



## AP English Literature Summer Reading

April 2026

Welcome to AP English Literature! This is a lively, yet challenging course designed to strengthen your writing skills and broaden your abilities in analyzing literature. In preparation for the course, you do have some work to complete over the summer. Please read the assignment below carefully, and on day one, come ready to share your thoughts, understanding, and opinions on the reading.

### ASSIGNMENT

#### ***The Odyssey*, by Homer (annotation required)**

Read [\*The Odyssey\*, Translated by W.H.D. Rouse](#), published by Signet Classics ISBN 978-0-451-47433-9. If needed, you may borrow a copy which is available at the front desk of BSM over the summer. Simply add your name to the check-out list and take a copy. If possible, purchase your own copy so you can annotate the text directly.

1. Read Rouse's translation of *The Odyssey*.
2. As you read, **mark significant passages worth rereading** by putting a sticky note in the margins.
3. Using the attached Glossary of Literary and Rhetorical Devices, **annotate three** passages you marked with questions and comment on 1-2 devices evident in each passage (see annotation advice
4. as well as the highlighted terms in glossary of devices on the following pages). If borrowing a book, print select pages from the online pdf and annotate those. Passages should be a half to a whole page in length. Ultimately, the optimal way to interact with this text is to read a print version, here is a link to an online pdf of the epic: [THE ODYSSEY](#)
5. Within the first few days of class, there will be a multiple choice and passage analysis exam on *The Odyssey*.

Throughout the year, we will be reading novels, plays, short stories, and poetry in preparation for the AP English exam; the course itself will often feel like a quest, or a journey. As we share ideas whether in discussion or in writing, let's all strive to embrace the following:

- Make your case (or comments) with evidence.
- Be intellectually charitable (listening with goodwill and kindness in judgement).
- Be intellectually humble.
- Be constructive.
- Be yourself.

~taken from HxA Way

The reading and annotations are due on the first day of class. I recommend you read *The Odyssey* closer to the start of school so that the details will be fresh in your mind. Until we meet in August, I wish you the best of summer.

Sincerely,

*Ms. Dominguez*

**AP Literature and Composition Teacher**

**Model UN Co-Advisor**

[adominguez@bsmschool.org](mailto:adominguez@bsmschool.org)

## BSM Book Policy Update

Beginning in the fall of 2023, the English Department at BSM is \*strongly recommending\* that students purchase their own copies of books. As a department, we have noticed a drastic increase in reading comprehension and analytical skills when students engage in active reading by annotating their texts. This observation is supported by countless studies.

For instance, annotating develops metacognition, writing growth, and deeper understanding while improving student learning outcomes (Johnson). Additionally, annotating can help students break down complex texts (Lloyd et al).

Although we recognize that buying books poses an additional expense for families, we believe the benefits are worth the investment. With that said, we will have books available for families who choose not to purchase them; however, in most cases, students will not be able to annotate the borrowed texts, although we will provide post-it notes to help with skill.

For further reading:

Corrigan, Paul T. "[Attending to the Act of Reading: Critical Reading, Contemplative Reading, and Active Reading.](#)"

Johnson, Matthew. "[How Students and Teachers Benefit from Students Annotating Their Own Writing.](#)"

### **BOOK LISTS AND PURCHASE INFORMATION FOR AP LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION:**

- *The Odyssey* Homer (translated by W. Rouse) ISBN 13: 978-0451474339
- *How To Read Literature Like a Professor* Thomas C. Foster ISBN 13: 978- 978-0062301673
- *Frankenstein* Mary Shelley ISBN: 13: 978-0553212471
- *Othello* William Shakespeare ISBN: 13: 978-0743477550
- *The Color Purple* Alice Walker

### **Active Reading Strategies**

Choose the strategies that work best for you or that best suit your purpose.

- **Identify and define any unfamiliar terms.**
- **Bracket the main idea or thesis of the reading, and put an asterisk next to it.** Pay particular attention to the introduction or opening paragraphs to locate this information.
- **Put down your highlighter. Make marginal notes or comments instead.** Every time you feel the urge to highlight something, write instead. You can summarize the text, ask questions, give assent, protest vehemently. You can also write down key words to help you recall where important points are discussed. Above all, strive to enter into a dialogue with the author.
- **Write questions in the margins, and then answer the questions in a reading journal or on a separate piece of paper.**
- **Make outlines, flow charts, or diagrams that help you to map and to understand ideas visually.**
- **Write a summary of an essay or chapter in your own words.** Do this in less than a page. Capture the essential ideas and perhaps one or two key examples. This approach offers a great way to be sure that you know what the reading really says or is about.
- **Write your own exam question based on the reading.**
- **Teach what you have learned to someone else!** Research clearly shows that teaching is one of the most effective ways to learn. If you try to explain aloud what you have been studying, (1) you'll transfer the information from short-term to long-term memory, and (2) you'll quickly discover what you understand — and what you don't.

## More Annotation advice . . .

As you thoughtfully read and focus on key passages of the novel,

- identify important or striking features,
- notice patterns,
- predict meanings, and
- annotate, or “mark up”, the text to show your observations and thoughts

This kind of practice will help you read more closely and with greater thought and understanding! As you get more practice, you’ll develop your own system. Until then (that means for your summer reading), use the following system.

Mark features of the text with a:

★ or ! for important events, decisions, or thoughts expressed by the author or a character

? to highlight confusing or puzzling ideas or events

\_\_\_\_\_ or ○ to identify a literary technique used by the author. Notice ... important, striking, or enchanting words, phrases, and sentences sensory images figurative language, repetition, sounds, and unusual punctuation

In the margins, write brief comments. If the margins are narrow, you may want to use post-it notes. When writing comments, you might ...

- |                                                                   |                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| • Observe what is being said or done                              | • Describe the effect of an image, sound, or word |
| • Define unfamiliar words                                         | • Identify a literary technique                   |
| • Identify a theme being developed                                | • Infer a character quality                       |
| • Paraphrase or summarize a difficult phrase, sentence or passage | • Ask a thoughtful question or predict an outcome |

On the following pages are examples that—I hope—will help you see how useful and easy it is to mark up text as you observe and think while reading.

his chin cupped in his hands. Then the regular movement of the searchlight was reflected through an upper window and the boy had time to fix in memory the pile of cigarettes, the counter, and the small hole under it. The footsteps of a policeman on the pavement made him grab the first packet to his hand and dive for the hole. A light shone along the floor and a hand tried the door, then the footsteps passed on, and Charlie cowered in the darkness. At last he got his courage back by telling himself in his curiously adult way that if he were caught now there was nothing to be done about it, and he might as well have his smoke. He put a cigarette in his mouth and then remembered that he had no matches. For a while he dared not move. Three times the searchlight lit the shop, while he muttered taunts and encouragements. May as well be hung for a sheep, Cowardy, cowardly custard, grown-up and childish exhortations oddly mixed.

But as he moved he heard footfalls in the street, the sound of several men walking rapidly. Charlie Stowe was old enough to feel surprise that anybody was about. The footsteps came nearer, stopped; a key was turned in the shop door, a voice said: 'Let him in,' and then he heard his father. 'If you wouldn't mind being quiet, gentlemen I don't want to wake up the family.' There was a note unfamiliar to Charlie in the undecided voice. A torch flashed and the electric globe burst into blue light. The boy held his breath; he wondered whether his father would hear his heart beating, and he clutched his nightshirt tightly and prayed, 'O God, don't let me be caught.' Through a crack in the counter he could see his father where he stood, one hand held to his high stiff collar, between two men in bowler hats and belted mackintoshes. They were strangers. 'Have a cigarette,' his father said in a voice dry as a biscuit. One of the men shook his head. 'It wouldn't do, not when we are on duty. Thank you all the same.' He spoke gently, but without kindness. Charlie Stowe thought his father must be ill.

'Mind if I put a few in my pocket?' Mr Stowe asked, and when the man nodded he lifted a pile of Gold Flake and Players from a shelf and caressed the packets with the tips of his fingers. 'Well,' he said, 'there's nothing to be done about it, and I may as well have my smokes.' For a moment Charlie Stowe feared discovery, his father stared round the shop so thoroughly; he might have been seeing it for the first time. 'It's a good little business,' he said, 'for those that like it. The wife will sell out, I suppose. Else the neighbours'll be wrecking it. Well, you want to be off. A stitch in time. I'll get my coat.'

Fear of discovery builds up atmosphere of tension  
Panic  
Relief  
Recovers  
Gone so far, might as well go through with it  
Still afraid  
Why this word?  
Tension again  
'Gentlemen' - very polite and formal  
Something out of the ordinary happening  
Police?  
Police again!  
Stocking up - may not be back for some time  
Why 'caressed'?  
A bit like Charlie, 'if he were caught now there would be nothing to be done about it'

searchlight  
policeman  
packet  
hand  
darkness  
curiously  
adult  
May as well be hung for a sheep  
Cowardy, cowardly custard  
grown-up and childish  
stiff collar  
between two men  
bowler hats  
belted mackintoshes  
voice dry as a biscuit  
when we are on duty  
gently  
without kindness  
there's nothing to be done about it  
The wife will sell out  
Else the neighbours'll be wrecking it

Fear of his 'crime' being found out  
Tension  
Why 'curiously' adult? - he is realistic about what is happening  
Mixture of adult and child  
Supposed to be in Norwich  
Why not?  
Fear of being caught  
Like Charlie clenching his nightshirt  
Is he under arrest?  
Fear, uncertainty  
Why 'gently'/'without kindness'? - an unusual combination  
Has to ask permission - under arrest?  
Or the last!  
The end of his family life  
Why would the neighbours do that?

Lord of the Flies  
by William Golding

Shadows and Tall Trees

121

Ralph heard the mockery and hated Jack. The sting of ashes in his eyes, tiredness, fear, enraged him.

"Go on then! We'll wait here."

There was silence.

"Why don't you go? Are you frightened?"

A stain in the darkness, a stain that was Jack, detached itself and began to draw away.

"All right. So long."

The stain vanished. Another took its place.

Ralph felt his knee against something hard and rocked a charred trunk that was edgy to the touch. He felt the sharp cinders that had been bark push against the back of his knee and knew that Roger had sat down. He felt with his hands and lowered himself beside Roger, while the trunk rocked among invisible ashes. Roger, uncommunicative by nature, said nothing. He offered no opinion on the beast nor told Ralph why he had chosen to come on this mad expedition. He simply sat and rocked the trunk gently. Ralph noticed a rapid and infuriating tapping noise and realized that Roger was banging his silly wooden stick against something.

So they sat, the rocking, tapping, impervious Roger and Ralph, fuming, round them the close sky was loaded with stars, save where the mountain punched up a hole of blackness.

There was a slithering noise high above them, the sound of someone taking giant and dangerous strides on rock or ash. Then Jack found them, and was shivering and croaking in a voice they could just recognize as his.

"I saw a thing on top."

They heard him blunder against the trunk which rocked violently. He lay silent for a moment, then muttered.

"Keep a good lookout. It may be following."

A shower of ash pattered round them. Jack sat up.

"I saw a thing bulge on the mountain."

"You only imagined it," said Ralph shakily, "because nothing would bulge. Not any sort of creature."

Roger spoke; they jumped, for they had forgotten him.

"A frog."

Jack giggled and shuddered.

metaphor  
stain = Jack =  
darkness = evil

somebody  
scraped the  
bark? That's  
how Ralph knew  
Roger sat down?

rocking  
tapping  
impervious  
even sounds  
annoying!

sss...  
like a snake  
(alliteration)

? or what  
who is the other  
stain?

Roger

shows Ralph  
is irritated  
with Roger

the mountain is  
a living thing!  
a dark thing!  
the close sky  
feels suffocating

Roger rocked the  
trunk gently.  
Jack rocked it  
violently.

It's so dark Ralph can't see anything!  
He feels sharp cinders. He and Roger  
hear Jack.

## AP Literature Glossary of Literary and Rhetorical Devices

**Active Voice** - The subject of the sentence performs the action. This is a more direct and preferred style of writing in most cases. "*Anthony drove while Toni searched for the house.*" The opposite is **passive voice** – when the subject of the sentence receives the action. "*The car was driven by Anthony.*" Passive voice is often overused, resulting in lifeless writing. When possible, try to use active voice.

**Allusion** - An indirect reference to something (usually a literary text, although it can be other things commonly known, such as plays, songs, historical events) with which the reader is supposed to be familiar.

**Alter-ego** – A character that is used by the author to speak the author's own thoughts; when an author speaks directly to the audience through a character. In Shakespeare's last play, *The Tempest*, Shakespeare talks to his audience about his own upcoming retirement, through the main character in the play, Prospero. Do not confuse with **persona**.

**Anecdote** - A brief recounting of a relevant episode. Anecdotes are often inserted into fictional or non fictional texts as a way of developing a point or injecting humor.

**Antecedent** - The word, phrase, or clause referred to by a pronoun. The AP language exam occasionally asks for the antecedent of a given pronoun in a long, complex sentence or in a group of sentences. "*If I could command the wealth of all the world by lifting my finger, I would not pay such a price for it.*" An AP question might read: "What is the antecedent for 'it'?"

**Classicism** – Art or literature characterized by a realistic view of people and the world; sticks to traditional themes and structures (see **romanticism**).

**Comic relief** – when a humorous scene is inserted into a serious story, in order to lighten the mood somewhat. The "gatekeeper scene" in *Macbeth* is an example of comic relief.

**Diction** - Word choice, particularly as an element of style. Different types of words have significant effects on meaning. An essay written in academic diction would be much less colorful, but perhaps more precise than street slang. You should be able to describe an author's diction. You **SHOULD NOT** write in your thesis, "The author uses diction...". This is essentially saying, "The author uses words to write." (Duh.) Instead, describe the *type* of diction (for example, formal or informal, ornate or plain).

**Colloquial** - Ordinary or familiar type of conversation. A "**colloquialism**" is a common or familiar type of saying, similar to an **adage** or an **aphorism**.

**Connotation** - Rather than the dictionary definition (denotation), the associations suggested by a word. Implied meaning rather than literal meaning. (For example, "policeman," "cop," and "The Man" all denote the same literal meaning of police officer, but each has a different connotation.)

**Denotation** - The literal, explicit meaning of a word, without its connotations.

**Jargon** – The diction used by a group which practices a similar profession or activity. Lawyers speak using particular jargon, as do soccer players.

**Vernacular** - 1. Language or dialect of a particular country. 2. Language or dialect of a regional clan or group. 3. Plain everyday speech

**Didactic** - A term used to describe fiction, nonfiction or poetry that teaches a specific lesson or moral or provides a model of correct behavior or thinking.

**Adage** – A folk saying with a lesson. "*A rolling stone gathers no moss.*" Similar to **aphorism** and **colloquialism**.

**Allegory** - A story, fictional or non-fictional, in which characters, things, and events represent qualities or concepts. The interaction of these characters, things, and events is meant to reveal an abstraction or a truth. *Animal Farm*, by George Orwell, is an allegory.

**Aphorism** - A terse statement which expresses a general truth or moral principle. An aphorism can be a memorable summation of the author's point. Ben Franklin wrote many of these in *Poor Richard's Almanac*, such as "*God helps them that help themselves*," and "*A watched pot never boils*."

**Ellipsis** - The deliberate omission of a word or phrase from prose done for effect by the author. "*The whole day, rain, torrents of rain.*" The term ellipsis is related to **ellipsis**, which is the three periods used to show omitted text in a quotation.

**Euphemism** - A more agreeable or less offensive substitute for generally unpleasant words or concepts. Sometimes they are used for political correctness. "*Physically challenged*," in place of "*crippled*." Sometimes a euphemism is used to exaggerate correctness to add humor. "*Vertically challenged*" in place of "*short*."

**Figurative Language** - "Figurative Language" is the opposite of "Literal Language." Literal language is writing that makes complete sense when you take it at face value. "Figurative Language" is the opposite: writing that is *not* meant to be taken literally.

**Analogy** - An analogy is a comparison of one pair of variables to a parallel set of variables. When a writer uses an analogy, he or she argues that the relationship between the first pair of variables is the same as the relationship between the second pair of variables. "*America is to the world as the hippo is to the jungle*." Similes and metaphors are sometimes also analogies.

**Hyperbole**: Exaggeration. "*My mother will kill me if I am late*."

**Idiom**: A common, often used expression that doesn't make sense if you take it literally. "*I got chewed out by my coach*."

**Metaphor**: Making an *implied* comparison, not using "like," "as," or other such words. "*My feet are popsicles*." An **extended metaphor** is when the metaphor is continued later in the written work. If I continued to call my feet "my popsicles" in later paragraphs, that would be an extended metaphor. A particularly elaborate extended metaphor is called using **conceit**.

**Metonymy** - Replacing an actual word or idea, with a related word or concept. "*Relations between London and Washington have been strained*," does not literally mean relations between the two cities, but between the leaders of The United States and England. Metonymy is often used with body parts: "*I could not understand his tongue*," means his language or his speech.

**Synecdoche** - A kind of metonymy when a whole is represented by naming one of its parts, or vice versa. "*The cattle rancher owned 500 head*." "*Check out my new wheels*."

**Simile**: Using words such as "like" or "as" to make a *direct* comparison between two very different things. "*My feet are so cold they feel like popsicles*."

**Synesthesia** - a description involving a "crossing of the senses." Examples: "*A purplish scent filled the room*." "*I was deafened by his brightly-colored clothing*."

**Personification**: Giving human-like qualities to something that is not human. "*The tired old truck groaned as it inched up the hill*."

**Foreshadowing** - When an author gives hints about what will occur later in a story.

**Genre** - The major category into which a literary work fits. The basic divisions of literature are prose, poetry, and drama. However, genres can be subdivided as well (poetry can be classified into lyric, dramatic, narrative, etc.). The AP Language exam deals primarily with the following genres: autobiography, biography, diaries, criticism, essays, and journalistic, political, scientific, and nature writing.

**Gothic** – Writing characterized by gloom, mystery, fear and/or death. Also refers to an architectural style of the middle ages, often seen in cathedrals of this period.

**Imagery** - Word or words that create a picture in the reader's mind. Usually this involves the five senses. Authors often use imagery in conjunction with metaphors, similes, or figures of speech.

**Invective** – A long, emotionally violent, attack using strong, abusive language.

**Irony** - When the opposite of what you expect to happen does.

**Verbal irony** - When you say something and mean the opposite/something different. For example, if your gym teacher wants you to run a mile in eight minutes or faster, but calls it a "walk in the park" it would be verbal irony. If your voice tone is bitter, it's called **sarcasm**.

**Dramatic irony** - When the audience of a drama, play, movie, etc. knows something that the character doesn't and would be surprised to find out. For example, in many horror movies, we (the audience) know who the killer is, which the victim-to-be has no idea who is doing the slaying. Sometimes the character trusts the killer completely when (ironically) he/she shouldn't.

**Situational irony** - Found in the plot (or story line) of a book, story, or movie. Sometimes it makes you laugh because it's funny how things turn out. (For example, Johnny spent two hours planning on sneaking into the movie theater and missed the movie. When he finally did manage to sneak inside he found out that kids were admitted free that day).

**Juxtaposition** - Placing things side by side for the purposes of comparison. Authors often use juxtaposition of ideas or examples in order to make a point. (For example, an author may juxtapose the average day of a typical American with that of someone in the third world in order to make a point of social commentary).

**Mood** - The atmosphere created by the literature and accomplished through word choice (diction). Syntax is often a creator of mood since word order, sentence length and strength and complexity also affect pacing and therefore mood. Setting, tone, and events can all affect the mood.

**Motif** – a recurring idea in a piece of literature. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the idea that “you never really understand another person until you consider things from his or her point of view” is a motif, because the idea is brought up several times over the course of the novel.

**Oxymoron** – When apparently contradictory terms are grouped together and suggest a paradox – “wise fool,” “eloquent silence,” “jumbo shrimp.”

**Pacing** – The speed or tempo of an author’s writing. Writers can use a variety of devices (**syntax**, **polysyndeton**, **anaphora**, **meter**) to change the pacing of their words. An author’s pacing can be fast, sluggish, stabbing, vibrato, staccato, measured, etc.

**Paradox** - A seemingly contradictory situation which is actually true. “*You can't get a job without experience, and you can't get experience without getting a job.*”

**Parallelism** – (Also known as **parallel structure** or **balanced sentences**.) Sentence construction which places equal grammatical constructions near each other, or repeats identical grammatical patterns. Parallelism is used to add **emphasis**, **organization**, or sometimes **pacing** to writing. “*Cinderella swept the floor, dusted the mantle, and beat the rugs.*”

**Anaphora** - Repetition of a word, phrase, or clause at the beginning of two or more sentences or clauses in a row. This is a deliberate form of repetition and helps make the writer's point more coherent. *"I came, I saw, I conquered."*

**Chiasmus** – When the same words are used twice in succession, but the second time, the order of the words is reversed. *"Fair is foul and foul is fair."* *"When the going gets tough, the tough get going."* Also called **antimetabole**.

**Antithesis** - Two opposite or contrasting words, phrases, or clauses, or even ideas, with parallel structure. *"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times"*

**Zuegma (Syllepsis)** - When a single word governs or modifies two or more other words, and the meaning of the first word must change for each of the other words it governs or modifies. *"The butler killed the lights, and then the mistress."* *"I quickly dressed myself and the salad."*

**Parenthetical Idea** - Parentheses are used to set off an idea from the rest of the sentence. It is almost considered an aside...a whisper, and should be used sparingly for effect, rather than repeatedly. Parentheses can also be used to set off dates and numbers. *"In a short time (and the time is getting shorter by the gallon) America will be out of oil."*

**Parody** - An exaggerated imitation of a serious work for humorous purposes. It borrows words or phrases from an original, and pokes fun at it. This is also a form of **allusion**, since it is referencing a previous text, event, etc. The Simpsons often parody Shakespeare plays. Saturday Night Live also parodies famous persons and events. Do not confuse with **satire**.

**Persona** - The fictional mask or narrator that tells a story. Do not confuse with **alter-ego**.

**Poetic device** – A device used in poetry to manipulate the sound of words, sentences or lines.

#### **Alliteration**

The repetition of the same consonant sound at the beginning of words.  
*"Sally sells sea shells by the sea shore"*

#### **Assonance**

The repetition of identical or similar vowel sounds.  
*"From the molten-golden notes"*

#### **Consonance**

The repetition of the same consonant sound at the end of words or within words.  
*"Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door"*

#### **Onomatopoeia**

The use of a word which imitates or suggests the sound that the thing makes.  
*Snap, rustle, boom, murmur*

#### **Internal rhyme**

When a line of poetry contains a rhyme within a single line.  
*"To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells!"*

#### **Slant rhyme**

When a poet creates a rhyme, but the two words do not rhyme exactly – they are merely similar.  
*"I sat upon a stone, / And found my life has gone."*

#### **End rhyme**

When the last word of two different lines of poetry rhyme.  
*"Roses are red, violets are blue, / Sugar is sweet, and so are you."*

## Rhyme Scheme

The pattern of a poem's end rhymes. For example, the following lines have a rhyme scheme of *a b a b c d c d*:

|                                                 |          |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?         | <i>a</i> |
| Thou art more lovely and more temperate.        | <i>b</i> |
| Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May.   | <i>a</i> |
| And summer's lease hath all too short a date.   | <i>b</i> |
| Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines       | <i>c</i> |
| And often is his gold complexion dimmed         | <i>d</i> |
| And every fair from fair sometime declines      | <i>c</i> |
| By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed | <i>d</i> |

## Stressed and unstressed syllables

In every word of more than one syllable, one of the syllables is stressed, or said with more force than the other syllable(s). In the name "Nathan," the first syllable is stressed. In the word "unhappiness," the second of the four syllables is stressed.

## Meter

A regular pattern to the syllables in lines of poetry.

## Free verse

Poetry that doesn't have much meter or rhyme.

## Iambic pentameter

Poetry that is written in lines of 10 syllables, alternating stressed and unstressed syllables.

*"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"*

## Sonnet

A 14-line poem written in iambic pentameter. Usually divided into three quatrains and a couplet.

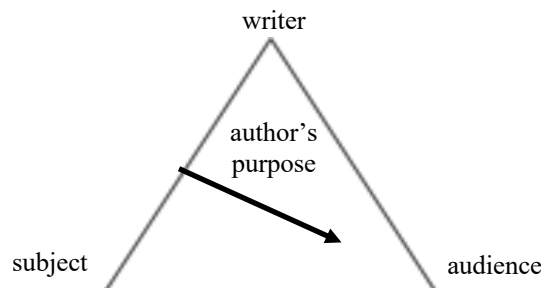
**Polysyndeton** – When a writer creates a list of items which are all separated by conjunctions. Normally, a conjunction is used only before the last item in a list. *Examples of polysyndeton: "I walked the dog, and fed the cat, and milked the cows." "Or if a soul touch any unclean thing, whether it be a carcass of an unclean beast, or a carcass of unclean cattle, or the carcass of unclean creeping things...he also shall be unclean."* Polysyndeton is often used to slow down the pace of the writing and/or add an authoritative tone.

**Pun** – When a word that has two or more meanings is used in a humorous way. *"My dog has a fur coat and pants!" "I was stirred by his cooking lesson."*

**Rhetoric** - The art of effective communication.

## Aristotle's Rhetorical Triangle

The relationships, in any piece of writing, between the writer, the audience, and the subject. All analysis of writing is essentially an analysis of the relationships between the points on the triangle.



**Rhetorical Question** - Question not asked for information but for effect. *"The angry parent asked the child, 'Are you finished interrupting me?'"* In this case, the parent does not expect a reply, but simply wants to draw the child's attention to the rudeness of interrupting.

**Romanticism** – Art or literature characterized by an idealistic, perhaps unrealistic view of people and the world, and an emphasis on nature. Does not rely on traditional themes and structures (see **classicism**).

**Sarcasm** - A generally bitter comment that is ironically or satirically worded. However, not all satire and irony are sarcastic. It is the bitter, mocking tone that separates sarcasm from mere verbal irony or satire.

**Satire** - A work that reveals a critical attitude toward some element of life to a humorous effect. It targets human vices and follies, or social institutions and conventions. Good satire usually has three layers: serious on the surface; humorous when you discover that it is satire instead of reality; and serious when you discern the underlying point of the author.

**Sentence** - A sentence is group of words (including subject and verb) that expresses a complete thought.

**Appositive** - A word or group of words placed beside a noun or noun substitute to supplement its meaning. *"Bob, the lumber yard worker, spoke with Judy, an accountant from the city."*

**Clause** - A grammatical unit that contains both a subject and a verb. An **independent 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. (Example: *"Other than baseball, football is my favorite sport."* In this sentence, the independent clause is "football is my favorite sport" and the dependent clause is "Other than baseball.")

#### Sentence structures:

**Balanced sentence** – A sentence in which two parallel elements are set off against each other like equal weights on a scale. Both parts are parallel grammatically. *"If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich."* Also called **parallelism**.

**Compound sentence** - Contains at least two independent clauses but no dependent clauses.

**Complex sentence** - Contains only one independent clause and at least one dependent clause.

**Cumulative sentence** – (also called a **loose sentence**) When the writer begins with an independent clause, then adds subordinate elements. *"He doubted whether he could ever again appear before an audience, his confidence broken, his limbs shaking, his collar wet with perspiration."* The opposite construction is called a **periodic sentence**.

**Periodic sentence** - When the main idea is not completed until the end of the sentence. The writer begins with subordinate elements and postpones the main clause. *"His confidence broken, his limbs shaking, his collar wet with perspiration, he doubted whether he could ever again appear before an audience."* The opposite construction is called a **cumulative sentence**.

#### Sentence types:

**Simple sentence** - Contains only one independent clause.

**Declarative sentence** - States an idea. It does not give a command or request, nor does it ask a question. *"The ball is round."*

**Imperative sentence** - Issues a command. *"Kick the ball."*

**Interrogative sentence** - Sentences incorporating interrogative pronouns (what, which,

who, whom, and whose). “*To whom did you kick the ball?*”

**Style** - The choices in diction, tone, and syntax that a writer makes. Style may be conscious or unconscious.

**Symbol** - Anything that represents or stands for something else. Usually a symbol is something concrete such as an object, actions, character...that represents something more abstract. Examples of symbols include the Whale in *Moby Dick*, the river and the jungle in *Heart of Darkness*, and the Raven in “The Raven.”

**Syntax/sentence variety** - Grammatical arrangement of words. This is perhaps one of the most difficult concepts to master. First, a reader should examine the length of sentences (short or long). How does sentence length and structure relate to tone and meaning. Are they simple, compound, compound-complex sentences? How do they relate to one another? **Syntax** is the grouping of words, while **diction** refers to the selection of individual words.

**Theme** - The central idea or message of a work. The theme may be directly stated in nonfiction works, although not necessarily. It is rarely stated directly in fiction.

**Thesis** - The sentence or groups of sentences that directly expresses the author's opinion, purpose, meaning, or proposition. It should be short and clear. (also see **argument**)

**Tone** - A writer's attitude toward his subject matter revealed through diction, figurative language and organization. To identify tone, consider how the piece would sound if read aloud (or how the author wanted it to sound aloud). Tone can be: playful, serious, businesslike, sarcastic, humorous, formal, somber, etc.

**Understatement** - The ironic minimizing of fact, understatement presents something as less significant than it is. The effect can frequently be humorous. “*Our defense played valiantly, and held the other team to merely eight touchdowns in the first quarter.*”

**Litotes** - a particular form of understatement, generated by denying the opposite of the statement which otherwise would be used. Depending on the tone and context of the usage, litotes either retains the effect of understatement (*Hitting that telephone pole certainly didn't do your car any good*) or becomes an intensifying expression (*The flavors of the mushrooms, herbs, and spices combine to make the dish not at all disagreeable*).