use of a proper name as an archetypal name, to express a generic idea (for example: "*the Bard of Avon*" for William Shakespeare).
- **Anthropomorphism:** Anthropomorphism attributes human traits, emotions, or intentions to non-human entities. Some famous examples of anthropomorphism include *Winnie the Pooh*, the *Little Engine that Could*, and *Simba* from the movie *The Lion King*.
- **Aphorism:** An aphorism is a concise, terse, laconic, or memorable expression of a general truth or principle. Aphorisms are often handed down by tradition from generation to generation. Aphorisms are straightforward maxims. Clichés are often overused events that become predictable. Idioms are phrases with a fixed figurative meaning instead of a literal meaning. To be an aphorism, the statement or expression contains a truth revealed tersely. Example: "*Youth is a blunder; Manhood a struggle; Old age regret.*"¹⁷
- **Aphorismus:** The word comes from the Greek *aphorismós*, "*a marking off*", also "*rejection, banishment*". It is a figure of speech that questions if a word is used correctly, such as "*How can you call yourself a man?*". It often appears in the form of a rhetorical question meant to imply a difference between the present thing being discussed and the general notion of the subject.

¹⁶ According to Aristotle, the use of an antithesis makes the audience better understand the point the speaker is trying to make. Further explained, the comparison of two situations or ideas makes choosing the correct one simpler. Aristotle states that antithesis in rhetoric is similar to **sylllogism** due to the presentation of two conclusions within a statement.

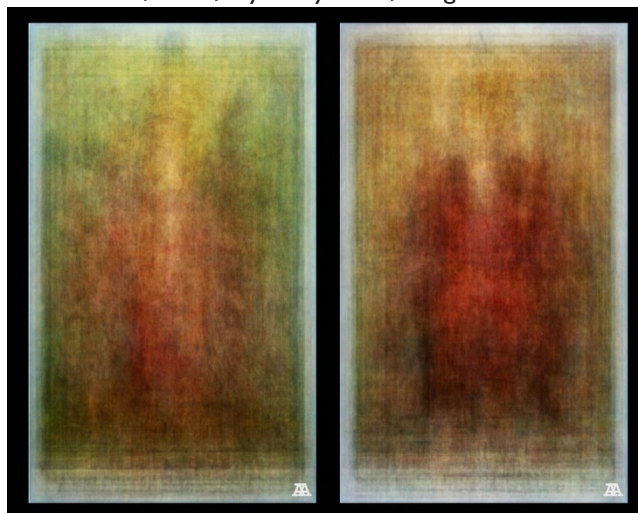
¹⁷ Benjamin Disraeli

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- **Apologue:** An apologue or apolog (from the Greek meaning a "statement" or "account") is a brief fable or allegorical story with pointed or exaggerated details, meant to serve as a pleasant vehicle for a moral doctrine or to convey a useful lesson without stating it explicitly. Unlike a fable, the moral is more important than the narrative details. As with the parable, the apologue is a tool of rhetorical argument used to convince or persuade.
- **Apophthegm:** A terse, pithy saying, akin to a proverb, maxim, or aphorism
- **Aporia:** In philosophy, an aporia is a problem or state of puzzlement. It is a declaration of doubt, made for a rhetorical purpose and is often feigned.
- **Aposiopesis:** The word is a rhetorical device in which speech is broken off abruptly, and the sentence is left unfinished. A biblical example¹⁸ is: "Unless I had believed I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living..." The implication is that the author does not know what he would have done.
- **Appositive:** An appositive is a noun or pronoun — often with modifiers — set beside another noun or pronoun to explain or identify it. The word appositive comes from the Latin for "to put near, side by side, or alongside." An appositive phrase usually follows the word it explains or identifies, but it may also precede it. Advice from *Grammarly*¹⁹ is that "Appositive nouns, and noun phrases are often nonrestrictive; that is, they can be omitted from a sentence without obscuring the identity of the nouns they describe. Another word for nonrestrictive is nonessential. Always bookend a nonrestrictive, appositive noun or phrase with commas²⁰ in the middle of a sentence. If the noun or phrase is placed at the end of a sentence, it should be preceded by a comma." Examples: "Dexter, my dog, will chew your shoes if you leave them there", "Lee, my Army mate, caught a whelk while fishing for bass."
- **Archetype:** Any story element (e.g. idea, symbol, pattern, or character-type) that repeatedly appears in stories across time and space.

Picture Credit: "Archetypal-Tarot-Dreams-The-Empress-The-Emperor" by Anestis Anestis is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0



- **Argument:** An argument is the main statement of a poem, an essay, a short story, or a novel, which usually appears as an introduction, or a point on which writers develop their work to convince their readers. Literature does not merely entertain.
- **Assonance:** Assonance is a resemblance in the sounds of words/syllables either between their vowels (e.g., *meat*, *bean*) or between their consonants (e.g., *keep*, *cape*). However, assonance between consonants is generally called **consonance**, at least in American usage. The two types are often combined, as between the words *six* and *switch*, in which the vowels are identical, and the consonants are similar but not completely identical. If there is a repetition of the same vowel or some similar vowels in literary work, especially in stressed syllables, this may be termed "vowel harmony" in poetry (although linguists have a different definition of **vowel harmony**). A special case of assonance is **rhyme**, in which the endings of words (generally beginning with the vowel sound of the last stressed syllable) are identical—as in *fog* and *log* or *history* and *mystery*. Vocalic assonance is an important element in verse. Assonance occurs more often in verse than in **prose**; it is used in English-language poetry and is particularly important in Old French, Spanish, and the Celtic languages. English poetry is rich with examples of assonance and or consonance: for example, "That solitude which suits abstruser musings".²¹

¹⁸ Psalm 27, verse 13.

¹⁹ At: https://www.grammar-monster.com/glossary/appositive_apposition.htm

²⁰ Or parenthesis (round brackets) or dashes.

²¹ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Frost at Midnight"

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- **Asyndeton:** Asyndeton is a literary scheme in which one or several conjunctions are deliberately omitted from a series of related clauses. Examples include *veni, vidi, vici* and its English translation "*I came, I saw, I conquered*".
- **Bathos:** The word, from the Greek meaning "depth", is a literary term, first used in this sense in Alexander Pope's 1727 essay "Peri Bathous" to describe an amusingly failed attempt at presenting artistic greatness, to evoke pity, sympathy, or sorrow.
- **Bildungsroman:** This is a story following the psychological and moral maturation of the protagonist or main character from childhood to adulthood. It is a type of coming-of-age tale.
- **Burlesque:** A burlesque is a literary, dramatic or musical work intended to cause laughter by caricaturing the manner or spirit of serious works or by ludicrous treatment of their subjects. The word derives from the Italian *burlesco*, which, in turn, is derived from the Italian *burla* – a joke, ridicule or mockery. Burlesque overlaps in meaning with caricature, parody and travesty, and, in its theatrical sense, with *extravaganza*, as presented during the Victorian era. It has been applied retrospectively to works of Chaucer and Shakespeare and to the Graeco-Roman classics. Later use of the term, particularly in the United States, refers to performances in a variety show format. These were popular from the 1860s to the 1940s, often in cabarets and clubs, as well as theatres, and featured bawdy comedy and female striptease.
- **Buzzword:** A buzzword is a word or phrase, new or already existing, that becomes popular for a while. Buzzwords often derive from technical terms yet often have much of the original technical meaning removed through fashionable use, simply to impress others.
- **Byronic Hero:** A type of character in a dramatic work whose defining features derive largely from characters in the writings of English Romantic poet Lord Byron as well as from Byron himself. It is a variant of the archetypal Romantic hero.
- **Cacophony:** A cacophony is a harsh or jarring sound or colour in the form of an incongruous or chaotic mixture.

Picture Credit: "sweet sweet cacophony w Charles Bowling" by woodleywonderworks is licensed under CC BY 2.0



- **Caesura:** A caesura is a break or pause in a line of poetry, dictated by the natural rhythm of the language and or enforced by punctuation. A line may have more than one caesura or none at all. If near the beginning of the line, it is called *the initial caesura*; near the middle, *medial*; near the end, *terminal*. An *accented* or *masculine caesura* follows **an accented syllable**, an *unaccented* or *feminine caesura* **an unaccented syllable**. The caesura is used in two essentially contrary ways: to emphasise formality and to stylise; and to slacken the stiffness and tension of formal metrical patterns.
- **Catharsis:** Catharsis (from the Greek *katharsis*, meaning "*purification*" or "*cleansing*" or "*clarification*") is the purification and purgation of emotions—particularly pity and fear—through art or any extreme change in emotion that results in renewal and restoration. It is a metaphor²², comparing the effects of tragedy on the mind of a spectator to the effect of catharsis on the body.
- **Character:** In fiction, a character (sometimes known as a fictional character) is a person or other being in a narrative (such as a novel, play, television series, or film). The character may be entirely fictional or based on a real-life person, in which case the distinction of a "fictional" versus "real" character may be made. Derived from an ancient Greek word, the English word dates from the Restoration²³.

²² Originally used by Aristotle in the *Poetics*, the earliest surviving work of dramatic theory and first extant philosophical treatise to focus on literary theory.

²³ The Restoration of the Stuart monarchy in the kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland took place in 1660 when King Charles II returned from exile in continental Europe. The preceding period of the *Protectorate* and the civil wars came to be known as the *Interregnum* (1649–1660).

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- **Characterisation:** Characterisation is the representation of persons (or other beings or creatures) in narrative and dramatic works. The term *character development* is sometimes used as a synonym. This representation may include direct methods like the attribution of qualities in description or commentary and indirect (or "dramatic") methods inviting readers to infer qualities from characters' actions, dialogue, or appearance. Such a personage is called a character. Character is a literary element.
- **Chiasmus:** In rhetoric, chiasmus or, less commonly, chiasm, is a reversal of grammatical structures in successive phrases or clauses – but no repetition of words – to produce an artistic effect. Example: "Never let a Fool Kiss You or a Kiss Fool You."
- **Chronicle:** A chronicle (Latin: *chronica*, from Greek *chroniká*, from *chrónos* – "time") is a historical account of events arranged in chronological order, as in a timeline. Typically, equal weight is given for historically important events and local events, the purpose being the recording of events that occurred, seen from the chronicler's perspective. A chronicle that traces world history is a *universal chronicle* - in contrast to a narrative or history, in which an author chooses events to interpret and analyse and excludes those the author does not consider important or relevant. The information sources for chronicles vary. Some are written from the chronicler's direct knowledge, others from witnesses or participants in events, still others are accounts passed down from generation to generation by oral tradition.
- **Chronology:** Chronology is the arrangement of events in their order of occurrence in time. It is also "the determination of the actual temporal sequence of past events". Chronology is a part of periodisation.
- **Circumlocution:** Circumlocution is a phrase that circles around a specific idea with multiple words rather than directly evoking it with fewer and apter words. It is sometimes necessary in communication, but it can also be undesirable.
- **Cliché:** A cliché is a borrowed French word used for an element of an artistic work, saying, or idea that has become overused to the point of losing its original meaning or effect, even to the point of being trite or irritating, especially when at some previous time it was considered meaningful or novel.
- **Colloquialism:** Colloquialism or colloquial language is the linguistic style used for casual or informal communication. It is the most common functional style of speech, the idiom commonly employed in conversation and other everyday contexts. Some examples of informal colloquialisms can include phrases (such as "old as the hills" and "graveyard dead"), or sometimes even an entire aphorism ("There's more than one way to skin a cat" and "He needs to step up to the plate.").
- **Connotation:** A connotation is a commonly understood cultural or emotional association that any given word or phrase carries, in addition to its explicit or literal meaning, which is its denotation. A connotation is frequently described as either positive or negative, concerning its pleasing or displeasing emotional connection. For example, a stubborn person may be described as being either strong-willed or pig-headed; although these have the same literal meaning (stubborn), strong-willed connotes admiration for the level of someone's will (a positive connotation), while pig-headed connotes frustration in dealing with someone (a negative connotation).
- **Consonance:** The close repetition of identical consonant sounds before and after different vowels, e.g. "slip, slop"; "creak, croak"; "black, block". Compare with *assonance*.
- **Conundrum:** The word means an intricate and difficult problem.
- **Cynicism:** Cynicism is an attitude characterised by a general distrust of others' motives. A cynic may have a general lack of faith or hope in people motivated by ambition, desire, greed, gratification, materialism, goals, and opinions that a cynic perceives as vain, unobtainable, or ultimately meaningless and therefore deserving of ridicule or admonishment. The term originally derives from the ancient Greek philosophers, the *Cynics*, who rejected conventional ambitions of wealth, power, and honour. They practised shameless non-conformity with social norms in religion, manners, housing, dress, or decency, instead advocating the pursuit of virtue following a simple and natural way of life.
- **Denotation:** Connotation is the use of a word to suggest a different association than its literal meaning, which is known as denotation. For example, blue is a colour, but it is also a word used to describe a feeling of sadness, as in: "She's feeling blue." Connotations can be either positive, negative, or neutral.
- **Denouement:** Denouement is the resolution or unravelling of the complications of the plot in a play or story, often following the climax in a final scene or chapter in which mysteries, confusions, and doubtful destinies are clarified.
- **Deus ex Machina:** Deus ex machina is a plot device whereby a seemingly unsolvable problem in a story is suddenly and abruptly resolved by an unexpected and unlikely occurrence.

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- **Deuteragonist:** In literature, the deuteragonist or secondary main character is the second most important narrative character, after the protagonist and before the tritagonist. The deuteragonist often acts as a constant companion to the protagonist or someone who continues actively aiding a protagonist.
- **Diacope:** Diacope is a rhetorical term meaning repetition of a word or phrase with one or two intervening words. It derives from the Greek word *thiakhop*, which means "cut in two". There are two basic types of diacope: *vocative diacope* and *elaborative diacope*. An example of the vocative is: "He's a good man! What a good man!" An example of the elaborative is: "He's my man! And he's a good man! A good, kind man!"
- **Dilemma:** A dilemma is a problem offering two possibilities, neither of which is unambiguously acceptable or preferable. The possibilities are called *the horns of the dilemma*, a clichéd usage, but distinguishing the dilemma from other kinds of predicament.
- **Dystopia:** A dystopia (from Ancient Greek) is a speculated community or society that is undesirable or frightening. It is often treated as an antonym of utopia, a term that Sir Thomas More and figures coined as the title of his best-known work, published in 1516, which created a blueprint for an ideal society with minimal crime, violence and poverty. The relationship between utopia and dystopia is not a direct opposition, as many utopian elements and components are found in dystopias and vice versa. Dystopias are often characterised by rampant fear or distress, tyrannical governments, environmental disasters, or other characteristics associated with a cataclysmic decline in society. Despite certain overlaps, dystopian fiction is distinct from post-apocalyptic fiction, and an undesirable society is not necessarily dystopian.²⁴
- **Elegy:** In English literature, an elegy is a poem of serious reflection, usually a lament for the dead. However, according to *The Oxford Handbook of the Elegy*, "for all of its pervasiveness ... the 'elegy' remains remarkably ill-defined: sometimes used as a catch-all to denominate texts of a sombre or pessimistic tone, sometimes as a marker for textual monumentalizing, and sometimes strictly as a sign of a lament for the dead". The Greek term *elegeia* originally referred to any verse written in *elegiac couplets* and covered a wide range of subject matter (death, love, war). The term also included epitaphs, sad and mournful songs, and commemorative verses. The Latin *elegy* of ancient Roman literature was most often erotic or mythological in nature. Because of its structural potential for rhetorical effects, the *elegiac couplet* was also used by both Greek and Roman poets for witty, humorous, and satirical subject matter.
- **Ellipsis:** The ellipsis is also called a suspension point, points of ellipsis, periods of ellipsis, or (colloquially) "dot-dot-dot". Depending on their context and placement in a sentence, ellipses can indicate an unfinished thought, a leading statement, a slight pause, an echoing voice, or a nervous or awkward silence. *Aposiopesis* is the use of an ellipsis to trail off into silence—for example: "But I thought he was..." When placed at the end of a sentence, an ellipsis may be used to suggest melancholy or longing. The most common forms of an ellipsis include a row of three periods or full points ... or a precomposed triple-dot glyph, the horizontal ellipsis... . Style guides often have their own rules governing the use of ellipses.²⁵
- **Enallage:** A figurative device involving substituting one grammatical form for another. It is commonly used in metaphor; e.g. "to palm someone off" or "to have a good laugh". Compare it with Hypallage.
- **Encomium:** Encomium is a Latin word deriving from the Ancient Greek *enomion*, meaning "the praise of a person or thing." Another Latin equivalent is *laudatio*, a speech praising someone or something.
- **Enjambment:** Enjambment²⁶ is a literary device in which a line of poetry carries its idea or thought over to the next line without a grammatical pause. With enjambment, the end of a poetic phrase extends past the end of the poetic line. This means that the thought or idea "steps over" the end of a line in a poem and into the beginning of the next line. The absence of punctuation allows for enjambment and requires the reader to read through a poem's line break without pausing to understand the conclusion of the thought or idea. Enjambment is often used by poets as a means of minimising the difference between the sound of verse and the sound of prose, creating a poem that flows freely and emphasises unexpected beats and words for the reader. For example, T.S. Eliot uses enjambment as a literary device in his poem "The Waste Land":
April is the cruellest month breeding, Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing Memory and desire, stirring Dull roots with spring rain.

²⁴ Dystopian societies appear in many fictional works and artistic representations, particularly in stories set in the future. The best known by far is George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Other famous examples are Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), and Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953).

²⁵ For example, *The Chicago Manual of Style* (Chicago style) recommends that an ellipsis be formed by typing three periods, each with a space on both sides . . . , while the *Associated Press Stylebook* (AP style) puts the dots together, but retains a space before and after the group, thus: Whether an ellipsis at the end of a sentence needs a fourth dot to finish the sentence is a matter of debate.

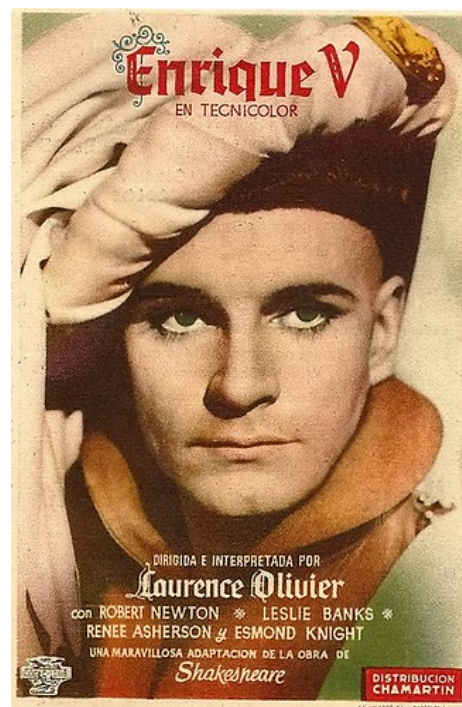
²⁶ From *Literary Devices*, [HERE](#).

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- **Enthymeme:** An enthymeme is a rhetorical syllogism²⁷ used in oratorical practice. Originally theorised by Aristotle, there are four types of enthymeme, at least two of which are described in Aristotle's work. Aristotle referred to the enthymeme as "the body of proof", "the strongest of rhetorical proofs...a kind of syllogism".
- **Epanalepsis:** Epanalepsis (from the Greek *epanálepsis* "repetition, resumption, taking up again") is the repetition of the initial part of a clause or sentence at the end of that same clause or sentence. The beginning and the end of a sentence are two positions of emphasis, so special attention is placed on the phrase by repeating it in both places. Nested double-epanalepses are **antimetaboles**. Examples are: *The king is dead; long live the king* (the traditional proclamation made following the accession of a new monarch in various countries); *"Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more"* (Shakespeare, *Henry V*, 3.1.1).

Picture Credit: "Enrique V" by Kirby York is licensed under CC PDM 1.0



- **Epigram:** An epigram is a brief, interesting, memorable, and sometimes surprising or satirical statement. It can be a concise poem dealing pointedly and often satirically with a single thought or event and often ending with an ingenious turn of thought. Or it can be a terse, sage, or witty and often paradoxical saying. The word is derived from the Greek *epigramma*, meaning "inscription" and from *epigraphēin* "to write on, to inscribe". The definition of epigram is very broad, and one person might see something as an epigram when another does not consider it to be. Example: *"Mankind must put an end to war, or war will put an end to mankind"*.
- **Epigraph:** In literature, an epigraph is a phrase, quotation, or poem that is set at the beginning of a document, monograph or section thereof. Ernest Hemingway used Gertrude Stein's famous quotation, *"You are all a lost generation,"* at the start of his book *The Sun Also Rises*. Through this epigraph, Hemingway shows us the entire period in which they were forced to live.
- **Epilogue:** An epilogue or epilog (from the Greek word *epilogos*, "conclusion" from *epi*, "in addition" and *logos*, "word") is a piece of writing at the end of a work of literature, usually used to bring closure to the work. It is presented from the perspective of the story. When the author steps in and speaks directly to the reader, that is more properly considered an **afterword**. The opposite is a **prologue**—a piece of writing at the beginning of a work of literature or drama, usually used to open or introduce the story and capture interest.
- **Epiphany:** An epiphany (from the ancient Greek word *epiphaneia* meaning "manifestation, striking appearance") is an experience of a sudden and striking realisation. Generally, the term is used to describe a scientific breakthrough or a religious or philosophical discovery, but it can apply in any situation in which an enlightening realisation allows a problem or situation to be understood from a new and deeper perspective. Epiphanies are relatively rare occurrences and generally follow a process of significant thought about a problem. Often they are triggered by a new and key piece of information, but importantly, deep prior knowledge is required to allow the leap of understanding. Famous epiphanies include Archimedes' discovery of a method to determine the volume of an irregular object ("*Eureka!*") and Isaac Newton's realisation that a falling apple and the orbiting moon are both pulled by the same force.

²⁷ A syllogism is a kind of logical argument that applies deductive reasoning to arrive at a conclusion based on two propositions that are asserted or assumed to be true. In its earliest form, a syllogism arises when two true premises validly imply a conclusion, or the main point that the argument aims to get across.

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- **Epistrophe:** Epistrophe is the repetition of the same word or words at the end of successive phrases, clauses or sentences. It is also known as epiphora and occasionally as antistrophe. It is a figure of speech and the counterpart of anaphora. Brutus' speech in Julius Caesar includes examples of epistrophe: "*There is tears for his love, joy for his fortune, honour for his valour, and death for his ambition.*"
- **Epitaph:** An epitaph (from Ancient Greek *epitáphios*, meaning "a funeral oration", *epi* "at, over", and *táphos*, "tomb", is a short text honouring a deceased person. Strictly speaking, it refers to text that is inscribed on a tombstone or plaque, but it may also be used in a figurative sense. Some epitaphs are specified by the person themselves before their death, while others are chosen by those responsible for the burial. An epitaph may be written in prose or in poem verse; poets have been known to compose their epitaphs before their death. Most epitaphs are brief records of the family and perhaps the deceased's career, often with a common expression of love or respect—for example, "*beloved father of ...*"—but others are more ambitious.
- **Epithet:** An epithet (from the Ancient Greek *epitheton*, meaning "adjective" from *epithetos* "additional", is a byname, or a descriptive term (word or phrase), accompanying or occurring in place of a name and having entered common usage. It has various shades of meaning when applied to seemingly real or fictitious people, divinities, objects, and binomial nomenclature. It can also be a descriptive title: for example, *Pallas Athena*, *Phoebus Apollo*, *Alfred the Great* or *Suleiman the Magnificent*. The word *epithet* can also refer to an abusive, defamatory, or derogatory phrase.
- **Eponym:** An eponym is a person, place, or thing after whom or which someone or something is, or is believed to be, named. The adjectives derived from eponym include eponymous and eponymic.
- **Equivocation:** In logic, equivocation is an informal fallacy resulting from using a particular word or expression in multiple senses within an argument. It is a type of ambiguity that stems from a phrase having two or more distinct meanings, not from the grammar or structure of the sentence.
- **Euphemism:** A euphemism is an innocuous word or expression used to replace one that is deemed offensive or suggests something unpleasant. Some euphemisms are intended to amuse, while others use bland, inoffensive terms for concepts that the user wishes to downplay or minimise the effect.
- **Excursus:** An excursus is a short episode or anecdote in a work of literature. Often excursuses have nothing to do with the matter being discussed by the work and are used to lighten the atmosphere in a tragic story, a similar function to that of satyr plays²⁸ in Greek theatre.
- **Exposition:** Narrative exposition is the insertion of background information within a story or narrative. This information can be about the setting, characters' backstories, prior plot events, historical context, etc. In literature, exposition appears in the form of expository writing embedded within the narrative. Exposition is one of four **rhetorical modes** (aka *modes of discourse*), along with description, **persuasion**, and narration.
- **Exemplum:** The word is Latin, for *example*. An exemplum is a moral anecdote, brief or extended, real or fictitious, used to illustrate a point. The plural form of exemplum, also called "*exemplification*", is "*exempla*". The word exemplum is also used to express an action performed by another and used as an example or model. One of the most famous exempla of all is: *Once there was a boy who lived in a village. He liked to call out "Wolf!" and laugh as the villagers ran around in a panic, only to realise that there was no wolf at all. One day, the boy was playing in the forest, and ran into an actual wolf. He cried "Wolf! Wolf!" but no one believed him anymore. Everyone thought he was lying again, and no one came to save him.*
- **Extended Metaphor:** An extended metaphor, also known as a conceit or sustained metaphor, is an author's use of a single metaphor or analogy at length through multiple linked tenors, vehicles, and grounds throughout a poem or story. William Shakespeare used extended metaphors to great effect. In *Romeo and Juliet*: Upon seeing Juliet for the first time, Romeo delivers a monologue that features an extended metaphor comparing Juliet to the sun. "*But, soft! What light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun*". Once Shakespeare establishes the terms of his initial metaphor ("*Juliet is the sun*"), he elaborates on the qualities of the sun and extends its function "*arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon*". The extended metaphor serves to highlight Romeo's intense passion and immediate love upon seeing Juliet.

²⁸ The *satyr play* is a form of Attic theatre performance related to both comedy and tragedy. It preserves theatrical elements of dialogue, actors speaking verse, a chorus that dances and sings, masks and costumes.

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- **Fable:** Fable is a literary genre: a succinct fictional story, in prose or verse, that features animals, legendary creatures, plants, inanimate objects, or forces of nature that are anthropomorphised, and that illustrates or leads to a particular moral lesson (a "*moral*"), which may at the end be added explicitly as a concise maxim or saying. A fable differs from a parable in that the latter excludes animals, plants, inanimate objects, and forces of nature as actors that assume speech or other powers of humankind. Usage has not always been so clearly distinguished. In the King James Version of the New Testament, ("*mythos*") was rendered by the translators as "*fable*".²⁹ By the way, a person who writes fables is called a *fabulist*.
- **Fairy Tale:** A fairy tale, fairytale, wonder tale, magic tale, fairy story or Märchen is an instance of European folklore genre that takes the form of a short story. Such stories typically feature mythical entities such as dwarfs, dragons, elves, fairies, giants, gnomes, goblins, griffins, mermaids, talking animals, trolls, unicorns, or witches, and usually magic or enchantments. In most cultures, there is no clear line separating myth from folk or fairy tale; all these together form the literature of preliterate societies. Fairy tales may be distinguished from other folk narratives such as legends (which generally involve belief in the veracity of the events described) and explicit moral tales, including beast fables. In less technical contexts, the term is also used to describe something blessed with unusual happiness, as in "fairy-tale ending" (a happy ending) or "*fairy-tale romance*". Colloquially, the term "*fairy tale*" or "*fairy story*" can also mean any far-fetched story or tall tale; it is used especially of any story that not only is not true but could not possibly be true. Legends are perceived as real within their culture; fairy tales may merge into legends, where the narrative is perceived both by the teller and those who hear it as being grounded in historical truth. However, unlike legends and epics, fairy tales usually do not contain more than superficial references to religion and to actual places, people, and events; they take place "*once upon a time*" rather than in actual times.
- **Fantasy:** Fantasy is a genre of speculative fiction involving magical elements, typically set in a fictional universe and sometimes inspired by mythology and folklore. Its roots are in oral traditions, which then became fantasy literature and drama. From the 20th century, it has expanded further into various media, including film, television, graphic novels, manga, animated movies and video games. Fantasy is distinguished from the genres of science fiction and horror by the respective absence of scientific or macabre themes, though these genres overlap. In popular culture, the fantasy genre predominantly features settings of a medieval nature. In its broadest sense, however, fantasy consists of works by many writers, artists, filmmakers, and musicians from ancient myths and legends to many recent and popular works. Most fantasy uses magic or other supernatural elements as a main plot element, theme, or setting. Magic, magic practitioners (sorcerers, witches and so on) and magical creatures are common in many of these worlds.
- **Farce:** Farce is a comedy that seeks to entertain the audience through situations that are highly exaggerated, extravagant, ridiculous, absurd, and improbable. Farce is also characterised by heavy use of physical humour; the use of deliberate absurdity or nonsense; satire, parody, and mockery of real-life situations, people, events, and interactions; unlikely and humorous instances of miscommunication; ludicrous, improbable, and exaggerated characters; and broadly stylised performances.
- **Fiction:** Fiction is any creative work, mostly any narrative work, portraying people, events, or places in imaginary ways that are not strictly based on history or fact. In its most narrow usage, fiction applies to written narratives in prose and often specifically novels and novellas and short stories. More broadly, however, fiction has come to encompass imaginary narratives expressed in any medium, including not just writing but also live theatrical performances, films, television programs, radio dramas, comics, role-playing games, and video games. The Internet has had a major impact on the creation and distribution of fiction, calling into question the feasibility of copyright as a means to ensure that royalties are paid to copyright holders.
- **Figures of Speech:** A figure of speech or rhetorical figure is a word or phrase that entails an intentional deviation from ordinary language use to produce a rhetorical effect. Figures of speech are traditionally classified into schemes, which vary the ordinary sequence or pattern of words, and tropes, where words are made to carry a meaning other than what they ordinarily signify. An example of a scheme is a polysyndeton: the repetition of a conjunction before every element in a list, whereas the conjunction typically would appear only before the last element, as in "*Lions and tigers and bears, oh my!*"—emphasising the danger and number of animals more than the prosaic wording with only the second "*and*". An example of a trope is a metaphor, describing one thing as something that it clearly is not, to lead the mind to compare them, in "*All the world's a stage*."

²⁹ In the First Epistle to Timothy, the Second Epistle to Timothy, the Epistle to Titus and the First Epistle of Peter.

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- **Foreshadowing:** Foreshadowing is a literary device in which a writer gives an advance hint of what is to come later in the story. Foreshadowing often appears at the beginning of a story, or a chapter, and it helps the reader develop expectations about the upcoming events. A writer may implement foreshadowing in many different ways, such as character dialogues, plot events, and changes in setting. Even the title of a work or a chapter can act as a clue that suggests what will happen. Foreshadowing in fiction creates an atmosphere of suspense in a story so that the readers are interested and want to know more. The use of the device can make extraordinary and bizarre events appear credible, as some events are predicted to make the audience feel anticipated for them.
- **Foreword:** A foreword is a piece of writing sometimes placed at the beginning of a book or other piece of literature. It is typically written by someone other than the primary author of the work. It often tells of some interaction between the writer of the foreword and the book's primary author or the story the book tells.
- **Genre:** A literary genre is a category of literary composition. Genres may be determined by literary technique, tone, content, or even length. They generally move from more abstract, encompassing classes, which are then further sub-divided into more concrete distinctions.
- **Gothic Double:** In literature, the term Gothic Double refers to a duality within a character, mainly the protagonist or a major character, based on the presumption that this duality centres on the polarity of good and evil. An example of this could be Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* or Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*.
- **Haiku:** Haiku is a type of short-form poetry originally from Japan. Traditional Japanese haiku consists of three phrases that contain a *kireji*, or "cutting word", 17 on in a 5, 7, 5 pattern, and a *kigo*, or seasonal reference. Similar poems that do not adhere to these rules are generally classified as *senryū*.
- **Hamartia:** Hamartia is the error or false step that leads a hero or protagonist in a tragedy to their downfall, as discussed by Aristotle in his *Poetics*. The protagonist's misfortune may be caused by some moral shortcoming or character defect or by their misjudgment, ignorance, or hubris.
- **Harangue:** To harangue means to speak to someone or a group of people, often for a long time, in a forceful and sometimes angry way, especially in an attempt to persuade them.
- **Homograph:** A homograph is a word that shares the same written form as another word but has a different meaning. However, some dictionaries insist that the words must also be pronounced differently, while the Oxford English Dictionary says that the words should also be of "different origin". Examples are: *Agape* – with mouth open or love. *Bass* – a type of fish or a low, deep voice.
- **Homophone:** A homophone is a word that is pronounced the same as another word but differs in meaning. A homophone may also differ in spelling. The two words may be spelt the same as, for example, *rose* and *rose*, or differently, as in *rain*, *reign*, and *rein*.
- **Hubris:** The term Hubris (or, less frequently, Hybris) originated in Ancient Greece. It describes a personality quality of extreme or excessive pride or dangerous overconfidence, often in combination with (or synonymous with) arrogance. The term "arrogance" comes from the Latin word *adrogare*, meaning to feel that one has a right to demand certain attitudes and behaviours from other people. To "arrogate" means "to claim or seize without justification... To make undue claims to having", or "to claim or seize without right... to ascribe or attribute without reason". Hubris is usually perceived as a characteristic of an individual rather than a group.
- **Hypallage:** Hypallage is a figure of speech in which the syntactic relationship between two terms is interchanged, or – more frequently – a modifier is syntactically linked to an item other than the one that it modifies semantically.
- **Hyperbaton:** Hyperbaton, in its original meaning, is a figure of speech in which a phrase is made discontinuous by the insertion of other words. In modern usage, the term is also used more generally for figures of speech that transpose sentences' natural word order, and it is also called an anastrophe. An example is "One swallow does not a summer make, nor one fine day."
- **Hyperbole:** Hyperbole is an exaggeration used as a rhetorical device or figure of speech. In rhetoric, it is also sometimes known as *auxesis*. In poetry and oratory, it emphasises, evokes strong feelings, and creates strong impressions. As a figure of speech, it is usually not meant to be taken literally.

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- **Hypophora:** Hypophora, also referred to as anhypophora or antipophora, is a figure of speech in which the speaker poses a question and then answers the question. Example taken from *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White. Charlotte's hypophora is quite memorable as she talks to Wilbur about life. "After all, what's a life, anyway? We're born, we live a little while, we die. A spider's life can't help being something of a mess, with all this trapping and eating flies. By helping you, perhaps I was trying to lift up my life a trifle. Heaven knows anyone's life can stand a little of that."
- **Iambic Pentameter:** Iambic Pentameter is made up of two words, where *pentameter* is a combination of 'pent,' which means *five*, and 'meter,' which means *to measure*. *Iambic*, on the other hand, is a metrical foot in poetry in which a stressed syllable follows an unstressed syllable. It means iambic pentameter is a beat or foot that uses ten syllables in each line. Simply, it is a rhythmic pattern comprising five *iamb*s in each line, like five heartbeats. Example: from *Twelfth Night* (By William Shakespeare)³⁰

"If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken and so die.
That strain again! it had a dying fall..."

- **Idiom:** An idiom is a phrase or expression that typically presents a figurative, non-literal meaning attached to the phrase, but some phrases become figurative idioms while retaining the literal meaning of the phrase. Categorized as *formulaic language*, an idiom's figurative meaning is different from the literal meaning. Idioms frequently occur in all languages; in English alone there are an estimated twenty-five thousand idiomatic expressions. Two examples are: *Kill two birds with one stone* (meaning: Get two things done with a single action). *Don't let the cat out of the bag* (meaning: Don't give away a secret).



Picture Credit: "Don't let the cat out of the bag" by RichKnowles is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

- **Inferences:** Inferences are steps in reasoning, moving from premises to logical consequences; etymologically, the word *infer* means to "carry forward". Inference is theoretically traditionally divided into deduction and induction, a distinction that in Europe dates at least to Aristotle. Deduction is inference deriving logical conclusions from premises known or assumed to be true, with the laws of valid inference being studied in logic. Induction is inference from particular premises to a universal conclusion. A third type of inference is sometimes distinguished, notably by Charles Sanders Peirce,³¹ contra-distinguishing abduction from induction.
- **Innuendo:** An innuendo is a hint, insinuation or intimation about a person or thing, especially of a denigrating or a derogatory nature. It can also be a remark or question, typically disparaging (also called insinuation), that works obliquely by allusion. In the latter sense the intention is often to insult or accuse someone so that one's words, taken literally, are innocent.
- **Intertextuality:** Intertextuality is the shaping of a text's meaning by another text. It is the interconnection between similar or related works of literature that reflect and influence an audience's interpretation of the text. Intertextuality is the relation between texts that are inflected using quotations and allusion. Intertextual figures include allusion, quotation, calque, plagiarism, translation, pastiche and parody. It is a literary device that creates an 'interrelationship between texts' and generates related understanding in separate works. These references are made to influence the reader and add layers of depth to a text based on the readers' prior knowledge and understanding. The structure of intertextuality, in turn depends on the structure of influence. It is also a literary discourse strategy utilised by writers in novels, poetry, theatre and even in non-written texts (such as performances and digital media). Examples of intertextuality are an author's borrowing and transforming a prior text, and a reader's referencing of one text in reading another.

³⁰ Explanation from <https://literarydevices.net/iambic-pentameter/>

³¹ Charles Sanders Peirce (1839 – 1914) was an American philosopher, logician, mathematician and scientist who is sometimes known as "the father of **pragmatism**".

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- **Invective:** Invective is abusive, reproachful, or venomous language used to express blame or censure; or a form of rude expression or discourse intended to offend or hurt; vituperation, or deeply seated ill will, vitriol. The Latin adjective *invectives* means "scolding".
- **Irony:** In its broadest sense, irony is a rhetorical device, literary technique, or event in which what on the surface appears to be the case or to be expected differs radically from what is actually the case. Irony can be categorised into different types, including verbal irony, dramatic irony, and situational irony.
- **Isocolon:** Isocolon is a rhetorical scheme in which parallel elements possess the same number of words or syllables. As in any form of parallelism, the pairs or series must enumerate like things to achieve symmetry.
- **Jargon:** Jargon is the specialised terminology associated with a particular field or area of activity. Jargon is normally employed in a particular communicative context and may not be well understood outside that context. The context is usually a particular occupation, but any ingroup can have jargon.
- **Juxtaposition:** Juxtaposition is an act or instance of placing two elements close together or side by side and is often done to compare/contrast the two, show similarities or differences, etc.
- **Kairos:** Kairos is an ancient Greek word meaning '*the right, critical, or opportune moment*'. In modern Greek, kairos also means '*weather*'. It is one of two words that the ancient Greeks had for '*time*', the other being *chronos*.
- **Künstlerroman:** A Künstlerroman means "*artist's novel*" - about an artist's growth to maturity, It could be classified as a sub-category of Bildungsroman: a *coming-of-age* novel. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, one way a Künstlerroman may differ from a Bildungsroman is its ending, where a Künstlerroman hero rejects everyday life, but a Bildungsroman hero settles for being an ordinary citizen. According to Oxford Reference, the difference may lie in a longer view across a Künstlerroman hero's whole life, not just their childhood years.
- **Legend:** A legend is a genre of folklore that consists of a narrative featuring human actions, believed or perceived, both by teller and listeners, to have taken place in human history. Narratives in this genre may demonstrate human values and possess certain qualities that give the tale verisimilitude. Legend, for its active and passive participants, may include miracles. Legends may be transformed over time to keep them fresh and vital. Many legends operate within uncertainty, never being entirely believed by the participants and never being resolutely doubted.
- **Limerick:** A limerick is a form of verse, usually humorous and frequently rude, in five-line, mainly *Anapestic trimeter*³² with a strict rhyme scheme of AABBA, in which the first, second- and fifth-line rhyme, while the third and fourth lines are shorter and share a different rhyme.
- **Litotes:** In rhetoric, litotes, also known classically as antenantiōsis or moderatour, is a figure of speech and form of verbal irony in which understatement is used to emphasise a point by stating a negative to affirm a positive further, often incorporating double negatives for effect. As a figure of speech, the meaning of litotes is not literal. Instead, litotes is intended to be a form of understatement by using negation to express the contrary meaning. Litotes is a clever use of language in its combination of negative terms to convey a positive sentiment or statement. For example, the phrase "*I don't hate it*" reflects the use of litotes.
- **Malapropism:** A malapropism is the mistaken use of an incorrect word in place of a word with a similar sound, resulting in a nonsensical, sometimes humorous utterance. An example is the statement credited to baseball player Yogi Berra: "*Texas has a lot of electrical votes*", rather than "*electoral votes*".
- **Maxim:** A maxim is a concise expression of a fundamental moral rule or principle, whether considered as objective or subjective, contingent on one's philosophy. A maxim is often pedagogical and motivates specific actions.
- **Meiosis:** In rhetoric, meiosis is a euphemistic figure of speech that intentionally understates something or implies that it is lesser in significance or size than it really is. Meiosis is the opposite of *auxesis*, and is often compared to *litotes*. The term is derived from Greek and means "*to make smaller*", "*to diminish*".
- **Melodrama:** A modern melodrama is a dramatic work wherein the plot, typically sensationalized and for a strong emotional appeal, takes precedence over detailed characterisation. Melodramas typically concentrate on dialogue that is often bombastic or excessively sentimental, rather than action.
- **Memoir:** A memoir is any nonfiction narrative writing based on personal memories. The assertions made in the work are thus understood to be factual.

³² Anapestic tetrameter is a poetic meter that has four anapestic metrical feet per line. Each foot has two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed syllable. It is sometimes referred to as a "reverse dactyl", and shares the rapid, driving pace of the dactyl.

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- **Mesostic:** A mesostic is a poem or other text arranged so that a vertical phrase intersects horizontal text lines. It is similar to an acrostic but with the vertical phrase intersecting somewhere in the midst of the line, as opposed to the beginning of each line.
- **Metaphor:** A metaphor is a figure of speech that, for rhetorical effect, directly refers to one thing by mentioning another. It may provide clarity or identify hidden similarities between two different ideas.



- **Metonymy:** Metonymy is a figure of speech in which a thing or concept is referred to by the name of something closely associated with that thing or concept and what it does or is used for. An example is "The pen is mightier than the sword" from Edward Bulwer Lytton's play *Cardinal Richelieu*. This sentence has two metonyms: "Pen" stands for "the written word" and "Sword" stands for "military aggression".

Picture Credit: "Ad for Waterman Ideal Fountain Pen, 'The Pen is Still Mightier than the Sword', 1914." by Halloween HJB is licensed under CC0 1.0

- **Monologue:** In theatre, a monologue (from the Greek word *mónos*, "alone, solitary" and *lógos*, "speech") is a speech presented by a single character, most often to express their thoughts aloud, though sometimes also to directly address another character or the audience. Monologues are common across the range of dramatic media (plays, films, etc.) and in non-dramatic media such as poetry. Monologues share much in common with several other literary devices, including soliloquies, apostrophes, and asides. There are, however, distinctions between each of these devices.³³
- **Motif:** In narrative, a motif is a distinctive repeating feature or idea; often, it helps develop other narrative (or literary) aspects such as theme or mood. A narrative motif can be created through the use of imagery, structural components, language, and other elements throughout literature. The flute in Arthur Miller's play *Death of a Salesman* is a recurrent sound motif that conveys rural and idyllic notions. Another example from modern American literature is the green light found in the *Great Gatsby* novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Narratives may include multiple motifs of varying types. In Shakespeare's play *Macbeth*, he uses a variety of narrative elements to create many different motifs. Imagistic references to blood and water are continually repeated. The phrase "fair is foul, and foul is fair" is echoed at many points in the play, a combination that mixes the concepts of good and evil. The play also features the central motif of the washing of hands, one that combines both verbal images and the movement of the actors.
- **Motto:** A motto is the general motivation or intention of an individual, family, social group or organisation. Mottos are usually found predominantly in written form and may stem from long traditions of social foundations or from significant events, such as a civil war or a revolution.

³³ Monologues are similar to poems, epiphanies, and others, in that they involve one 'voice' speaking, but there are differences between them. For example, a soliloquy consists of a character relating their thoughts and feelings to themselves and to the audience without addressing any of the other characters. A monologue is the thoughts of a person spoken out loud. Monologues are also distinct from apostrophes, in which the speaker or writer addresses an imaginary person, inanimate object, or idea. Asides differ from each of these not only in length (asides are shorter) but also in that asides are not heard by other characters even in situations where they logically should be (e.g. two characters engaging in a dialogue interrupted by one of them delivering an aside).

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Picture Credit: "Medea's Myth" by Egisto Sani is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

- **Myth:** Myth is a folklore genre consisting of narratives that play a fundamental role in a society, such as foundational tales or origin myths. The main characters in myths are usually non-humans, such as gods, demigods, and other supernatural figures. However, others also include humans, animals, or combinations in their classification of myth. Stories of everyday human beings, although often of leaders of some type, are usually contained in legends, as opposed to myths. Myths are sometimes distinguished from legends in that myths deal with gods, usually have no historical basis, and are set in a world of the remote past, very different from that of the present. The term mythology may either refer to the study of myths in general, or a body of myths regarding a particular subject. The study of myth began in ancient history.
- **Narrative:** Narrative or Narration³⁴ uses a written or spoken commentary to convey a story to an audience. Narration is given by a narrator: a specific person or unspecified literary voice, developed by the story's creator, to deliver information to the audience, particularly about the plot (the series of events). Narration is a required element of all written stories (novels, short stories, poems, memoirs, etc.), with the function of conveying the story in its entirety. However, narration is merely optional in most other storytelling formats, such as films, plays, television shows, and video games, in which the story can be conveyed through other means, like a dialogue between characters or visual action. The narrative mode encompasses the set of choices through which the story's creator develops their narrator and narration. See more, [HERE](#).
- **Nemesis:** In ancient Greek religion, *Nemesis* (also called *Rhamnusia* or *Rhamnusia*) is the goddess who enacts retribution against those who succumb to hubris, arrogance before the gods. She was a personification of the resentment aroused in men by those who committed crimes with apparent impunity or had inordinate good fortune. The name *Nemesis* is related to the Greek word *némein*, meaning "to give what is due". Divine retribution is a central theme in the Hellenic worldview, providing the unifying theme of the tragedies of Sophocles and many other literary works.
- **Neologism:** A neologism (from the Greek *néo*, meaning "new" and *logos*, meaning "speech, utterance") is a relatively recent or isolated term, word, or phrase not yet entirely accepted into mainstream language. Neologisms are often driven by changes in culture and technology. In the process of language formation, neologisms are more mature than protologisms. A word whose development stage is between that of the protologism (freshly coined word) and neologism (new word) is a prelogism³⁵. Popular examples of neologisms can be found in science, fiction (notably science-fiction), films and television, branding, literature, jargon, cant, linguistic and popular culture. An example is a **laser** (1960) from *Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation*.

³⁴ As nouns the difference between narration and narrative is that **narration** is the act of recounting or relating in order the particulars of some action, occurrence, or affair; a narrating while **narrative** is the systematic recitation of an event or series of events. As an adjective narrative is telling a story.

³⁵ The definition of **prelogism** is the theory that the primitive man's mind would ignore the principles of identity, causality and non-contradiction, and would have no awareness of his personality, as it is perfectly fused in the community and in the natural environment.

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- **Nostalgia:** Nostalgia is a sentimentality for the past, typically for a period or place with happy personal associations.
- **Ode:** An ode is a lyrical poem, sometimes sung, that focuses on glorifying a single subject and its meaning. Often, an ode has an irregular stanza structure.
- **Onomatopoeia:** Onomatopoeia is a word that phonetically imitates, resembles, or suggests the sound that it describes. Common onomatopoeias include animal noises such as oink, meow, roar, bark and chirp.
- **Oxymoron:** An oxymoron is a figure of speech that appears to be a contradiction in terms and juxtaposes concepts with opposing meanings within a word or phrase. An oxymoron can be used as a rhetorical device to illustrate a rhetorical point or to reveal a paradox.
- **Palindrome:** A palindrome is a word, number, phrase, or other sequence of characters which reads the same backward as forward, such as madam or racecar. There are also numeric palindromes, including date/time stamps using short digits 11/11/11, 11:11 and long digits 02/02/2020. The longest palindrome in English is often considered to be **tattarrattat**, a word coined by James Joyce in his 1922 *Ulysses* to imitate the sound of a knock on the door.
- **Palinode:** A *palinode* (or *palinody*) is an ode in which the writer retracts a view or sentiment expressed in an earlier poem. The word comes from the Greek word *Palin*, meaning 'back' or 'again'. The first recorded use of a palinode is in a poem by Stesichorus in the 7th century BC, in which he retracts his earlier statement that the Trojan War was all the fault of Helen. An important example of a palinode is that of Socrates in the *Phaedrus*, in which his first major speech disparages the "mania" of Eros and its part in human affairs, while his second one (commonly known as the palinode of Socrates) praises Eros³⁶.
- **Parable:** A parable is a succinct, didactic story, in prose or verse that illustrates one or more instructive lessons or principles. It differs from a fable in that fables employ animals, plants, inanimate objects, or forces of nature as characters, whereas parables have human characters. The word comes from the Greek word *parabolē*, literally "throwing" "alongside" (*para-*), by extension meaning "comparison, illustration, analogy." It was the name given by Greek rhetoricians to an illustration in the form of a brief fictional narrative.
- **Paradox:** A paradox is a logically self-contradictory statement or a statement that runs contrary to one's expectations. Despite apparently valid reasoning from true premises, it is a statement that leads to a seemingly self-contradictory or a logically unacceptable conclusion. A paradox usually involves contradictory, yet interrelated elements that exist simultaneously and persist over time. In logic, many paradoxes exist that are known to be invalid arguments yet are nevertheless valuable in promoting critical thinking, while other paradoxes have revealed errors in definitions.
- **Parallelism:** In grammar, parallelism, also known as parallel structure or parallel construction, is the repetition of grammatical elements in writing and speaking. Parallelism influences the grammatical structure of sentences but can also impact the meaning of thoughts and ideas being presented. When writers use parallelism as a figure of speech, this literary device extends beyond just a technique of grammatical sentence structure. It may feature repetition of a word or phrase for emphasis, or it can be used as a literary device to create a parallel position between opposite ideas through grammatical elements as a means of emphasising contrast. Parallelism takes many forms in literature, such as *anaphora*, *antithesis*, *asyndeton*, *epistrophe*, etc. Parallelism is a literary device in itself, but it is also a category under which other figures of speech fall. Therefore, these other literary devices and figures of speech are specific types of parallelism.³⁷ One of the most well-known examples of parallelism is featured in what Neil Armstrong's said as he stepped on the moon: "*That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.*"

³⁶ As Socrates says, "We must not let anyone disturb us or frighten us with the claim that you should prefer a friend who is in control of himself to one who is disturbed. Besides proving that point, if [the lover of speeches] is to win his case, our opponent must show that love is not sent by the gods as a benefit to a lover and his boy. And we, for our part, must prove the opposite, that this sort of madness is given us by the gods to ensure our greatest good fortune. It will be a proof that convinces the wise if not the clever."

³⁷ This explanation is from *Literary Devices*, [HERE](#).

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- **Paraphrase:** A paraphrase is a restatement of the meaning of a text or passage using other words in an attempt to clarify the text. The term itself is derived via Latin *paraphrasis* from the Greek *paráfrasis*, meaning 'additional manner of expression'). The act of paraphrasing is also called *paraphrasis*. Paraphrasing seems to have dropped off as a specific exercise that students learn, a drop off that largely coincides with the removal of Classical texts from the core of Western education. There is, however, renewed interest in the study of paraphrases, given concerns around plagiarism and original authorship. A paraphrase typically explains or clarifies the text that is being paraphrased. For example, "The signal was red" might be paraphrased as "The train was not allowed to pass because the signal was red".
- **Parataxis:** The word (from Greek, meaning "act of placing side by side"; from *para* "beside" and *táxis* "arrangement") is a literary technique, in writing or speaking, that favours short, simple sentences, without conjunctions or with the use of coordinating, but not with subordinating conjunctions. It contrasts with syntaxis and hypotaxis. It is also used to describe a technique in poetry in which two images or fragments, usually starkly dissimilar images or fragments, are juxtaposed without a clear connection. Readers are then left to make their own connections or understating implied by the paratactic syntax.
- **Parody:** A parody, also called a spoof, a send-up, a take-off, a lampoon, a play on, or a caricature, is a creative work designed to imitate, comment on, and/or to make fun of its subject by using satiric or ironic imitation. Often its subject is an original work or some aspect of it — theme/content, author, style, etc.
- **Pastiche:** A pastiche is a work of visual art, literature, theatre, music, or architecture that imitates the style or character of the work of one or more other artists. Unlike parody, pastiche celebrates, rather than mocks, the work it imitates.
- **Pathetic Fallacy:** The phrase pathetic fallacy is a literary term for attributing human emotion and conduct to things found in nature that are not human. It is a kind of personification that occurs in poetic descriptions, when, for example, *clouds seem sullen*, when *leaves dance*, or when *rocks seem indifferent*.
- **Pejorative:** A pejorative or slur is a word or grammatical form expressing a negative or a disrespectful connotation, a low opinion, or a lack of respect toward someone or something. It is also used to express criticism, hostility, or disregard.
- **Peripetia:** Peripeteia, from Greek, is a reversal of circumstances or turning point. The term is primarily used concerning works of literature. The Anglicised form of peripeteia is peripety. Aristotle, in his *Poetics*, defines peripeteia as "a change by which the action veers round to its opposite, subject always to our rule of probability or necessity." According to Aristotle, peripeteia, along with discovery, is the most effective when it comes to drama, particularly in a tragedy. He wrote that "The finest form of Discovery is one attended by Peripeteia, like that which goes with the Discovery in Oedipus..."
- **Persona:** Persona (plural personae or personas), depending on the context, can refer to either the public image of one's personality, or the social role that one adopts, or a fictional character. The word derives from Latin, originally referring to a theatrical mask. On the social web, users develop virtual personas as online identities. The Latin word probably derived from the Etruscan word "phersu", with the same meaning, and that from the Greek (*prosōpon*).
- **Personification:** Personification is the attribution of a personal nature or human characteristics to something non-human or the representation of an abstract quality in human form.
- **Phronesis:** The word comes from Ancient Greek: *phrónēsis*, translated into English by terms such as prudence, practical virtue and practical wisdom. It implied both good judgment and excellence of character and habits and was a common topic of discussion in ancient Greek philosophy in ways that are still influential today.
- **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the representation of another author's language, thoughts, ideas, or expressions as one's own original work. In educational contexts, there are differing definitions of plagiarism depending on the institution. Plagiarism is considered a violation of academic integrity and a breach of journalistic ethics.

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- **Platitude:** A platitude is a trite, meaningless, or prosaic statement, often used as a thought-terminating cliché, aimed at quelling social, emotional, or cognitive unease. The statement may be true, but its meaning is lost due to its excessive use. Example of usage of the word: "he masks his disdain for her with platitudes about how she should believe in herself more"
- **Pleonasm:** Pleonasm is redundancy in linguistic expressions, such as "black darkness" or "burning fire". It is a manifestation of tautology by traditional rhetorical criteria and might be considered a fault of style. Pleonasm may also be used for emphasis or because the phrase has become established in a certain form.
- **Plot:** In a literary work, film, or another narrative, the plot is the sequence of events where each affects the next one through the principle of cause-and-effect. The causal events of a plot can be thought of as a series of events linked by the connector "and so". Plots can vary from the simple to forming complex interwoven structures, with each part sometimes referred to as a subplot or imbrogio. Plot is similar in meaning to the term *storyline*.
- **Plot Twist:** A plot twist is a literary technique that introduces a radical change in the direction or expected outcome of the plot in a work of fiction. When it happens near the end of a story, it is known as a *twist* or *surprise ending*.
- **Poetic Diction:** Poetic diction is the term used to refer to the linguistic style, the vocabulary, and the metaphors used in the writing of poetry. In the Western tradition, all these elements were thought of as properly different in poetry and prose up to the time of the Romantic revolution, when William Wordsworth challenged the distinction in his Romantic manifesto, the Preface to the second (1800) edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). Wordsworth proposed that a "language near to the language of men" was as appropriate for poetry as it was for prose. This idea was very influential, though more in theory than practice: a special "poetic" vocabulary and mode of metaphor persisted in 19th century poetry. It was deplored by the Modernist poets of the 20th century, who again proposed that there is no such thing as a "prosaic" word unsuitable for poetry. In some languages, "poetic diction" is quite a literal dialect use. In Classical Greek literature, for example, certain linguistic dialects were seen as appropriate for certain types of poetry.
- **Poetry:** Poetry (derived from the Greek *poiesis*, meaning "making") is a form of literature that uses aesthetic and often rhythmic qualities of language – such as phonaesthetics, sound symbolism, and metre – to evoke meanings in addition to, or in place of, a prosaic ostensible meaning. A poem is a literary composition written utilising this principle. Poetry has a long and varied history, evolving differentially across the globe. It dates back at least to prehistoric times with hunting poetry in Africa and to panegyric and elegiac court poetry of the empires of the Nile, Niger, and Volta River valleys. Some of the earliest written poetry in Africa occurs among the Pyramid Texts written during the 25th century BCE. The earliest surviving Western Asian epic poetry, the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, was written in Sumerian.
- **Point of View:** Point of view (POV) is what the character or narrator telling the story can see or feel (from their perspective). The author chooses "who" is to tell the story by determining the point of view. Depending on who the narrator is, they will be standing at one point and seeing the action. This viewpoint will give the narrator a partial or whole view of events as they happen. Many stories have the protagonist telling the story, while in others, the narrator may be another character or an outside viewer, a narrator who is not in the story at all. The narrator should not be confused with the author, the story's writer and whose opinions may not be those written into the narrative.³⁸
- **Polemic:** Polemic is contentious rhetoric intended to support a specific position by forthright claims and to undermine the opposing position. Polemics are thus seen in arguments on controversial topics. The practice of such argumentation is called polemics.
- **Polyptoton:** Polyptoton is the stylistic scheme in which words derived from the same root are repeated. A related stylistic device is *antanaclasis*, in which the same word is repeated, but each time with a different sense. Another related term is *figura etymologica*.

³⁸ This explanation is from Literary Devices, [HERE](#).

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- **Polysyndeton:** The word polysyndeton comes from the Ancient Greek *poly*, meaning "many", and *syndeton*, meaning "bound together with". A stylistic scheme, polysyndeton is the deliberate insertion of conjunctions into a sentence to "slow[ing] up the rhythm of the prose" to produce "an impressively solemn note." In grammar, a polysyndetic coordination is a coordination in which all conjuncts are linked by coordinating conjunctions (usually *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor* in English).
- **Premise:** A *premise* or *premiss* is a true or false statement that helps form the body of an argument, which logically leads to a true or false conclusion. *premise* makes a declarative statement about its subject matter, which enables a reader to either agree or disagree with the premise in question, and in doing so understand the logical assumptions of the argument. If a premise is logically false, then the conclusion, which follows from all of the premises of the argument, must also be false—unless the conclusion is supported by a logically valid argument with which the reader agrees. Therefore, if the reader disagrees with any one of the argument's premises, they have a logical basis to reject the conclusion of the argument.
- **Present Perfect:** This is a verb tense that describes actions just finished or continuing from the past into the present. This can also imply that past actions have present effects.
- **Procatalepsis:** Procatalepsis, also called *prolepsis* or *prebuttal*, is a figure of speech in which the speaker raises an objection to their own argument and then immediately answers it. By doing so, they hope to strengthen their argument by dealing with possible counter-arguments before their audience can raise them. In rhetoric, anticipating future responses and answering possible objections will set up one's argument for a strong defence. In argumentation, procatalepsis is used to answer the opponent's possible objections before they can be made. In literary discussion, procatalepsis is used as a figure of speech in which a description is used before it is strictly applicable. Sayings such as "I'm a dead man" exemplify the suggestion of a state that has not yet occurred. In narratological analyses, prolepsis can be used with the order of events and presentation of events in texts. This refers to the study of narrative in respect to "flash-forwards", in which a future event serves as an interruption of the present time of the text. Example: "*It is difficult to see how a pilot boat could be completely immune to capsising or plunging, but pilot boat design criteria must meet the needs of the industry and pilotage authorities.*"
- **Prolepsis:** A flashforward (also spelt flash-forward and more formally known as *prolepsis*) is a scene that temporarily takes the narrative forward in time from the current point of the story in literature, film, television and other media. Flashforwards are often used to represent events expected, projected, or imagined to occur in the future. They may also reveal significant parts of the story that have not yet occurred, but soon will in greater detail. It is similar to foreshadowing, in which future events are not shown but rather implicitly hinted at. It is also similar to an ellipsis, but an ellipsis takes the narrative forward and is intended to skim over boring or uninteresting details, for example, the ageing of a character. It is primarily a postmodern narrative device, named by analogy to the more traditional flashback, which reveals events that occurred in the past.
- **Prologue:** A prologue is an opening to a story that establishes the context and gives background details, often some earlier story that ties into the main one, and other miscellaneous information.
- **Propaganda:** Propaganda is communication that is primarily used to influence an audience and further an agenda, which may not be objective and may be selectively presenting facts to encourage a particular synthesis or perception, or using loaded language to produce an emotional rather than a rational response to the information that is being presented. Propaganda can be found in news and journalism, government, advertising, entertainment, education, and activism and is often associated with material that is prepared by governments as part of war efforts, political campaigns, revolutionaries, big businesses, ultra-religious organisations, the media, and certain individuals such as 'soapboxers'. In the 20th century, the term propaganda was often associated with a manipulative approach, but historically, propaganda has been a neutral descriptive term.

Picture Credit: "Freedom Of Speech" by PropagandaTimes is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/)



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- **Prose:** Prose is a form of written or spoken language that typically shows a natural flow of speech and grammatical structure. A connected narrative device is the stream of consciousness, which also flows naturally but is not concerned with syntax. The word prose first appeared in English in the 14th century. It is derived from the Old French prose, which originates in the Latin expression *prosa oratio* (literally, *straightforward or direct speech*). Works of philosophy, history, economics, etc., journalism, and most fiction (an exception is the *verse novel*), are examples of works written in prose. It differs from most traditional poetry, where the form has a regular structure, consisting of verse based on metre and rhyme. However, developments in 20th century literature, including free verse, concrete poetry, and prose poetry, have led to the idea of poetry and prose as two ends on a spectrum rather than firmly distinct from each other. The American poet T. S. Eliot noted, whereas "*the distinction between verse and prose is clear, the distinction between poetry and prose is obscure*".
- **Protagonist:** A protagonist is the main character of a story. It can be used for any kind of story: in literature, a film, a television show or in a play. The protagonist is also called the central character and is often the story's hero. However, the protagonist does not always win and survive in a story. Protagonists are usually moral and benevolent, helping other characters to change their badness to become good again or defeating the evil and bad characters, but this is not always the case - for example, the protagonist in the film *Psycho* is a serial killer.
- **Proverb:** A proverb is a simple and insightful, traditional saying that expresses a perceived truth based on common sense or experience. Proverbs are often metaphorical and use formulaic language. Collectively, they form a genre of folklore. Examples are: *The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence. Don't judge a book by its cover. Strike while the iron is hot.*
- **Pseudonym:** A pseudonym or alias is a fictitious name that a person or group assumes for a particular purpose, which differs from their original or true name. It differs from a new name that entirely or legally replaces an individual's own.
- **Pun:** The pun, also known as *paronomasia*, is a form of wordplay that exploits multiple meanings of a term, or of similar-sounding words, for an intended humorous or rhetorical effect. These ambiguities can arise from the intentional use of homophonic, homographic, metonymic, or figurative language. Example: "*The Railway Society reception was an informal party of people of all stations (excuse the pun) in life*"
- **Quatrain:** A quatrain is a type of stanza, or a complete poem, consisting of four lines. Existing in a variety of forms, the quatrain appears in poems from the poetic traditions of various ancient civilisations and continues into the 21st century, where it is seen in works published in many languages. Michel de Nostredame (Nostradamus) used the quatrain form to deliver his famous prophecies in the 16th century. There are fifteen possible rhyme schemes, but the most traditional and common are ABAA, AAAA, ABAB, and ABBA.
- **Quest:** A quest is a journey toward a specific mission or a goal. The word serves as a plot device in mythology and fiction: a challenging journey towards a goal, often symbolic or allegorical. Tales of quests figure prominently in the folklore of every nation and ethnic culture. In literature, the object of a quest requires great exertion by the hero, who must overcome many obstacles, typically including much travel. The aspect of travel allows the storyteller to showcase exotic locations and cultures (an objective of the narrative, not of the character). The object of a quest may also have supernatural properties, often leading the protagonist into other worlds and dimensions. The moral of a quest tale often centres on the changed character of the hero.
- **Rebus:** A rebus is a puzzle device that combines the use of illustrated pictures with individual letters to depict words or phrases. For example: the word *might* be depicted by a rebus showing an illustrated bumblebee next to a plus sign (+) and the letter "n". It was a favourite form of heraldic expression used in the Middle Ages to denote surnames.



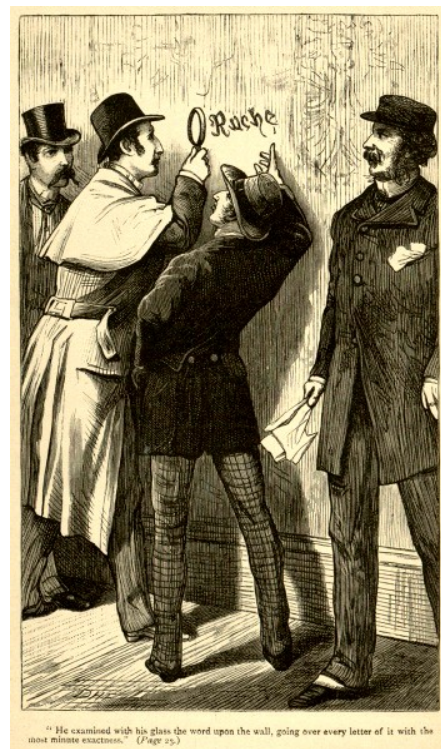
Picture: A rebus-style "escort card" from around 1865, to be read as "May I see you home my dear?" (Copyright expired).

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- **Red Herring:** A red herring is something that misleads or distracts from a relevant or important question. It may be either a logical fallacy or a literary device that leads readers or audiences toward a false conclusion. A red herring may be used intentionally, as in mystery fiction or as part of rhetorical strategies (e.g., in politics), or inadvertently be used in argumentation. The term was popularised in 1807 by English polemicist **William Cobbett**, who told a story of having used a strong-smelling smoked fish to divert and distract hounds from chasing a rabbit.

Picture Details: In the mystery story "*A Study in Scarlet*", detective **Sherlock Holmes** examines a clue which is later revealed to be intentionally misleading (i.e., a Red Herring). Public Domain: 1887, Illustration by David Henry Friston, in *Beeton's Christmas Annual*.



- **Repetition:** Repetition is the simple repeating of a word, within a short space of words (including in a poem), with no particular placement of the words to secure emphasis. It is a multilinguistic written or spoken device, frequently used in English and several other languages, such as Hindi and Chinese, and so rarely termed a figure of speech. Its forms, many of which are listed below, have varying resonances to listing (forms of enumeration, such as "Firstly, Secondly, Thirdly and lastly..."), as a matter of trite logic often similar in effect.³⁹
- **Resolution:** The resolution of a story is the conclusion of a story's plot. Also known as the denouement, the resolution is a literary term for the final plot points that occur after a story's climax and falling action. A resolution can be a scene or series of scenes that tie a narrative arc together near the end of the story.
- **Rhetoric:** Rhetoric is a technique of using language effectively and persuasively in spoken or written form. It is an art of discourse, which studies and employs various methods to convince, influence, or please an audience. For instance, a person gets on your nerves, you start feeling irritated, and you say, "Why don't you leave me alone?" By posing such a question, you are not asking for a reason. Instead, you simply want him to stop irritating you. Thus, you use rhetoric to direct language in a particular way for effective communication. A situation where you use rhetoric is called a "rhetorical situation".⁴⁰
- **Rhyme:** rhyme is a repetition of similar sounds (usually, precisely the same sound) in the final stressed syllables and any following syllables of two or more words. Most often, this kind of perfect rhyming is consciously used for a musical or aesthetic effect in the final position of lines within poems or songs. More broadly, a rhyme may also variously refer to other types of similar sounds near the ends of two or more words. Furthermore, the word rhyme has sometimes been used as a shorthand term for any brief poem, such as a nursery rhyme or Balliol rhyme.
- **Romance:** As a literary genre of high culture, heroic romance or chivalric romance is a type of prose and verse narrative that was popular in the noble courts of *High Medieval* and *Early Modern Europe*. They were fantastic stories about marvel-filled adventures, often of a chivalric knight-errant portrayed as having heroic qualities, who goes on a quest. Popular literature also drew on themes of romance, but with ironic, satiric, or burlesque intent. Romances reworked legends, fairy tales, and history to suit the readers' and hearers' tastes, but by c. 1600, they were out of fashion, and Miguel de Cervantes famously burlesqued them in his novel *Don Quixote*. Originally, romance literature was written in Old French, Anglo-Norman, Occitan, and Provençal, and later in Portuguese, Spanish, English, Italian (Sicilian poetry), and German. During the early 13th century, romances were increasingly written as prose. In later romances, particularly those of French origin, there tends to be an emphasis on courtly love themes, such as faithfulness in adversity.

³⁹ See [HERE](#) for a listing of forms of Repetition.

⁴⁰ Explained by Literary Devices, [HERE](#).

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- **Sarcasm:** Sarcasm is a literary device that uses irony to mock someone or something or convey contempt. It can also be defined as the use of words that mean the opposite of what the speaker or writer intends, especially to insult or show irritation with someone or amuse others. When used within the context of a given rhetoric, the primary purpose is usually to mock a given idea or position by almost pretending to agree with it and parrot it. For example, if a person says in a snide tone of voice that something was a great idea, he is using sarcasm, and what he means to say is that it was actually a terrible idea. The effective use of sarcasm is generally based on a shared cultural understanding of norms. Sarcasm is related to satire or farce, a well-known genre of literature and the dramatic arts. There are seven different types of sarcasm, and their denotation is created by the tone in which they are spoken.⁴¹
- **Sardonic:** Sardonic is an adjective describing dry, understated, and sort of mocking speech or writing—such as a clever remark that stings because it's so accurate. While sardonic comments seem slightly hostile, they are supposed to be witty and humorous rather than deeply hurtful. Sardonic lines are delivered with a completely straight face, as though it isn't supposed to be funny, and the speaker isn't thinking about it. It is considered a 'tone' (e.g. "a sardonic comment"), and it can also describe a person who often uses that tone. Example: "*I did not attend the funeral, but I sent a letter saying I approved of it.*" (Mark Twain)⁴²
- **Satire:** Satire is a genre of the visual, literary, and performing arts, usually in the form of fiction and less frequently non-fiction, in which vices, follies, abuses, and shortcomings are held up to ridicule, often with the intent of shaming or exposing the perceived flaws of individuals, corporations, government, or society itself into improvement. Although satire is usually meant to be humorous, its greater purpose is often constructive social criticism, using wit to draw attention to both particular and wider issues in society. A feature of satire is strong irony or sarcasm.
- **Self-Fulfilling Prophecy:** A self-fulfilling prophecy is the socio-psychological phenomenon of someone "predicting" or expecting something, and this "prediction" or expectation coming true simply because the person believes or anticipates it will and the person's resulting behaviours align to fulfil the belief.
- **Setting:** A setting (or backdrop) is the time and geographic location within a narrative, either non-fiction or fiction. It is a literary element. The setting initiates the main backdrop and mood for a story. The setting can be referred to as story world or *milieu* to include a context (especially society) beyond the immediate surroundings of the story. Elements of setting may include culture, historical period, geography, and time. Along with the plot, character, theme, and style, the setting is considered one of the fundamental components of fiction. A setting can take three basic forms. One is the natural world or in an outside place. In this setting, the natural landscapes of the world play an important part in a narrative, along with living creatures and different times of weather conditions and seasons. The second form exists as the cultural and historical background in which the narrative resides. Past events that have impacted the cultural background of characters or locations are significant in this way. The third form of a setting is a public or private place that has been created/maintained, and or lived in by people. Examples of this include a house, a park, a street, a school, etc.
- **Similes:** A simile is a figure of speech that directly compares two things. Similes differ from other metaphors by highlighting the similarities between two things using comparison words such as "like", "as", "so", or "than", while other metaphors create an implicit comparison.
- **Soliloquy:** A soliloquy is a monologue addressed to oneself; thoughts spoken aloud without addressing another person. Renaissance drama used soliloquies to great effect, such as in the soliloquy "*To be, or not to be*", the centrepiece of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.
- **Sonnet:** A sonnet is a poetic form that originated in the Italian poetry composed at the Court of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II in Palermo, Sicily. The 13th century poet and notary Giacomo da Lentini is credited with the sonnet's invention for expressing courtly love. The earliest sonnets, however, no longer survive in the original Sicilian language, but only after being translated into Tuscan dialect. The term sonnet is derived from the Italian word *sonetto* (lit. "little song", derived from the Latin word *sonus*, meaning a sound). By the 13th century, it signified a poem of fourteen lines that follows a very strict rhyme scheme and structure.

⁴¹ Explained at: <https://www.ultius.com/glossary/literature/rhetorical-devices/sarcasm.html>

⁴² Explained by Literary Terms. [HERE](#).

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- **Spoonerism:** A spoonerism is an error in a speech in which corresponding consonants, vowels, or morphemes are switched between two words in a phrase. These are named after the Oxford don and ordained minister William Archibald Spooner, who reputedly did just that.
- **Squinting Modifier:** A squinting modifier is a misplaced modifier that, because of its location in a sentence, could modify either the phrase that precedes it or the one that follows it. Take the following sentence as an example: "*Listening to loud music slowly gives me a headache.*" Is the subject listening to music slowly or slowly getting a headache? To correct a squinting modifier, reposition it in the sentence to make it clear to the reader which word you intend to modify, perhaps as: "*When I listen to loud music, I slowly develop a headache.*"⁴³
- **Stanza:** In poetry, a stanza (from the Italian word *stanza* "room") is a group of lines within a poem, usually set off from others by a blank line or indentation. Stanzas can have regular rhyme and metrical schemes, though stanzas are not strictly required to have either. There are many unique forms of stanzas. - some are simple, such as four-line quatrains, while others are more complex, such as the **Spenserian stanza**. The stanza in poetry is analogous with the paragraph seen in prose; related thoughts are grouped into units.
- **Stereotype:** Social psychology defines a stereotype as a generalised belief about a particular category of people. The type of expectation can vary; it can be, for example, an expectation about the group's personality, preferences, appearance or ability. Stereotypes are sometimes overgeneralised, inaccurate, and resistant to new information, but even so, they may sometimes be accurate. While such generalisations about groups of people may be helpful when making quick decisions, they may be erroneous when applied to particular individuals and are among the reasons for prejudicial attitudes.
- **Subtext:** The subtext is the unspoken or less obvious meaning or message in a literary composition, drama, speech, or conversation. The subtext becomes known by the reader or audience over time, although it is not immediately or purposefully revealed by the story itself. Example of subtext: "*She smiled when she heard someone else had won, but knowing what she was thinking, the smile was a façade which covered her true disappointment at having lost the election.*" The subtext in the situation is that what is below the surface (disappointment) does not match the surface (happiness and congratulations).⁴⁴
- **Surrealism:** Surrealism is a literary and artistic movement the goal of which is to create something bizarre and disjointed, yet still somehow understandable. Surrealist paintings and novels often have a dreamlike quality – they *sort of* make sense, but they're odd and hard to follow. Example: The artist M.C. Escher provides a superb example of surrealism in art. His art is "realistic" in that it employs perspective and contains physical objects that *seem* as if they could be real. But it is ultimately irrational. His famous lithograph *Relativity* shows a twisting knot of staircases going in different directions. At first glance, it is a three-dimensional, fairly realistic drawing of staircases. But if you try to follow the staircases individually, you become hopelessly lost. The appearance of rationality turns out to be an illusion.⁴⁵
- **Syllepsis:** Syllepsis is a rhetorical term for a kind of ellipsis in which one word (usually a verb) is understood differently in relation to two or more other words, which it modifies or governs. Zeugma, often also called syllepsis (or semantic syllepsis), is a construction where a single word is used with two other parts of a sentence but must be understood differently to each of them.
- **Syllogism:** A syllogism (a word from the Greek: *syllogismos*, meaning "*conclusion, inference*") is a kind of logical argument that applies deductive reasoning to arrive at a conclusion based on two propositions that are asserted or assumed to be true. For example, knowing that all men are mortal (a major premise) and Socrates is a man (a minor premise), we validly conclude that Socrates is mortal.⁴⁶ Syllogistic arguments are usually represented in a three-line form:
All men are mortal.
Socrates is a man.
Therefore, Socrates is mortal
- **Symbolism:** Symbolism is the practice of representing things by symbols, or of investing things with a symbolic meaning or character. A symbol is an object, action, or idea that stands for something other than itself, often of a more abstract nature. Symbolism creates quality aspects that make literature like poetry and novels more meaningful.

⁴³ Explained by Grammarly.com, [HERE](#).

⁴⁴ Explained by Literary Terms, [HERE](#).

⁴⁵ Explained by Literary Terms, [HERE](#).

⁴⁶ See: Aristotle in his 350 BCE book *Prior Analytics*

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- **Symploce:** Symploce is the combination of anaphora and epistrophe. Its etymology is from Greek and means "interweaving". In rhetoric, symploce is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is used successively at the beginning of two or more clauses or sentences and another word or phrase with similar wording is used successively at the end of them. A good example is: "*When there is talk of hatred, let us stand up and talk against it. When there is talk of violence, let us stand up and talk against it.*"⁴⁷
- **Synecdoche:** A synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a term for a part of something refers to the whole of something or vice versa. The word comes from Greek (*synekdochē*), meaning 'simultaneous understanding'. A synecdoche is a class of metonymy, often by means of either mentioning a portion for the whole or conversely the whole for one of its parts. Examples are *Green Thumb* (signifies a person who is good at gardening), *Stars and Stripes* (signifies the US flag), and *Suits* (signifies Businesspeople).
- **Synesthesia:** In literature, *synesthesia* (also spelt *synaesthesia*) is a rhetorical device that describes or associates one sense in terms of another, most often in the form of a simile. Sensations of touch, taste, see, hear, and smell are expressed as being intertwined or having a connection between them. The term is derived from the neurological condition of the same name, where some people experience an actual link between their senses, where one sense stimulates another—for instance, they may feel like they hear a colour, smell a shape, or taste a texture. A person that experiences synesthesia is referred to as a synesthete. As a literary technique, synesthesia reflects this condition. Synesthesia is a unique literary device that we don't see in everyday writing. Example of usage: *The bright field of wildflowers smelled like purple, magenta, yellow, white and green.*
- **Synonym:** A synonym is a word with the same or nearly the same meaning as another word. When words or phrases have the same meaning, we say they are synonymous with each other. The term synonym comes from a combination of the Ancient Greek *syn*, meaning *with*, and *onoma*, meaning *name*. Synonyms are regular and essential parts of everyday language that we use almost without thinking. They come in all parts of speech: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc. Example: Bad: *awful, terrible, horrible.*⁴⁸
- **Synopsis:** A synopsis is a brief summary that gives audiences or readers an idea of what a composition is about. It provides an overview of the storyline or main points and other defining factors of the work, including style, genre, persons or characters of note, setting, etc. Synopses are written for all kinds of things—any type of fiction or nonfiction book, academic papers, journal and newspaper articles, films, TV shows, and video games etc. Here's an example of a short synopsis of *Jack and Jill*: *Jack and Jill is the story of a boy and a girl who went up a hill together. They went to fetch a pail of water, but unfortunately, their plan is disrupted when Jack falls, hits his head, and rolls back down the hill. Then, Jill falls too, and comes tumbling down after Jack.*⁴⁹
- **Syntax:** In linguistics, syntax is the study of how words and **morphemes** combine to form larger units such as phrases and sentences. Central syntax concerns include word order, grammatical relations, hierarchical sentence structure (constituency), agreement, the nature of cross-linguistic variation, and the relationship between form and meaning.
- **Tautology:** Tautology is a phrase or expression in which the same thing is said twice (or more) in different words. It is generally considered to be a fault of style, as in the example: "*...they arrived one after the other in succession.*"
- **Theme:** In contemporary literary studies, a theme is a central topic, subject, or message within a narrative. Themes can be divided into two categories: a work's thematic concept is what readers "*think the work is about*", and its thematic statement is "*what the work says about the subject*". Themes are often distinguished from premises. The most common contemporary understanding of theme is an idea or point that is central to a story, which can often be summed in a single word (for example, love, death, betrayal). A theme may be exemplified by the actions, utterances, or thoughts of a character in a novel. A story may have several themes. Themes often explore historically common or cross-culturally recognizable ideas, such as ethical questions, and are usually implied rather than stated explicitly. An example of this would be whether one should live a seemingly better life, at the price of giving up parts of one's humanity, which is a theme in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. Along with plot, character, setting, and style, theme is considered one of the components of fiction.

⁴⁷ Attributed to former US President Bill Clinton

⁴⁸ Explained by Literary Terms, [HERE](#).

⁴⁹ Explained by Literary Terms, [HERE](#).

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- **Tmesis:** Tmesis is a linguistic phenomenon in which a word or phrase is separated into two parts, with other words between them. The word comes from Ancient Greek: *tmēsis*, meaning "a cutting". Colloquial examples include the common "un-[bloody]-believable".
- **Tone:** All pieces of literature, even official documents and technical documents, have some sort of tone. Authors create tone through the use of various other literary elements, such as diction or word choice; syntax, the grammatical arrangement of words in a text for effect; imagery, or vivid appeals to the senses; details, facts that are included or omitted; and figurative language, the comparison of seemingly unrelated things for sub-textual purposes. While now used to discuss literature, it was originally applied solely to music. Depending upon the writer's personality and the effect they want to create, the work can be formal or informal, sober or whimsical, assertive or pleading, straightforward or sly. When one writes, images and descriptive phrases can transmit emotions across—guarded optimism, unqualified enthusiasm, objective indifference, resignation, or dissatisfaction. Other examples of literary tone are: airy, comic, condescending, facetious, funny, heavy, intimate, ironic, light, modest, playful, sad, serious, sinister, solemn, sombre, and threatening. Tone and mood are not the same, although they are frequently confused. The mood of a piece of literature is the feeling or atmosphere created by the work, or, said slightly differently, how the work makes the reader feel. Mood is produced most effectively through the use of setting, theme, voice and tone, while tone is how the author feels about something.
- **Tragedy:** Tragedy (from the Greek word *tragōidia*) is a genre of drama based on human suffering and, mainly, the terrible or sorrowful events that befall the main character. While many cultures have developed forms that provoke this paradoxical response, the term tragedy often refers to a specific tradition of drama that has played a unique and important role historically in the self-definition of Western civilisation. From its origins in the theatre of ancient Greece 2500 years ago, from which there survives only a fraction of the work of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, as well as many fragments from other poets, and the later Roman tragedies of Seneca; through the works of Shakespeare, Lope de Vega, Jean Racine, and Friedrich Schiller to the more recent naturalistic tragedy of Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg; Samuel Beckett's modernist meditations on death, loss and suffering; Heiner Müller postmodernist reworkings of the tragic canon, tragedy has remained a crucial element of cultural experimentation, negotiation, struggle, and change.
- **Tritagonist:** In literature, the tritagonist or tertiary main character is the third most important character of a narrative, after the protagonist and deuteragonist. In ancient Greek drama, the tritagonist was the third member of the acting troupe.
- **Trope:** A literary trope is the use of figurative language, through word, phrase or an image, for artistic effect such as using a figure of speech. Professors and scholars William Keith and Christian Lundberg describe a trope as "a substitution of a word or phrase by a less literal word or phrase."⁵⁰ The word trope also describes commonly recurring literary and rhetorical devices, motifs or clichés in creative works. Literary tropes span almost every form of writing, including poetry, television, and art. Tropes can be found in all forms of literature. The term trope derives from the Greek (*tropos*), "turn, direction, way", derived from the verb (*trepein*), "to turn, to direct, to alter, to change". Tropes and their classification were an important field in classical rhetoric. The study of tropes has been taken up again in modern criticism, especially in deconstruction. The phrase, 'stop and smell the roses,' and the meaning we take from it is an example of a trope.
- **Truism:** A truism is a claim that is so obvious or self-evident as to be hardly worth mentioning, except as a reminder or as a rhetorical or literary device and is the opposite of falsism. In philosophy, a sentence which asserts incomplete truth conditions for a proposition may be regarded as a truism. An example of such a sentence would be, "Under appropriate conditions, the sun rises." Without contextual support – a statement of what those appropriate conditions are – the sentence is true but incontestable.
- **Turning Point:** In literature, the turning point or climax is the point of highest tension in a narrative; it's the most exciting and revealing part of a story. It leads the rising action into the falling action before a story is resolved and concludes. From a narrative's beginning, all of the action rises up to the turning point, where questions are answered, secrets are revealed, conflicts are resolved, and everything begins to end. It is a central and key narrative device for authors of all genres, both fiction and nonfiction.⁵¹

⁵⁰ See: *The essential guide to rhetoric*. ISBN 978-1-319-09419-5. OCLC 1016051800.

⁵¹ Explained by Literary Terms, [HERE](#).

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- **Understatement:** Understatement is an expression of lesser strength than what the speaker or writer actually means or what is normally expected. It is the opposite of embellishment or exaggeration and is used for emphasis, irony, hedging, or humour. A particular form of understatement using negative syntax is called litotes. Don't confuse it with euphemism, where a polite phrase is used instead of a harsher or more offensive expression. Understatement also merges the comic with the ironic, as in Mark Twain's comment, "*The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated.*"
- **Unreliable Narrator:** An unreliable narrator is a narrator whose credibility is compromised. They can be found in fiction and film and range from children to mature characters. The term was coined in 1961 by **Wayne C. Booth** in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. While unreliable narrators are almost by definition first-person narrators, arguments have been made for the existence of unreliable second- and third-person narrators, especially within the context of film and television, and sometimes also in literature. Sometimes the narrator's unreliability is made immediately evident. For instance, a story may open with the narrator making a plainly false or delusional claim or admitting to being severely mentally ill, or the story itself may have a frame in which the narrator appears as a character, with clues to the character's unreliability. A more dramatic use of the device delays the revelation until near the story's end. In some cases, the reader discovers that in the foregoing narrative, the narrator had concealed or greatly misrepresented vital pieces of information and forces readers to reconsider their point of view and experience of the story. In some cases, the narrator's unreliability is never fully revealed but only hinted at, leaving readers to wonder how much the narrator should be trusted and how the story should be interpreted.
- **Urban Legend:** An urban legend is a fictional story rooted in modern popular culture. You can think of urban legends as today's folklore—just like traditional folktales, they are based on real parts of culture and often real people; however, in most cases the details have been exaggerated, ultimately making the stories false. They can take the form of an elaborate joke or hoax, a rumour gone too far, unsolved mysteries and crimes, popular misconceptions or beliefs, and so on. Some urban legends may be completely plausible, while others may have supernatural elements that make them less believable or clearly not true. Either way, their truthfulness is always questionable, but perhaps also difficult to disprove.⁵²
- **Utopia:** A utopia is a paradise. It's a perfect society in which everything works, and everyone is happy – or at least *is supposed* to be. Utopias are very common in fiction, especially in science fiction, where authors use them to explore what a perfect society would look like and what the problems might be in such a flawless society. However, very few fictional utopias are true utopias. Almost all of them are revealed to be the opposite of utopia—dystopia—during the course of the story. Utopian literature is generally about exploring real problems facing our world and making political, philosophical, or moral points through storytelling. Example: The central worlds of "*The Federation*" in *Star Trek* are often depicted as utopias – they are lush with greenery and beautiful architecture, and there is no evidence of any hunger, poverty, or war.⁵³
- **Verisimilitude:** In philosophy, verisimilitude is the idea that some propositions are closer to being true than other propositions. The problem of verisimilitude is the problem of articulating what it takes for one false theory to be closer to the truth than another false theory in having the quality of seeming true having the appearance of being real.
- **Vernacular:** Vernacular is everyday speech. It's just the way people talk in their day-to-day life. The opposite of vernacular is formal writing – the language you would use in academic papers or while addressing a foreign diplomat.
- **Vulgate:** The use of informal, common speech, particularly of uneducated people. Similar to the use of vernacular.
- **Vignette:** In literature, a vignette is a short passage that uses imagery to describe a subject in greater detail. Using descriptive language, a vignette helps readers visualise a character, a place, a moment or an idea. You might find a vignette in works of fiction or non-fiction, essays, films, and theatrical scripts.
- **Zeugma:** In rhetoric, zeugma and syllepsis are figures of speech in which a single phrase or word joins different parts of a sentence.
- **Zoomorphism:** In the context of art, zoomorphism could describe art that imagines humans as non-human animals. Zoomorphism is when animal characteristics are assigned to humans and is the opposite of anthropomorphism (when animals are described as human). Examples of Zoomorphism: "*My brother eats like a horse.*" and "*The chubby little boy rolled around in the mud like a pig.*"

⁵² Explained by Literary Terms, [HERE](#).

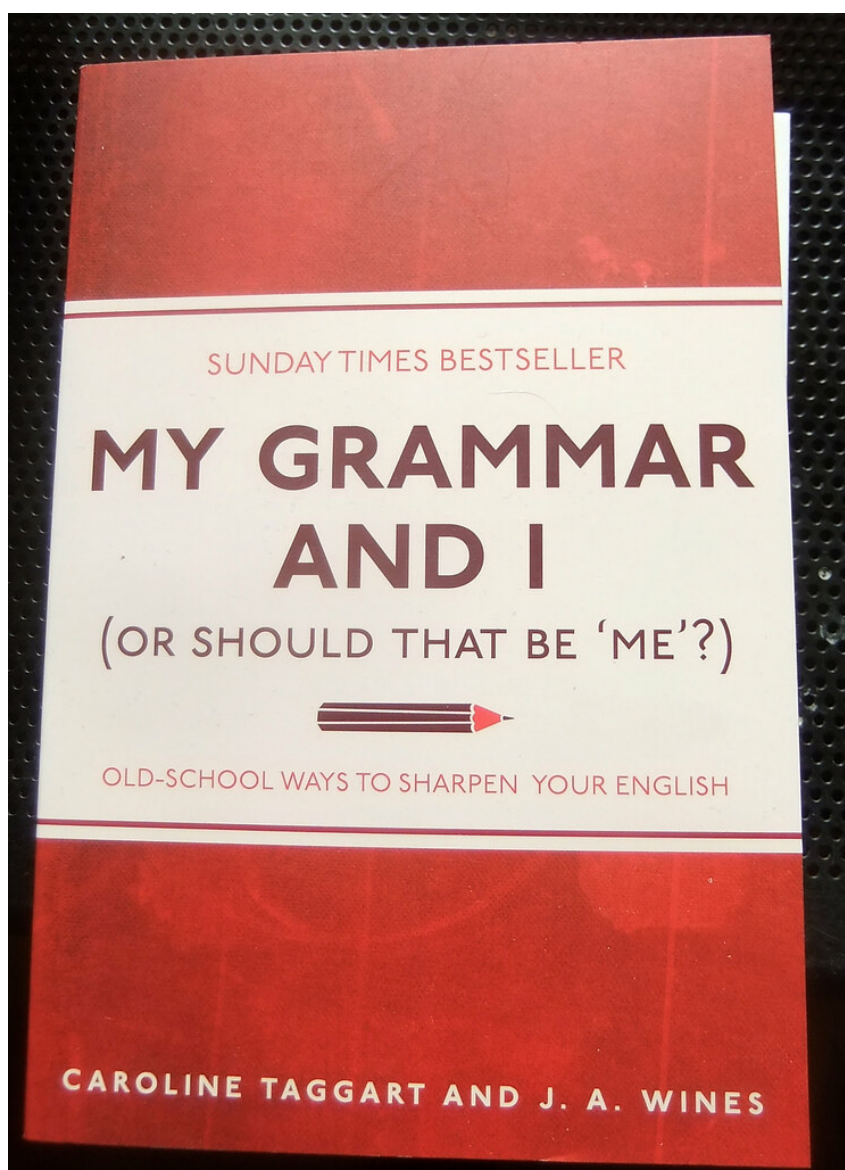
⁵³ Explained by Literary Terms, [HERE](#).

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Further Information

- **10 Editing Resources to Bookmark for Better Content:** <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/write/common-mistakes1.html>
- **Grammar - An Introduction:** <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/write/grammar1.html>
- <https://hume.stanford.edu/resources/student-resources/writing-resources/grammar-resources/top-20-errors-undergraduate-writing>
- <https://blog.influenceandco.com/10-writing-mistakes-people-make-all-the-time-and-how-to-fix-them>
- **15 Common Grammar Mistakes that Kill Your Writing Credibility:** <https://authority.pub/common-grammar-mistakes/>
- **What is an Unclear Pronoun Antecedent?** <https://askinglot.com/what-is-an-unclear-pronoun-antecedent>
- **Unclear Antecedents:** <https://www.dailywritingtips.com/style-quiz-12-unclear-antecedents/>
- **Wikipedia Glossary of Literary Terms:** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_literary_terms
- **Literary Terms:** <https://literaryterms.net/>
- **Spark Notes:** <https://www.sparknotes.com/writinghelp/glossary-of-literary-terms/>
- **Shmoop Literature Glossary:** <https://www.shmoop.com/literature-glossary/>
- **Oxford English Dictionary - Glossary of Grammatical Terms:** <https://public.oed.com/how-to-use-the-oed/glossary-grammatical-terms/>



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