**AP Literature Terms 21-40**

1. **genre –** The major category into which a literary work fits. The basic divisions of literature are prose, poetry, and drama.
2. **homily –** This term literally means “sermon,” but more informally, it can include any serious talk, speech, or lecture involving moral or spiritual advice.
3. **hyperbole –** A figure of speech using deliberate exaggeration or overstatement. (The literal Greek meaning is “overshoot.”) Hyperboles often have a comic effect; however, a serious effect is also possible. Often, hyperbole produces irony. The opposite of hyperbole is *understatement*.
4. **imagery –** The sensory details or figurative language used to describe, arouse emotion, or represent abstractions. On a physical level, imagery uses terms related to the five senses: visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory, and olfactory.

**\*\*\***On the AP literature exam, pay attention to *how* an author creates imagery and to the effect of this imagery.

1. **inference/infer –** To draw a reasonable conclusion from the information presented.

**\*\***When a multiple choice question asks for an inference to be drawn from a passage, the most direct, most reasonable inference is the safest answer choice. If an inference is implausible, it’s unlikely to be the correct answer. *Note that if the answer choice is directly stated, it is* ***not*** *inferred and it is wrong.* You must be careful to note the connotation – negative or positive – of the choices.

1. **invective –** an emotionally violent, verbal denunciation or attack using strong, abusive language.
2. **irony/ironic –** The contrast between what is stated explicitly and what is really meant, or the difference between what appears to be and what is actually true.
3. **litotes** (pronounced almost like “light oh tees”) – a form of understatement that involves making an affirmative point by denying its opposite. *Litote* is the opposite of *hyperbole*.
4. **loose sentence/non-periodic 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 independent clause, the clause would be a complete sentence. A work containing many loose sentences often seems informal, relaxed, or conversational. Generally, loose sentences create loose style. The opposite of a loose sentence is the *periodic sentence*.
5. **metaphor –** A figure of speech using implied comparison of seemingly unlike things or the substitution of one for the other, suggesting some similarity.
6. **metonymy –** (mĕtŏn′ ĭmē) A term from the Greek meaning “changed label” or “substitute name,” metonymy is a figure of speech in which the name of one object is substituted for that of another closely associated with it.
7. **narrative –** The telling of a story or an account of an event or series of events.
8. **onomatopoeia –** A figure of speech in which natural sounds are imitated in the sounds of words. Simple examples include such words as *buzz, hiss, hum, crack, whinny,* and *murmur*.

**\*\*\***If you note examples of onomatopoeia in an essay passage, note the effect.

1. **oxymoron –** From the Greek for “pointedly foolish,” an oxymoron is a figure of speech wherein the author groups apparently contradictory terms to suggest a paradox.

**\*\*\***This term does not usually appear in the multiple-choice questions, but there is a chance that you might find it in an essay. Take note of the effect that the author achieves with the use of oxymoron.

1. **paradox –** A statement that appears to be self-contradictory or opposed to common sense but upon closer inspection contains some degree of truth or validity.
2. **parallelism –** Also referred to as parallel construction or parallel structure, this term comes from Greek roots meaning “beside one another.” It refers to the grammatical or rhetorical framing of words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs to give structural similarity. This can involve, but is not limited to, repetition of a grammatical element such as a preposition or verbal phrase. The effects of parallelism are numerous, but frequently they act as an organizing force to attract the reader’s attention, add emphasis and organization, or simply provide a musical rhythm.
3. **anaphora –** A sub-type of *parallelism,* when the exact repetition of words or phrases at the beginning of successive lines or sentences.
4. **parody –** A work that closely imitates the style or content of another with the specific aim of comic effect and/or ridicule. It exploits peculiarities of an author’s expression (propensity to use too many parentheses, certain favorite words, etc.) Well-written parody offers enlightenment about the original, but poorly written parody offers only ineffectual imitation. Usually an audience must grasp literary allusion and understand the work being parodied in order to fully appreciate the nuances of the newer work. Occasionally, however, parodies take on a life of their own and don’t require knowledge of the original.
5. **pedantic –** An adjective that describes words, phrases, or general tone that is overly scholarly, academic, or bookish (language that might be described as “show-offy”; using big words for the sake of using big words).
6. **periodic sentence –** The opposite of *loose sentence*, a sentence that presents its central meaning in a main clause at the end. This independent clause is preceded by a phrase or clause that cannot stand alone. The effect of a periodic sentence is to add emphasis and structural variety. It is also a much stronger sentence than the loose sentence.