**AP Language Rhetorical Terms: List 3**

1. **abstract** - words or phrases denoting ideas, qualities, and conditions that exist but cannot be seen. Love, for example, is an abstract term; so are *happiness, beauty*, and *patriotism*. The opposite of abstract terms are concrete ones—words that refer to things that are tangible, visible, or otherwise physically evident. *Hunger* is abstract, but *hamburger* is concrete. The best writing blends the abstract with the concrete, with concrete terms used in greater proportion to clarify abstract ones. Writing two steeped in abstract words or terms tends to be vague and unfocused.
2. ***ad populem* argument**- A fallacious argument that appeals to the passions and prejudices of a group

rather than its reason. An appeal for instance, to support an issue because it’s the “American Way” is an

*ad populem* argument.

3. **allegory**- the device of using character and/or story elements symbolically to represent an abstraction in addition to the literal meaning. In some allegories, for example, an author may intend the characters to personify an abstraction like hope or freedom. The allegorical meaning usually deals with moral truth or generalization about human existence.

1. **anaphora** (un-NA-fuh-ruh) – the repetition of a group of words at the beginning of successive clauses
2. **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.) An aphorism can be a memorable summation of the author’s point.
3. **apostrophe**- a figure of speech that directly addresses an absent or imaginary person or a personified abstraction, such as liberty or love. The effect may add familiarity or emotional intensity. William Wordsworth addresses John Milton as he writes, “Milton, thou shouldst be living at this hour: England hath need of thee.”
4. **attitude**- A writer’s intellectual position or emotion regarding the subject of the writing. In essay sections, expect to be asked what the writer’s attitude is and how his or her language conveys that attitude.
5. **audience** - The group for whom a work is intended. For a writer, the audience is the reader who the

writer desires to persuade, inform, or entertain. Common sense tells us that a writer should always

write to the level and needs of the particular audience for whom the writing is meant. For example, if

you are writing for an unlettered audience, it is pointless to cram your writing with many literary allusions whose meanings will likely be misunderstood.

1. **claim** – The ultimate conclusion, generalization, or point, backed up by support, of an argument.
2. **cliché**- A stale image or expression, and the bane of good expository writing. “White as a ghost” is a

cliché; so is “busy as a bee.” Some clever writers can produce an effect by occasionally inserting a

cliché in their prose, but most simply invent a fresh image rather than cull one from the public stock.

11. **comparison/contrast**- A rhetorical mode used to develop essays that systematically match two items for similarities and differences.

12. **complex sentence** – A sentence with one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses

13. **concrete** - Said of words or terms denoting objects or conditions that are palpable, visible, or otherwise

evident to the senses. *Concrete* is the opposite of *abstract*. The difference between the two is a matter of

degrees. *Illness*, for example is abstract; *ulcer* is concrete; “sick to the stomach” falls somewhere between

the two. The best writing usually expresses abstract propositions in concrete terms.

14. **evidence** - the logical bases or supports for an assertion or idea. Logical arguments consist of at least

three elements: propositions, reasoning, and evidence. The first of these consists of the ideas that the

writer advocates or defends. The logical links by which the argument is advanced make up the second.

The statistics, facts, anecdotes and testimonial support provided by the writer in defense of the idea

constitute the evidence. In a research paper, evidence consisting of paraphrases or quotations from the

works of other writers must be documented in a footnote, endnote, or parenthetical reference. See also

**argumentation.**

15. **genre**- the major category into which a literary work fits. The basic divisions of literature are prose, poetry, and drama. However, genre is a flexible term: within these broad boundaries exist many subdivisions that are often called genres themselves. For example, prose can be divided into fiction (novels and short stories) or nonfiction (essays, biographies, autobiographies, etc.). Poetry can be divided into lyric, dramatic, narrative, epic, etc. Drama can be divided into tragedy, comedy, melodrama, farce, etc. On the AP language exam, expect the majority of the passages to be from the following genres: autobiography, biography, diaries, criticism, essays, and journalistic, political, scientific, and nature writing.

16. **inversion -** The reversal of the normal order of words in a sentence to achieve some desired effect, usually emphasis. Inversion is a technique long used in poetry, although most modern poets shun it as too artificial. For examples of inversion, see Shakespeare's "That Time of Year" (Sonnet 73).

17**. 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 independent clause, the clause would be a complete sentence. A work containing many loose sentences often seems informal, relaxed, and conversational. See *periodic sentence*.

18. **metonymy**- 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. A news release that claims “the White House declared” rather than “the President declared” is using metonymy.

19**. periodic sentence**- a sentence that presents its central meaning in a main clause at the end. This independent clause is preceded by a phrase of clause that cannot stand alone. For example: “Ecstatic with my AP scores, I let out a loud shout of joy!” The effect of a periodic sentence is to add emphasis and structural variety. See *loose sentence*.

20. **process analysis** - A type of development in writing that stresses how a sequence of steps produces a certain effect. For instance, explaining to the reader all of the steps involved in balancing a checkbook would be a process essay.

**21. rhetorical question** - A question posed with no expectation of receiving an answer. This device is often

used in public speaking in order to launch or further discussion: “Do you know what one of the

greatest pains is? One of the greatest pains in human nature is the pain of a new idea.”

22. **synecdoche** (suh-NEK-duh-kee) – a part of something used to refer to the whole—for example, “50 head of cattle” referring to 50 complete animals

23. **syntax** – The order of words in a sentence and their relationships to each other. Good syntax requires correct grammar as well as effective sentence patters, including unity, coherence, and emphasis.

24. **transition** – Words, phrases, sentences, or even paragraphs that indicate connections between the writer’s ideas. These transitions provide landmarks to guide the reader from one idea to the next so that the reader will not get lost. The following are some standard transitional devices:

*Time*: soon, immediately, afterward, later, meanwhile, in the meantime

*Place*: nearby, on the opposite side, further back, beyond

*Result*: as a result, therefore, thus, as a consequence

*Comparison*: similarly, likewise, also

*Contrast*: on the other hand, in contrast, nevertheless, by, yet, otherwise

*Addition*: furthermore, moreover, in addition, and, first, second, third, finally

*Example*: for example, for instance, to illustrate, as a matter of fact, on the whole, in other words

25. **unity** - The characteristic of having all parts contribute to the overall effect. In writing, an essay or paragraph is described as having *unity* when all sentences develop one idea. The worst enemy of unity is irrelevant material. A good rule is to delete all sentences that do not advance or prove the thesis (in an essay) or the topic sentence (in a paragraph).

Chad-1,2

Amber-3,4

Coleman-5,6

Grace-7,8

Sagarika-9,10

Michael-11,12

Sarah-13,14

Cole-15,16

Macey-17,18

Elif-19,20

Luke-21,22