Literary Devices Vocabulary

1. **Alliteration:** a series of words that contain the same consonant sound in the first syllable
   1. **Ex.** Angels ate apples (all begin with the same letter: “a”)
2. **Allusion:** A brief, usually indirect reference to a person, place, or event--real or fictional
   1. **Ex.** “You make the sun shine brighter than Doris Day” (Wham!)
3. **Assonance:** a series of words that contain the same vowel sound in the first syllable
   1. **Ex.** Angels ate cake (all contain the long “a” sound)
4. **Hyperbole:** truth is exaggerated for humor or emphasis
   1. **Ex.** “Maybe Kino has cut off his own head and destroyed himself” (Steinbeck 53).
5. **Metaphor:** a comparison made between two unlike objects
   1. **Ex.** “Above, the surface of the water was an undulating mirror of brightness” (Steinbeck 17).
6. **Onomatopoeia:** The formation or use of words that imitate the sounds associated with the objects or actions they refer to
   1. **Ex.** “You put the boom boom into my heart” (Wham!)
7. **Oxymoron:** contradictory terms that appear side by side
   1. **Ex.** Big shrimp; icy hot
8. **Personification:** giving human qualities or characteristics to non-human objects
   1. **Ex.** “Behind him Juana’s fire leaped into flame and threw spears of light through the chinks of the brushhouse wall…” (Steinbeck 2).
9. **Simile:** a comparison made between two unlike objects, using the words “like” or “as” in the comparison
   1. **Ex.** “She looked up at him, her eyes as cold as the eyes of a lioness” (Steinbeck 7).
10. **Connotation**: an emotional feeling about a word
    1. **Ex.** Slender and slim evoke positive emotions compared to the words emaciated and lanky
11. **Denotation:** the literal dictionary definition of a word.
    1. **Ex.** Thin, skinny, trim, emaciated, slender, lanky, and slim all mean of limited size; of slight consistency.
12. **Foreshadow:** hints or clues of events to occur later in a story
    1. **Ex.** “Kino saw a ghostly gleam, and then the shell closed down” (Steinbeck 18).
13. **Mood:** a general feeling that is created by the tone; usually described in expressions of feeling and emotions
    1. **Ex.** Fear, surprise, anger, hatred, contentment, jealousy
14. **Symbolism**: the use of creative objects or symbols to represent a deeper meaning or something larger than the object itself.
    1. **Ex.** Turkey is a symbol of Thanksgiving
15. **Tone:** the author’s attitude or point of view toward a subject
    1. **Ex.** nostalgic, sentimental, moralizing, humorous or serious, personal or impersonal, subjective or objective, casual or passionate.
16. **Style:** reveals the author’s uniqueness and to get a point across to the audience
    1. **Ex.** Word choice, imagery, sentence structure, foreshadowing
17. **Dialect:** a variety of language used by people in a particular geographic area
    1. **Ex.** “I’m a’fixin’ to go to the store.”
18. **Rhythm pattern:** the recurring alternation of strong and weak elements in the flow of sound
    1. **Ex.** “End of passion play, crumbling away /I’m your source of self-destruction /Veins that pump with fear, sucking darkest clear / Leading on your death’s construction / Taste me you will see / More is all you need / Dedicated to / How I’m killing you” =ABCBDDEE (Metallica)
19. **Repetition:** An instance of using a word, phrase, or clause more than once in a short passage--dwelling on a point
    1. **Ex.** The Chorus, “Wake Me Up Before You Go Go”
20. **Sensory images** the use of words to create pictures in the reader’s mind; using the 5 senses
    1. **Ex.** "The artist's life nourishes itself on the particular, the concrete. . . . Start with the mat-green fungus in the pine woods yesterday: words about it, describing it, and a poem will come. . . . Write about the cow, Mrs. Spaulding's heavy eyelids, the smell of vanilla flavouring in a brown bottle. That's where the magic mountains begin." (Sylvia Plath, *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath*, edited by Karen Kukil, Anchor, 2000)

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