Sophomore Literary Terms and Poetic Terms List: (2011)

**denotation**: The precise, literal meaning of a word without emotional associations or overtones

**connotation**: The associations, images, or impressions carried by a word, as opposed to the word’s literal meaning.

**alliteration**: The repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words or within words.

**consonance**: The close repetition of identical consonant sounds before and after differing vowel sounds.

**free verse**: poetry that is free of regular meter but instead follows more closely the natural speech rhythms

**prose**: any ordinary writing or speech that lacks the sustained and regular rhythmic patterns of poetry

**rhyme**: the similarity of sounds between two words

**meter**: the fixed or nearly fixed pattern of accented and unaccented syllables in a line of a poem that produces its rhythm

**onomatopoeia**: The use of words whose sound imitates the sound of the thing being named.

**rhythm**: The patterned flow of sound in poetry and prose.

**stanza**: A section or division of a poem; specifically, a grouping of lines into a recurring pattern.

**assonance**: The close repetition of middle vowel sounds between different consonant sounds.

**internal conflict**: A character’s struggle against or within himself or herself.

**external conflict**: A character’s struggle against nature or against another character.

**mood**: The prevailing emotional attitude in a literary work or in part of a work.

**situational irony**: The contrast between what is expected and what actually occurs.

**verbal irony**: A figure of speech in which there is a contrast between what is said and what is actually meant.

**dramatic irony**: A situation in literature in which the audience/reader is intended to understand something the characters do not

**hyperbole**: obvious exaggeration or overstatement meant to create humor or emphasis

**parody**: a composition that ridicules another composition by imitating and exaggerating aspects of its content, structure or style.

**oxymoron**: a figure of speech in which two contradictory words or phrases are combined in a single expression, giving the effect of a paradox

**paradox**: A statement that, while apparently self-contradictory, is nonetheless essentially true.

**tone**: The author’s attitude toward his or her subject, character and readers.

**foreshadowing**: The technique of giving hints or clues that suggest or prepare for events that occur later in a work.

**symbol**: Anything, usually something concrete that signifies or stands for something else, usually something abstract.

**allegory**: A work of literature in which characters, events, and settings represent abstract qualities and in which the writer intends a second meaning to be read beneath the surface story

**metaphor**: An implied analogy in which one thing is imaginatively and directly compared to or identified with another, dissimilar thing.

**allusion**: A passing reference to historical or fictional characters, places, or events, or to other works that the writer assumes the reader will recognize.

**personification**: A figure of speech in which human characteristics are attributed to animals, plants, inanimate objects, natural forces or abstract ideas.

**theme**: The central idea or message in a work of literature.

**imagery**: Figurative language that appeals to the five senses and creates “pictures in words.”

**analogy**: A comparison of similar things that uses something familiar to explain something unfamiliar.

**characterization**: the method through which an author creates the appearance and personality of a character

**simile**: A figure of speech that uses ‘like’, ‘as’, or ‘as if’ to compare two essentially different objects, actions, or attributes that share some aspect of similarity.

* denotes a literary/poetic term which is also a Freshman English term