

Abstract Words for Thematic Ideas: Middle Grades

Student Resource

Use the following thematic ideas to create a thematic statement that reveals universal meaning.

As you develop your thematic statement, consider these questions:

- What does the text say about _____?
- What is the life lesson being taught about _____?
- What are the author's ideas about _____?

As you read and discuss various texts, add other thematic ideas in the second column.

alienation
 betrayal
 coming of age
 competition
 courage
 cruelty
 death
 duty
 escape
 evil
 family
 fate
 fear
 forgiveness
 freedom
 grief
 guilt
 happiness
 hardship
 heroism
 honesty
 identity
 individuality
 journey
 loneliness
 love
 loyalty
 patriotism
 prejudice
 pride
 rebellion
 religion
 revenge
 temptation
 trust
 war
 wisdom

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Character and Style Analysis Words List

Student Resource

Understanding and successfully conveying to the reader how authors characterize people in their works is crucial to success in analytical essays. Many standardized tests deal with characterization and style analysis. The following lists have been compiled to help students select the most precise word to describe a character's personal qualities or an author's style. Words have been checked using lists from EDL (Educational Developmental Laboratories) to ensure reading levels and reader accessibility for middle grades through high school English classes. The lists include both positive and negative descriptors.

Character Traits

Physical Qualities

manly, sturdy, strong, muscular, brawny, handsome, beautiful, pretty, lovely, good-looking, charming, well-groomed, dainty, delicate, graceful, elegant, attractive, ravishing, neat, skillful, agile, nimble, active, lively, spirited, vivacious, glamorous, bewitching, enchanting, classy, weak, feeble, sluggish, frail, decrepit, thin, emaciated, portly, sloppy, obese, unkempt, sickly, frail, unclean, ugly, hideous, homely, awkward, clumsy, bizarre, grotesque, repulsive, loathsome, horrible

Mental Qualities

educated, scholarly, learned, wise, intelligent, talented, intellectual, gifted, rational, reasonable, sensible, prudent, shrewd, observant, clever, ingenious, inventive, subtle, cunning, crafty, sharp, logical, resourceful, calculating, intuitive, knowledgeable, unintelligent, nonintellectual, unschooled, ignorant, illiterate, irrational, foolish, crass, prejudiced, narrow-minded, simple, shallow, dull, idiotic, deranged, demented, senile

Moral Qualities

innocent, righteous, upright, pure, forgiving, temperate, truthful, honorable, decent, trustworthy, straightforward, respectable, wicked, mean, corrupt, infamous, notorious, immoral, unprincipled, vulgar, deceitful, dishonest, dishonorable, foul, lewd, lustful, cruel

Spiritual Qualities

religious, reverent, pious, devout, faithful, holy, saintly, angelic, godlike, spiritual, devoted, skeptical, agnostic, atheistic, irreligious, impious, irreverent, sacrilegious, materialistic, godless, fiend-like, spiteful, fanatical, wicked

Social Qualities

civil, tactful, courteous, polite, cooperative, genial, hospitable, gracious, amiable, cordial, sociable, flirtatious, good-natured, cheerful, jovial, jolly, suave, debonair, elegant, quiet, unsociable, anti-social, antagonistic, abusive, aggressive, discourteous, impudent, impolite, insolent, ill-mannered, jealous, unrefined, ungracious, annoying, sycophantic, pompous, sullen, sulky, grumpy, crabby, belligerent, critical, cynical, caustic, sleazy, classless, condescending, crude

General Personal Qualities

distinguished, noble, admirable, influential, impressive, genteel, refined, aristocratic, cultured, generous, charitable, altruistic, philanthropic, humane, merciful, gentle, kindly, patient, sympathetic, compassionate, ambitious, conscientious, punctual, enthusiastic, determined, confident, courageous, solemn, serious, cautious, eloquent, persuasive, witty, reserved, meek, humble, modest, natural, shy, sensitive, thrifty, appreciative, consistent, kind, defiant, judgmental, nonchalant, indifferent, moody, melancholic, petty, stingy, domineering, ruthless, incompetent, unreliable, unstable, cowardly, headstrong, impulsive, apathetic, insensitive, extravagant, insincere, hypocritical, overconfident, arrogant, proud, stubborn, rebellious, envious, traitorous, odd, obnoxious, malicious, spiteful

Style Analysis

Author Descriptors

cultured, intellectual, sensible, rational, analytical, imaginative, perceptive, optimistic, idealistic, religious, sympathetic, sophisticated, sentimental, original, clever, witty, humorous, unprejudiced, realistic, romantic, uncultured, nonintellectual, shallow, opinionated, intolerant, pessimistic, cynical

Diction and Author's Style Descriptors

exact, precise, concise, clinical, ironic, metaphorical, poetic, plain, simple, forceful, natural, formal, smooth, polished, classical, literal, figurative, colloquial, extravagant, euphemistic, pompous, vague, harsh, coarse, awkward, unpolished, crude, vulgar, obscure, grotesque

Syntax and Sentence Descriptors

loose, periodic, balanced, parallel, antithetical, inverted, long, short, euphonic, rhythmical, ornate, mimetic (imitative), journalistic, disjointed, incoherent, rambling, awkward, jerky, cacophonous, monotonously similar, jumbled, disorganized

Characters and Characterization

Student Resource

Characterization is the act of creating or developing a character. No work of fiction can be effective unless the author creates believable and sympathetic characters to people it. Through them, the fictional conflict arises and is resolved, the theme revealed, and the reader entertained and enlightened.

Types of Characterization

Direct Characterization: The author directly states the character's traits.

Indirect Characterization: The author reveals the traits of a character through various methods, leaving it up to the reader to draw conclusions about the character based on this indirect information. Authors may indirectly characterize through any of the following methods:

- what the character says (dialogue)
- what the character does (actions)
- what the character thinks (interior monologue)
- what other characters say about him/her

Character Terms

Protagonist: the central character of a drama, novel, short story, or narrative poem

Antagonist: the adversary of the protagonist

Foil: a character designed to highlight qualities of another character

Epiphany: a sudden revelation in which a character proceeds from ignorance and innocence to knowledge and awareness

Round Character: a three-dimensional character

Flat Character: a character with a single important trait

Dynamic Character: a character who changes in response to the experience through which he or she passes

Static Character: a character who changes little over the course of a narrative

Archetypal Character (or Archetype): a character who embodies a certain kind of universal human experience; a type seen in myths, fairy tales, and in other forms of literature in every time and place

Examples:

Mentor: a wise teacher who provides guidance

Damsel in distress: a young, beautiful woman in need of saving

Clause Toolbox

Student Resource

A **clause** is a group of related words that contains a subject and a verb.

Independent clause—the same as a simple sentence. It will stand alone as an understandable thought. It has a subject and a predicate (verb). It may also have an object and modifiers, such as adjectives, adverbs, and/or phrases.

Example: The writer spent the day at the computer.
(subject) (verb) (object)

Dependent (subordinate) clause—a group of related words that contains a subject and a verb but that cannot stand alone. It requires the addition of an independent clause to make it a complete thought.

Example: Because the writer spent the day at the computer
(subject) (verb) (object)

Though this group of words has a subject and a verb, the thought isn't complete. It leaves us with a question: *What happened BECAUSE the writer spent the day at the computer?*

Because the writer spent the day at the computer, she completed her novel.
(an independent clause)

The second clause describes what happened as a result of the action described in the first clause. “She completed her novel” is an independent clause because it can stand alone.

Types of Dependent (Subordinate) Clauses

Adjective Clauses—dependent clauses that modify nouns and pronouns (just as adjectives do). They come directly after the word they modify. They usually begin with a “**signal word**” called a *relative pronoun*.

Relative Pronouns

that

where

which

who

whose

Adjective clauses add more information about a person, place, or thing.

Example: The writer spent the day at the computer. + The writer's books are on the bestseller list.

combined using an **adjective clause**:

The writer whose books are on the bestseller list spent the day at the computer.
(subject) (verb)

Adverb clauses—dependent clauses that give more details about the rest of the sentence, such as time, cause and effect, conditions, or contrast. Adverb clauses can occur anywhere in the sentence: at the beginning, between the subject and the verb, or at the end of the sentence. They usually begin with a “**signal word**” called a *subordinating conjunction*:

TIME	CAUSE AND EFFECT	CONDITION	CONTRAST
<i>after</i> <i>before</i> <i>when</i> <i>while</i> <i>as</i> <i>whenever</i> <i>since</i> <i>until</i> <i>as soon as</i> <i>as long as</i> <i>once</i>	<i>because</i> <i>since</i> <i>now that</i> <i>as</i> <i>as long as</i> <i>so</i> <i>so that</i> <i>in order that</i>	<i>if</i> <i>unless</i> <i>whether</i> <i>even if</i> <i>providing that</i> <i>in case (of, that)</i> <i>in the event (of, that)</i>	<i>although</i> <i>even though</i> <i>though</i> <i>whereas</i> <i>while</i>

Adverb clauses are used to add more information.

Example: The writer spent the day at the computer.

If we want to know more about the **time**, we choose a *subordinating conjunction* from the TIME box above.

After the writer spent the day at the computer, she was very tired.

If we want to know more about **a cause and effect**, we choose a *subordinating conjunction* from the CAUSE AND EFFECT box above.

Because the writer spent the day at the computer, she finished her novel.

If we want to know more about **a condition**, we choose a *subordinating conjunction* from the CONDITION box above.

Unless the writer spent the day at the computer, she wouldn't be able to finish her novel.

If we want to know more about **a contrast**, we choose a *subordinating conjunction* from the CONTRAST box above.

Although the writer spent the day at the computer, she really wanted to be at the park.

Note: Although all of these clauses occur at the beginning of the sentence, they could be moved to the end of the sentence.

Noun clauses—dependent clauses that function like a single noun in a sentence. They can be subjects, objects, or complements. The “**signal words**” for noun clauses are

how
however
if
*that**
what
whether
whatever

when
whenever
where
wherever
which
whichever

who
whoever
whom
whomever
whose
why

Noun clause as the **subject** of a sentence:

Whatever you want for dinner is fine with me.

Noun clause as the **object** of a sentence:

John will make **whatever you want for dinner.**

Noun clause as the **object of a preposition**:

I have dinner ready for **whoever wants to eat.**

Noun clauses can also function as: *indirect objects, subject complements, adjective complements.*

**In a noun clause, if the signal word “that” is not the first word of the sentence, it can be omitted.*

*Example: I see (that) you made homemade cookies.
(The sentence makes sense with or without “that.”)*

Name: _____ Date: _____

Types of Context Clues

Study these four common types of context clues. Think about what information in the sentence is useful and what is not. Working with your partner, see if you can come up with different examples for at least two of the types.

Definition—the word is defined directly and clearly in the sentence in which it appears.

“The arbitrator, the neutral person chosen to settle the dispute, arrived at her decision.”

Antonym (or contrast)—often signaled by the words *whereas*, *unlike*, or *as opposed to*.

“Unlike Jamaal’s room, which was immaculate, Jeffrey’s room was very messy.”

“Whereas Melissa is quite lithe, her sister is clumsy and awkward.”

Synonym (or restatement)—other words are used in the sentence with similar meanings.

“The slender woman was so thin her clothes were too big on her.

Inference—word meanings are not directly described, but need to be inferred from the context.

“Walt’s pugnacious behavior made his opponent back down.”

“The man gigged the large fish, but he needed his friend to enlarge the hole to drag it out of the frigid water.”

Compound Sentences with Coordinating Conjunctions (**FANBOYS**)

A compound sentence contains two separate **subject** and **verb** pairs. You can combine two simple sentences together with **a comma** and **a coordinating conjunction** to make one compound sentence. The list of coordinating conjunctions includes **for, and, nor, but or, yet, and so**. These conjunctions create the easy-to-remember acronym, FANBOYS. They each have a special purpose when used to combine two independent sentences. Here are some examples of how to use each conjunction to connect two sentences and create a compound sentence:

F – for I drank some water, for I was thirsty.
 She put on a sweater, for it was cold outside.

***For means** the same thing as **because**.

The only difference is that when you use *for* to join two sentences into one compound sentence, you need to use a comma before it. When you use **because, you don't use a comma** before it.

A – and He was tired, and he had a headache.

***And means** that the second sentence is *continuing* the same thought or idea of the first sentence or is *adding to* the thought or idea of the first sentence.

N – nor She doesn't drink milk, nor does she eat butter.
 I can't whistle, nor can I sing.
 He didn't study last night, nor did he read his book.
 They were not wearing jackets, nor were they carrying umbrellas.

***Nor means** "also not". **Nor** requires a special sentence structure. The first sentence will contain a negative (usually the adverb "not"). The second sentence will contain what looks like an interrogative affirmative verb form. An auxiliary verb (*do/does/did, is/am/are/was/were*), modal verb (*can/could/will/would/may/might/must/should*), or *being* main verb (*is/am/are/was/were*) comes after *nor* and before the subject, and then the main verb comes after the subject.

B – but Tom studied a lot, but he didn't pass the test.

***But means** that the second sentence contains a thought or idea that is a contrast to the first sentence. **But** often indicates that we are combining opposite ideas.

O – or He can buy the book, or he can borrow it from the library.

***Or means** that we are expressing alternate ideas by combining the two sentences.

Y – yet Tom studied a lot, yet he didn't pass the test.

***Yet means** the same thing as *but*.

S – so Maria was thirsty, so she drank some water.

It was cold outside, so she put on a sweater.

***So means** “as a result.”

When we use **so** to combine sentences, the thought or idea in the second sentence is the result of the thought or idea in the first sentence. Using **so** often indicates a cause and effect relationship between the two sentences we are combining.

Terms Associated with Grammar

Terms related to the grammar portion of the eighth grade Skill Progression Chart are in bold face print. Additional terms and definitions are included for the sake of vertical team continuity so that students who wish to go beyond their grade level standards may advance their knowledge of literary terminology at their own pace. Definitions contain an example from *A Wrinkle in Time* and an explanation of how the grammatical or syntactical structure contributes to meaning.

Phrases—See the Grammar Foundation Lessons for examples.

Clauses—See the Grammar Foundation Lessons for examples.

Sentences—Purpose

A **declarative sentence** makes a statement: e.g., “She waited, breathlessly, and after a moment she realized that she was alone in the column” (151).

An **imperative sentence** gives a command: e.g., ““Look at him, in that column there. Get him out, Calvin”” (148).

An **interrogative sentence** asks a question: e.g., “had it been the shadow, the Black Thing? Had they had to travel through it to get to her father?” (99).

An **exclamatory sentence** provides emphasis or expresses strong emotion: e.g., ““How extraordinary! I could almost see the atoms rearranging!”” (151).

Sentences—Structure

Antithetical sentences contain two statements which are balanced, but opposite: e.g., ““It’s a privilege, not a punishment”” (5). Here, Meg contrasts her attic room as it usually is (quiet and private) with how frightening it has become during the hurricane.

In a **balanced sentence**, the phrases or clauses balance each other by virtue of their likeness or structure, meaning, or length: e.g., “The window

rattled madly in the wind, and she pulled the quilt close about her” (5). These two independent clauses create emphasis through repetition of the strong declarative statements about the stormy night.

A **complex sentence** contains an independent clause and one or more subordinate or dependent clauses: e.g., “As Charles Wallace gave Meg her sandwich, Fortinbras came out from under the table” (15). By placing the dependent clause first, L’Engle makes the reader first picture Charles Wallace’s action, then the dog’s, recreating how Meg saw what happened.

A **compound sentence** contains two independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction or by a semicolon: e.g., “The cocoa steamed fragrantly in the saucepan; geraniums bloomed on the window sills and there was a bouquet of tiny yellow chrysanthemums in the center of the table” (11). The similarity of these three independent clauses reflects the “regularity” of the family’s comfortable kitchen.

A **compound-complex sentence** contains two or more independent clauses and one or more subordinate clauses: e.g., “The furnace purred like a great, sleepy animal; the lights glowed with steady radiance; outside, alone in the dark, the wind still battered against the house, but the angry power that had frightened Meg while she was alone in the attic was subdued by the familiar comfort of the kitchen” (11).

A **loose** or **cumulative** sentence has its main clause at the beginning with additional grammatical units added after it. It is the normal structure of everyday English sentences: “A voice emerged from among turned-up coat collar, stole, scarves, and hat, a voice like an uncoiled gate, but somehow not unpleasant” (16). This loose sentence adds depth to the description of the mysterious Mrs. Whatsit with each additional phrase after the main clause, “A voice emerged. . .”

A **periodic sentence** has its main clause at the end of the sentence with additional grammatical units leading up to the point: e.g., “At the quiet of his voice she felt calmer”; “If they hadn’t walked upright they would have seemed like animals”; “From under the table where he was lying at Charles Wallace’s feet, hoping for a crumb or two, Fortinbras raised his slender dark head in greeting to Meg, and his tail thumped against the floor” (8). These periodic sentences delay the completion of their meaning and create temporary suspense for the reader.

A **simple sentence** consists of one independent clause; e.g. “Charles Wallace freed his hands from Meg and Calvin and plunked himself down on one of the chairs” (129). This simple sentence emphatically recreates Charles Wallace’s action.

Syntax Techniques

Syntax means the arrangement of words and the order of grammatical elements in a sentence. In *A Wrinkle in Time*, Madeleine L’Engle uses short, clipped, “Dick and Jane”-type sentences to describe the jerky, uniform actions of the overly controlled citizens of Camazotz, as in the following passage describing children playing skip rope: “Down came the ropes. Down came the balls. Over and over again. Up. Down. All in rhythm. All identical. Like the houses. Like the paths. Like the flowers” (103). The author employs simple sentences and sentence fragments to show the fragmentary and overly simple existence of these citizens of a totalitarian government. She also uses a type of repetition (anaphora) to show the bleak similarity of all their actions.

The techniques listed here are powerful strategies for using language. Students find it both interesting and valuable to identify these techniques in the works of authors and to use them in their own writing.

Juxtaposition is a poetic and rhetorical device in which normally unassociated ideas, words, or phrases are placed next to one another, often creating an effect of surprise and wit: e.g., “The silver light from the enormous moon poured over them, blending with the golden quality of the day, flowing over the children,

over Mrs. Whatsit, over the mountain peak” (70). The mingling of night and day creates a beautiful setting for the children’s visit to the summit of the planet Uriel.

Natural order of a sentence involves constructing a sentence so the subject comes before the predicate: e.g., “She scowled down at the ground in sullen fury” (126). This sentence achieves the effect of most English sentences—we “see” the subject and then the action.

Omission

- *Asyndeton (a-syn'-de-ton)* is deliberate omission of conjunctions in a series of related clauses; it helps to speed the pace: e.g., “The kitten yawned, stretched, gave a piteous miaow, trotted out of the attic and down the stairs” (5). Sometimes, as in this sentence, the use of asyndeton means that all parts of the sentence receive equal weight because they are not separated.
- *Ellipsis (el-lip'-sis)* is the deliberate omission of a word or words that are readily implied by the context: e.g., “Her eyes were bright, her nose [was] a round, soft blob, her mouth [was] puckered like an autumn apple” (17). The words L’Engle omits, those in the brackets, simply are not needed for the sentence to make sense; adding them would make the sentence wordier and less happy in tone.

Parallel structure (parallelism) refers to a grammatical or structural similarity between sentences or parts of a sentence. It involves an arrangement of words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs so that elements of equal importance are equally developed and similarly phrased: e.g., “Calvin led the way to the wall, and then sat there, his red hair shining silver in the moonlight, his body dappled with patterns from the tangle of branches” (49). The two absolute phrases in the sentence are parallel and equally important in this description of Calvin.

Polysyndeton (pol-y-syn¹-de-ton) is the deliberate use of many conjunctions for special emphasis—to highlight quantity or mass of detail, or to create a flowing, continuous sentence pattern; it slows the pace: e.g., “There was a gust of wind and a great thrust and a sharp shattering as she was shoved through—what?” (79). What polysyndeton does in this sentence is capture the feeling of Meg’s unfolding arrival into another dimension, giving it a feeling of almost hypnotic power gripping her.

Repetition is a device in which words, sounds, and ideas are used more than once to enhance rhythm and create emphasis. For example, in this sentence the repetition recreates the monotonous movement of people in and out of the building: e.g., “Six large doors kept swinging open, shut, open, shut, as people went in and out, in and out, looking straight ahead, straight ahead, paying no attention to the children whatsoever” (111-112).

- *Anadiplosis* (an¹-a-di-plo¹-sis) is the repetition of the last word of one clause at the beginning of the following clause: e.g., “Quite calmly, as though this old woman and her boots were nothing out of the ordinary, Mrs. Murry pulled until the second boot relinquished the foot. This foot was covered with a blue and gray Argyle sock, and Mrs. Whatsit sat there, wriggling her toes, contentedly finishing her sandwich before scrambling to her feet” (20). Repetition of “foot” makes the reader focus on the humor of the scene when Mrs. Whatsit falls backwards in her chair yet continues to eat her sandwich.
- *Anaphora* (a-naph¹-o-ra) is the repetition of the same word or group of words at the beginning of successive clauses. For example, the repetition of “Let” at the beginning of each clause echoes the solemnity and awe of God’s word: “Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift their voice; let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the Lord!” (68). But the repetition of “Each” at the beginning of each of the following

sentences makes the people seem like robots or automatons: “Each woman stood on the steps of her house. Each clapped. Each child with the ball caught the ball. Each child with the skipping rope folded the rope. Each child turned and walked into the house” (103-104).

- *Epanalepsis* (ep¹-an-a-lep¹-sis) is the repetition at the end of a clause of the word that occurred at the beginning of the clause: e.g., “‘Eat!’ Meg exclaimed as Mrs. Murry went out through the lab. ‘How does she expect me to eat?’” (16). Meg’s shock is reflected in the repetition of “eat” at the beginning and end of the passage.
- *Epistrophe* (e-pis¹-tro-pee) is the repetition of the same word or group of words at the ends of successive clauses: e.g., “‘Your development has to go at its own pace. It just doesn’t happen to be the usual pace’” (9). And “She moved with great agility for such an old woman. At least Meg was reasonably sure that she was an old woman, and a very old woman at that” (20). Repeating “pace” and “old woman” at the ends of sentences places special emphasis on the words because they come in a powerful place in the sentences.

Reversal

- *Antimetabole* (an¹-ti-me-ta-bo-lee) is a sentence strategy in which the arrangement of ideas in the second clause is a reversal of the first: e.g., “To live is to read; to read is to live.” (There are no examples of antimetabole in *A Wrinkle in Time*)
- *Inverted order of a sentence (inversion)* involves constructing a sentence so the predicate comes before the subject: e.g., “As the skipping rope hit the pavement, so did the ball!” (103). This is a device in which typical sentence patterns are reversed to create an emphatic or rhythmic effect—exactly the effect of the skipping rope and the ball simultaneously hitting the pavement.

A ***rhetorical question*** is a question that requires no answer. It is used to draw attention to a point and is generally stronger than a direct statement: e.g., “How could they sleep? . . . How could they leave her up in the attic in the rickety brass bed, knowing that the roof might be blown right off the house, and she tossed out into the wild night sky to land who knows where?” (5). These questions run through Meg’s mind as she worries. Even if she had spoken them aloud, she would not have really expected answers—just someone to listen to her.

A ***rhetorical fragment*** is a sentence fragment used deliberately for a persuasive purpose or to create a desired effect: e.g., “A whirl of darkness. An icy cold blast. An angry, resentful howl that seemed to tear through her. Darkness again” (209). Here, Meg experiences a fast return to earth. The fragments capture the jolting confusion of what is happening to her.

Marker Verbs for Essays of Literary Analysis

*COMMUNICATES

Acquaints
Advertises
Announces
Appeals
Betrays
Breaks
Carries
Concludes
Connects
Corresponds
Declares
Discloses
Divulges
Enlightens
Evokes
Hints
Imparts
Implies
Informs
Introduces
Makes known
Offers
Proclaims
Provides
Relates
Reports
Reveals
Signifies
States
Suggests
Transfers
Transmits
Unfolds

*DESCRIBES

Depicts
Explains
Expresses
Illustrates
Portrays

*COMPRISES

Amounts to
Composes
Contains
Embodies
Encompasses
Holds
Includes
Incorporates

*REVEALS

Acknowledges
Bares
Clarifies
Demonstrates
Discloses
Displays
Elucidates
Exemplifies
Exhibits
Exposes
Illustrates
Manifests
Opens
Sheds light on
Shows
Unveils

*ENHANCES

Adorns
Aggrandizes
Amplifies
Augments
Builds up
Complements
Elevates
Exaggerates
Fleashes out
Heightens
Increases
Intensifies
Lifts
Magnifies
Raises
Reinforces
Strengthens

*EXAMINES

Analyzes
Compares
Contrasts
Dissects
Explores
Investigates
Questions
Probes

*DEVELOPS

Broadens
Enlarges
Expands
Explains

*REINFORCES

Adds to
Backs up
Bolsters
Buttresses
Carries
Confirms
Defends
Emphasizes
Enlarges
Fortifies
Increases
Props
Proves
Stresses
Substantiates
Supplements
Supports
Sustains
Underlines
Underscores
Validates
Verifies

*USES

Utilizes
Employs
Makes use of
Exercises
Applies

*CONVEYS

Communicates
Discloses
Expresses
Imparts
Projects
Relates
Reveals
Tells
Sends

*SYMBOLIZES

Connotes
Denotes
Designates
Emblemizes
Embodies
Epitomizes
Equates
Exemplifies
Illustrates
Likens
Links
Mirrors
Personifies
Represents
Shows

*COMMENTS

Affirms
Asserts
Clarifies
Construes
Criticizes
Discloses
Elucidates
Explains
Expounds
Interjects
Mentions
Notes
Notices
Observes
Points out
Reflects
Remarks
Touches on

*CLAIMS

Argues
Asserts
Concedes
Contends
Establishes
Maintains
Makes a case
Qualifies
Rebuts
Reasons
States

Note: **Bolded** words are most commonly used.



she
her
hers

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Parts of Speech Picnic

A Guide to Using the Student Resource

Grades 3-5

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

This resource introduces students to the eight parts of speech by illustrating how students might encounter each part of speech in the context of a picnic. For most students, the eight parts of speech—*nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections*—are their introduction to grammar study. Students need practice using the eight parts of speech to construct sentences that express increasing complexity of thought. Classroom practice that integrates grammar instruction into close reading and composition lessons is the best way for students to develop a conceptual understanding of how parts of speech function in a sentence. Spiraling grammar instruction throughout the curriculum will help students not only recognize parts of speech but also understand their relationship to the overall structure of a sentence.

TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

This resource is a fun way to introduce students to the eight parts of speech. Teachers can introduce the resource as a coloring page and allow students to add examples of their own. At the beginning of the year, you might create a bulletin board using a picnic theme to introduce the Student Resource.

The noun page includes examples of both common and proper nouns. You might attach Ziploc® sandwich bags for each part of speech to the bulletin board. As students recognize additional examples of nouns in the classroom, they can write their nouns on a small piece of paper and drop them in the sandwich bag. Allow students to do the same for the other parts of speech.

A game of “I Spy” is another way to reinforce nouns, adjectives, and indefinite pronouns. Explain to students that the clue giver will use an adjective to describe the indefinite pronoun *something*. Another student will use a noun to answer. The following example would be an acceptable round of play:

Student One: I spy something big and yellow.

Student Two: I spy a school bus.

Listen carefully as students play. If the student providing the clue includes words that are not adjectives, his or she must restate or forfeit his or her turn. “I spy something big and yellow with wheels” would not be an acceptable clue because it includes a noun in the description. This format will support grammar instruction and increase the complexity of the game.

The resource is designed to teach action verbs. Be sure to include action verbs that students might not recognize as actions, such as think, wonder, hope, etc. After students become familiar with action verbs, introduce linking verbs. Students can make a list of “be verbs” to

add to the verb page of the resource.

The resource does not list all of the coordinating conjunctions. The conjunctions *and or*, and *but*, have been included, but the additional conjunctions *for*, *yet*, *so*, and *nor* can be added by students to the resource. The word *not* is **not** a conjunction. Explain to students that *not* is included to demonstrate the meaning of *but*, as in “not one ant but two.” If you see this as problematic for your students, remove the word *not* from the resource and discuss with them how to read the rebus.

The adjective/adverb page of the resource includes examples of adjectives that answer the questions: *Which one?*, *How many?*, *What kind?* The resource also includes examples of indefinite adjectives. If your standards dictate the use of this term, this resource will provide an introduction. You might ask students to think of additional adjectives to describe the pictures so students can practice ordering adjectives in a sentence. The resource only shows examples of adverbs that end in *-ly*. Discuss with your vertical team when and how to introduce unusual adverbs like *not*, *quite*, *rather*, etc.

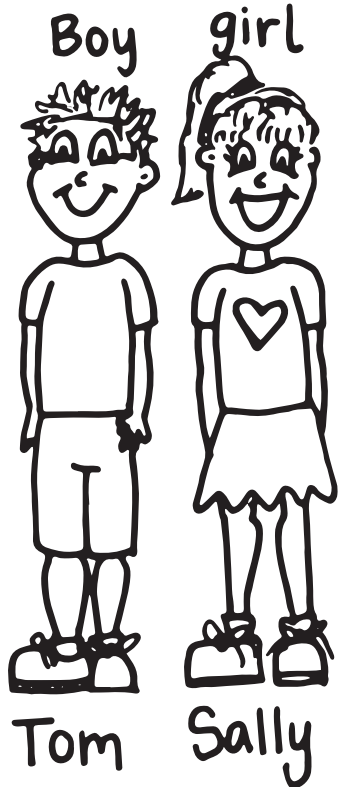
The list of prepositions included in the resource is not exhaustive, so students should be encouraged to list additional prepositions on the page. You might have students write sentences that describe the position of the ants to the basket.

Consider using the book *One Hundred Hungry Ants* by Elinor J. Pinczes to create student activities to support the Student Resource. Students could identify the various parts of speech in sentences presented in the book, or they could practice sentence modeling or sentence combining based on passages from the book.

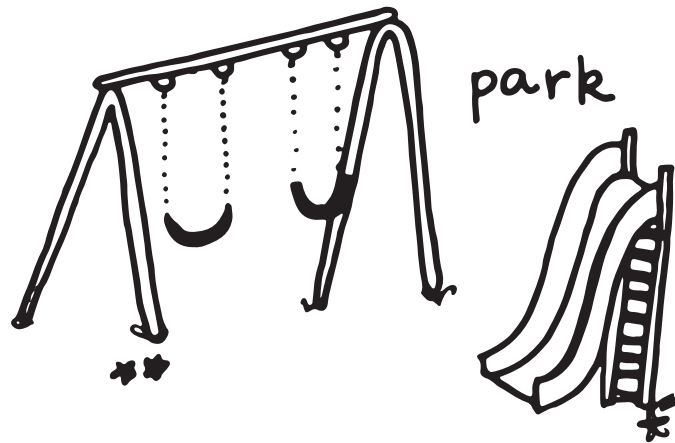
Parts of Speech Picnic

A Noun is a person, a place, a thing, or an idea.

People



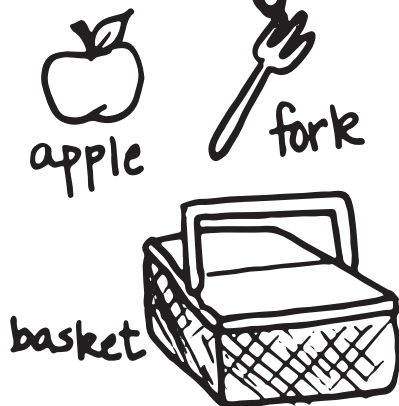
Places



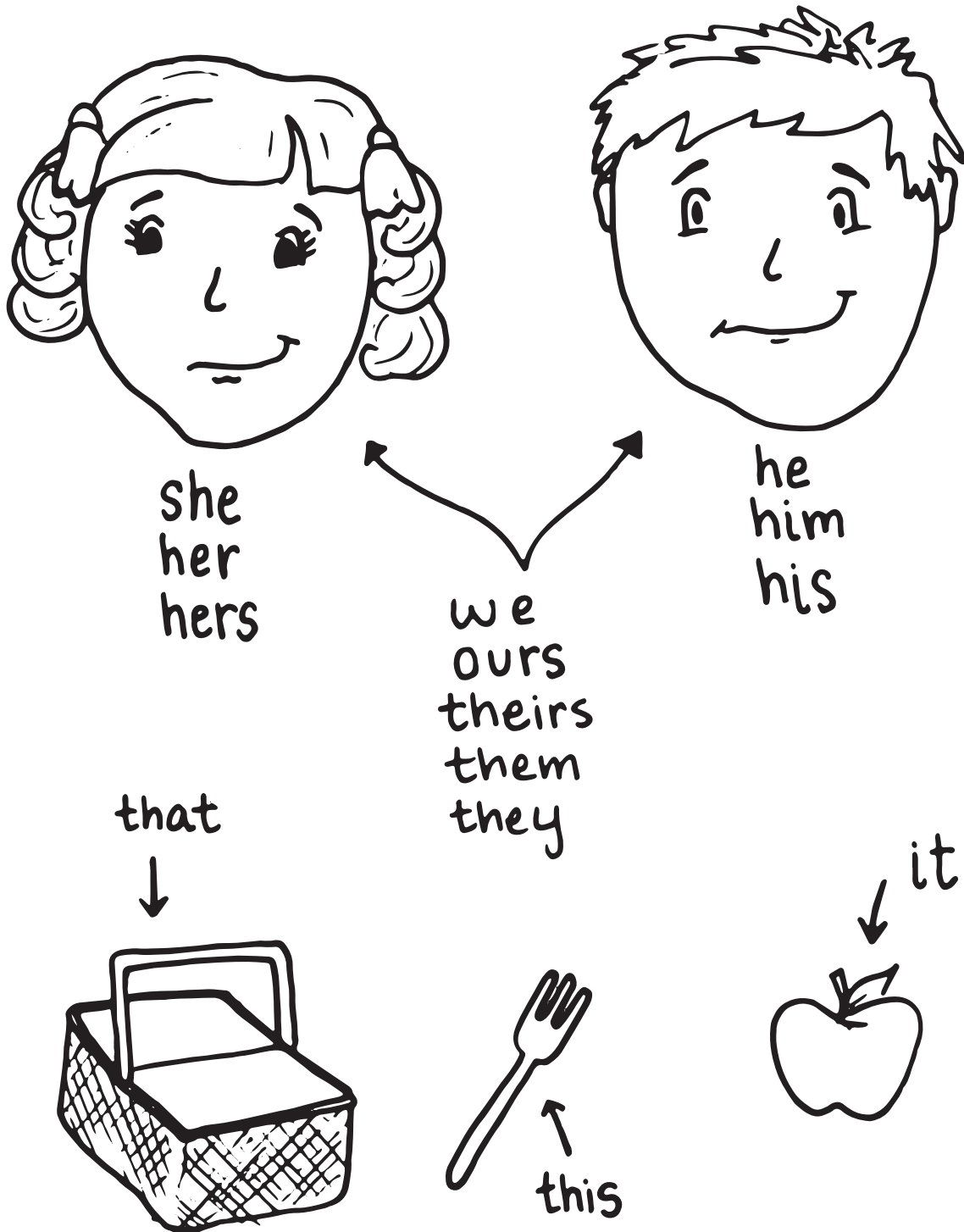
Ideas



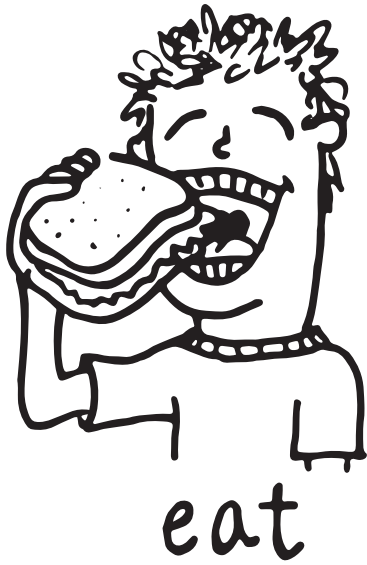
Things



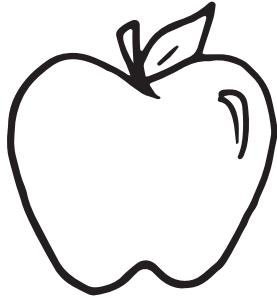
Pronouns take the place of nouns



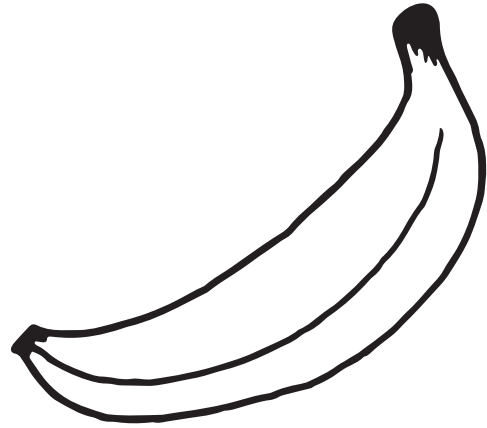
Verbs show action



Conjunctions join words in sentences



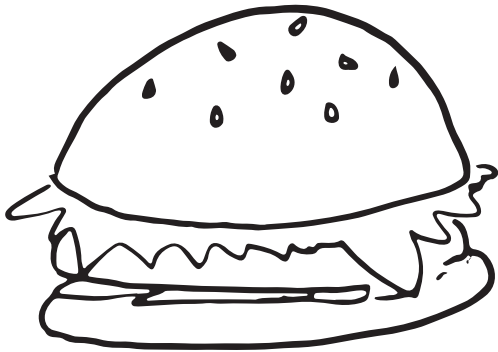
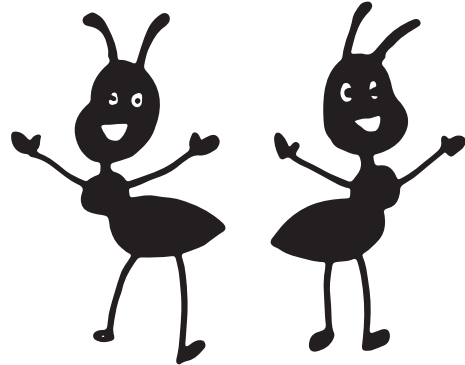
or



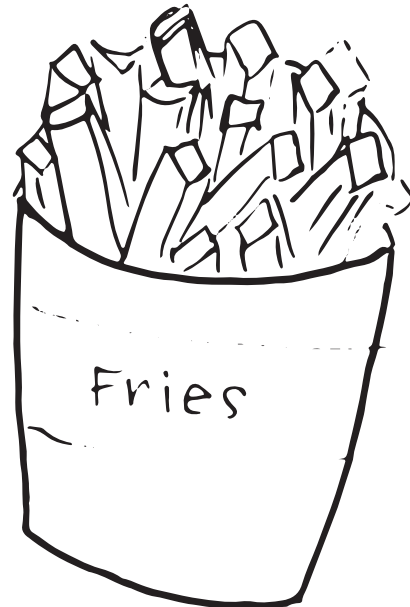
not



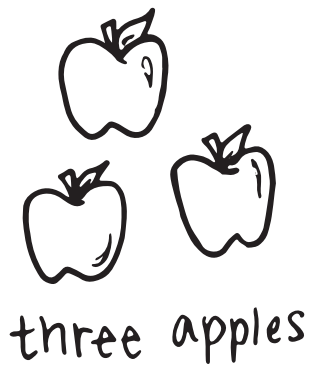
but



and



Adjectives modify nouns



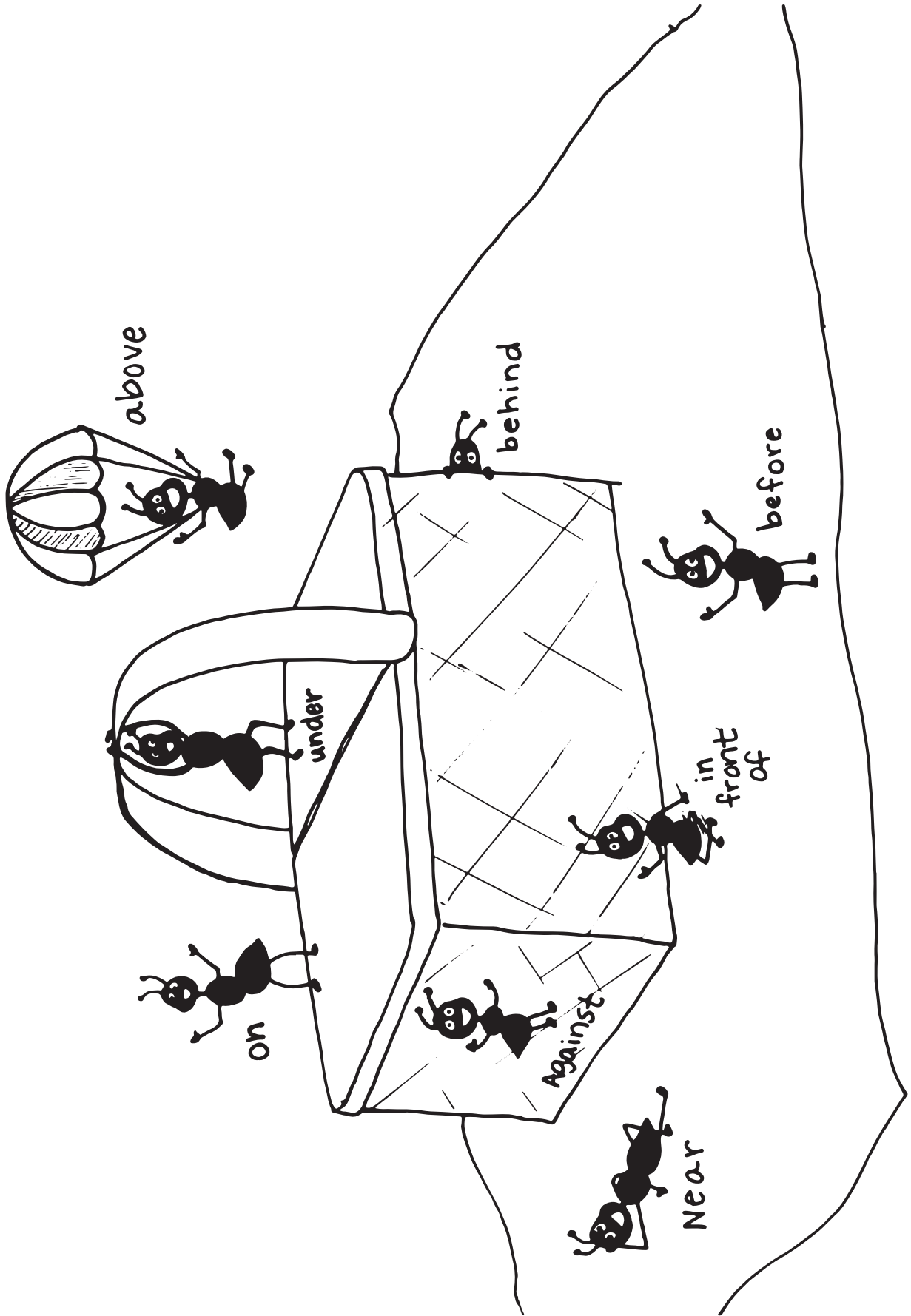
Adverbs modify verbs



Interjections express emotion or excitement



A preposition is a connecting word that shows the relationship between a noun or a pronoun and other words in the sentence.



Phrase Toolbox

Student Resource

Phrases are groups of words that do not contain both a subject and a verb. Collectively, the words in the phrase function as a single part of speech.

Prepositional phrase

a preposition plus its object and modifiers

Prepositions

to, around, under, over, like, as, behind, with, outside, etc.

Adjective prepositional phrase

Adjective prepositional phrases tell *which one*, *what kind*, *how many*, and *how much*, or give other information about a noun, a pronoun, a noun phrase, or a noun clause.

*The store **around the corner** is painted green.* (Which store is it? The store around the corner.)

*The girl **with the blue hair** is angry.*

Adverb prepositional phrase

Adverb prepositional phrases tell *how*, *when*, *where*, *why*, *to what extent*, or *under what condition* about a verb, an adjective, an adverb, an adverb phrase, or an adverb clause.

*Oscar is painting his house **with the help of his friends**.* (How is he painting his house? With the help of his friends.)

*Sally is coloring **outside the lines**.*

Infinitive phrase

An infinitive phrase consists of the word “to” plus a verb. Infinitive phrases can function as adjectives, adverbs, or nouns.

***To dance gracefully** is my ambition.* (subject of sentence)

*Her plan **to become a millionaire** fell through when the stock market crashed.* (functions as an adjective modifying “plan”)

*She wanted **to become a veterinarian**.* (noun—direct object of “wanted”)

*John went to college **to study engineering**.* (functions as an adverb telling why he went)

Appositive phrase

An appositive phrase renames, or identifies, a noun or pronoun. When it adds information that is nonessential—information that could be omitted from the sentence without hindering understanding of the sentence—it is set off by commas.

*My teacher, **a woman with curly hair**, is very pretty.*

*Bowser, **the dog with the sharp teeth**, is coming around the corner.*

*I went to the mall yesterday with my friend **Linda**.* (Since I have many friends, I must include the name of the friend with whom I went to the mall. This appositive is essential and is therefore not set off by commas.)

Participial phrase

A participle is a verb form (past or present) that functions like an adjective. The phrase is the participle plus its modifiers.

Blinded by the light, Sarah walked into the concert hall.

Swimming for his life, John crossed the English Channel.

Gerund phrase

A gerund is an “-ing” verb form that functions as a noun. The phrase is the gerund plus its complements and modifiers.

Walking in the moonlight is a romantic way to end a date. (subject of the sentence)

He particularly enjoyed **walking in the moonlight with his girlfriend**. (direct object)

He wrote a poem about **walking in the moonlight**. (object of the preposition)

Walking the dog is not my favorite task. (subject)

Absolute phrase

An absolute phrase (also called a *nominative absolute*) is a group of words consisting of a noun or pronoun, an “-ing” or “-ed” verb form, and any related modifiers. Absolute phrases modify the whole sentence rather than a particular part of it. They are always set off from the rest of the sentence with a comma or pair of commas (or dashes) because they are parenthetical elements. An absolute phrase, very simply put, is an independent clause with the “was” or “were” omitted. Absolute phrases are valuable in constructing concise, layered sentences.

Their minds whirling from the avalanche of information provided by their teacher, the students made their way thoughtfully to the parking lot.

His head pounding, his hands shaking, his heart filled with trepidation, the young man knelt and proposed marriage to his sweetheart.

The two lovers walked through the garden, **their faces reflecting the moonlight, their arms twined about each other, their footsteps echoing in the stillness of the night**.

Noting Titles: Quotation Marks vs. Underlining and Italicizing Student Resource

The following chart covers punctuation conventions for titles of most sources. Note that if titles appear in italics in a prompt, you should underline that title when you handwrite the essay. This list was gleaned from a variety of online and print sources.

Underlining/ <i>Italicizing</i> *	<i>Example</i>	“Quotation Marks”*	<i>Example</i>
Book (anything as a stand-alone publication)		Short Story	“The Most Dangerous Game”
Fiction (including a novella, if published as a book)	<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	Chapter Title	“The Last to See Them Alive” in <i>In Cold Blood</i>
Nonfiction	<i>The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin</i>	Newspaper Article	“Jewelry Robbers Nabbed” in <i>The New York Times</i>
Reference Book	<i>Encyclopedia Britannica</i>	Encyclopedia Information	“Ulysses S. Grant” in <i>World Book Encyclopedia</i>
Collection/Anthology of Short Stories or Essays	<i>The Best American Essays of 2008</i> <i>Norton’s Anthology of British Literature</i>	Essay	“The Art of Controversy” “Advice to Youth”
Epic Poem	<i>Odyssey</i> <i>Paradise Lost</i>	Poem	“The Raven” “Mending Wall”
Play/Drama (more than three acts)	<i>MacBeth</i> <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>	One-Act Play	“Check Please” “Aliens vs. Cheerleaders”
Movie/Film/Cinema	<i>The Magnificent Seven</i> <i>The Avengers</i> <i>Gone with the Wind</i>	Skit/Monologue	“The Biggest Liars in Texas”
Television/Radio Series	<i>The Good Wife</i> <i>I Love Lucy</i>	Individual TV show/ program	“The Dream Team” “The Candy Factory”
Works of Art (sculpture, painting, photograph)	Rhodan’s <i>The Thinker</i> Van Gogh’s <i>Starry Night</i> Adams’ <i>A Man from Taos</i>	Lecture/Speech/ Sermon Title	Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream”

Underlining/Italicizing*	Example	“Quotation Marks”**	Example
Magazine/Newspaper/ Pamphlet	<i>Better Homes and Gardens</i> <i>The New York Times</i> <i>Common Sense</i>	Articles in Magazine/ Newspaper	“50 Ways to Improve Your Diet”
Ship/Train/ Aircraft/ Spacecraft (do not italicize USS or HMS)	<i>USS Nimitz</i> <i>The Orient Express</i> <i>Air Force One</i> <i>Challenger</i>	Review of Book/Play/ Film	“Review of <i>The English Patient</i> ” “ <i>Gone Girl</i> : A Review of Contemporary Literature”
Album/Cassette/CD	Carrie Underwood’s <i>Blown Away</i>	Single Song Title	“Oklahoma” “Good Girl”
Example Words or Phrases	Using the term <i>obese</i> conjures up negative emotions in society.	Nicknames	Babe Ruth was also known as the “Sultan of Swat” and the “Big Bambino” during his baseball career.
Foreign Words	Most people understand the Spanish term <i>adios</i> .	Meanings of foreign words	The term <i>puja</i> is defined as “the Hindu act of worship.”
Rhetorical emphasis to stress the word itself	Not only did he eat one cookie, he ate <i>all twelve</i> of the cookies.	Use of word for irony	The cafeteria worker spooned a green glob of “food” onto my plate.
Legal Cases/Supreme Court Decisions	<i>Roe v. Wade</i>	One- to Two-Page Handout	“Perfect Punctuation for the Proper Paper”
Long Musical Composition (without key or number)	<i>Messiah</i> <i>Orfeo</i> <i>Symphonie</i> <i>Fantastique</i>	*Single quotes only are used inside a quote.	Mary said, “The poem ‘Porphyria’s Lover’ is really spooky.”
Ballet/Opera/Musical/ Broadway Show	<i>Oklahoma</i> <i>Les Miserables</i>		
Letters or numbers referred to in a sentence	She forgot to carry her 3 when she added. She had made an A in math every year.		
*Anything italicized in print is underlined when handwritten.	<i>We read <u>Death of a Salesman in English</u> class.</i>		
**Religious books, such as the Bible or the Koran, are not italicized.			

Terms Associated with Close Reading

Middle Grades

Terms related to the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade Skill Progression Charts are included for the sake of vertical team continuity and so that students who wish to go beyond their grade level standards may advance their knowledge of literary terminology at their own pace. Most definitions contain an example from *A Wrinkle in Time* and an explanation of how the use of the device links to meaning.

Literary Elements

Archetype is a character, action, or situation that is a prototype, or pattern, of human life generally; a situation that occurs over and over again in literature, such as a quest, an initiation, or an attempt to overcome evil. Many myths contain archetypes. Two common types of archetypes involve **setting** and **character**. A common **archetypal setting** is the desert, which is associated with spiritual sterility and barrenness because it is devoid of many amenities and personal comforts. **Archetypal characters** are those who embody a certain kind of universal human experience. For example, a *femme fatale*, *siren*, or *temptress* figure is a character who purposefully lures men to disaster through her beauty. Other examples of archetypal figures include the “damsel in distress,” the “mentor,” the “old crone,” the “hag” or witch, and the “naïve young man from the country.” These characters are recognizable human “types” and their stories recreate “typical” or recurrent human experiences. For example, Mrs. Whatsit, Mrs. Who, and Mrs. Which in *A Wrinkle in Time* function as archetypal mentors or guides to Charles Wallace, Meg, and Calvin, guiding and directing their quest to find Meg’s father and save the world from the “Dark thing” or shadow that threatens the planet Earth. Their journey itself is an archetypal one: it requires a call to adventure, painful ordeals, tests of courage, a confrontation of “the shadow” (a manifestation of evil), magic talismans (Mrs. Who’s spectacles), and a successful completion of the task. Calvin, Meg, and Charles Wallace act out the classic plot elements of an archetypal quest as do the characters in *Star*

Wars, *The Wizard of Oz*, and many other books, short stories, poems, and films.

Characters are people or animals who take part in the action of a literary work. Readers learn about characters from

- what they say (dialogue),
- what they do (actions),
- what they think (interior monologue),
- what others say about them, and
- through the author’s direct statement.

The **protagonist** is the central character of a drama, novel, short story, or narrative poem. The adversary of this character is then the antagonist. To be believable, a character must reflect universal human characteristics that are the same despite geographical differences and time periods. The emotions and concerns or real people of all times are expressed in concrete terms through the traits of literary characters. An author may choose to emphasize a single important trait, creating what is called a **flat character**; or the author may present a complex, fully-rounded personality (a three-dimensional or **round character**). A character that changes little over the course of a narrative is called a **static character**. Things happen *to* these characters, but little happens *in* them. A character that changes in response to the actions through which he or she passes is called a **dynamic character**. One of the objectives of the work is to reveal the consequences of the action upon her or him. Meg Murry, the protagonist of *A Wrinkle in Time*, is an example of a dynamic, round character. The reader gets to know many aspects of Meg’s character: she is angry, a loner, is grieving over the loss of her “perfect” father, adores but envies her mother and brothers, and has a low opinion of her own intelligence and physical attractiveness. During the course of the novel, she finds out that her father is human, gains friends and allies in her quest, and comes to an understanding of her own gifts through the events in the plot because of Calvin’s interest in her. She changes dramatically, losing her angry

resentment and focusing on her ability to love others. Her brothers Sandy and Dennys are good examples of flat, static characters. They are somewhat one-dimensional (the reader gets to know only that they are popular and good at sports), and they do not change at all from the first pages of the book to the last.

Epiphany—an event in which the essential nature of something—a person, a situation, an object—is suddenly perceived; it is intuitive grasp of reality in a quick flash of recognition in which something usually simple and commonplace is seen in a new light. Meg’s epiphany occurs when she suddenly realizes that anger and resentment will not help her free Charles Wallace from the grip of evil, but love will.

Foil—a character, usually minor, designed to highlight qualities of a major character: e.g., The Man with Red Eyes contrasts vividly with Mrs. Whatsit, Mrs. Who, and Mrs. Which. His evil makes their goodness all the more striking.

Motivation—a reason that explains a character’s thoughts, feelings, actions, or behavior. Meg and Charles Wallace seek their father who has been absent from their family for two years. They miss him terribly. Later, Meg must rescue Charles Wallace from the grip of the evil force because she loves her brother deeply.

Stock—a flat character in a standard role with standard traits: e.g., Mr. Jenkins, the school principal, stereotypically does not tolerate nonconformity well and delivers standard “if you’d just apply yourself” lectures to Meg.

Details are facts, revealed by the author or speaker, that support the attitude or tone in a piece of poetry or prose. In *A Wrinkle in Time*, Meg discovers her father trapped in a transparent column. The details of her father’s appearance reinforce her increasing despair over their situation and her disappointment in her father: “He had grown a beard, and the silky brown was shot with gray. His hair, too, had not been cut. It wasn’t just the overlong hair of the man in the snapshot at Cape Canaveral; it was pushed back

from his high forehead and fell softly almost to his shoulders, so that he looked like someone in another century, or a shipwrecked sailor” (145).

Diction is word choice intended to convey a certain effect. In *A Wrinkle in Time*, no one on the planet of Camazotz “suffers.” When Meg’s little brother, Charles Wallace, falls under the spell of the evil force on the planet, he tells Meg and Calvin, “‘We let no one suffer. It is much kinder simply to annihilate anyone who is ill. Nobody has weeks and weeks of runny noses and sore throats. Rather than endure such discomfort, they are simply put to sleep’” (139).

Arguing with Charles’ use of these words—*kinder*, *simply*, *annihilate*, *simply*, *put to sleep*—Calvin points out that this practice is *murder*.

The **denotative** and **connotative** meanings of words must also be considered. **Denotation** refers to the dictionary definition of a word, whereas **connotation** refers to the feelings and attitudes associated with a word. In *A Wrinkle in Time*, the author writes that, in the Murrays’ house, “the furnace purred like a great, sleepy animal; the lights glowed with steady radiance; outside, alone in the dark, the wind still battered against the house. . .” (11). The word “purred” refers denotatively to a guttural, wordless noise, but its connotation is one of comfort, contentment, satisfaction—it is a warm word that the reader associates with cats and with pleasure. The emotional impact of the word highlights the contrast between the people in the house—surrounded by warmth, safety, light, and companionship—and the wind, which is “battering” the house but which is “alone in the dark,” lonely and ineffectual against the safe walls of the house.

Dialect is the speech of a particular region or group as it differs from those of a real or imaginary standard speech. To emphasize the authority of Mrs. Which and to distinguish her from the other “witches,” L’Engle creates a strange dialect for her: “‘Yyouu hhave ssaidd itt!’ Mrs. Which’s voice rang out. ‘Itt iss Eevill. Itt iss thee Ppowers of Ddarrkknness!’” (88). The repeated letters cause her speech to be read slowly and emphatically.

Euphemism is the use of a word or phrase that is less expressive or direct but is considered less distasteful or offensive than another: e.g., Charles Wallace, under the spell of evil, says, ““Nobody has weeks and weeks of runny noses and sore throats. Rather than endure such discomfort, they are simply put to sleep”” (139). Of course, “put to sleep” is a euphemism for murder, but makes the evil force seem reasonable in its explanation.

Idiom is an accepted phrase or expression having a meaning different from the literal: e.g., Calvin says about himself, ““I’m blessed with more brains and opportunities than many people, but there’s nothing about me that breaks out of the ordinary mold”” (47). He means that he is an ordinary person, not that he literally would break a mold that shaped him. He also says about Meg that “. . .you’re supposed to be dumb in school, always being called up on the carpet”” (42). Meg gets in trouble at school; she isn’t literally forced to stand on a rug when she is reprimanded.

Imagery consists of the words or phrases a writer uses to represent persons, objects, actions, feelings and ideas descriptively by appealing to the senses. In *A Wrinkle in Time*, the author incorporates appeals to all five senses. Through these appeals we experience what the main character, Meg, experiences both physically and emotionally.

- **Sight and smell**—“They were standing in a sunlit field, and the air about them was moving with the delicious fragrance that comes only on the rarest of spring days when the sun’s touch is gentle and the apple blossoms are just beginning to unfold” (59).
- **Sound**—““Oh, my dears,’ came the new voice, a rich voice with the warmth of a woodwind, the clarity of a trumpet, the mystery of an English horn” (65).
- **Sight**—“And though it was warmer than it had been when they so precipitously left the apple orchard, there was a faintly autumnal touch to the air; near them were several small trees with reddened leaves very much like sumac; and a big patch of goldenrod-like flowers” (99).
- **Taste**—“The table was set up in front of them,

and the dark smocked men heaped their plates with turkey and dressing and mashed potatoes and gravy and little green peas with big yellow blobs of butter melting in them and cranberries and sweet potatoes topped with gooey browned marshmallows and olives and celery and rosebud radishes and—“ (129).

- **Touch and smell**—“But with the tentacle came the same delicate fragrance that moved across her with the breeze, and she felt a soft tingling warmth go all through her that momentarily assuaged her pain” (174-175).

Mood is the atmosphere or predominant emotion in a literary work. In other words, mood is the emotional response of the reader to the text. In *A Wrinkle in Time*, the description of the house where the three “witches” live establishes an *ominous* mood: “The elms were almost bare, now, and the ground around the house was yellow with damp leaves. The late afternoon light had a greenish cast which the blank windows reflected in a sinister way. An unhinged shutter thumped. Something else creaked” (34).

Plot is the sequence of events or actions in a short story, novel, play, or narrative poem. **Freytag’s Pyramid** is a convenient diagram that describes the typical pattern of a dramatic or fictional work. The structure of the work begins with **exposition**, in which the author lays the groundwork for the reader by revealing the setting, the relationships between the characters, and the situation as it exists before conflict begins. The **inciting incident** interrupts the harmony and balance of the situation and one or more of the characters comes into conflict with an outside force, with his or her own nature, or with another character. During the plot events that constitute the **rising action**, the things that happen in the work build toward an irreversible **climax**, or pivotal point, after which the **falling action** leads inevitably toward a revelation or meaning that occurs at the **denouement**, or unraveling, of the problem set up by the inciting incident. A plot may be sequenced chronologically, or interrupted by **flashback** or **flash forward**. In *A Wrinkle in Time*, the plot outline might read this way:

Exposition: The reader is introduced to Meg Murry and her family and gets to know their situation and personalities.

Inciting Incident: A “tramp,” who turns out to be Mrs. Whatsit, comes to the Murry house for a late-night snack. In the process she mentions a mysterious word, “tesseract,” what is somehow connected to Meg’s missing father and his highly secret government work.

Rising Action: During the rising action of the story, Meg and Charles Wallace investigate the three “witches,” meet Calvin, and set off on their journey, finally arriving at Camazotz, the “shadowed” planet where Meg’s father is being held captive.

Climax: In a dramatic confrontation with the hideous disembodied brain “IT,” Meg battles for her freedom and that of her family and friends, using emotion (anger and impatience) as a weapon to counter her antagonist’s monstrous insistence on isolated reason and restrictive order. She is able to resist, but Charles Wallace falls into the antagonist’s trap because of his overconfidence in his own intelligence.

Falling Action: The falling action takes place as Meg, Calvin, and Meg’s father escape from Camazotz, leaving Charles Wallace held captive by “IT.” They again encounter the three witches, and Meg is sent back to the shadowed planet to try to release Charles Wallace from the spell that holds him.

Denouement: In the denouement, or resolution of the plot, Meg counters the antagonist’s logical order with the power of her love, forgives her father for not being all-powerful, accepts her own strengths and weaknesses, and triumphs over “IT.” The children and Mr. Murry are returned to their home and reunited with their loved ones.

Conflict is a term that describes the tension between opposing forces in a work of literature. Some of the more common conflicts involve the following forces:

- a person in opposition to another person
- a person opposing fate
- an internal battle involving contradictory forces within a character
- a person fighting against the forces

of nature

- a person in opposition to some aspect of his or her society

In *A Wrinkle in Time*, Meg, Charles Wallace, and Calvin oppose the forces of darkness in order to save both Meg and Charles’s father and the world as we know it. The children fight particularly against that aspect of society that seeks conformity and uniformity of all its members; they fight for individuality and free will. In addition to this conflict, Meg herself is internally conflicted, fighting against her own insecurity and fear.

Flashback is a scene that interrupts the action of a work to show a previous event. Near the beginning of *A Wrinkle in Time*, the author shows the reader Meg Murry remembering an incident in which her absent father had reassured her about her own intelligence and that of her little brother. The scene is presented as though taking place *now*, with **dialogue** and description, even though it is really a memory that Meg is recalling.

Foreshadowing is the use of hints or clues in a narrative to suggest future action. The author of *A Wrinkle in Time* uses foreshadowing in the beginning paragraph of the novel. Even though the main character Meg Murry is safe in her bed in her family home, the author foreshadows the fearsome nature of the task that is about to confront her by describing the storm that is battering the house, personifying its natural phenomena when she shows the clouds “scudding frantically” across the sky and the moon “ripping” through the clouds, making “wraithlike shadows” that “race” across the ground. The use of these frightening images and scary diction portends the ominous events that lie in store for Meg.

Suspense is the quality of a short story, novel, play, or narrative poem that makes the reader or audience uncertain or tense about the outcome of events. In *A Wrinkle in Time*, Madeleine L’Engle creates suspense by withholding certain information about the three witches and about Meg’s father, thus making the reader question the witches’ motives and

wonder about Mr. Murry’s actions and whereabouts.

Point of view is the *perspective* from which a narrative is told. Some technical terms for different points of view include *omniscient* and *limited*; however, point of view can also refer to the bias of the *person* or thing through whose eyes the reader experiences the action. In *A Wrinkle in Time*, L’Engle uses the *third-person limited* point of view. The story focuses on Meg Murry and her perspective. We know how she thinks and feels, but we do not know about how the other characters think and feel. For example: “Meg had almost forgotten the flowers, and was grateful to realize that she was still clasping them, that she hadn’t let them fall from her fingers. Calvin and Charles also hold their flowers, but we do not know their thoughts or feelings about the experience (70).

Point of view shift—when an author shifts the focus of attention to another character; there are, however, no real shifts in point of view in *A Wrinkle in Time*. Meg’s father gives a summary of what has happened to him, but the focus is still on Meg’s reactions to what he has to say.

Rhetorical shift or *turn* refers to a change or movement in a piece resulting from an epiphany, realization, or insight gained by the speaker, a character, or the reader. In *A Wrinkle in Time*, Meg realizes she must take on the responsibility of rescuing her brother: “She felt tired and unexpectedly peaceful. Now the coldness that, under Aunt Beast’s ministrations, had left her body had also left her mind. She looked toward her father and her confused anger was gone and she felt only love and pride. . . ‘It has to be me. It can’t be anyone else. I don’t understand Charles, but he understands me’” (195).

Setting is the time and place in which events in a short story, novel, play, or narrative poem take place. In *A Wrinkle in Time*, the initial setting is a small New England town, with Meg Murry’s safe, loving home and boring rural high school. The action takes place during the latter half of the twentieth century. Later, the setting changes to wild interplanetary landscapes, most notably the rigid totalitarian planet of Camazotz.

Style is the writer’s characteristic manner of employing language.

Theme is the central message of a literary work. It is not the same as a subject, which can be expressed in a word or two: courage, survival, war, pride, etc. The theme is the idea the author wishes to convey about that subject. It is expressed as a sentence or general statement about life or human nature. A literary work can have more than one theme, and most themes are not directly stated but are implied. The reader must think about all the elements of the work and use them to make inferences, or reasonable guesses, as to which themes seem to be implied. In *A Wrinkle in Time*, Meg rescues her brother through the power of love. Therefore, a major theme in the novel is “Love can conquer the greatest evil.” Or “Expressing anger and hate only make situations worse.”

Tone is the writer’s or speaker’s attitude toward a subject, character, or audience, and it is conveyed primarily through the author’s choice of diction, imagery, figurative language, details, and syntax. Tone can be serious, humorous, sarcastic, indignant, objective, etc. L’Engle in *A Wrinkle in Time* clearly establishes a tone of *horror* when Meg confronts IT on the planet Camazotz: “A disembodied brain. An oversized brain, just enough larger than normal to be completely revolting and terrifying. A living brain. A brain that pulsed and quivered, that seized and commanded. No wonder the brain was called IT. IT was the most horrible, most repellent thing she had ever seen, far more nauseating than anything she had ever imagined with her conscious mind, or that had ever tormented her in her most terrible nightmares” (158).

Tone shifts and **multiple tones** reveal changes in attitude or create new attitudes: e.g., Meg’s tone changes from anger to exhilaration when she realizes what she has to do to save Charles Wallace, reflecting her change in attitude from frustrated to controlled.

Figures of Speech

Figures of speech are words or phrases that describe one thing in terms of something else. They always involve some sort of imaginative comparison between seemingly unlike things. Not meant to be taken literally, figurative language is used to produce images in a reader’s mind and to express ideas in fresh, vivid, and imaginative ways. The most common examples of figurative language, or figures of speech, used in both prose and poetry are **simile**, **metaphor**, and **personification**.

Apostrophe is a form of personification in which the absent or dead are spoken to as if present, and the inanimate as if animate. These are all addressed directly: e.g., “Milton! Thou should’s’t be living at this hour.” In *A Wrinkle in Time*, when Meg and Calvin try to rescue Charles Wallace from the Man with the Red Eyes, Meg wishes desperately for the help of the absent Mrs. Whatsit: “‘Mrs. Whatsit!’ Meg called despairingly. ‘Oh, Mrs. Whatsit!’” (135).

Metaphor is a comparison of two unlike things not using like or as: e.g., “Time is money.” In *A Wrinkle in Time*, Meg sees what Mrs. Whatsit really is, a beautiful creature with wings: “From the shoulders slowly a pair of wings unfolded, wings made of rainbows, of light upon water, of poetry” (64). L’Engle implies that the wings are special, rare, ephemeral things, blessings.

Extended/controlling metaphor—differs from a regular metaphor in that it is sustained for several lines or sentences or throughout a work: e.g. in *A Wrinkle in Time*, the “Black Thing” stands for the evil force trying to conquer the universe and is referred to throughout the novel.

Metonymy is a form of metaphor. In *metonymy*, the name of one thing is applied to another thing with which it is closely associated: e.g., “I love Shakespeare.” In *A Wrinkle in Time*, the “shadow” stands for an evil power (the “Black Thing”) trying to conquer the universe.

Oxymoron is a form of paradox that combines a pair of opposite terms into a single unusual expression:

e.g., “sweet sorrow” or “cold fire.” There are no examples of oxymoron in *A Wrinkle in Time*.

Paradox occurs when the elements of a statement contradict each other. Although the statement may appear illogical, impossible, or absurd, it turns out to have a coherent meaning that reveals a hidden truth: e.g., “Much madness is divinest sense” (Emily Dickinson). In *A Wrinkle in Time*, Meg expresses her vast relief after experiencing being “flattened” on a two-dimensional planet: “She was whizzed into nothingness again, and nothingness was wonderful” (80).

Personification is a kind of metaphor that gives inanimate objects or abstract ideas human characteristics. For example, in *A Wrinkle in Time*: “Directly ahead of her was the circular building, its walls glowing with violet flame, its silvery roof pulsing with a light that seemed to Meg to be insane” (205). Meg enters the CENTRAL Central Intelligence building, fearful and doubting whether she can rescue her brother Charles. The “insane” light reflects her state of mind and the insanity going on inside the building.

Pun is a play on words that are either identical or similar in sound but have sharply diverse meanings. Puns can have serious as well as humorous uses. Early in *A Wrinkle in Time*, Mrs. Murry and Meg’s brothers tell her she needs to find a “happy medium” in her life—meaning to practice moderation in her behavior and reactions to trouble. Later, she meets an actual “Happy Medium,” a cheerful “seer,” who shows the children their home planet and significant celestial events in her crystal ball to help them understand the importance of their mission.

Simile is a comparison of two different things or ideas through the use of the words like or as. It is a definitely stated comparison in which the author says one thing is like another. In *A Wrinkle in Time*, L’Engle captures Meg’s experience of being two-dimensional when the three “witches” accidentally stop on the wrong planet: “Without warning, coming as a complete and unexpected shock, she felt a pressure she had never imagined, as though she

were being completely flattened out by an enormous steam roller” (79). Another simile shows Meg’s true emotional state when she tries to pose as brave and confident: “She was completely unaware that her voice was trembling like an aspen leaf” (102). These comparisons of strange, unknown situations to known objects help us to picture what is happening to the characters in the story.

An *epic/Homeric simile* is more involved and more ornate than the typical simile. When trying to make something new and strange understandable to their audience, authors compare it to something familiar. For example, at the beginning of the *Pequod’s* voyage in *Moby-Dick*, Captain Ahab is in a foul mood, but as they journey south to a warmer climate, his mood vastly improves. Melville compares Ahab’s moods to the weather and , also, the weather to dancing girls:

“ . . . [T]here was little or nothing. . . to employ or excite Ahab, now; and thus chase away, for that one interval, the clouds that layer upon layer were piled upon his brow, as ever all clouds choose the loftiest peaks to pile themselves upon.

Nevertheless, ere long, the warm, warbling persuasiveness of the pleasant holiday weather we came to, seemed gradually to charm him from his mood. For, as when the red-cheeked dancing girls, April and May, trip home to the wintry, misanthropic woods, even the barest, ruggedest, most thunder-cloven old oak will at least send forth some few green sprouts, to welcome such glad-hearted visitants; so Ahab did, in the end, a little respond to the playful allurings of that girlish air. More than once did he put forth the faint blossom of a look which, in any other man, would have soon flowered out in a smile” (123-124).

Synecdoche is a form of metaphor. In synecdoche, a part of something is used to signify the whole: e.g., “All hands on deck.” Also, the reverse, whereby the whole can represent a part, is synecdoche: e.g., “Canada played the United States in the Olympic hockey finals.” Another form of synecdoche involves the container representing the thing being contained: e.g., the pot is boiling.” In one last form of synecdoche, the material from which an object

is made stands for the object itself: e.g., “The quarterback tossed the pigskin.” In *A Wrinkle in Time*, Mrs. Whatsit suggests to the children after a long journey: ““We don’t have far to go, and we might as well walk. It will do you good to stretch your legs a little”” (83). Of course, it is the whole body that need so move and stretch, not just the legs, after they have traveled such a great distance.

Sound Devices

Sound devices are stylistic techniques that convey meaning through sound. Some examples of sound devices are *rhyme* (two words having the same sound), *assonance* (repetition of similar vowel sounds), *consonance* (repetition of consonant sounds in the middle or at the end of words), *alliteration* (words beginning with the same consonant sound), and *onomatopoeia* (words that sound like their meaning).

Alliteration is the practice of beginning several consecutive or neighboring words with the same sound. For example, in *A Wrinkle in Time*: “Over a Bunsen burner bubbled a big earthenware dish of stew” (39). The repetition of the “b” sound reproduces the motion of the stew simmering in its pot. It is a humorous moment, too, because Mrs. Murry cooks in the lab where she does her scientific experiments, worrying her children that a chemical might get mixed up with the food.

Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds in a series of words: e.g., the words “cry” and “side” have the same vowel sound and so are said to be in assonance. In the following sentence from *A Wrinkle in Time*, the long “a” captures the unpleasant effects the storm has upon clouds; it is almost a cry or moan of pain: “Every few moments the moon ripped through them, creating wraithlike shadows that raced along the ground” (3).

Consonance is the repetition of a consonant sound within a series of words to produce a harmonious effect. In *A Wrinkle in Time*, the author describes the storm: “Behind the trees clouds scudded frantically across the sky” (3). The repeated hard “c” sound recreates the chaotic harsh movement in the stormy sky.

Meter is the measured, patterned arrangement of syllables according to stress and length in a poem. In *A Wrinkle in Time*, Charles Wallace shouts out lines of nursery rhymes to try to keep the Man with Red Eyes from taking over his mind: “‘And everywhere that Mary went the lamb was sure to go!’ . . . ‘Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater, had a wife and couldn’t keep her—’” The first sentence “and everywhere. . . go” is written in iambic meter. The second sentence “Peter, Peter. . . her” reverses this sentence pattern. The meter of each individual line of these verses is tetrameter—four accented syllables per line. The rhythm of each line is trochaic.

Onomatopoeia is the use of words that mimic the sounds they describe: e.g., “hiss,” “buzz,” “bang.” When onomatopoeia is used on an extended scale in a poem, it is called imitative harmony. A good example occurs in *A Wrinkle in Time* when the Happy Medium falls asleep: “‘Good-by, everyb—’ and her word got lost in the general b-b-bz-z of a snore” (98).

Rhyme is the repetition of sounds in two or more words of phrases that appear close to each other in a poem. **End rhyme** occurs at the end of lines; **internal rhyme**, within a line. A **rhyme scheme** is the pattern of end rhymes. In *A Wrinkle in Time*, Charles Wallace recites nursery rhymes, trying to save himself from mind control:

“Mary had a little lamb.
Its fleece was white as snow.
And everywhere that Mary went
The lamb was sure to go.”

The second and fourth lines rhyme and help to connect the lines of the poem. The rhyme scheme is ABCB, showing the rhyme pattern.

Rhythm is the varying speed, intensity, elevation, pitch, loudness, and expressiveness of speech, especially poetry. In *A Wrinkle in Time* when “IT” tries to control Meg’s mind, she resists the force through concentration on ordinary thoughts. She starts reciting the Periodic Table (“hydrogen, helium, lithium, beryllium, boron, carbon, etc.”), but the words become too rhythmical, allowing “IT” to perceive the pattern and try to gain control again. She switches to working out math problems instead (161-162).

Literary Techniques

Allusion is a reference to a **mythological, literary**, or **historical** person, place, or thing. L’Engle employs numerous allusions in *A Wrinkle in Time*, especially references to *Alice in Wonderland*. These allusions add to the feeling that the settings in the novel are turned upside down, that natural laws do not apply in this world. When Mrs. Who disappears before her glasses do, “it reminded Meg of the Cheshire Cat.” In Carroll’s *Alice*, the Cheshire disappears before his smile does. Again, on the planet Camazotz, the children see a man running into a main building saying, “Oh, dear, I shall be late,” and Meg responds, “He’s like the white rabbit” (112). Alice encounters a white rabbit nervously consulting his watch and proclaiming, “I’m late! I’m late!” L’Engle also incorporates Biblical and Shakespearean allusions throughout the story. These more serious allusions underscore the importance of the children’s mission.

Antithesis is a contrast of thoughts, situations, or ideas. In *A Wrinkle in Time*, the thoughts of the people of Earth are antithetical to the thoughts of the people on Camazotz, who have willingly surrendered their freedom in order to eliminate conflict in their society while the people of Earth continue to resist the forces trying to control them.

Argumentation functions by convincing or persuading an audience, or by proving or refuting a point of view or an issue. Argumentation uses **induction**, moving from observations about particular things to generalizations, or **deduction**, moving from generalizations to valid inferences about particulars—or some combination of the two—as its pattern of development. Composers of arguments will also use

a combination of logical (*logos*), emotional (*pathos*), and ethical (*ethos*) evidence to establish both their credibility as writers or speakers. Though not written as formal persuasive essays, passages in *A Wrinkle in Time* include examples of arguments between characters illustrating the different types of appeals:

Ethical—The Man with Red Eyes tries to convince Charles Wallace that he is trustworthy by promising that Charles can leave if he chooses to and also by feeding Calvin and Meg a decent meal. He flatters Charles Wallace’s intelligence and speaks to him in a calm, soothing manner.

Emotional—When Meg decides near the end of the story to rescue Charles Wallace alone, her father and Calvin express their fears and insist on going with her. First, Meg responds angrily that she can do it alone and then reminds them tearfully that she must go alone to save her brother.

Logical—The three “witches” give Meg, Calvin, and Charles Wallace a clear, detailed explanation of the “tessering” concept to persuade them that they would survive the experience of traveling through space in a different dimension.

Cause/effect is one of the traditional rhetorical strategies; it consists of arguing from the presence (or absence) of the cause to the existence (or nonexistence) of the effect or result. Conversely, it can also involve arguing from an effect to its probable causes.

Classification, one of the traditional ways of thinking about a subject, identifies the subject as a part of a larger group with shared features.

Comparison is a traditional rhetorical strategy based on the assumption that a subject may be shown more clearly by pointing out ways it is similar to something else. The two subjects may each be explained separately and then their similarities are noted. In *A Wrinkle in Time*, Mrs. Whatsit compares the lives of the characters to the sonnet: “‘You mean you’re comparing our lives to a sonnet? A strict form, but freedom within it?’ ‘Yes.’ Mrs. Whatsit said. ‘You’re given the form, but you

have to write the sonnet yourself. What you say is completely up to you’” (199).

Contrast is a traditional rhetorical strategy based on the assumption that a subject may be shown more clearly by pointing out ways in which it is unlike another subject.

Characterization is the act of creating or developing a character. In **direct characterization**, the author directly states a character’s traits. In *A Wrinkle in Time*, L’Engle describes Meg’s twin brothers: “The twins didn’t have any problems. They weren’t great students, but they weren’t bad ones either. They were perfectly content with a succession of Bs and an occasional A or C. They were strong and fast runners and good at games, and when cracks were made about anybody in the Murry family, they weren’t made about Sandy and Dennys” (7). A writer uses **indirect characterization** when showing a character’s personality through his or her actions, thoughts, feelings, words, and appearance, or through another character’s observations and reactions. L’Engle shows that Mrs. Whatsit has a sense of humor when she falls backward in her chair and says, “‘If you have some liniment, I’ll put it on my dignity...I think it’s sprained’” (20).

Hyperbole is a deliberate, extravagant, and often outrageous exaggeration. It may be used for either serious or comic effect: e.g., “The shot heard ‘round the world.” In *A Wrinkle in Time*, Meg lacks self-confidence and self-esteem. She exaggerates things because she feels inept in her life right now: “On top of Meg Murry doing everything wrong” (4); “A delinquent, that’s what I am...” (4); “Why do I always have to show everything [on my face]?” (5).

Irony occurs in three types.

Dramatic irony occurs when a character or speaker says or does something that has a different meaning from what he thinks it means, though the audience and other characters understand the full implications of the speech or action. In *A Wrinkle in Time*, though Meg holds a low opinion of herself through most of the story, L’Engle prepares us well for the ending of the novel when Meg is the only one,

among many knowledgeable and seemingly more powerful and capable beings, who can rescue her brother. Her ineptitude in school and her relations with others matter little in comparison to the love and understanding she has for her brother.

Situational irony occurs when a situation turns out differently from what one would normally expect—though often the twist is oddly appropriate: e.g., a deep sea diver drowning in a bathtub is ironic. In *A Wrinkle in Time*, when Meg, her father, and Calvin land on a strange planet, they find creatures there like none they have ever seen. They have no face, four arms, and tentacles on their hands. At first, they frighten Meg, Calvin, and Mr. Murry, but these creatures turn out to be highly sophisticated, caring, intellectual beings. They save Meg’s life and help in the rescue of Charles Wallace from the evil force holding him captive.

Verbal irony occurs when a speaker or narrator says one thing while meaning the opposite. Meg and her mother and brother in *A Wrinkle in Time*, have this exchange about a so-called “tramp” in the area: ““They were saying at the post office this afternoon that a tramp stole all Mrs. Buncombe’s sheets.’ ‘We’d better sit on the pillow cases, then,’ Mrs. Murry said lightly.” Mrs. Murry employs irony to lighten Meg’s fears and Charles’ concerns.

Sarcasm is the use of **verbal irony** in which a person appears to be praising something but is actually insulting it: e.g., “As I fell down the stairs headfirst, I heard her say, ‘Look at that coordination.’” In *A Wrinkle in Time*, to defuse the tension when Charles and Meg encounter Calvin for the first time, Calvin wryly comments about Charles’ supposed lack of intelligence: ““What *is* this? The third degree? Aren’t you the one who’s supposed to be the moron?’ Meg flushed with rage, but Charles Wallace answered placidly, ‘That’s right. If you want me to call my dog off, you’d better give!’ ‘Most peculiar moron I’ve ever met,’ Calvin said” (31).

Motif is a term that describes a pattern or strand of imagery or symbolism in a work of literature. *Light* and *dark* throughout *A Wrinkle in Time* indicate the level of safety for the characters.

Satire refers to the use of humorous devices like *irony*, *understatement*, and *exaggeration* to highlight a human folly or a societal problem. The purpose of satire is to bring the flaw to the attention of the reader in order that it may be addressed, remedied, or eradicated. L’Engle’s description of the robotic-like inhabitants of Camazotz portrays her disapproval of the tendency people have to want everyone to conform. This particular planet imposes sameness on everyone and on everything they do with dangerous, deadly consequences for deviations. Through this description, L’Engle intends for her readers to share her feelings and to value differences as Meg learns to do by the end of the story.

Symbolism is the use of any object, person, place, or action that has a meaning in itself while standing for something larger than itself, such as a quality, attitude, belief, or value. There are two basic types, *universal* (a symbol that is common to all mankind) and *contextual* (a symbol used in a particular way by an individual author). Symbols are elastic and multifaceted, not static or concrete. It is important to remember that symbols have no one-on-one correspondence, but are like prisms through which the reader may view many colors, many shades of meaning. *A Wrinkle in Time* contains many symbols. For example, *light* and *dark* act as symbols. Light can be positive or negative depending upon its color and its context. Dark usually symbolizes danger and evil, but sometimes Meg finds comfort in the darkness. *Colors*, too, play a symbolic role in the novel. The *red* light coming from the man’s eyes suggests the danger the children (and the universe) face. *Black* is the color of the “thing” seeking to blanket the universe with evil. On the planet where the “beasts” save Meg from death, the trees and plants are *brown* and *gray*. At first, Meg finds these colors depressing, but she learns later that colors do not matter on their planet because the “beasts” cannot see. *Silver* and *gold* add richness to descriptions of the light of day and night. And when Mrs. Whatsit

reveals her true form, she turns out to be all *white*, resembling something like a centaur and symbolizing a force of goodness. Also, *dimensions* symbolize the complexities in the story. The *fifth dimension* allows the characters to move through space quickly though they only vaguely understand the concept.

Understatement is the opposite of *hyperbole*. It is a kind of *irony* that deliberately represents something as being much less than it really is: e.g., “I could probably manage to survive on a salary of two million dollars per year.” In *A Wrinkle in Time*, when Calvin, Meg, and Mr. Murry escape from “IT” but land on an unknown planet, Meg lies near death. Mr. Murry matter-of-factly relates to Calvin his harrowing experience being captured and imprisoned for two years on Camazotz: ““Yes. It’s frightening as well as an exciting thing to discover that matter and energy *are* the same thing, that size is an illusion, and that time is a material substance. We can know this, but it’s far more than we can understand with our puny little brains”” (167).

Literary Forms

Aristotle’s Rules for Tragedy

Catharsis is the release of emotion (pity and fear) from the audience’s perspective: e.g. After watching *Antigoné*, the audience will feel pity for the tragic deaths and fear for themselves because if even the “best” in society fall, what future awaits the common man?

Dramatic Unities

- **Time:** The play has to take place within a 24-hour period: e.g. *Antigoné* takes place in “real” time; the audience experiences the action as it unfolds.
- **Place:** The action of the play is set in one place. *Antigoné* is set in front of the royal palace in Thebes.
- **Action:** There is one hero and one plot. The action in *Antigoné* focuses on Antigoné’s determination to bury her brother Polyneices and the resulting consequences.

Hamartia is the tragic flaw that leads to the tragic hero’s downfall: e.g. Creon’s tragic flaw of holding himself above the prophets and the laws of the gods dooms him.

Hubris is arrogance before the gods: e.g. Creon’s pride and arrogance cause his downfall.

Recognition occurs as the hero meets his catastrophe, at which point he recognizes his flaw and why he must die: e.g. Creon acknowledges his responsibility for the deaths of his family and confesses he was too proud.

Reversal occurs when the opposite of what the hero intends is what happens: e.g. Creon thinks he is doing the right thing by imprisoning Antigoné, but this action leads to the suicides of his son and his wife.

Tone and Mood

Teacher Resource

Though some literary authorities consider **tone** and **mood** to be synonymous terms, others find it useful to distinguish between the two concepts. College Board publications for Pre-AP* teachers, including *The AP* Vertical Teams Guide for English*, as well as NMSI English resources use this distinction to differentiate the two ideas:

Tone: The writer’s or speaker’s/narrator’s attitude toward the subject, the audience, or a character

Mood: The feeling created in the reader; the atmosphere of a piece

Teachers who are introducing these ideas to students often emphasize

Tone—author

Mood—reader

Both of these concepts have to do with emotion, and the words used to describe each are the same or similar. For example, a story might contain a frightening tone, creating a frightening mood. For this reason, more advanced readers and writers, including those in Advanced Placement classes, often make little distinction between the two ideas and use the terms interchangeably.

On the following page is a list of words commonly used to describe tone. This list can be duplicated as a student handout.

Activities to Help Students Learn Tone (and Mood) Words

- Create banks of words that describe tone for students to use and add to throughout the year, either through individual student notebooks or with a Word Wall for all to see.
- Use visuals and pieces of music, both instrumental and lyrical, to assess tone.
- Give students a list of tone words, and, as a group activity, have them group the words into synonyms. Then instruct them to place the words in order of degree of feeling. (See the NMSI Close Reading Foundation Lesson “Best Word for the Job” as a model.)
- After completing the activity directly above, instruct students to find photographs in magazines to match each of the words in a short “degree” list. For example, from a list of five “happy” words, ranging from “pleased” to “ecstatic,” find a photo of a person feeling each of those emotions.
- When reading a poem or narrative, instruct students to find examples of several tones taken by the narrator at different points in the piece. (Note that this activity can lead to a discussion of a shift in attitude.)
- Instruct students to write a letter. Provide the situation (for example, responding to an invitation to participate in a summer writing camp). Give each student or group a tone to take in the letter. Have students read their letters aloud while others determine the tone.
- Employ picture books in a discussion of tone.

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A SAMPLING OF TONE WORDS

Positive	Neutral	Negative
admiring	authoritative	angry
amazed	clinical	argumentative
amused	confident	arrogant
awed	detached	biased
benevolent	dramatic	biting
benign	factual	blasphemous
candid	formal	childish
cheerful	impartial	condescending
comforting	ironic	confused
compassionate	matter-of-fact	disdainful
complimentary	neutral	disrespectful
concerned	nostalgic	fearful
delighted	objective	frivolous
ecstatic	outspoken	grim
excited	restrained	indignant
forgiving	sentimental	irreverent
giddy	solemn	melancholy
happy	straightforward	moralistic
humorous	surprised	mournful
impressed		outraged
lighthearted		patronizing
optimistic		pessimistic
peaceful		sad
playful		sarcastic
respectful		scornful
sincere		self-pitying
sympathetic		somber
sweet		threatening

Transition Toolbox

To be effective, your writing must be clear and easy to follow. It is therefore helpful to provide connections between ideas so the reader can easily see the progression of your thoughts. These connections serve as “direction signals” to guide the reader through your analysis, argument, or description. **Transitions** are words and phrases that are used to link ideas from one clause, sentence, or paragraph to the next and to show how those ideas are related. Using appropriate transitions makes a writer’s ideas more cohesive and coherent.

Repetition

Repetition of key words can link ideas clearly:

*Exercise is one of the keys to losing weight, but **exercise** alone is not enough. Unless we change our eating habits, we may see few results from a new **exercise** regimen.*

Pronouns

Some transitions of thought can be created by using pronouns to replace nouns rather than repeating those nouns:

Steve wanted very much to become a writer, so he read everything he could find about the lives of his favorite authors. He also tried to imitate the styles of the writers he most admired.

Instead of:

Steve wanted very much to become a writer, so Steve read everything Steve could find about the lives of Steve’s favorite authors. Steve also tried to imitate the styles of the writers Steve most admired.

Synonyms

Synonyms can be used to link ideas when repetition of the same word becomes boring or when you want to expand the original idea.

American cities today are facing difficulties as many people move from urban areas into surrounding suburbs and even beyond. Some major metropolitan centers are seeing increasing numbers of dilapidated buildings and decreasing revenues, and municipal budgets are stretched thin as city leaders try to deal with the challenges.

Instead of:

American cities today are facing difficulties as many people move from cities into surrounding suburbs and even beyond. Some major cities are seeing increasing numbers of dilapidated buildings and decreasing revenues, and city budgets are stretched thin as city leaders try to deal with the challenges.

Transitional Words and Phrases

Words and phrases that serve as transitions between ideas can be divided into categories, each with a specific purpose. Writers should use the correct transitional word or phrase to avoid creating confusion or an illogical transition. Some examples are provided in the following chart.

Purpose	Transitional Words and Phrases		
Addition	additionally also and another	besides both/and equally important in addition to	moreover not only/but also similarly
Cause/Effect	as a result because	consequently for that reason since	therefore thus
Comparison/Contrast	after all also and another but conversely	however in addition in spite of likewise nevertheless notwithstanding	on the contrary otherwise rather similarly too yet
Concession	even though granted granted that	in spite of it is true that of course	though while it may be
Developmental Order	another besides	despite furthermore	however nonetheless
Emphasis/ Intensification	above all by all means certainly definitely furthermore	generally in addition in fact indeed naturally	surely to repeat truly undoubtedly without doubt
Example/ Illustration	for example for instance for one thing	in other words in particular specifically	this can be seen in to demonstrate to illustrate
Place	above behind below beside	beyond here nearby opposite surrounding	there to wherever within sight
Purpose	for this purpose	in order that	so that
Qualification	almost always frequently	maybe nearly	never perhaps probably
Summary	accordingly as a result finally	in conclusion in other words in short in summary	it seems on the whole therefore
Time	after afterwards always as soon as at first at last before concurrently eventually	finally first/second immediately in the meantime last meanwhile never next once	ordinarily previously simultaneously sometimes soon subsequently then when while