

## Language Analysis: Useful Terms and Definitions

### Emotive Language

Emotive language tends to use strong, vivid words and phrases and is used to evoke a strong emotional response from the reader. In doing so, the writer emphasises some aspect of the situation. Perhaps the reader will feel anger, sympathy, sorrow, thankfulness, love... emotive language gives direction to the reader, helping them to be able to feel empathetic towards the characters or situation being described.

### Imperatives

Imperatives are command verbs which require an action or cessation of action. They tend to be staccato in nature rather than descriptive and flowery. Imperatives can change the speed of the narration, communicating urgency (**sit down**)

### Comparative Adjectives

As the name suggests, comparative adjectives compare **two** things and may be used to demonstrate a change. They draw distinctions between similar objects, increasing the reader's understanding of the objects. Usually a suffix of -er is added to the adjective (slow, **slower**), unless a superlative adjective is needed...

### Superlative Adjectives

I kind of think of these as super adjectives. Superlatives compare more than two things and tend to denote the extreme ends of the spectrum of the adjective in question. Here the suffix is -est. This illustrates the writer's point of view regarding the relative importance of the thing or progression (or lack-there-of) (slow, slower, **slowest**).

### Colloquial Language

Colloquial language is informal language. I always understood this to mean language that is used in general conversation, which feels comfy and familiar. It's kinda chatty language <----- an example of colloquial language! It tends to be more flowery and casual, building a sense of familiarity and togetherness. Sometimes an author will use colloquial language which is not that familiar to them but respects the vernacular of the character. This gives their writing more authenticity, making it realistic to the framework of the story. For example, colloquial language of someone

in Northern Ireland would be very different from the colloquial language of the Cornish or the Dales.

## **Literary Techniques: Useful Terms and Definitions**

### **Simile**

Think in terms of similar to or like. A simile compares two different things using something abstract they have in common. They are easy to pick up on because they contain 'like' or 'as' to highlight that similarity. Example: she blushed as red as a tomato.

### **Metaphor**

These are quite easy to muddle with a simile. Just remember simile always uses 'like' or 'as'. A metaphor has a similar effect as a simile. However, instead of using 'like' or 'as' to compare two things, it declares they are the same. In this way, metaphors tend to be more direct and therefore more powerful, creating a stronger picture in the reader's mind eye.

I love metaphorical language! Here are some examples of the different types of metaphors your child might find in the extracts and their uses:

- **Simple metaphor:** He is my rock. *Well known, used in everyday language.*
- **Creative metaphor:** Her eyes were pools of endless sorrow. *Offer fresh perspective/new.*
- **Extended metaphor:** “All the world’s a stage, And all the men and women merely players; They have their exits and their entrances, And one man in his time plays many parts, His acts being seven ages” (Shakespeare). *Whole paragraph/ piece of writing dedicated to the metaphor.*
- **Mixed metaphor:** The company was a well-oiled machine that hit the ground running. *Two or more dissimilar metaphors for comedic or confusion purposes!*
- **Dead metaphors:** The heart of the matter. *Excessively used metaphors.*
- **Visual metaphor:** A dove represents peace. *Represent abstract ideas and concepts.*
- **Implied metaphor:** The silence was deafening. *Suggested rather than explicitly stated.*
- **Synthetic metaphor:** The spices danced on my tongue. *Used to compare one sense to another (here, because the spices are usually tasted but instead they are being felt on the tongue).*

## **Imagery**

These are what I would call vivid adjectives and strong verbs. These engage the reader's senses by painting detailed picture. For example: *sun-kissed waves; ferocious waves; waves pounding against the cliffs and plunging back into the sea*. The picture is painted in such a way that the reader can engage their senses and imagine they actually feel/hear/taste/touch/see that which is being described.

## **Alliteration**

A favourite of my Charlotte's when she was younger, alliteration uses the repetition of consonants, usually at the beginning of words. For example: *The waves were really sloshing, slurping and slobbering with their salty lips*. Alliteration offers the reader an auditory rhythmic pulse to the narration. This emphasises the importance of this part of the writing making it memorable and appealing, eliciting some sort of response from the reader.

## **Personification**

This is the attribution of human characteristics and qualities to inanimate objects, animals or abstract concepts. If you look to the example above in alliteration, you'll see the writer also snuck in a sneaky personification of 'salty lips' when describing the waves. Other examples: the waves winked in the sunlight. I'm not sure why all my examples are to do with waves but hey ho! Personification engages the reader by offering a human characteristic to an inanimate object. This encourages relational empathy, adding depth and creating a more immersive experience for the reader.

## **Onomatopoeia**

A favourite of Abigail's, an onomatopoeia is a word that sounds like the thing it is. It phonetically resembles the sound that it makes. Examples of onomatopoeia words are pop, crackle, bang, sizzle, crash, roar, rumble...I could go on. They are great fun and fairly easy to find! Onomatopoeia creates particularly vivid imagery, as well as adding a sense of sound to the reading. This can help transport the reader into the writing. It can add excitement, action and humour.

## **Repetition**

It basically does what it says on the tin: it is the repetition of words, phrases or sounds to emphasise, establish a rhythm or reinforce ideas. A powerful example is Churchill's speech during World War 2: *We shall not flag nor fail*.

*We shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France and on the seas and oceans. We shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island whatever the cost may be; we shall fight on beaches, landing grounds, in fields, in streets and on the hills.*

### **Rule of Three**

This is really another form of repetition but done three times. It is usually three adjectives or phrases used to describe something. An example: *So various, so beautiful, so new*. The rule of three aids understanding, memory and interest. It emphasises, adds nuance and emotional layers and increases the persuasiveness of writing.

### **Juxtaposition**

This is a means of highlighting the differences between two contrasting ideas, images or concepts by placing them side by side. For example: *'When the ocean rises, the seashore disappears'* and *'All's fair in love and war'* (Shakespeare). Juxtaposition highlights the differences between two contrasting things. It may encourage nuanced and critical thinking, adding layers and hinting at a link between two seemingly unrelated things.

### **Short Staccato Sentences**

Staccato sentences are simple and easy to understand sentences. Their beauty lies not in their complexity but in their repetition. They are written back-to-back for emphasis, clarity, or to increase pace for drama or excitement. Example: *Get out of my way! Quick! Now!*

### **Symbolism**

Symbolism is the use of symbols to represent ideas or qualities. For example: *The wild landscape of the moors symbolizes the tempestuous passions of the characters and the changeability of people*. The effects of symbolism include creating more emotional depth by creating a bond with the reader. They add a visual element to express complex themes or character traits, leaving a lasting impression on the reader.

### **Hyperbole**

Hyperbole is an exaggeration that should not be taken literally. For example: *I was dying of laughter*. Using hyperbole emphasises something within the story, such as enhancing the characteristics of someone or something, drawing attention to it. It can evoke strong feelings and is useful

in conveying over-the-top feeling. Hyperbole can also be used to communicate a poignant point or for comedic value.

### **Anaphora**

Anaphora is the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses. For example: *In every cry of every Man, In every infant's cry of fear, In every voice, In every ban.* Using anaphora creates rhythm, making the writing easier to read and more memorable. It can also emphasise ideas, evoke emotion, link ideas and is a creative way to write a list!

### **Listing**

A number of connected items or ideas written down one after the other to emphasise a particular quality.

### **Zooming In or Out**

The narrowing or widening of the narrative focus.

### **Climax**

The most intense point in the development of the narrative.

## **Structural Techniques: Useful Terms and Definitions**

### **Narrative Voice**

The narrative voice is also known as the point of view. It can be 1st, 2nd or 3rd person. A strong narrative voice is crucial as it affects how the reader relates to the characters, events and shapes storytelling decisions such as the pace and level of detail. However, it can also convey cultural and social contexts which increases the understanding of the stories theme. First person narration offers an intimate connection with the character's thoughts, feelings and motivations. Third person is more omniscient and therefore offers a far broader perspective of multiple characters. Whatever the choice, the narrative voice should be consistent otherwise the reader may become confused.

### **Tense**

This can be past, present or future, although it could be more than one if there are flashbacks or flash-forwards.

## **Openings**

The opening of any writing helps in setting the mood, describing the setting, introducing the characters and establishing the narration.

## **Endings**

The ending usually brings a sense of closure to the text. Often there is resolution of a problem, wrapping up any loose ends and answering any questions the body of the text put forward. It may give insight into a character's development. Very occasionally, often when there is a second part to come, it ends the story on a cliffhanger.

## **Links Between the Beginning and the Ending**

This describes the narrative link between the beginning of the text and the end of the text.

## **Linear Narrative**

Linear Narrative refers to a chronological narrative structure where events are arranged in the order of time and is the simplest to follow.

## **Non-Linear Narrative**

Non-linear narrative refers to a more complex and challenging narrative structure which may feature flashbacks, flash-forwards or alternate timelines. The events are therefore in a non-sequential order, requiring the reader to pay attention in order to understand what is happening.

## **Cyclical Structure**

A cyclical structure occurs when the ending of the prose mirrors or echoes its starting point, emphasising themes or a character's development. It offers a sense of closure and regenerative circularity.

## **Exposition**

This is the introduction of background information on characters, events or settings and so helps to anchor the reader.

## **Foreshadowing**

Foreshadowing is an advance hint as to something which will occur later on in the story. The clues are subtle and rely on the reader to notice and interpret them correctly. Foreshadowing adds depth and complexity to the narrative, and it creates a nuanced narrative which if picked up on by the reader helps to create a sense of anticipation and suspense for the reader.

## **Sentence Forms**

It is useful to know the names of the different sentence forms for talking about language and structure in the English IGCSE, so I've included them below. Any that aren't familiar to your student you can look up, but most are self-explanatory:

- Declarative
- Interrogative
- Imperative
- Exclamative
- Simple
- Compound
- Complex
- Impact/fragment