**AP Literature Vocabulary Terms**

1. **allegory –** The device of using character and/or story elements symbolically to represent an abstraction in addition to the literal meaning.
2. **alliteration –** The repetition of sounds, especially initial consonant sounds in two or more neighboring words (as in “she sells sea shells”)..
3. **allusion –** A direct or indirect reference to something which is presumably commonly known, such as an event, book, myth, place, or work of art. Allusions can be historical, literary, religious, topical, or mythical.
4. **ambiguity –** The multiple meanings, either intentional or unintentional, of a word, phrase, sentence, or passage.
5. **analogy –** A similarity or comparison between two different things or the relationship between them. An analogy can explain something unfamiliar by associating it with or pointing out its similarity to something more familiar. Analogies can also make writing more vivid, imaginative, or intellectually engaging.
6. **antecedent –** The word, phrase, or clause referred to by a pronoun.
7. **antithesis –** the opposition or contrast of ideas; the direct opposite.
8. **aphorism –** A terse statement of known authorship which expresses a general truth or a moral principle. (If the authorship is unknown, the statement is generally considered to be a folk proverb.)
9. **apostrophe –** A figure of speech that directly addresses an absent or imaginary person or a personified abstraction, such as liberty or love. It is an address to someone or something that cannot answer. The effect may add familiarity or emotional intensity.
10. **atmosphere –** The emotional nod created by the entirety of a literary work, established partly by the setting and partly by the author’s choice of objects that are described. Even such elements as a description of the weather can contribute to the atmosphere. Frequently atmosphere foreshadows events. Perhaps it can create a mood.
11. **caricature –** a verbal description, the purpose of which is to exaggerate or distort, for comic effect, a person’s distinctive physical features or other characteristics.
12. **clause –** A grammatical unit that contains both a subject and a verb. An *independent*, or *main*, *clause* expresses a complete thought and can stand alone as a sentence. A *dependent*, or *subordinate clause*, cannot stand alone as a sentence and must be accompanied by an independent clause.
13. **colloquial/colloquialism –** The use of slang or informalities in speech or writing. Not generally acceptable for formal writing, colloquialisms give a work a conversational, familiar tone. Colloquial expressions in writing include local or regional dialects.
14. **conceit –** A fanciful expression, usually in the form of an extended metaphor or surprising analogy between seemingly dissimilar objects. A conceit displays intellectual cleverness as a result of the unusual comparison being made.
15. **connotation –** The non-literal, associative meaning of a word; the implied, suggested meaning. Connotations may involve ideas, emotions, or attitudes.
16. **denotation –** The strict, literal, dictionary definition of a word, devoid of any emotion, attitude, or color.
17. **diction –** Related to style, diction refers to the writer’s word choices, especially with regard to their correctness, clearness, or effectiveness.
18. **didactic –** From the Greek, *didactic* literally means “teaching.” Didactic words have the primary aim of teaching or instructing, especially the teaching of moral or ethical principles.
19. **euphemism –** From the Greek for “good speech,” euphemisms are a more agreeable or less offensive substitute for a generally unpleasant word or concept. The euphemism may be used to adhere to standards of social or political correctness or to add humor or ironic understatement.
20. **extended metaphor –** A metaphor developed at great length, occurring frequently in or throughout a work.