

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH LITERARY APPRECIATION

1. **Figurative Speech** – Figure of speech: Use of images or mental pictures, collectively referred to as imagery in writing – in prose or poetry. E.g. Simile, Metaphor.
2. **Proverbs**: Popular sayings and words of wisdom, with words of advice or warning. E.g. It takes two to make a quarrel. A stitch in time saves nine.
3. **Idiom**: Words, phrases or expressions peculiar to a people or country. The meaning is not obvious through the knowledge of individual words. E.g. He went into coma but came round after a while. The old man ultimately kicked the bucket.
4. **Literary Style**: Special features employed by the author to enrich his work. It includes narrative technique, poetic and non-poetic language, imagery and diction.
5. **Subject Matter/Theme**: What the story, prose or poetry is all about. Possible themes that can be explored in a novel, play or any piece of writing include: Poverty, Injustice, discrimination, slavery, prostitution, racism, persecution, politics, childlessness, immorality, bribery and corruption, witchcraft.
6. **TYPES OF POEMS – CATEGORIES OF POEMS**:
 - (i) **An Ode**: Poem written in celebration of some special event or thing, expressing noble sentiments and feelings. E.g. “Ode to the Nightingale” (a migratory bird that sings sweetly by night as well as by day).
 - (ii) **A Lyric**: Poetry, which expresses intense personal emotions of love, joy, sorrow and death.
 - (iii) **A ballad**: A simple song or poem that tells an old story. E.g. “The Rhyme of the Ancient Marina”. (Marina = Harbour designed for pleasure boats often with hotels).
 - (iv) **An Elegy**: A poem or song of sorrow especially for the dead. The prevailing mood in elegy is normally that of gloom, sadness and depression.
 - (v) **Dirge**: When an elegy is clearly a song, it is called “dirge”.
 - (vi) **A Sonnet**: Is a poem, usually of 14 lines written to a regular rhyme scheme.
 - (vii) **Blank verse**: Is a poem without a regular rhyme scheme.
 - (viii) **Traditional poem**: This is a poem, which belongs to the oral tradition of poetry in Africa.
7. **Assonance**: There is assonance (in poetry) when the same vowel sound is repeated in close succession. E.g. Sharper / Garter.
8. **Tragedy**: In drama where serious issues often end in death or grave misfortune, creating feelings of sorrow in the reader or audience.
9. **Comedy**: In drama in which light issues are dealt with, creating feelings of joy and relief.
10. **Melodrama**: A serious play with exaggerated action and incredible turn of events aimed at shocking the reader or audience.
11. **Farce**: A comic play with exaggerated action and absurd incidents aimed solely at creating fun and laughter. The sole objective is to create intense amusement in the reader, or loud laughter in the audience.

ELEMENTS OF DRAMA AND THEATRE

12. **Prologue**: An introductory scene to a play or an address spoken before the commencement of a dramatic performance.
13. **Epilogue**: A short closing scene or final address spoken at the close of a dramatic performance.
14. **Interlude**: A short piece of entertainment between Acts of a play.
15. **Conflict**: Clashes of forces in a play between individuals and groups. It moves a play forward.
16. **Dramatist Personae**: Full list of characters in a play.

17. **Cast:** Set of actors and actresses playing the different roles in a play. On stage, the actor or actress becomes a character.
18. **Denouement:** Moment of resolution of a conflict.
19. **Tragi – Comedy:** A serious drama which has elements of the comic in greater proportion.
20. **Villain:** The principal antagonist in a play is known as villain.
21. **Suspense:** The device by which an author retains the interest and excitement of his or her reader or listener.
22. **Climax:** The moment of peak tension in a play.
23. **Aside:** The practice of an actor or actress speaking confidentially to the audience when not alone on a stage.
24. **Allegory:** A story in which the characters and events are used as symbolic.
25. **Parody:** A work of art which attempts an imitation of the style of another author in a funny and exaggerated manner.
26. **Diction:** The effective choice and use of words, style or manner of speaking and writing.
27. **Narrative text:** A passage which recounts a story.
28. **Epistolary art:** A literary work written in the form of a letter.
29. **Theme:** The dominant idea in a piece of literary work. (Injustice, freedom, etc.)
30. **An Octave:** A verse of 8 lines.
31. **Hyperbole:** The effective use of exaggeration in a literary work. E.g. “The great Neptune’s ocean cannot wash out this filthy hand”, “His tears filled a bucket”, “A spittle could do for a bathe”.
32. **Litotes:** An understatement employed for the purpose of enhancing the effect of the ideas expressed, for the sake of emphasis and also to create humorous effect. This is the opposite of hyperbole, e.g. “His illiterate uncle speaks English better than the lecturer”.
33. **Apostrophe:** This is a device by which an actor turns from the audience or a writer from readers to address a person who usually is either absent or deceased, or an inanimate object, or an abstract idea. Oh! Death!
34. **Simile:** This is a specific comparison by means of words like “like” or “as”. E.g. As big as an Elephant. As agile as a monkey.
35. **Metaphor:** This is direct comparison of two things made more or less in a non-formed way. E.g. John was a lion in the battle field. (Cf. Simile: John fought like a lion in the battle field.)
36. **Onomatopoeia:** This is the imitation of natural sounds by words. E.g. “humming of bees”, “the cackling of hens”, “the whizzing arrows”.
37. **Euphemism:** The use of delicate or inoffensive expression in place of coarse, sordid or otherwise unpleasant association. “She has been put in a family way by her boy friend” (pregnant). “He has passed away” (died). “I want to ease myself” (go to toilet, urinate), etc.
38. **Irony:** Speech conveying a meaning contrary to the literal sense. (A dryly humorous or lightly sarcastic mode of speech) The expression of one’s meaning by saying something which is the direct opposite of one’s thoughts, in order to make one’s remarks forceful. Cf. Irony of life, Irony of fate, in situation which is desirable, but unfortunately turns to evil. E.g. If a poor man inherits a large fortune and died a month later, one might call it one of the ironies of life. – Ironical – opposite, sarcastic, contradiction to real sense.
39. **Paradox:** This is a statement or sentiment that appears contradictory common sense yet is true to fact. Something seemingly absurd, or foolish, yet in reality is true. E.g. (i) The first shall be the last. (ii) The boy is the father of the man.
40. **Oxymoron:** combination of two contradictory or incongruous words. E.g. (i) Cruel kindness (ii) Living deaths (iii) Dear wounds (iv) Fair storms (v) Freezing fires.
41. **Personification:** The representation of inanimate objects or abstract ideas as living things. (i) The sky wears a smile (gloomy look, mournful look) (ii) Necessity is the mother of invention.

42. **Rhetorical question:** Asking a question not to gain information but to attest more emphatically the obvious answer. (i) Did you help me when I needed help? (ii) Did you do anything to lessen my load?
43. **Synecdoche:** Figurative locution whereby the part is made to stand for the whole, the whole for a part, etc. (i) 50 heads of cattle = heads = cattle (ii) The best brains = brains = intellectually brilliant persons. (iii) Employ more hands (persons, workers)
44. **Metonymy:** Use of a word or phrase for another to which it bears an important relation – as the effect for the cause, the abstract for the concrete. (i) An avid reader of Shakespeare (His plays). (ii) The hostess kept a good table (food implied).
45. **Fable:** Stories of animals, nor based or fact, but conveying some universal moral truths. Animals are given attributes of human beings.
46. **Myths:** Story, especially concepts of religious beliefs and gods, handed down from olden times, about the early history of race, explanations of events, such as seasons.
47. **Legend:** Old story handed down from the past, especially of doubtful truth. E.g. The legends of King Arthur. Story coming down from the past, especially one popularly regarded as historical although not verifiable.
48. **Parable:** Short fictitious narrative, designed to illuminate a spiritual truth or moral lesson. – Good Samaritan – The Sower – Ten Virgins
N.B. Fables and parables are forms of allegory.
49. **Epigram:** A short poem or saying expressing an idea in a clever and amusing way. Witty paradoxical saying (i) To look is less easy than to see. (ii) To be clever is good. To be brave is best.
50. **Conceit:** An elaborate, often extravagant metaphor or simile making an analogy between totally dissimilar things.
Cf. No 44. E.g. (iii) “Death has no respect for the sceptre or the crown. (Crown = King).
51. **Metre:** Verse rhythm, fixed arrangement of accented and unaccented syllables.
52. **Rhyme:** Sameness of sound of the ending or two or more words of lines of verse. E.g. day – play; measure – pleasure – puff-rough.
53. **Rhythm:** Regular succession of weak and strong stresses, accents, sounds or movements in speech, music and dancing.
54. **Epic:** Poetic accounts of the deeds of great heroes, or of nation’s past history. E.g. Homer’s illiad.
55. **Didactic:** To teach. A poem which teaches, especially morals.
56. **Burlesque:** Poem, which imitates speech, behaviour of somebody for purpose of fun. (See Parody).
57. **Anecdote:** short, usually amusing story about some real person or event (e.g. at celebrations by Masters of Ceremonies).
58. **Anagram:** Word made by changing the order of the letters in another word. E.g. Plum – Lump. Let’s play anagram. Poem – Mope.
59. **Limeric:** Humorous or nonsense poem of five lines.
60. **Bathos:** (In rhetorics) sudden change in writing and speech from what is deeply moving or sublime to what is foolish or unimportant.
61. **Pathos:** Quality in speech or writing, which arouses a feeling of pity, sympathy or tenderness.
62. **Pun:** A play on sound of words that sound alike but different in meaning. E.g. had, heard.
63. **Mime – Pantomime:** A play acted without words – only gestures. A dumb show not necessarily by the dumb.
64. **Dramatic Irony:** A situation in which the audience shares with the author the knowledge which a character is ignorant of.
65. **Crisis:** The turning point in an action or development in an incident or story which is critical.
66. **Catharsis:** A time the audience is purged of emotions in a tragedy.
67. **Catastrophe:** A point of failure or disappointment for an actor.
68. **Comic relief:** A situation in a tragic play where humorous characters are brought in to relieve tension or to bring laughter (see, clown, jester, humorist).

69. **Soliloquy:** A situation in which a character – alone or on a stage utters his thoughts aloud (Solo = alone; loquor – speak).
70. **Hallucination:** State of mind in which one sees something not present or real. Something imagined. Drunken people or sick people are sometimes subject to hallucinations.
71. **Audience:** The spectators or the observers of a play.
72. **Epithet:** Adjective or descriptive phrase used to indicate the character of somebody or something, as in (i) “Pope Gregory the great.” (ii) Peter the Lion heart. (iii) Rev. Fr. Ogwuaja.
73. **Malatropism:** Misuse of a word, especially in mistake for one that resembles it, causing amusement. E.g. (i) Come, I will exhort you (escort). (ii) We eat lice everyday (rice) (iii) Illusion / allusion.
74. **Cliché:** Idea or expression that has been too much used and is now out-dated.
75. **Allusion:** Indirect reference to something. Joana is an adopted child but she does not like people to make any allusion to it.
76. **Refrain:** Lines of a song which are repeated, especially at the end of each verse.
77. **Epitaph:** Words commemorating a dead person. E.g. as cut on a tombstone. “He took my place and died for me.” (Christopher c.f. Biafra war story).
78. **Anticlimax:** Refers to sequence of events that abruptly diminish in dignity or importance. E.g. Among the great achievements of the Eze Ekwueme were the reunification of his warring communities; the establishment of a Town Union, and the revival of New Yam Festival.
79. **Antithesis:** This is the matching or comparison (juxtaposition) of two words, phrases, or sentences, opposed in meaning, to give emphasis to contrasting ideas. E.g. “*To err is human, to forgive is divine*” [By Alexander Pope, English Poet]. “*United we stand, divided we fall.*”
80. **Climax:** refers to arrangements of words or sentences the order of their importance, the least in importance coming first. E.g. “In their school system, it is outrage to be late to school; it is sinful to miss a class, and a crime to be absent from school.

See also! “Gateway to Success in English” – Chapter Four – Page 129 – 142.