**Critical Terminology - General**

Get to know the terms listed below in preparation for textual analysis, close reading and critical essays.

**Adjective** – a describing word

**Adverb** – a word which tells s more about a verb

**Alliteration** – the use of the same consonant sound, usually at the beginning of words, e.g. *‘She sells sea shells on the sea shore.’*

**Ambiguity** – the idea that a word or phrase might mean more than one thing

**Cliché** – an overused expression, e.g*. ‘There’s plenty more fish in the sea’*

**Conjunction** – a word that links together phrases or clauses e.g. *‘and’*

**Connotation** – the ideas suggested by a particular word

**Context** – the words, phrases, sentences around a specified word or expression

**Enjambment** – a sentence or expression over more than one line without a pause

**Hyperbole** – deliberate exaggeration, e.g*. ‘It was a million times worse than I had imagined’*

**Image** – a picture created by words

**Irony** – language that says the opposite of what is meant, sometimes for humorous effect.

**Literal** – where a word means exactly what it says, e.g. ‘*raining cats and dogs’* taken literally would mean that cats and dogs were falling from the sky. The opposite of literally is **figuratively**.

**Metaphor** – a comparison where one thing is said to be another, e.g. *‘Juliet is the sun’*

**Noun** – a word which names things. Proper nouns are used for the names of actual people and places; common nouns are used for objects; collective nouns refer to groups of things and abstract nouns refer to thoughts, feelings and qualities.

**Onomatopoeia** – where a word makes the sound it is describing, e.g. *snap, pop, bang, whoosh*

**Oxymoron** – two words placed side by side which are contradictory, e.g. *‘sweet sorrow’ or ‘bitter sweet’*

**Paradox** – two contradictory ideas placed together

**Parenthesis** – non-essential information which is separated from the rest of the sentence by double commas, dashes or brackets, e.g.:

*The cat,* ***which was black and gorgeous****, sat on the mat*. The section in bold could be removed from the sentence and it would still make sense.

**Personification** – inanimate objects are described as having human qualities, e.g. ‘*the wind whistled’*

**Pronoun** – a word which replaces a noun, e.g. *he, she, it, they, I …*

**Rhyme** – words that have the same sound

**Rhythm** – the beat within a line of poetry

**Simile** – two things are directly compared using *‘like’ or ‘as’*

**Stanza** – groups of lines in poetry

**Symbol** – an idea or an object that represents more than just its literal self. The seasons are often used to symbolise life

**Theme** – the main idea in a text

**Tone** – the feeling or attitude that is suggested by words, e.g. sarcastic, frightened…

**Punctuation Reminder:**

**Apostrophe (‘)** Used to show when a letter has been missed out in a contraction, e.g. do not = don’t. Apostrophes are also used to show possession, e.g. the girl’s books – the books belonging to the girl

**Comma (,)** Used to create a pause in a sentence and to separate **items in a** list

**Semi-colon (;)** Can introduce an expansion of an idea in the second part of a sentence or can break up a list of phrases

**Colon (:)** Used to introduce a list or explanation

**Inverted Commas (“ “)** For direct speech and titles, or to show when a word should not be taken literally

**Dash (-)** Used as a sign of interruption.

**Hyphen (-)** Joins together two separate words to make an expression

**Brackets ( )** Used to separate a word or phrase from the rest of the sentence