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**Glossary of Terms -- AP English Language and Composition: List Five**

**Digital Scavenger Hunt: Use your phone or other electronic device to find examples of the terms. Copy the example below the definition.**

**These terms should be of use to you in answering the multiple choice questions and in composing your essays. Keep this information handy at all times.**

1. **satire --** A work that targets human vices and follies or social institutions and conventions for reform or ridicule. Regardless of whether or not the work aims to reform human behavior, satire is best seen as a style of writing rather than a purpose for writing. It can be recognized by the many devices used effectively by the satirist: irony, wit, parody, caricature, hyperbole, understatement, and sarcasm. The effects of satire are varied, depending on the writer's goal, but good satire, often humorous, is thought provoking and insightful about the human condition.

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1. **semantics --** The branch of linguistics that studies the meaning of words, their historical and psychological development, their connotations, and their relation to one another.

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1. **style --** The consideration of style has two purposes: (1) An evaluation of the sum of the choices an author makes in blending diction, syntax, figurative language, and other literary devices. Some authors' styles are so idiosyncratic that we can quickly recognize works by the same author (or a writer emulating that author's style). Compare, for example, Jonathan Swift to George Orwell or William Faulkner to Ernest Hemingway. We can analyze and describe an author's personal style and make judgments on how appropriate it is to the author's purpose. Styles can be called flowery, explicit, succinct, rambling, bombastic, commonplace, incisive, or laconic, to name only a few examples. (2) Classification of authors to a group and comparison of an author to similar authors. By means of such classification and comparison, we can see how an author's style reflects and helps to define a historical period, such as the Renaissance or the Victorian period, or a literary movement, such as the romantic, transcendental or realist movement.

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1. **subject complement --** The word (with any accompanying phrases) or clauses that follows a linking verb and complements, or completes, the subject of the sentence by either (1) renaming it or (2) describing it. The former is technically a predicate nominative, the latter a predicate adjective. Multiple-choice questions.

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1. **subordinate clause --** Like all clauses, this word group contains both a subject and a verb (plus any accompanying phrases or modifiers), but unlike the independent clause, the subordinate clause cannot stand alone; it does not express a complete thought. Also called a dependent clause, the subordinate clause depends on a main clause, sometimes called an independent clause, to complete its meaning. Easily recognized key words and phrases usually begin these clauses--for example: *although, because, unless, if, even though, since, as soon as, while, who, when, where, how,* and *that.*

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1. **syllogism --** From the Greek for "reckoning together," a syllogism (or syllogistic reasoning or syllogistic logic) is a deductive system of formal logic that presents two premises (the first one called "major" and the second, "minor") that inevitably lead to a sound conclusion. A frequently cited example proceeds as follows: *major Premise:* All men are mortal. *minor premise:* Socrates is a man. *conclusion:* Therefore, Socrates is mortal. A Syllogism's conclusion is valid only if each of the two premises is valid. Syllogisms may also present the specific idea first ("Socrates") and the general second ("All men").

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1. **symbol/symbolism --** Generally, anything that represents itself and stands for something else. Usually a symbol is something concrete--such as an object, action, character, or scene--that represents something more abstract. However, symbols and symbolism can be much more complex. One system classifies symbols in three categories: (1) *Natural* symbols are objects and occurrences from nature to represent ideas commonly associated with them (dawn symbolizing hope or a new beginning, a rose symbolizing love, a tree symbolizing knowledge). (2) *Conventional* symbols are those that have been invested with meaning by a group (religious symbols such as a cross or Star of David; national symbols, such as a flag or an eagle; or group symbols, such as a skull and crossbones for pirates or the scales of justice for lawyers). (3) *Literary* symbols are sometimes also conventional in the sense that they are found in a variety of works and are generally recognized. However, a work's symbols may be more complicated as is the whale in *Moby Dick* and the jungle in *Heart of Darkness.* On the AP exam, try to determine what abstraction an object is a symbol for and to what extent it is successful in representing that abstraction.

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1. **syntax** *--* The way an author chooses to join words into phrases, clauses, and sentences. Syntax is similar to diction, but you can differentiate them by thinking of syntax as the groups of words, while diction refers to the individual words. In the multiple-choice section, expect to be asked some questions about how an author manipulates syntax. In the essay section, you will need to analyze how syntax produces effects.

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1. **theme --** The central idea or message of a work, the insight it offers into life. Usually theme is unstated in fictional works, but in nonfiction, the theme may be directly stated, especially in expository or argumentative writing.

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1. **thesis --** In expository writing, the thesis statement is the sentence or group of sentences that directly expresses the author's opinion, purpose, meaning, or position. Expository writing is usually judged by analyzing how accurately, effectively ,and thoroughly a writer has proven the thesis.

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1. **tone --** Similar to mood, tone describes the author's attitude toward his material, the audience, or both. Tone is easier to determine in spoken language than in written language. Considering how a work would sound if it were read aloud can help in identifying an author's tone. Some words describing tone are *playful, serious, businesslike, sarcastic, humorous, formal, ornate, sardonic,* and *somber*.

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1. **transition** -- A word or phrase that links different ideas. Used especially, although not exclusively, in expository and argumentative writing, transitions effectively signal a shift from one idea to another. A few commonly used transitional words or phrases are *furthermore, consequently, nevertheless, for example, in addition, likewise, similarly* and *on the contrary.* More sophisticated writers use more subtle means of transition. We will discuss these methods later.

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1. **trope**—an artful variation from expected modes of expression of thoughts and ideas., a figure of speech involving a “turn” or change of sense—a use of the word in a sense other than its proper or literal one. Common types of tropes include: metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy, personification, hyperbole, litotes, irony, oxymoron, onomatopoeia, etc.

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1. **understatement --** The ironic minimizing of fact, understatement presents something as less significant than it is. The effect can frequently be humorous and emphatic. Understatement is the opposite of hyperbole.

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1. **undertone --** an attitude that may lie under the ostensible tone of the piece. Under a cheery surface, for example, a work may have threatening undertones. William Blake's "The Chimney Sweeper" from the Songs of Innocence has a grim undertone.

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1. **unreliable narrator**—An untrustworthy or naïve commentator on events and characters in a story. Huck Finn is on of American literature’s most famous of this type.

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1. **wit --** In modern usage, intellectually amusing language that surprises and delights. A witty statement is humorous, while suggesting the speaker's verbal power in creating ingenious and perceptive remarks. Wit usually uses terse language that makes a pointed statement. Historically, wit originally meant basic understanding. Its meaning evolved to include speed of understanding, and finally (in the early seventeenth century), it grew to mean quick perception including creative fancy and a quick tongue to articulate an answer that demanded the same quick perception.

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1. **zeugma**—a trope, one word (usually a noun or main verb) governs two other words not related in meaning. “He maintained a business and his innocence.”

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