

English Language Arts Glossary

academic writing - Formal writing which is primarily analytical in nature. Academic writing usually reveals and helps increase the writer's understanding of a topic.

affix - A word element, such as a prefix or suffix, which can only occur as an attachment to a base, stem, or root. (e.g., the prefix *ad-* and the suffix *-ing* in *adjoining*)

alliteration - The repetition of the same sound, usually of a consonant, at the beginning of two or more words immediately succeeding each other or at short intervals.

alphabetic or alphabetic principle - Alphabetic is the study of letter-sound correspondences and spellings and the application of this knowledge to reading and writing. It is the basic principle underlying English writing - the way the written language represents the spoken language. In the alphabetic principle written words are composed of letters (graphemes). The letters correspond to segments of spoken words or sounds (phonemes).

amplification - The repetition of a word or expression while adding detail to it; allows the writer to emphasize and develop a detail that might otherwise be overlooked.

analogy - A resemblance between things otherwise unlike; an inference that if two or more things are alike in some respects, they will probably agree in others; a comparison based on such resemblance.

bandwagon - An appeal to the reader's desire to fit in, often with a group outside one's peer group. The author may refer to a shift in cultural practice or expectation to influence the reader.

bias - Personal beliefs, opinions, or attitudes that prevent one from being objective about a particular topic.

call to action - An explicit suggestion in persuasive writing or speech that encourages the reader or listener to take specific action.

character - A person or other being in a story.

citation - A reference to a book, paper, author, or other resource, or the information necessary to locate a specific information resource. Citations usually follow strict formats, which can be found in style guides.

conflict - A problem or struggle between two opposing forces in a story. The five basic conflicts are:

Person Against Person which is a problem between characters.

Person Against Self which is a problem within a character's own mind.

Person Against Society which is a problem between a character and society, school, the law, or some tradition.

Person Against Nature which is a problem between a character and some element of nature- a blizzard, a hurricane, a mountain climb, etc.

Person Against Fate which is a problem or struggle that appears to be well beyond a character's control.

connotation - A secondary meaning suggested by a word in addition to its literal meaning.

context - The setting and situation in which a spoken or written message occurs.

context cues - Cues and hints that the words and sentences surrounding an unknown word give to the reader to help identify words for decoding (sounding out) and words being read for the first-time. The reader's speaking vocabulary is a back-up strategy and is primarily useful to resolve ambiguity (is bread pronounced *bred* or *breed*?) and to confirm the accuracy of decoding (does it make sense and does it sound right?) The context helps resolve which shade of meaning is intended (prog-res or pro-gress) and may be helpful in learning the meaning of new words that can be decoded or pronounced but are not yet in the reader's vocabulary- especially if the context contains clues from synonyms or antonyms, clues contained in comparison and contrast or clues contained in a definition or a description, clues provided by the tone and setting, clues derived from cause and effect, and clues that appear in a series.

counterargument - A contrary or opposing argument presented to challenge a given argument.

denotation - The explicit meaning of a word rather than an implied or associated idea.

diction - A writer's choice of words: slang, colloquial, formal, etc. or the degree of clarity and distinctness of pronunciation.

drama - A dramatic work intended for performance by actors on a stage (e.g., plays).

etymology - The study of the history and development of the structures and meanings of words; derivation.

extended metaphor - A metaphor that is developed and sustained throughout an argument.

facility - Ease in performing a task or doing something.

fallacy ("fallacious reasoning") - An error in reasoning. It refers to typical errors that render unsound the arguments in which they appear. Common fallacies are:

- The appeal to emotion: the *ad populum* approach is a common fallacy in arguments. Instead of presenting evidence in an argument, it relies on expressive

language and other devices calculated to incite enthusiasm, excitement, anger, or hatred

- Appeal to pathos (pity): a common fallacy in arguments, the *ad misericordiam* approach is a special case of the appeal to emotion in which the altruism and mercy of the audience are the special emotions to which the speaker appeals.

fiction - Imaginative narrative in any form of presentation. Fiction may take many literary forms including-historical fiction, fables, fairy tales, folklore, legends, picture books, plays, narrative poetry, etc.

figurative language - Writing that describes using hyperbole, metaphor, simile, or personification to enhance mental images and clarify meaning.

first-person narrative - Narration by a person from within the story who tells the story from his or her point of view and who refers to him or herself as “I”.

fluency - The ability to perform reading skills such as naming letters, reading words, and reading connected text quickly, smoothly, automatically, and with proper expression and phrasing.

Rate is the speed at which the text is read.

Accuracy is the ability to read words correctly.

Automaticity is the ability to read words quickly.

Prosody is the appropriate use of intonation, phrasing, and expression.

genre - A category used to classify literary works by form, technique, or content.

grapheme - A letter or combination of letters that represent a single phoneme (sound in a word).

homograph - One of two or more words having the same spelling but differing in origin, meaning, and sometimes pronunciation. (e.g., *tear*-to pull apart or into pieces; *tear*-a drop of clear saline liquid from the eye)

hyperbole - The use of exaggeration for effect; may be extreme.

idiom/idiomatic expression - Words used in a special way that may be different from their literal meaning. (e.g., Rush-hour traffic moves at a snail’s pace.)

imagery - The use of vivid description or figures of speech in speaking or writing to produce mental images.

informational (expository) texts - A much broader category than nonfiction and involves many kinds of expository or non-narrative writing intended to convey information. Examples of informational texts include reference tools, manuals, newspapers, brochures, articles, recipes, and selections from websites.

legible [of handwriting, print, etc.] - Able to be read (handwriting, print, etc.) or recognized (e.g., pictures, symbols).

leveled [text] - Passages in which elements that contribute to complexity are measured to inform the notation of difficulty along a PK – Diploma continuum of sophistication.

literary devices

English Language Arts: The techniques by which an author manipulates language for rhetorical effect and to evince style (e.g., figurative language).

World Languages: Clues that help one read and comprehend literature.

literary fiction - See fiction.

literary nonfiction - See nonfiction.

loaded words - Emotive words which have multiple meanings, many have charged emotional connotative meanings.

main idea - The gist of a passage; the central thought; a statement that gives the explicit or implied major topic of a passage and the specific way in which the passage is limited in content or reference.

metaphor - A figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness between them; a figure of speech in which a comparison is implied by analogy but is not stated.

narrative text - Writing that tells a story or recounts a sequence of events. The structure is organized to tell a story either in the order it happened or in some other logical sequence. Narratives can be true as in a newspaper account or take creative license as in fiction. The reader is kept engaged through effective use of story elements (setting, characters, problem/solution). Narratives may also include messages, morals, or lessons as part of their purpose.

narrative strategies - Narrative writing techniques that imbue any writing with the sense of a story (e.g., dialogue or suspense).

narrator - The person who relates an account or story dealing with sequences of events and experiences, though not necessarily in order of occurrence.

First Person Narration is narration by a person who is a character from within the story who tells the story from his/her point of view and who refers to him or herself as “I”.

Third Person Narration is narration by a person who is outside the story and who refers to all the characters in the story by name, or as “he,” “she,” or “they.” (See also narration and point of view).

non-fiction texts/prose - Writing based on fact designed primarily to explain, argue, or describe. Nonfiction writing that is narrative in structure such as the writing found in biographies, autobiographies, reflections, and essays is called narrative nonfiction. Nonfiction texts are well-written, well-illustrated texts on topics related to science, social studies, history, math, and the fine arts. Other nonfiction writing is often called informational text.

non-print sources - Information supplied through visual texts (e.g., illustrations, diagrams, graphics, hypertexts, pictures, videos, etc.).

onomatopoeia - The formation or use of words having a sound that imitates what they denote and makes you think of its meaning (e.g., buzz, meow, cuckoo, zigzag).

organizational features - Aspects of written texts that aid readers in locating and comprehending information (e.g., titles, tables of contents, etc.).

peer pressure - A literary device which incorporates elements of bandwagon (desire to fit in) and testimonial (often with celebrity endorsement) by appealing to the readers’s desire to fit in with a specific group (hence peers); may involve “plain folk” as opposed to celebrity endorsement.

peer response - A form of collaborative learning, commonly used in writing, in which students discuss their reactions to—and suggested edits for—one another’s writing (i.e., “peer feedback”).

personification - A manner of speech that endows things or abstractions with life or human characteristics.

persuasion - One of the four traditional forms of composition in speech and writing (narration, exposition, description, and persuasion). Persuasive writing is designed to convince the reader that a position is valid or that the reader should take a specific action. Persuasive text differs from exposition in that it does more than explain; it takes a stand and endeavors to persuade the reader to take the same position.

phoneme - The smallest unit of sound.

phonemic awareness - The ability to recognize and manipulate phonemes in spoken words by orally blending, segmenting, adding and deleting them. A student who is phonemically aware can successfully complete the following tasks:

- Segment the word grass into its 4 phonemes - /g/ /r/ /ă/ /s/
- Blend the 3 phonemes /b/ /ũ/ /g/ into the word bug
- Delete the first sound in hat to make the word at

- Change the last sound in hen to /d/ to make the word head (Placement of letters within // indicates the sound, not the name, of the letter.)

phonics - A systematic process of teaching sound-symbol relationships to decode words.

plot - The structure of the action of a story.

poem/poetry - Writing designed to convey a vivid and imaginative sense of experience, especially by the use of condensed language chosen for its sound and suggestive power as well as for its meaning. Language choices are also made to achieve meter, rhyme, natural cadences, and metaphors.

point of view - The perspective or perspectives established by an author (often through a narrator) through which the reader is presented with the characters, actions, setting, and events.

prefix - A word part that is added to the beginning of a root or base word that changes the sense or meaning of the root or base word.

primary sources - First-hand documentations of events (e.g., autobiographies, original research, diaries, etc.) that present no “secondary” analysis or interpretation by historians or anyone other than those who produced the primary source.

print sources - Information conveyed in written format often following a linear sequence of organization (e.g., books, magazines, newspapers, etc.).

propaganda - The spreading of ideas, information, or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause, or a person.

reading strategies - Any systematic or otherwise deliberate methods adapted, monitored, or employed to improve one’s reading performance.

repetition - The use of a word or phrase again and again for emphasis; may also include the repeated use of a format.

rhetorical devices - Devices that make use of effective expression and the persuasive use of language. Rhetorical devices are specific, effective uses of language intended to influence or persuade an audience (e.g., rhetorical questions, repetition, and extended analogies in speeches).

rhyme - Words that have the same ending sound but not necessarily the same letters (e.g., state, straight, bait).

rhythm - The pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry. Poets use rhythm to bring out the musical quality of language, to emphasize ideas, to create mood, to unify a work, or to heighten emotional response.

roots - The meaningful base form of a complex word after all affixes are removed. *Note:* a root may be independent or free, such as *read* in *unreadable*, or may be dependent, or bound, such as *-liter-* (from the Greek for *letter*) in *illiterate*.

secondary sources - Sources based on primary sources or other secondary sources and may include summaries across sources, interpretations, generalizations, compilations, or critiques of original works (e.g., literary criticism, biographies, encyclopedia articles, journal articles critiquing the work of others, narrative or social history).

semantics - The study of meaning in language, through the analysis of the meanings of words, phrases, sentences, discourse, and whole texts; the historical and psychological study, and the classification of changes in the meaning of words or forms

sensory details - Details in writing that evoke images that could ordinarily be perceived by the reader's senses.

setting - The time and place in which a narrative takes place; the physical and psychological background against which the action of a story takes place; the scenery and stage effects for a dramatic production.

shades of meaning - A subtle or slight gradation or variation of meaning; nuances of meaning.

simile - A figure of speech or other direct comparison of two things that are dissimilar, using the words *like* or *as*.

standard American English - The language in which most educational texts and government and media publications are written in the United States. Standard American English varies widely in pronunciation and in idiomatic use but maintains a fairly uniform grammatical structure.

stereotype - A standardized mental image that is held in common with others and that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment.

structural differences - The dissimilarities in the construction of various forms of fiction and nonfiction writing that distinguish one genre from another.

structural features - The specific characteristics of various forms of fiction and nonfiction writing that distinguish one genre from another or that associate/identify one genre with another.

style - The manner of linguistic or written expression in prose or verse; how a speaker or writer speaks or writes.

stylistic devices - The techniques by which an author creates the style of linguistic or written expression (word choice, use of figurative language, etc.).

suffix - A word part that is added to the ending of a root word or base word to form a new word, indicate a plural form, or establish the part of speech of that word. For example, the suffix *-ly* added to *immediate*, an adjective, creates the word, *immediately*, an adverb.

syllable types - A syllable is a word or part of a word pronounced with a single, uninterrupted sounding of the voice. All syllables are marked by a “beat”. For example, *help* has one beat, *helpful* has two beats, and *helpfully* has three beats. Where one syllable begins and another ends is called the syllable juncture. Syllables can be categorized into different types.

Open syllables have a V*CV vowel and consonant pattern as in rea*son and an open or long vowel in the first syllable.

Closed syllables have a VCC*VC as in help*er or VC*CV as in tem*per vowel and consonant pattern and a closed or short vowel in the first syllable.

Stressed syllables- one syllable usually has more emphasis, or stress, than others. The stressed syllable often has a long vowel sound. In two-syllable words, the first syllable is usually accented or stressed. Prefixes or suffixes are rarely stressed.

symbolism - The practice of representing things by means of symbols or of attributing symbolic meanings or significance to objects, events, relationships, etc.

syntax - The study of how sentences are formed and of the grammatical rules that govern their formation; the pattern or structure of word order in sentences, clauses, and phrases.

testimonial - A literary device which uses personal support or endorsement, often with a celebrity or established authority on the topic.

text features - Visual presentation of information designed to facilitate comprehension of the information by the reader. Text features are varied and have different purposes such as to present an overview of the information (e.g., table of contents), to assist in locating information (e.g., index), to show connections or relationships among ideas (e.g., diagrams, flow charts, maps, time lines), to emphasize certain points or ideas (e.g., bullets, boldface font, headings), to show how information is organized (e.g., webs, tree diagrams), to define terms (e.g., glossary), to explain for deeper understanding (e.g., cross section, cutaways, close-ups, descriptions connected to a graphic representations) etc.

text structures - Organizational patterns an author uses to structure the ideas in a text (e.g., cause/effect, compare/contrast, description, problem/solution, sequencing, goal/action/outcome, concept/definition, and proposition/support).

theme - A topic of discussion or writing; a major idea or proposition broad enough to cover the entire scope of a literary or other work of art. Theme can often be described as a message about life or about human nature. In the elementary grades, theme can often be characterized as the central ideas, lesson, or message of the selection. A theme may be stated or implied.

third person narrative - Narration by a person who is outside of the story and who refers to all the characters in the story by name, or as “he”, “she”, or “they”.
(See also **narration** and **point of view**.)

tier three words - words whose frequency of use is quite low and often limited to specific content areas or domains. (e.g., peninsula, photosynthesis, lathe). Explicit instruction for tier 3 words is given to provide the student an opportunity to use the more specific language of a specialist in that field in order for the student to speak more precisely regarding topics in this domain or content area.

Tier two words are high frequency words for mature language users and are found across a variety of domains. Tier 2 words are the priority for explicit vocabulary instruction to increase the accurate use of these vocabulary words by a student in any situation or setting.

Tier one words rarely require instruction because they are part of the students’ speaking vocabulary.

tone - The attitude or feeling that comes across in a piece of literature, revealed by the characters, the word choice, and the general writing style. The tone can be funny, serious, satiric, etc.

transfer - A literacy device in which a word or image is used to elicit a strong emotional response but is not directly or explicitly connected to the topic (often used in advertising such as using a teddy bear to represent the effect of a fabric softener).

voice - A term used to refer to an author’s pervasive “presence”; the determinate intelligence and moral sensibility that has selected, ordered, rendered and expressed what is read.

word parts - Components that make-up a word:

Morpheme is the smallest meaning units into which a word can be divided.

Onset is the initial consonant or consonants in a syllable (e.g., In sat, the onset is s.)

Rime is the vowel and any consonants after the initial consonant or consonants in a syllable (e.g., In sat, the rime is at.)

Prefix is a morpheme that cannot stand alone to form meaningful words are called affixes. A prefix is an affix that is placed before a root word to form a word with a meaning different from that of the root. (In unhappy, un is the prefix.)

Suffix is a suffix is an affix placed after a root word or root to form a word with a different meaning or different grammatical function. (E.g., In the boys, s is the suffix. In tallest, est is the suffix.)

Root word or root is a morpheme that can both stand alone and have meaning and be combined with other roots to form new words. (E.g., Doghouse is a compound word containing two root words dog and house.)

writing process - The many aspects of the complex act of producing a written communication; specifically: pre-writing, drafting, conferencing, revising, editing, and publishing.