**AP Literature Frequently Used Literary Terms**

Directions: Write the word, definition and an example of the term on a notecard. Complete this by Monday for full credit. You may work together but everyone must have their own notecards.

Apostrophe – A figure of speech wherein the speaker talks directly to something that is nonhuman or dead.

Bildungsroman- A novel that recounts the development of an individual from childhood or adolescence to maturity, to the point at which the protagonist recognizes their place in the world. Examples: *Catcher in the Rye*, *Their Eyes Were Watching God, Invisible Man* and *Kite Runner.*

Conceit or Controlling Image – In poetry, *conceit* doesn’t mean stuck-up. It refers to a startling or unusual metaphor, or to a metaphor developed and expanded upon over several lines. When the image dominates and shapes the entire work, it’s called a *controlling image*. A metaphysical conceit is reserved for metaphysical poems only.

Couplet – A pair of lines that end in rhyme.

Diction and syntax – The author’s choice of words. Whether to use *wept* or *cried* is a question of diction. *Syntax* refers to the ordering and structuring of the words. Whether to say, *The pizza was smothered in cheese and pepperoni; I devoured it greedily, or Greedily, I devoured the cheese-and-pepperoni-smothered pizza*, is a question of syntax.

Dramatic irony – When the audience knows something that the characters in the drama do not.

Enjambment – The continuation of a syntactic unit from one line or couplet of a poem to the next with no pause.

Foreshadowing – An event or statement in a narrative that suggests, in miniature, a larger event that comes later.

Hyperbole – Exaggeration or deliberate overstatement

Metaphor, Extended Metaphor and Simile – A *metaphor* is a comparison or analogy that states one thing is another. *His eyes were burning coals*, or *In the morning, the lake is covered in liquid gold*. It’s a simple point, so keep it straight: a simile is just like a metaphor but softens the full-out equation of things, often, but not always, by using *like* or *as*. *His eyes were like burning coals,* or *In the morning the lake is covered in what seems to be liquid gold*. An extended metaphor is a metaphor that is elaborated on throughout the entire passage or poem.

Metonymy: From the Greek for “change of name” a figure of speech in which one thing is represented by another that is commonly and often physically associated with it.

Omniscient narrator – This is a third-person narrator who sees, like God, into each character’s mind and understands all the action going on.

Paradox – A situation or statement that seems to contradict itself, but on closer inspection, does not.

Personification – Giving an inanimate object human qualities or form. The darkness of the forest became the figure of a beautiful, pale skinned woman in night-black clothes.

Point of view – The perspective from which the action of a novel (or narrative poem) is presented, whether the action is presented by one character or from different vantage points over the course of the novel. Be sensitive to *point of view*, because ETS likes to ask questions about it, and they also like to you to mention point of view in your essays.

Protagonist – The main character of a novel or play.

Stanza – A group of lines in verse, roughly analogous in function to the paragraph in prose.

Subjective – This treatment uses the interior or personal view of a single observer and is typically colored with that observer’s emotional responses.

Symbolism – A device in literature where an object represents an idea.

Synecdoche: a figure of speech in which a part of something is used to represent a whole.