English Literature Technical Knowledge Organiser

Word Based

- **lexical choice**: individual word choice *eg the lexical choice of "tiger" has connotations of power and danger*. Doesn't include grammar words like *the, a, on, and etc.*
- **descriptive lexical choices**: words used to describe
- **dynamic lexical choices**: words which show action
- **connotations**: the ideas or feelings a word produces not its dictionary meaning
- **nouns**: names for people, things, place and ideas *eg John, tree, sea, love*.
- **adjectives**: describe or change nouns *eg green, horrible, gigantic*
- **verbs**: words for actions *eg run, live, think, struggled*.
- **adverbs**: words which add to verbs (often ending in –ly) *eg slowly, carefully, painfully.*
- **present participles**: words ending in **ing**; can be used as verbs or adjectives; *eg he was skating, he was wearing skating shoes*
- **past participles**: word usually ending in ed; can be used as verbs or adjectives; *eg the lesson bored him, he was a bored student*
- **juxtaposition**: when two ideas or words are put next to each other to emphasise their difference *eg the <u>violent</u> storm came to the <u>gentle</u> village*
- **semantic field**: a group of words within a text which are related to the same topic *eg The lion <u>growled</u> at the man, its eyes full of <u>menace</u>, <u>hatred</u> tightening its powerful muscles.* = Semantic field of threat and anger
- **abstract nouns**: nouns which refer to ideas (*eg peace, equality, justice*) or emotions/feelings (*eg love, hatred, pleasure*)
- **dynamic / stative verbs**: dynamic verbs are for actions (*eg run, punch, walk*) stative verbs are for mental activities (*eg think, remember, regret*)
- **noun phrase**: a group of words doing the same job as a noun eg "the ancient house near the river" not just "house"
- **oxymoron**: a phrase where the words next to each other seem to contradict; *eg the tiny giant, the burning cold, a painful pleasure*
- **emotive lexical choices**: designed to arouse an emotional response
- **hyperbole**: exaggeration for effect
- **subjective / objective adjectives**: subjective adjectives show opinions, objective adjective show factual information
- **superlatives**: adjectives which show something at the upper or lower limit;

Imagery Based

- **metaphor**: a figure of speech which is not literal *eg the moon was a polished disk of silver*
- **personification**: giving human characteristics to something not human *eg winter played its icy fingers on the trees*
- **simile**: when the writer says something is *like* or *as* something else *eg as vicious as a shark.*
- **symbol**: an object which represents an idea on a deeper level *eg a rose might symbolise love*
- **pathetic fallacy**: when writers use setting (especially weather) to match the emotions of the characters *eg she wept bitterly as the rain cam down around her.*
- **extended metaphor**: a metaphor which continues in a pattern through a text, rather than just a one off example
- **synaesthesia**: a figure of speech where one sense is used to help describe another; *eg the cold silence, the screaming red, the delicious green, the silent sun*
- **motif**: a recurrent image, idea, or symbol that develops or explains a theme

Narrator Based

- **first person**: the reasons for choosing *I, me, my, our...*
- **third person**: the reasons for choosing *he, she, Oliver, them...*
- **point of view**: first person (I/we), second person (you), third person (she/it)
- **narrative perspective**: who is telling the story and how does their bias affect how it is told? What kind of character are they?
- **omniscient**: a narrator who is all-knowing
- **limited point of view**: a narrator who does not know everything; often a character in the text
- **unreliable narrator**: when the narrative comes from a figure whom we do not fully trust
- **homodiegetic narrator**: a first person narrator who is also a character in the text
- **external heterodiegetic narrator**: a third person narrator outside of the events, often an omniscient narrator
- **internal heterodiegetic narrator**: a third person narrator which is filtered through a particular character's point of view; *eg Ralph in Lord of the Flies*

Poetry Only

- **rhyme**: repetition of similar sounds
- **rhythm**: created by stressed and unstressed syllables; some poems have regular rhythm, others do not
- **stanzas**: proper names for the verses/paragraphs of a poem
- **poetic form**: the structure of the poem (*eg length of lines, rhythms, rhymes*) but also the type (*eg sonnet, elegy, ballad*)
- **enjambement**: when the sentence in a line of poetry runs over into the next
- **caesura**: a pause in the middle of a line of poetry, rather than at the end
- **meter**: a set rhythm though the poem
- **free verse**: poetry with no set patterns of rhythm or rhyme
- **blank verse**: poetry with a set rhythm (iambic pentameter) but no rhyme

Sound Based

- **onomatopoeia**: sound effect words *eg pop, crack, sizzle*
- **harsh / soft sounds**: *eg t, ck b, p are often harsh sounding; l, m, s, f are often soft*
- **alliteration**: *repeating the same consonant sound at the start of words eg <u>br</u>oken <u>b</u>attered <u>b</u>oats in the <u>ba</u>y*
- **sibilance**: the hissing sound from "s" (and sometimes "c" and "z")
- **plosives**: the sound from "d", "b" and "g" and "t", "k" and "p"
- **assonance**: repeating a vowel sound *eg the b<u>a</u>d m<u>a</u>n*
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- **phonology**: the academic term for sounds; *eg the poet uses phonology to emphasise the violence of the storm*
- **phonoaesthetics**: the study of the pleasantness of the sounds of words, rather than their meaning *eg the poet uses phonoaesthetics to emphasise the gentleness of the water with soft "l" sounds and sibilance* (also called **euphony**)
- **cacophony**: the use of **words** with sharp, harsh, hissing, and unmelodious sounds – primarily those of consonants

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Structure Based

- **beginning:** why start with these details?
- **middle:** how does the narrative/poem develop? Does the tone change?
- **end:** why and how does it end?
- **setting:** the place and time in which the text is set
- **characterisation:** the methods used to create characters; *eg physical description, dialogue, the narrator telling about their personality*
- **focus:** what a particular part of the text is "about"; describe how the focus **changes** or, offering further details on the same thing, **develops**
- **narrows the focus:** zooming in on detail
- **transition:** the point where the focus shifts from one thing to another
- **foreshadows:** when a text hints forward to details or events later in the text
- **cumulative effect:** an effect which builds up/increases through the text
- **dialogue:** speech between characters in a text
- **direct speech:** is speech with "speech marks"
- **reported speech:** when speech is summarised by the narrator without speech marks; *eg he told me about his holiday*
- **pivotal moment:** the crucial turning point in the text
- **climax:** the point of highest tension in the text
- **chronology:** the order events happen—which might *not* be the order the writer chooses to tell you them
- **links:** patterns of connections between details and events in the text
- **juxtaposition:** putting two contrasting things together
- **cohesion:** the way a writer makes the ideas in the text glue together
- **exposition:** the part of the text which introduces the setting, characters and theme for what is to follow
- **anti-climax:** when there is a build up to an expected climax—which fails to happen
- **denouement:** when a complicated plot is finally resolved and concluded

Sentence & Grammar Based

- **past tense and present tense:** what are the reasons for a writer choosing one of these—or *changing* tense in the text?
- **sentence:** consider the length and the type of sentence
- **simple sentence:** one idea, one clause
- **complex sentence:** contains one or more subordinate clauses (parts which wouldn't make sense on their own)
- **phrase:** a small group of words
- **repetition:** why is it used? What is emphasised and why?
- **lists:** lists with "and/or" are syndetic; lists without "and/or" are asyndetic; lists with more than one "and/or" are polysyndetic
- **tripling:** lists of th**ree**
- **non sentence / minor sentence:** has a capital letter and end with a full stop (or !?) but does not make sense on its own; *eg I shouted into the darkness. <u>Nothing</u>. <u>Silence</u>.*
- **modality:** how certain a text is about something; often revolves around the use of **modal verbs**: *will, must, could, might, may, ought to, should, shall*
- **fronted adverbial:** adverb[s] at the start of the sentence; *eg Clearly, the man was angry. Slowly, gently, the mist descended.*
- **fronted adjective:** adjective[s] at the start; *eg Tired, he slumped onto the bed. Resentful and ashamed, she left the room.*
- **declarative sentences:** statements
- **interrogative sentences:** questions
- **imperative sentences:** orders, commands and advice
- **imperative verb:** the verb which gives the order, command or advice; *eg <u>Close</u> the door. <u>Think</u> about your actions. <u>Peel</u> the potato.*
- **exclamative sentences:** end in exclamation marks
- **active voice:** the subject performs the action; *eg The man opened the door.*
- **passive voice:** the subject is acted upon; *eg The door was opened by the man.*

Shakespeare Only

- **act:** the major divisions in the play; Shakespeare's tragedies have five acts; time can move forward between scenes
- **scenes:** the smaller divisions in the play; a scene takes place in the same setting in continuous time
- **aside:** when a character speaks but is not heard by the other characters onstage; gives the audience special access
- **soliloquy:** when a character speaks to themselves, sharing their inner most thoughts with the audience; tend to give a major insight into characters
- **tragedy:** a play which treats in a serious and dignified style the sorrowful or terrible events encountered or caused by a heroic individual
- **tragic hero:** the main protagonist in the tragic action (not necessarily "heroic" in usual terms)
- **hamartia:** error of judgement, tragic flaw
- **hubris:** excessive pride or self-confidence
- **anagnorisis:** moment of realisation of wrong-doing
- **catharsis:** purging of emotions of the audience
- **fate:** a cause of downfall which is outside of the control of the tragic hero
- **pathos:** feelings of pity and sympathy
- **peripetia:** the reversal of fortune experienced by the tragic hero
- **megalopsychia:** the greatness of soul of the tragic hero, the qualities which *could* have made him great and honourable

Other Useful Terms

- **tone:** the attitude of the text towards its subject
- **pathos:** pity, sympathy—can be used for any text
- **atmosphere:** a type of feeling that readers get from a narrative, based on details such as setting, background, objects, and foreshadowing
- **narrative perspective:** who is telling the story and how does this affect how it is told?
- **dramatic irony:** when we as readers understand things better than the characters in the actual text
- **stylistic features of genre:** aspects which borrow from horror, romance, fables, fairy tales, tragedy etc.