Glossary of Rhetorical and Literary Terms*

1. **Absolute**—a word free from limitations or qualifications (“best,” “all,” “unique,” “perfect,” etc.)
2. **Abstract language**—language describing qualities that cannot be perceived with the five senses
3. **Adage**—a familiar proverb or wise saying
4. **Ad hominem**—appeals to personal considerations instead of logic; an argument attacking an individual’s character rather than his/her position on an issue
5. **Allegory**—a literary work in which characters, objects, or actions represent abstractions; narrative created to parallel and illuminate a separate set of moral, philosophical, political, religious, or social situations.
6. **Alliteration**—the repetition of initial consonant sounds in successive or neighboring words
7. **Allusion**—an unacknowledged reference or quote pertaining to something literary, mythological, or historical that the author assumes the reader will recognize and understand
8. **Analogy**—a literal comparison between two items, situations, or ideas that are somewhat alike, but unlike in most respects
9. **Anapest**—a three syllable metric foot containing two unstressed syllables followed by one stressed syllable
10. **Anaphora**—the repetition of words or phrases at the beginning of consecutive lines, sentences, phrases, or paragraphs
11. **Anecdote**—a short narrative account of an amusing, unusual, revealing, or interesting event
12. **Antagonist**—a person, idea, force, or general set of circumstances opposing the protagonist
13. **Antecedent**—the word, phrase, or clause to which a pronoun refers
14. **Anti-hero**—a protagonist who is a non-hero or the antithesis of a traditional hero meaning he/she possesses traits opposite of a traditional hero
15. **Antithesis**—a statement in which two opposing ideas are balanced; a figure of speech characterized by contrasting words, clauses, sentences, or ideals (man proposes/God disposes); the balancing of one term against another for effectiveness (“wretches hang that jury men may dine…hungry judges soon the sentence sign”); balanced opposition
16. **Appeal/Ethos**—appeals to character or trust; suggests that the action or belief called for is the “right thing”; appeals to the audience’s morals and sense of ethics
17. **Appeal/Logos**—appeals to the intellect; intended to show that a writer’s opinion is based on sound reasons and evidence
18. **Appeal/Pathos**—appeals to feelings (positive or negative, to inspire or infuriate); acknowledges the audience’s sympathies and believes; relates the issue/topic to the audience on a more personal level
19. ** Aphorism**—a concise statement that expresses succinctly a general truth or idea; often using rhyme or balance

* Definitions adapted from: 
20. Apostrophe—figure of speech in which one directly addresses an absent, imaginary, or dead person or some abstraction

21. Archetype—a detail, image, or character type that occurs frequently in literature and myth and is thought to appeal in a universal way to the unconscious, evoke a response, and/or reawaken blocked off memories of past bringing about strong emotions in the reader via images in his/her unconscious memory

22. Argument—a statement of the meaning or main point of a literary work

23. Aside—in drama, an onstage character’s speech presumed to be heard by other characters onstage revealing speaker’s inner thoughts

24. Assonance—the repetition of vowel sounds in conjunction with dissimilar consonant sounds

25. Asyndeton—a construction in which elements are presented in a series without conjunctions; the artistic elimination of conjunctions in a sentence to create a particular effect

26. Balanced sentence—a sentence in which words, phrases, or clauses are set off against each other to emphasize a contrast; a sentence presenting similar or antithetical ideas in parallel form in which elements are united or disunited to emphasize likeness or difference

27. Ballad—a narrative poem consisting of quatrains of iambic tetrameter alternating with iambic trimester which contains simple language and often sounds song-like

28. Bathos (Greek: “depth”)—an insincere or overly sentimental quality of writing/speech intended to evoke pity; descent in literature in which a poet or writer--striving too hard to be passionate or elevated--falls into trivial or stupid imagery, phrasing, or ideas

29. Begging the question—assuming something is true when it really needs proof; a quality of writing which leaves the reader with questions

30. Blank verse—a form of poetry containing unrhymed lines of ten syllables each with the even-numbered syllables bearing the accents.

31. Cacophony—“bad” sounds; refers to the use of words that combine sharp, harsh, hissing, or unmelodious sounds; the opposite of euphony

32. Caesura—pauses separating phrases within lines of poetry

33. Catharsis—purifying or figurative cleansing of emotions especially as an effect of tragic drama

34. Characterization/dynamic—a character who changes during the course of a literary work

35. Characterization/flat—a one-dimensional character

36. Characterization/round—a complex, multi-faceted character who is most like a real person

37. Characterization/static—a character who does not change during the course of a literary work

38. Chiasmus—the rhetorical inversion of the second of two parallel structures (“each throat was parched and glazed each eye”; “Susan walked in, and out rushed Mary”)

39. Chronology—(from Greek: “logic of time”) the order in which events happen, especially when emphasizing a cause-effect relationship in history or in a narrative

40. Cliché—a hackneyed or trite phrase that has become overused; clichés are often considered bad writing and bad literature (think “one for all and all for one”; “here today, gone tomorrow”)

41. Climax—the point of highest interest or suspense in a literary work

42. Classicism—approach to literature which stresses reason, balance, clarity, ideal beauty, and orderly form; imitation of ancient Greece and Rome

43. Colloquialism—informal words or expressions not usually acceptable in formal writing

44. Comedy—literary work, usually drama with a happy ending, frequently written to amuse
45. Complex sentence—a sentence with one independent clause and at least one dependent clause
46. Complication—a stage in a narrative where conflicts are brought out; the addition of circumstances which make the plot/conflict more difficult to resolve
47. Compound sentence—a sentence with two or more coordinate independent clauses often joined by one or more conjunctions
48. Conceit—a fanciful, particularly clever extended metaphor; an elaborate surprising figure of speech comparing two very dissimilar things which involves intellectual cleverness and ingenuity
49. Concrete language—the description of specific, perceivable qualities relating to actual things or events
50. Conflict—the opposition between two characters (such as a protagonist and an antagonist), between two large groups of people, or between the protagonist and a larger problem such as forces of nature, ideas, public mores, and so on; may also be completely internal, such as the protagonist struggling with his psychological tendencies (drug addiction, self-destructive behavior, and so on); the engine that drives a plot.
51. Connotation—the association that a word calls to mind beyond the dictionary definition; the implied meaning of a word
52. Consonance—a special type of alliteration in which the repeated pattern of consonants is marked by changes in the intervening vowels
53. Cosmic irony—another term for situational irony, especially situational irony connected to a fatalistic or pessimistic view of life
54. Couplet—two lines (the second line immediately following the first) of the same metrical length that end in a rhyme to form a complete unit
55. Crisis—the turning point for the protagonist; the point at which the protagonist’s situation or understanding changes dramatically
56. Cumulative sentence—a sentence in which the main independent clause is elaborated by the successive addition of modifying clause or phrases
57. Dactyl—a three syllable metric foot containing one stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables
58. Declarative sentence—a sentence that makes a statement or declaration
59. Deconstruction—literary criticism that says words only refer to other words and statements about any text subvert its original, intended meaning
60. Deductive reasoning—reasoning in which a conclusion is reached by stating a general principle and then applying that principle to a specific case (The sun rises every morning; therefore, the sun will rise on Tuesday morning.)
61. Denotation—the literal, exact, dictionary definition of a word independent of its emotional coloration or association
62. Denouement—the final unraveling of the plot; the outcome or resolution of a doubtful series of occurrences
63. Dialect—a variety of speech characterized by its own particular grammar or pronunciation often associated with a particular geographical region
64. Dialogue—a conversation between two or more people present in a literary work
65. Diction—the choice of a particular word as opposed to others; the accurate, careful use of words
66. Didactic—literature designed to teach a moral lesson; having the primary purpose of teaching, instructing, or guiding, particularly in a moral, ethical, or religious sense
67. Dilemma—a situation requiring a person to decide between two equally attractive or equally unattractive alternatives

68. Dissonance—harsh, inharmonious, or discordant sounds

69. Dramatic monologue—a poem in which a poetic speaker addresses either the reader or an internal listener at length; a dramatic situation in which the character is speaking to an identifiable but silent listener

70. Elegy—a formal poem presenting a meditation on death or another solemn theme

71. Ellipsis (elliptical sentence)—the omission of a word or phrase which is grammatically necessary for complete syntactical construction, but not necessary for understanding (“Some people prefer cats; others, dogs.”)

72. End-stopped line—lines of verse in which both the grammatical structure and the sense reach completion at the end of the line

73. Either-or-reasoning—a fallacy relying on absolutes which do not allow for intermediate circumstances

74. Enjambment—the continuation of the sense and grammatical construction of verse or couple onto the next line or couplet which occurs in run-on lines and offers contrast to end-stopped lines

75. Epic—a long narrative poem written in elevated style presenting the adventures of characters of high position and episodes that are important to the history of a nation or race

76. Epigram—a brief, pithy, and often paradoxical saying

77. Epigraph—an inscription on stone, a statue or a coin; in literature, a quotation on the title page of a text or a motto heading a chapter or section of a text

78. Epiphany—a manifestation or showing forth usually of some divine being; an event in which the essential nature of something (a person, situation, object) is suddenly perceived; a moment of sudden revelation or insight

79. Epitaph—an inscription on a tombstone or burial place

80. Epithet—a term used to point out a characteristic of a person; Homeric epithets are often compound adjectives (“swift-footed Achilles”) that become an almost formulaic part of a name; can be abusive or offensive but are not so by definition

81. Equivocation—the use of a word in to district meaning with the intention to deceive; a pun in which a word or phrase is so used that it has two different but appropriate meanings

82. Eulogy—a formal speech praising a person who has died

83. Euphemism—an indirect, less offensive way of saying something that is considered unpleasant (“I got sick” instead of “I barfed”)

84. Euphony—attempting to group words together harmoniously, so that the consonants permit an easy and pleasing flow of sound when spoken, as opposed to cacophony

85. Exclamatory sentence—a sentence expressing strong feeling usually punctuated with an exclamation mark

86. Expletive—an interjection to lend emphasis; sometimes, a profanity

87. Exposition—composition which explains the nature of an object, idea, or theme; in literature, the introductory material which creates tone gives setting, introduces characters, and supplies other necessary facts to the understanding of the literary piece

88. Fable—a brief story that leads to a moral often using animals as characters

89. Fairy tale—a story relating to mysterious pranks and adventures of supernatural spirits who manifest themselves in the form of diminutive human beings
90. Falling action—the second half or resolution of a dramatic plot which follows the climax
91. False analogy—a wrongful comparison of dissimilar things or situations
92. Fantasy—a story that concerns an unreal world or contains unreal characters; a fantasy may be merely whimsical, or it may contain a serious point
93. Figurative language—the intentional departure from the normal order, construction, or meaning of words in order to gain strength and freshness of expression or to create a pictorial effect. Perhaps, the two most common figurative devices are the simile—a comparison between two distinctly different things using “like” or “as” (“My love's like a red, red rose”) and the metaphor—a figure of speech in which two unlike objects are implicitly compared without the use of “like” or “as.” These are both examples of tropes. Any figure of speech that results in a change of meaning is called a trope. Any figure of speech that creates its effect in patterns of words or letters in a sentence, rather than twisting the meaning of words, is called a scheme. Perhaps, the most common scheme is parallelism.
94. Flashback—the insertion of an earlier event into the normal chronological order of a narrative
95. Foil—a person or other entity through which strong contrast underscores or enhances the distinctive characteristics of another
96. Folk tale—a short narrative handed down through oral tradition with various tellers and groups modifying it, adding to it so that it becomes a story of cumulative ownership
97. Foot—a unit of rhythm in a verse
98. Foreshadowing—the presentation of material in such a way that the reader is prepared for what is to come later in the work
99. Form follows content—the chosen form of the literary piece outweighs content; in prose, the connection between the form of the sentences and its contents
100. Frame device—a story within a story
101. Free verse—poetry based on the natural rhythms of phrases and normal pauses rather than the artificial constraints of metrical feet
102. Freudian slip—a slip of the tongue in which a person means to say one thing, but accidentally substitutes another word or phrase in a suggestive or revealing manner
103. Generalization—to deal in generalities; to speak or write vaguely
104. Genre—a major category or type of literature
105. Gothic—literature which suggests the medieval, natural, primitive, wild, free, authentic, or romantic (“all the extravagances of irregular fancy”)
106. Grotesque—literature featuring the irrational, distrust of any cosmic order, frustration at the human lot in the universe; the merging of comedy and tragedy resulting from humanity’s loss of faith in the moral universe
107. Hamartia—a term from Greek tragedy that literally means “missing the mark”; the error, frailty, mistaken judgment, or misstep through which the fortunes of the hero of a tragedy are reversed which could result in bad judgment, bad character, ignorance, inherited weakness, accident, or other negative effects
108. Homily—a sermon or moralistic lecture
109. Hubris—excessive pride or arrogance which often results in the downfall of the protagonist of a tragedy
110. Humor—Writing whose purpose is the evoking of laughter; a character’s disposition which readily perceives the ridiculous, ludicrous, and comical
111. Hyperbole—intentional exaggeration to create a desired effect; the trope of exaggeration or overstatement

112. Hypothetical question—a question raising a hypothesis, conjecture, or supposition

113. Iamb—a two syllable metric foot containing one unstressed syllable followed by one stressed syllable

114. Idiom—refers to a construction or expression in one language that cannot be matched or directly translated word-for-word in another language (a.k.a. an idiomatic expression); a regional speech or dialect

115. Imagery—the use of figures of speech to create vivid, concrete images that appeal to one or more of the senses

116. Implication—a suggestion an author or speaker makes (implies) without stating it directly; NOTE: the author/speaker implies; the reader/audience infers

117. Inductive reasoning—deriving general principles from particular facts or instances ("Every cat I have ever seen has four legs; cats are four-legged animals.")

118. Inference—a conclusion one draws (infers) based on premises or evidence

119. Invective—an intensely vehement, highly emotional verbal attack

120. Inversion—the placing of a sentence element out of its normal position either to gain emphasis or to secure a so-called poetic effect; too frequent of usages can result in artificiality

121. Irony—recognition of a reality different from a masked appearance

122. Irony/Dramatic—characters use words that mean one thing, but have a foreboding or deeper meaning to those who understand the situation (naïve narrator); or a situation in which the reader/audience knows something about present or future circumstances that a character does not

123. Irony/Situational—a trope in which accidental events occur that seem oddly appropriate, such as the poetic justice of a pickpocket getting his own pocket picked; however, both the victim and the audience are simultaneously aware of the situation in situational irony.

124. Irony/Verbal—a trope in which a speaker makes a statement in which its actual meaning differs sharply from the meaning that the words ostensibly express; often, this sort of irony is plainly sarcastic in the eyes of the reader, but the characters listening in the story may not realize the speaker's sarcasm as quickly as the readers do

125. Jargon—the specialized language or vocabulary of a particular group or profession

126. Juxtaposition—the arrangement of two or more ideas, characters, actions, settings, phrases, or words side-by-side or in similar narrative moments for the purpose of comparison, contrast, rhetorical effect, suspense, or character development

127. Legend—a narrative handed down from the past containing historical and, usually, supernatural elements

128. Limerick—a light verse consisting of five lines of regular rhythm in which the first, second, and fifth lines (each consisting of three metric feet) rhyme and the second and third lines (each consisting of two metric feet) rhyme

129. Limited narrator—a narrator who presents the story as it is seen and understood by a single character and restricts information to what is seen, heard, thought, or felt by that one character

130. Literary license (creative license)—deviating from the normal rules or methods in order to achieve a certain effect (intentional sentence fragments, for example)

131. Litotes—a type of understatement in which an idea is expressed by negating its opposite (describing a particularly horrific scene by saying, “It was not a pretty picture.”)
132. Loose sentence—a type of sentence in which the main idea (independent clause) comes first, followed by dependent grammatical units such as phrases and clauses; if a period were placed at the end of the work containing many loose sentences, the work often seems informal, relaxed, and conversational.

133. Malapropism—the mistaken substitution of one word for another word that sounds similar (“The doctor wrote a subscription”)

134. Maxim—a concise statement often offering advice; an adage

135. Melodrama—a play based on a romantic plot developed sensationally with little regard for convincing motivation and with an excessive appeal to the audience’s emotions

136. Metaphor—a comparison or analogy stated in such a way as to imply that one object is another one, figuratively speaking

137. Metaphysical conceit—see “conceit”

138. Meter—referring to poetry, the recurrence of rhythmic pattern or rhythm established by the regular occurrence of similar units of sound pattern

139. Metonymy—a figure of speech characterized by the substitution of a term naming an object closely associated with the word in mind for the word itself (the king as the crown; “the pen [writing] is mightier than the sword[war/fighting]”)

140. Monologue—an interior monologue does not necessarily represent spoken words, but rather the internal or emotional thoughts or feelings of an individual; monologue can also be used to refer to a character speaking aloud to himself, or narrating an account to an audience with no other character on stage

141. Mood—the climate of feeling in a literary work; the choice of setting, objects, details, images, and words all contribute towards creating a specific mood. For example, an author may create a mood of mystery around a character or setting but may treat that character or setting in an ironic, serious, or humorous tone

142. Motif—a standard theme, element, or dramatic situation that recurs in various works

143. Motivation—a character’s incentive or reason for behaving in a certain manner; that which impels a character to act

144. Myth—a traditional story presenting supernatural characters and episodes that help explain natural events

145. Narrative—an account of an actual or fictional event or sequence of events; a story

146. Narrator—the one who tells the story; may be first- or third-person, limited or omniscient

147. Non-sequitur—an inference that does not follow logically from the premises (literally, “does not follow”)

148. Objectivity—a quality in a literary work of impersonality, of freedom from expression of personal sentiments, attitudes, or emotions

149. Octave—an eight-line stanza

150. Omniscient narrator—a narrator who is able to know, see, and tell all, including the inner thoughts and feelings of other the characters

151. Onomatopoeia—a word formed from the imitation of natural sounds

152. Oversimplification—simplification to the point of causing misrepresentation, misconception, or error; generalizations that are too broad or rigid to appear reasonable; an overreaction or exaggeration

153. Oxymoron—an expression in which two words that contradict each other to the extreme are joined
154. Parable—a simple story that illustrates a moral or religious lesson
155. Paradox—using contradiction in a manner that oddly makes sense on a deeper level; common paradoxes seem to reveal a deeper truth through their contradictions, such as noting that “without laws, we can have no freedom”
156. Parallelism—the use of corresponding grammatical or syntactical forms as well as similar length
157. Paraphrase—a restatement of a text in a different form or in different words often for the purpose of clarity
158. Parody—a humorous imitation of another more serious work or situation
159. Parenthetical—a comment that interrupts the immediate subject often to qualify or explain
160. Pathos—suffering or deep feeling; see also: “Appeal/Pathos”
161. Pedantic—characterized by an excessive display of learning or scholarship
162. Periodic sentence—a long sentence that is not grammatically complete (and hence not completely understandable) until the reader reaches the final portion of the sentence
163. Personification—a trope in which abstractions, animals, ideas, and inanimate objects are given human character, traits, abilities, or reactions
164. Philippic—a strong verbal denunciation; comes from the orations of Demosthenes against Philip of Macedonia in the fourth century
165. Plot—the action of a narrative or drama
166. Point of view—the vantage point from which a story is told
167. Polysyndeton—the use, for rhetorical effect, of more conjunctions than is necessary or natural
168. Post hoc ergo propter hoc (commonly seen as “post hoc” or “ergo”)—Latin for “after this, therefore because of this”; it is a logical fallacy which states, “Since that event followed this one, that event must have been caused by this one”
169. Prose—all forms of written or spoken expression which do not have regular rhythmic pattern
170. Protagonist—chief character in a play or story, typically the hero
171. Pun—a play on words often achieved through the use of words with similar sounds but different meanings
172. Pyrrhic—a two syllable metric foot in which both syllables are unstressed
173. Quatrain—a stanza of four lines, often rhyming in an ABAB pattern
174. Repetition—the return of a word, phrase, stanza form, or effect in any form of literature; an effective literary device that may bring comfort, suggest order, or add special meaning to a piece of literature
175. Resolution—the falling action of a narrative; the events following the climax
176. Rhetoric—the art of persuasive argument through writing or speech—the art of eloquence and charismatic language
177. Rhetorical question (a.k.a. erotema)—a question asked merely for rhetorical effect and not requiring an answer; RQ’s often imply answers, but do not provide them explicitly
178. Rhythm—the passage of regular time intervals between accented syllables; the recurrence of specific sounds or kinds of sounds, stressed or unstressed syllables
179. Rhyme—the close similarity or identity of sound between accented syllables
180. Rhyme scheme—the pattern or sequence in which rhyme sounds occur in a stanza or poem
181. Rising action—the part of the plot which deals with complication of action; the force which gains in interest and power as the opposing forces come into conflict

182. Romantic—a term describing a character or literary work that reflects the characteristics of Romanticism, the literary movement beginning in the late 18th century that stressed emotion, imagination, and individualism

183. Sarcasm—harsh, cutting language or tone intended to ridicule; verbal irony in which a caustic and bitter expression of strong and personal disapproval is given; WARNING: NOT ALL IRONY IS SARCASTIC!

184. Satire—a literary manner which blends a critical attitude with humor and wit for the purpose of improving human institutions or conditions; an attempt to ridicule institutions, using humor, for the purpose of inspiring improvement or change; also consider “diatribe”

185. Scansion—a system of describing conventional poetic rhythms by dividing lines into feet, locating accents, and counting syllables

186. Scapegoat—a person or group that bears the blame for others

187. Scene—a real or fictional episode; a division of an act in a play

188. Scheme—a figure of speech that deals with word order, syntax, letters, and sounds, rather than the meaning of words

189. Sentimentality—an overindulgence in emotion especially the conscious effort to induce emotion in order to enjoy and analyze it; the failure to restrain or evaluate emotion through the exercise of judgment; an optimistic overemphasis of the goodness of humanity; sensibility

190. Sestet—the last part of an Italian or Petrarchan sonnet which consists of six lines that rhyme with a varying pattern; common rhyme patterns include CDECDE or CDCCDC; OR any six-line stanza or a six-line unit of poetry.

191. Setting—the time, place, and environment in which action takes place

192. Simile—a comparison of two things using “like,” “as,” or other specifically comparative words

193. Simple sentence—a sentence consisting of one independent clause and no dependent clause

194. Solecism—nonstandard grammatical usage; a violation of grammatical rules

195. Soliloquy—a monologue spoken by an actor at a point in the play when the character believes himself/herself to be alone; the technique frequently reveals a character's innermost thoughts, including his/her feelings, state of mind, motives or intentions

196. Sonnet—a lyric poem of fourteen lines, usually in iambic pentameter, with rhymes arranged according to certain definite patterns; it usually expresses a single, complete idea or thought with a reversal, twist, or change of direction in the concluding lines. There are three common forms: Italian or Petrarchan, English or Shakespearean, Miltonic

197. Spondee—a two syllable metric foot in which both syllables are stressed

198. Stanza—an arrangement of lines of verse in a pattern usually repeated throughout the poem; typically, each stanza has a fixed number of verses or lines, a prevailing meter, and a consistent rhyme scheme

199. Structure—the arrangement or framework of a sentence, paragraph, or entire work

200. Style—the choices a writer makes; the combination of distinctive features of a literary work

201. Subplot—a subordinate or minor complication running through a piece of literature; a secondary plot interest

202. Syllepsis—a construction in which one word is used in two different senses (“After he threw the ball, he threw a fit.”
203. Syllogism—a three-part deductive argument in which a conclusion is based on a major premise and a minor premise (“All men are mortal; Socrates is a man; therefore, Socrates is mortal.”)

204. Symbol—an object that is used to represent something else

205. Synecdoche—a form of metonymy which uses one part of an object to represent the entire object (referring to a car as “wheels” or saying “All hands on deck!”)

206. Synesthesia (or synaesthesia)—describing one kind of sensation in terms of another (“a loud color,” “a sweet sound”)

207. Syntax—the manner in which words are arranged into sentences or phrases

208. Tautology—needless repetition which adds no meaning or understanding; redundancy (“widow woman,” “free gift”)

209. Theme—a central or dominating idea in a literary work

210. Thesis—the primary position taken by a writer or a speaker

211. Tone—the attitude of a writer, usually implied, toward the subject or audience

212. Topic—the subject treated in a paragraph or work

213. Tragedy—a work in which the protagonist, a person of high degree, is engaged in a significant struggle that ends in ruin or destruction; the sense that humans are doomed through their own failures or errors; a series of events in the life of a character which culminate in an unhappy catastrophe

214. Tragic flaw—the flaw, error, or defect in the tragic hero which leads to his/her downfall

215. Tricolon—the repetition of a parallel grammatical construction three times for rhetorical effect

216. Trilogy—a work in three parts, each of which is a complete work in itself

217. Trite—overused and hackneyed

218. Trochee—a two syllable metric foot containing one stressed syllable followed by one unstressed syllable

219. Trope—a figure of speech with an unexpected twist in the meaning of words, as opposed to a scheme, which only deals with patterns of words

220. Understatement—the deliberate representation of something as lesser in magnitude than it actually is; a deliberate under-emphasis

221. Usage—the customary way language or its elements are used

222. Verisimilitude—the appearance or semblance of truth and actuality

223. Vernacular—the everyday speech of a particular country or region, often involving nonstandard usage

224. Vignette—(French, “little vine”) a short composition showing considerable skill, especially such a composition designed with little or no plot or larger narrative structure

225. Zeugma—(Greek: “yoking” or "bonding") artfully using a single verb to refer to two different objects grammatically, or artfully using an adjective to refer to two separate nouns, even though the adjective would logically only be appropriate for one of the two. For instance, in Shakespeare’s Henry V, Fluellen cries, “Kill the boys and the luggage.” (The verb kill normally wouldn't be applied to luggage.)