

Language Techniques (Language Devices) & Structural Devices

This resource covers the language devices we should be aware of as we prepare for our exams in year 11.

Please take the time to read through these and let me know if you have any questions!

Linguistic Devices

Alliteration	Repetition of consonant sounds. <i>Fair is foul, and foul is fair.</i>
Allusion	Making reference to another story or phrase. <i>She was like Eve in her garden.</i>
Anaphora	Repetition of a word or phrase at the start of several sentences or lines. <i>I have a dream...</i>
Anecdote	A short interesting story used to support a point being made.
Anthropomorphism	Giving human characteristics to an animal, god or object. <i>Animals in Animal Farm</i>
Assonance	Repetition of vowel sounds. <i>Go slowly over the road.</i>
Asyndetic listing	Words are listed without the use of a conjunction. <i>I bought shoes, socks, a hat, trainers...</i>
Colloquial language	Informal, conversational speech
Extended metaphor	A comparison that continues throughout a whole paragraph or text.
Hyperbole	An exaggeratory word or phrase. <i>I've told you a thousand times before.</i>
Imagery	Language used to create images and improve the reader's experience through their senses. Metaphor, simile and sensory language fall into this category.
Juxtaposition	Contrasting two ideas to highlight their differences. <i>The stars shone brightly in the inky blackness.</i>
Metaphor	A comparison – made directly or indirectly – without using "like" or "as." <i>She is rock.</i>
Onomatopoeia	A word that sounds like the thing it is describing. <i>Bang, crash.</i>
Oxymoron	A phrase that appears to contradict itself. <i>Deafening silence</i>
Pathetic fallacy	gives human emotions to naturally-occurring things, often related to weather or natural phenomena.

Personification	Giving human characteristics to an inanimate object. <i>The trees cried out for water.</i>
Plosive	Short burst of sound using b/d/g/k/p/t. <i>Get back! Get down, go!</i>
Polysyndetic listing	Words are listed using a conjunction. <i>I bought trainers, and socks, and shoes and hats.</i>
Religious imagery	Using religious motifs to help create meaning. <i>His hair rested like a crown of thorns upon his head.</i>
Rhetorical question	A question asked without the expectation of an answer.
Semantic field	A set of words relating to the same topic. <i>I gunned the trigger of the chainsaw.</i>
Sibilance	Repetition of 's' and 'sh' sounds. <i>Snakes slither silently.</i>
Simile	A comparison that says something is like another. <i>She leapt like a cat.</i>
Tricolon/ Triadic structure	Three parallel words, phrases or clauses. <i>I came. I saw. I conquered.</i>
Zoomorphism	Giving animal characteristics to non animals e.g. humans and objects. <i>She roared at the class to stop talking.</i>

Wider Literary Devices

Antagonist	The enemy of the main character in a narrative.
Antithesis	A person or thing that is the direct opposite of someone or something else.
Bildungsroman	A novel dealing with one person's spiritual and psychological growth and maturation.
Characterisation	creation or construction of a fictional character.
Dramatic irony	The audience are aware of the impact of a character's actions or words, normally for dramatic effect.
Foil	a character who contrasts with another character, typically, a character who contrasts with the protagonist, in order to better highlight or differentiate certain qualities of the protagonist.
Genre	Style or category of literature, film, text
Irony	Using language to create the opposite meaning. <i>I love doing more work than I need to.</i>
Monologue	A long speech by a character
Mood	The feeling created from the writing
Motif	an object, image, sound, or phrase that is repeated throughout a story to point toward the story's larger theme. <i>E.g. blood, nature, stars in Macbeth.</i>

Narrative perspective	The point of view from which a story is told, often explained in terms of omniscient narrator, limited narrator, first person narrative perspective etc.
Pathos	rhetorical appeal to audience's emotions
Prose	A conversational way of speaking which doesn't have a set rhythm or structure. Verse in contrast always has a set rhythm and structure.
Protagonist	Main character in the narrative
Tone	The writer's attitude that is expressed.
Verse	Writing arranged with a metrical rhythm, typically having a rhyme.
Voice	The style of the author used to convey their views and personality within the writing.

Structural Devices

Analepsis	A flashback to something that has happened previously in the narrative.
Chronological structure	The story follows the order that things happen in.
Climax	Dramatic turning point in the novel, where the protagonist is pitted against an opposing force in order to resolve the story's conflict.
Cyclical structure	The end of the story is very similar to the beginning.
Exposition	opening of a story
Falling action	after the dramatic confrontation of the climax the plot's tension decreases
Inciting incident	An event that introduces a problem or conflict for characters (prophecies presented to Macbeth and Banquo)
Media res	When the narrative begins in the middle of the action.
Non-linear structure	A disrupted or disjointed narrative that doesn't follow a set pattern.
Prolepsis	A flash forward to something that will happen in the narrative.
Repetition	Repeating a word or phrase several times.
Resolution	the scene(s) forming the end of a story; narrative arc and character arcs often tied together, questions might be answered.
Structure	Sequence in which you present the narrative

END OF RESOURCE