
Professional Certificate in IB Teaching in English

Literature Studies in IB English

Allegory

An allegory is a literary device where characters, events, or settings represent abstract ideas or moral qualities. These symbols are used to convey a deeper meaning or message to the reader. For example, George Orwell's "Animal Farm" is an allegory that uses farm animals to represent different political figures and ideologies.

Alliteration

Alliteration is the repetition of initial consonant sounds in a series of words within a line of poetry or prose. This technique is often used to create a musical or rhythmic effect. For example, in the phrase "she sells seashells by the seashore," the repetition of the "s" sound is an example of alliteration.

Anaphora

Anaphora is a rhetorical device where a word or phrase is repeated at the beginning of successive clauses or sentences. This technique is often used for emphasis or to create a poetic effect. For example, in Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, the repeated phrase "I have a dream" is an example of anaphora.

Antagonist

The antagonist is the character in a story who opposes the protagonist or main character. The antagonist's actions create conflict and obstacles for the protagonist to overcome. In William Shakespeare's play "Romeo and Juliet," Tybalt serves as the antagonist to the main characters.

Archetype

An archetype is a universal symbol, character, or theme that recurs in literature across different cultures and time periods. Archetypes represent fundamental human experiences and emotions. Examples of archetypes include the hero, the mentor, and the shadow.

Assonance

Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds within a series of words. This literary device is often used to create a musical or rhythmic effect in poetry. For example, in the phrase "fleet feet sweep by sleeping geese," the repetition of the long "e" sound is an example of assonance.

Ballad

A ballad is a narrative poem that tells a story, often focusing on themes of love, adventure, or tragedy. Ballads typically have a simple rhyme scheme and are meant to be sung or recited. An example of a famous ballad is "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Blank Verse

Blank verse is unrhymed poetry written in iambic pentameter. This form of verse is commonly used in English literature and drama, as it closely mimics natural speech patterns. William Shakespeare's plays are

known for their use of blank verse.

Catharsis

Catharsis is the process of releasing pent-up emotions or tensions through art, literature, or drama. In literature, catharsis refers to the emotional release experienced by the audience when witnessing the resolution of the protagonist's struggles. Aristotle described catharsis as a key element of tragedy.

Characterization

Characterization is the process of developing and portraying a character in a work of literature. Authors use a variety of techniques, such as dialogue, actions, and descriptions, to create well-rounded and believable characters. Characterization helps readers understand the motivations and personalities of the characters.

Conflict

Conflict is the central struggle between opposing forces in a work of literature. This struggle can be internal (within a character) or external (between characters or forces). Conflict drives the plot of a story and creates tension and drama. Common types of conflict include person vs. person, person vs. self, person vs. society, and person vs. nature.

Connotation

Connotation refers to the emotional or cultural associations that a word carries beyond its literal meaning. These associations can be positive, negative, or neutral, and can vary depending on the context in which the word is used. For example, the word "home" may have connotations of comfort and security.

Couplet

A couplet is a pair of lines in poetry that rhyme and have the same meter. Couplets are often used to conclude a poem or to create a sense of closure. In William Shakespeare's sonnets, the final two lines often form a couplet.

Diction

Diction refers to the author's choice of words and the way they are arranged in a text. Diction can affect the tone, mood, and style of a piece of writing. Authors carefully select words to convey their intended meaning and to evoke specific emotions in the reader.

Elegy

An elegy is a mournful poem or song that laments the death of a person or reflects on themes of loss and grief. Elegies often express feelings of sorrow, longing, and remembrance. A famous example of an elegy is "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" by Thomas Gray.

Epiphany

An epiphany is a sudden realization or insight experienced by a character in a work of literature. This moment of clarity often leads to a change in the character's perspective or behavior. Epiphanies can be key turning points in a story and can lead to personal growth or transformation.

Epistolary

An epistolary novel is a work of fiction composed of letters, diary entries, or other forms of written

correspondence. This format allows for multiple perspectives and voices to be represented within the narrative. An example of an epistolary novel is "Dracula" by Bram Stoker.

Exposition

Exposition is the portion of a story that introduces important background information, such as the setting, characters, and initial conflict. Exposition provides context for the events that follow and helps readers understand the world of the story. It is often found at the beginning of a work of literature.

Foreshadowing

Foreshadowing is a literary device where the author hints at future events or outcomes in a story. These subtle clues prepare the reader for what is to come and build tension and suspense. Foreshadowing can take many forms, such as symbolic objects, recurring motifs, or cryptic dialogue.

Hubris

Hubris is excessive pride or arrogance displayed by a character in a work of literature. Characters with hubris often overestimate their abilities or ignore warnings, leading to their downfall. In Greek tragedy, hubris is a common tragic flaw that results in the protagonist's undoing.

Iambic Pentameter

Iambic pentameter is a common meter in English poetry, consisting of lines with five metrical feet, each containing an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable (iambic rhythm). This rhythmic pattern closely mimics natural speech and is often used in sonnets, blank verse, and other poetic forms.

Imagery

Imagery refers to descriptive language that appeals to the senses and creates vivid mental pictures for the reader. Authors use imagery to evoke emotions, convey themes, and enhance the reader's understanding of a scene or setting. Imagery can include visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile descriptions.

Irony

Irony is a literary device where the intended meaning of a word or situation is opposite to its literal or expected meaning. Irony can create humor, tension, or dramatic irony, where the audience knows something that the characters do not. Types of irony include verbal, situational, and dramatic irony.

Metaphor

A metaphor is a figure of speech that compares two unlike things by stating that one thing is another. Metaphors create vivid and imaginative connections between ideas, objects, or emotions. For example, in Shakespeare's "All the world's a stage," the metaphor compares life to a theatrical performance.

Meter

Meter is the rhythmic structure of a poem, determined by the arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables in each line. Different poetic forms have specific meters, such as iambic pentameter, trochaic tetrameter, or dactylic hexameter. Meter contributes to the musicality and flow of a poem.

Monologue

A monologue is a long speech delivered by a single character in a play, story, or poem. Monologues allow

characters to express their thoughts, feelings, or motivations to the audience or other characters. Famous examples of monologues include Hamlet's "To be or not to be" soliloquy.

Motif

A motif is a recurring element, theme, or symbol in a work of literature that contributes to the overall meaning or message. Motifs can be objects, colors, images, or ideas that appear throughout the text. Authors use motifs to create cohesion and depth in their writing.

Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia is a figure of speech where words imitate the natural sounds they describe. Onomatopoeic words create auditory imagery and can evoke sensory experiences for the reader. Examples of onomatopoeia include "buzz," "hiss," "crash," and "sizzle."

Oxymoron

An oxymoron is a figure of speech that combines two contradictory or opposite words to create a paradoxical effect. Oxymorons are often used to convey complex ideas or emotions in a concise manner. Examples of oxymorons include "bittersweet," "jumbo shrimp," and "deafening silence."

Paradox

A paradox is a statement or situation that appears self-contradictory or illogical, but may contain a deeper truth or meaning. Paradoxes challenge the reader's assumptions and provoke thought. An example of a paradox is the statement "less is more."

Personification

Personification is a literary device where human characteristics, emotions, or attributes are given to inanimate objects, animals, or abstract concepts. Personification creates vivid and imaginative descriptions, allowing the reader to connect with non-human entities on a human level. For example, "the wind whispered through the trees."

Protagonist

The protagonist is the main character or hero of a story who drives the plot forward and undergoes a transformation or journey. The protagonist is often faced with challenges or conflicts that test their strengths and beliefs. In J.K. Rowling's "Harry Potter" series, Harry Potter is the protagonist.

Rhyme Scheme

Rhyme scheme is the pattern of rhyming words at the end of lines in a poem. Rhyme schemes are denoted using letters to indicate which lines rhyme with each other. Common rhyme schemes include AABB, ABAB, and ABCB. The rhyme scheme contributes to the musicality and structure of a poem.

Satire

Satire is a literary genre that uses humor, irony, or exaggeration to criticize or ridicule societal issues, politics, or human behavior. Satirical works often aim to provoke change or raise awareness through wit and sarcasm. Examples of satirical works include George Orwell's "Animal Farm" and Jonathan Swift's "Gulliver's Travels."

Sonnet

A sonnet is a 14-line poem written in iambic pentameter with a specific rhyme scheme. Sonnets are traditionally associated with themes of love, beauty, and mortality. There are different types of sonnets, including the Italian (Petrarchan) sonnet and the English (Shakespearean) sonnet.

Symbolism

Symbolism is a literary device where objects, characters, or settings represent abstract ideas or concepts. Symbols can have multiple layers of meaning and add depth to a work of literature. For example, the green light in F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby" symbolizes hope and the American Dream.

Theme

Theme is the central idea or message that a work of literature explores. Themes are universal concepts or topics that are relevant to human experience and can be interpreted in different ways. Authors use characters, plot, and symbols to convey themes and provoke thought in readers.

Tone

Tone refers to the author's attitude or emotional stance towards the subject matter or audience of a work of literature. Tone can be formal, informal, playful, serious, ironic, or empathetic. Authors use tone to convey mood, establish voice, and engage the reader.

Tragedy

Tragedy is a genre of literature that portrays the downfall or suffering of a noble or virtuous protagonist due to a tragic flaw or external circumstances. Tragedies often explore themes of fate, free will, and the human condition. Famous examples of tragedies include William Shakespeare's "Hamlet" and Sophocles' "Oedipus Rex."

Verse

Verse refers to a single line of poetry or a stanza in a poem. Verses are organized by meter, rhyme, and structure to create a rhythmic and musical effect. Poetic verses can vary in length and form, depending on the style and genre of the poem.