

Style Analysis

These are stylistic (or rhetorical) devices:



Tone
Attitude
Diction
Language
Figurative language
Figure of speech
Detail
Imagery
Point of view
Organization
Structure
Irony
Sentence structure
Syntax
Phrasing

These words are arranged in a specific order to help you learn the concepts later. We have used the first letter of each word or phrase to create the following mnemonic sentence:

Toiling alone during lunch, Fred
frantically developed indoor plants, ones
sitting in slippery, sharp pots.

From Fred Damiano



Stylistic Elements & Their Effect

High performance on the AP Free Response Prompts is not usually achieved by cataloguing long lists of highly technical literary language. The readers of the national exam look for understanding and confident, focused writing in student responses. These terms are sufficient tools for students to analyze on the timed-writing section of the exam. The most frequently asked questions in AP Literature and Language Free Responses Prompts concern attitude and/or characterization:

Attitude -- What is the speaker's attitude toward the subject?

Characterization -- How is an individual characterized by the speaker?

Stylistic elements writers use to develop these concepts:

1. **Detail** -- describing or relating an object or scene with complete particulars. Through details, very specific information clarifies and makes a more complete picture in the work. Most details describe or tell "who, what, when, where."
2. **Diction** -- the writer's or speaker's particular word choice used to accomplish a goal in writing. Word choice determines the level of the language..
 - Non-standard (vulgarity, slang, colloquial, jargon)
 - Formal vs. Informal
 - Mono- vs. Polysyllabic
 - Euphonious vs. Cacophonous
 - Literal vs. Figurative
 - Denotative vs. Connotative
 - Active vs. Passive
 - Concrete vs. Abstract
 - Specific vs. General
 - Overstated vs. Understated
 - Simple vs. Pedantic
3. **Emotional Distance** -- the distance between the speaker and his/her subject. The speaker may be distant and objective or close to the subject and highly personal.

4. **Figurative Language** -- an intentional departure from the normal order or meaning of words. Figurative language is not meant to be interpreted literally, but is used to intensify the work and stir the reader's imagination. Figurative language is a broader and more inclusive term than *Figures of Speech*.
5. **Figures of Speech** -- uses of language that depart from the customary construction, order, or significance of words and word meanings. Examples include specific tropes such as simile, metaphor, personification.
6. **Imagery** -- the author's use of sensory related words to project a picture and evoke the reader's emotions. Imagery deals with the five senses: sight, touch, taste, smell, hearing. It is not necessary to use the scientific names of these senses.
7. **Irony** -- indicates an intention opposite of what is actually stated. Irony is a recognition of reality different from its appearance. The tone in an ironic work may be subtly sarcastic.
8. **Language** -- Like word choice, the language of a passage has control over tone. Consider language to be the entire body of words used in a text, not simply isolated bits of diction, imagery or detail. Different from tone, these words describe the force or quality of the diction, images, details *as a whole*. These words describe *how* the work is written. (*See separate handout on "Terms to Describe Language."*)
9. **Narrative Pace** -- the pace of the written work. The pace may slow as the writer is placing emphasis on a particular line and quicken to show building momentum or excitement.
10. **Narrative Technique** -- the manner in which the author tells the story. Examples include: interior monologue, dialogue, soliloquy, aside, stream-of-consciousness, flashback, foreshadow. Less common structures include letter or diary narration.
11. **Organization** -- the order in which ideas are presented. Types include
 - Chronological, the order in which events take place,
 - Spatial, the physical description of persons and places,
 - Cause and Effect, one event brings about another, and
 - *In medias res*, starting in the middle of the narrative and returning to the beginning
12. **Phrasing** -- used to establish rhythm and as a single part of speech in a sentence. Phrases may be prepositional, adjectival, adverbial, or fragments. They also reveal parallelism of thought and structure.
13. **Point of View** -- the perspective or vantage point from which the narrative is told, including: first person, third-person, limited (minor or major character), and omniscient. Also consider whether your narrator is reliable or unreliable.

14. **Sentences** -- the way the sentences are constructed. Does the sentence length fit the subject matter? What variety of sentences are present? Why is the sentence pattern effective? Are the sentences in natural order? Is there any use of juxtaposition or repetition? Pay special attention to sentence beginnings.
 - Sentence Length – telegraphic (shorter than five words in length), short (approximately five words in length), medium (approximately eighteen words in length), long and involved (thirty words or more in length)
 - Sentence Structure -- fragments, simple, compound, complex, compound-complex or periodic. Sentence structure also deals with elements such as dependent and independent clauses.
 - Sentence Purpose -- declarative, imperative, interrogative, and exclamatory
 - Sentence Patterns – loose, periodic, cumulative, balanced, parallel, inverted

15. **Sound Devices** -- these elements appeal to the reader’s sense of rhyme, rhythm, and sound, and include: onomatopoeia, alliteration, caesura, eye rhyme, assonance, consonance, internal rhyme, heroic couplet, meter.

16. **Syntax** -- the way in which words are combined to make a sentence. Syntax deals with the grammatical structure of the sentence and the word order, including techniques such as inversion.

17. **Structure** -- the structure is the planned framework of the work, including the sequence of events. The story line from the exposition to the end constitutes structure, as well as the division of the work into chapters, parts, stanzas, or paragraphs.

18. **Tone** -- tone is most easily described as “tone of voice” in a narrative passage. It can also be implied through descriptions of setting or characters. Tone reveals attitude, but tone is not always the same as attitude in characterization. For example, a character may speak sarcastically to hide his/her attitude.

