

English 12

Composition Terms

Antithesis

Antithesis emphasizes the contrast between two ideas. The structure of the phrases/ clauses is usually similar in order to draw the reader's/ listener's attention directly to the contrast.

Examples. "To err is human, to forgive, divine." (Pope)

"That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind." (Neil Armstrong)

Anecdotal Evidence

(1) Evidence in the form of an anecdote or hearsay is called *anecdotal* if there is doubt about its veracity; the evidence itself is considered untrustworthy.

(2) Evidence, which may itself be true and verifiable, used to deduce a conclusion which does not follow from it, usually by generalizing from an insufficient amount of evidence.

In both cases the conclusion is *unreliable*; it may not be *untrue*, but it doesn't follow from the "evidence."

Example. The statement, "My grandfather smoked like a chimney and died healthy in a car crash at the age of 99," does not disprove the proposition that "smoking markedly increases the probability of cancer and heart disease at a relatively early age." In this case, the evidence may itself be true, but does not warrant the conclusion.

Case Study

A case study is a study of an individual unit, as a person, family, or social group, usually emphasizing developmental issues and relationships with the environment, especially in order to compare a larger group to the individual unit.

Example. Global Transport Knowledge Partnership supplies sample case studies related to road safety issues at <http://www.gtkp.com/theme.php?themepgid=88>

Cause and Effect

Cause and effect is the concept that an action or event will produce a certain response to the action in the form of another event.

Example. It is said that the slight flap of a butterfly's wings on one side of the world can cause a tsunami on the other side of the world- cause and effect.

Climactic Order

Climactic order has to do with arranging the elements in a list from least important to most important. The idea is to build your best points, rather than leading with them and thereby allowing the work to trail off with your more minor and less interesting observations.

Example. "I came, I saw, I conquered." (Julius Ceasar)

English 12

Composition Terms

Didactic

The primary intention of didactic art is not to entertain or to pursue subjective goals, but to teach. Didactic plays, for instance, teach the audience through the use of a moral or a theme.

Example. An example of didactic writing is Alexander Pope's *An Essay on Criticism* (1711), which offers a range of advice about critics and criticism.

Editorial

An 'editorial' is an opinion piece written by the senior editorial staff or publisher of a newspaper or magazine. Editorials are usually unsigned and may be supposed to reflect the opinion of the periodical.

Example. Will the boom in natural gas drilling contaminate America's water supply?

Euphemism

A euphemism is a substitution with an agreeable or less offensive expression in place of one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant to the receiver.

Example. Going to the powder room is a euphemism for having to use the toilet.

Expert Testimony

Expert testimony is when an expert witness or professional witness is an expert, who by virtue of education, training, skill, or experience, is believed to have expertise and specialized knowledge in a particular subject beyond that of the average person, sufficient that others may officially and legally rely upon the witness's specialized (scientific, technical or other) opinion about an evidence or fact issue within the scope of his expertise, referred to as the expert opinion, as an assistance to the fact-finder.

Example. In a case of a bridge falling down, an expert testimony can be given by a civil engineer, who has expertise in the building of bridges.

Graphic Text

A graphic text is a text in which meaning is conveyed through the use of images, or images and text.

Example. Editorial cartoons, graphs, charts, timelines and advertising.

Idiom

An idiom is an expression, word, or phrase that has a figurative meaning that is comprehended in regard to a common use of that expression that is separate from the literal meaning or definition of the words of which it is made.

Example. To kick the bucket is an idiomatic expression that means to die.

English 12

Composition Terms

Literal Language

Literal language refers to words that do not deviate from their defined meaning.

Example. The literal meaning of the expression to kick the bucket is to physically kick a bucket. Figuratively, it means to die.

Objective (Language, Tone, etc.)

Objective language is the presentation of information and ideas based on fact and precision. It is language devoid of opinion.

Example. Newspapers, save the editorial section, are to employ objective language and points of view.

Persuasive Technique

Persuasive technique is writing that is used to persuade a reader either into a new way of thinking or into action.

Example. Persuasive essays are examples of writing that employ persuasive technique.

Pro and Con Argument

Pro and con argument is an argument based upon weighing the pros and con of the possible outcome.

Example. One might weigh the pros and cons to changing his or her employment, buying a new or used car, or even dying one's hair a new colour.

Question and Answer

Question and answer is the process in writing in which questions are posed for the purpose of gaining information, and as a result, answers are supplied containing the information required. Rhetorical questions are often used as a writing technique; however, they require no response.

Example. Question: How many sonnets did Shakespeare write?
Answer: He wrote 154 sonnets.

Rhetorical Question

A rhetorical question is a question asked solely to produce an effect or to make an assertion and not to elicit a reply. The expected answer is usually a yes or a no.

Example. "Who is here so base that would be a bondman (slave)? If any, speak; for him have I offended." (Julius Caesar)

English 12

Composition Terms

Research

Research can be defined as the search for knowledge or any systematic investigation to establish facts.

Example. One may be required to research for an essay topic, where other sources will be utilized to support one's opinion or argument in said essay.

Statistical Evidence

Statistical evidence is evidence given to support an argument that is founded based upon statistics from a reputable source.

Example. Health Canada states, "Cigarette smoking is the single most important preventable cause of lung cancer, accounting for 85% of all new cases of lung cancer in Canada. Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths."

Stylistic Technique

In literature and writing, a stylistic device is the use of any of a variety of techniques to give an auxiliary meaning, idea, or feeling to the literal or written.

Example. A metaphor is a stylistic technique.

Subjective (Language, Tone, etc.)

Subjective language is the presentation of information and ideas based upon analysis or personal opinion.

Example. Newspaper editorials are written with subjective language.

Wit

Wit is a form of intellectual humour, and a wit is someone skilled in making witty remarks. Forms of wit include the quip and repartee.

Example. Shakespeare, a famous wit, once said, "Better a witty fool than a foolish wit."

The above definitions constitute the terms related to composition that are examinable in English 12.

These definitions were gathered from public domain content at wikipedia.org, dictionary.com, for students in the Saint Thomas Aquinas High School English Department.

Composition refers to the skill or art of creating written works or pieces of literature. While this can be in the form of poetry, drama, essays or prose, the terms on this list would apply mostly to students' own writing.

English 12 Composition Terms

Compare	Sarcasm
Contrast	Satire
Description	Understatement
Expository	Audience
Genre	Colloquial
Narrative	Denotation
Persuasion; persuasive	Jargon
Aside	Propaganda
Bias	Slang
Cliché	Style
Irony	Purpose
Voice (Active, Passive)	Emotional Appeal (Pathos)
Personal Essay	Argumentative Essay
Persuasive Essay	Informal Essay
Formal Essay	Expository Essay
Descriptive Essay	Thesis
Thesis Statement	Parallelism
Diction	Form
Formal Language	Informal Language
Colloquialism	

The above list constitutes the terms related to composition that are have been covered in high school English and are included in both the list of examinable terms for the English 12 Provincial Exam, and the list of examinable terms for the English 10 Provincial Exam.