

# AP English Language & Literature Glossary

## *A List of Figurative, Literary, Grammatical, & Rhetorical Terms*

The list that follows is a compilation of terms that I and other AP English Consultants and Teachers have identified through the years as being useful in literary and rhetorical analysis. This list is followed by a list of art, film, and media terms.

There are two vaguely contradictory notions in my head as I offer it. First, I wish to emphasize that it is quite possible for students to do well on the AP English exams without being experts of technical and disciplinary vocabulary. However, I do believe that knowing as many of these words and their meanings as possible can be a tremendous aid to students of language and literature. I have found that the study of vocabulary leads students to a much more meaningful appreciation of the artistry and skill of great artists, writers, speakers, and communicators. It also enables them to discuss and write about literature—fiction, poetry, and nonfiction, as well as art, film, and media, with greater fluency and sophistication.

***Allegory:*** A story, fictional or nonfictional, in which characters, things, and events represent qualities or concepts; they reveal an abstract truth

***Alliteration:*** The repetition of sounds, usually initial consonants in neighboring words: “She sells sea shells by the sea shore.”

***Allusion:*** An instance of indirect reference

***Ambiguity:*** The state of having multiple meanings; an intentional or unintentional equivocation

***Amplification:*** An expansion of detail to clarify a point: “We few, we happy few, we band of brothers.”

***Anacoluthon:*** A sudden break in a sentence’s grammatical structure: “So, then I pulled up to her house — are you still with me here?”

***Analogy:*** A resemblance of relations; an agreement or likeness between things in some circumstances or effects, when the things are otherwise entirely different

***Anadiplosis:*** Repetition of words, especially located at the end of one phrase or clause and the beginning of the next: “I was at a loss for words, words that perhaps would have gotten me into even more trouble.”

***Anaphora:*** A repetition of a word or of words at the beginning of two or more successive clauses: “I came, I saw, I conquered.”

***Anastrophe:*** Inversion of word order to mark emphasis: “Enter the forest primeval.”

***Anecdote:*** A brief recounting of a relevant episode; usually inject humor or develop a point

***Antanaclasis:*** Repetition of a word in a sentence in which a different meaning is applied each time: “If you aren’t fired with enthusiasm, you will be fired, with enthusiasm.”

***Antanagoge:*** The contradiction of a negative comment with a positive one, as in “The car wouldn’t start this time, but it least it didn’t catch on fire.”

***Antimetabole:*** Reversal of repeated words or phrases for effect: “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.”

***Antiphrasis:*** Ironic use of a single word: “It was a cool 100 degrees in the shade.”

***Antistrophe:*** Repetition of a word or phrase at the close of successive clauses: “You said he was late — true enough. You said he was not prepared — true enough. You said he did not defend his statements — true enough.”

**Antithesis:** The direct or exact opposite; may also be a contrast within parallel phrases: "Many are called, but few are chosen." The term can also refer to literary characters who, though not necessarily antagonists, represent opposite personal characteristics or moral views.

**Aphorism:** A terse statement which expresses a general truth or moral principle often in a clever way: "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds."

**Apophysis:** Calling attention to something by dismissing it: "No one would suggest that those who are homeless elected to live on the streets willingly."

**Aporia:** A statement of hesitation, also known as dubitatio, in which characters express to themselves an actual or feigned doubt or dilemma: "Should I strike now, or bide my time?"

**Aposiopesis:** Abrupt discontinuation of a statement: "If you say that one more time, I'm gonna . . ."

**Apostrophe:** The direct address of a non-person or an absent or imaginary person "Milton, thou shouldst be living at this hour/England hath need of thee"; may also be a personified abstraction, especially as a digression in the course of a speech or composition: "So, I ask you, dear reader, what would you have me do?"

**Archetype:** A timeless imaginative pattern that appears across cultures; these may be actions (mourning lost loved ones), characters (the hero/the traitor), and images (garden paradise)

**Aside:** In drama, words spoken by an actor to the audience or another character that are not meant to be heard by other onstage characters

**Assonance:** The close repetition of vowel sounds preceded/followed by different consonant sounds: sore/lore; ache/break

**Asyndeton:** Absence of conjunctions: "We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground."

**Attitude:** The posture, action, or disposition of a figure, writer, or speaker

**Auxesis:** Exaggeration, often with sequential enhancement: "You found my purse? You are a hero, a prince, a god!"

**Bathos:** Overdone attempts at evoking pity or compassion, usually creating a comedic effect

**Bdelygmia:** A rant of abusive language: "Calling you an idiot would be an insult to stupid people. Are you always this stupid, or are you just making a special effort today?"

**Blank verse:** Unrhymed iambic pentameter verse form

**Bomphiologia:** Excessive braggadocio: "I am the very model of a modern major-general. I've information vegetable, animal, and mineral."

**Brachyology:** An abbreviated expression or telegrammatic statement: "'Morning,' he mumbled as he stumbled out of bed"; "I have three words for you, buddy: pot, kettle, black."

**Cacophony:** Deliberate use of harsh letter sounds: "The clash and clang of steel jarred him awake."

**Caesura:** A pause or break in a line of poetry (a common feature of Anglo-Saxon verse)

**Catachresis:** A hyperbolic metaphor, as in "Each word was a lightning bolt to his heart."

**Chiasmus:** This is the reversal of grammatical order from one phrase to the next, exemplified in these two well-known quotes about evaluation: "Judge not, lest ye be judged"

**Clause:** A grammatical unit that contains a subject and a verb. An independent clause expresses a complete thought and may be considered a sentence. A dependent, or subordinate clause must be connected to an independent clause. The author's choice of which idea is subordinated in such combinations is worthy of consideration.

**Climax:** The moment of greatest emotional intensity or suspense in a plot

**Commoratio:** Repetition of a point with different wording: "He's passed on! This parrot is no more! He has ceased to be! He's expired and gone to meet his maker!" (etc., ad absurdum)

**Connotation:** The nonliteral or implied meaning of a word (may involve emotion or attitude)

**Consonance:** The close repetition of identical consonant sounds before and after differing vowel sounds: fill/full; sleep, slip

**Couplet:** In poetry, two consecutive end-rhymed lines

**Dehortatio:** Imperative advice about how not to act: "Do not look a gift horse in the mouth."

**Denotation:** The literal definition of a word (devoid of emotion or attitude)

**Deus ex machina:** (Literally "god from the machine," from classical Greek theater tradition of lowering an actor playing a god onto the stage) An unexpected force or event that suddenly appears and resolves a seemingly unresolvable problem

**Diacope:** Repetition of one or more words after the interval of one or more other words: "People who like this sort of thing will find this the sort of thing they like."

**Dialect:** A way of speaking characteristic of a particular region

**Diatypsis:** Advice: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you."

**Diction:** Choice and use of words in speech or writing

**Didactic:** Teaching a specific lesson or moral; providing a model of correct behavior or thinking

**Distinctio:** A definition or clarification of a term: "What we will be seeking . . . will be large, stable communities of like-minded people, which is to say relatives."

**Double-entendre:** An expression that has two meanings, one of which is usually risqué

**Elegy:** A work that mourns the dead or expresses a sorrowful or reflective mood

**Ellipsis:** The omission of words or phrases, sometimes indicated by the use of ". . ."

**End-stopped:** The designation for a line of poetry in which the grammar, meaning, and meter end at the end of the line

**Enjambed:** The designation for a lines of poetry in which a sentence continues from one line to the next

**Enumeratio:** The amplification of a subject through its division into its various parts: "Who's gonna turn down a Junior Mint? It's chocolate. It's peppermint. It's delicious. It's very refreshing!"

**Epanelepsis:** Starting and ending a phrase, clause, or a sentence, or a passage, with the same word or phrase: "Nothing is worse than doing nothing."

**Epigraph:** An inscription; a short quotation, often used at the beginning of a work, section, or chapter to introduce a theme

**Epistrophe:** The repetition of a word at the end of each phrase or clause: "I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

**Epizeuxis:** Also called palilogia, refers to nothing more than the repetition of words: "To my fifteen-year-old daughter, everything is 'boring, boring, boring!'"

**Ethos:** The disposition, character, or fundamental values peculiar to a specific person, people, culture, or movement; rhetorical appeal in which the author/speaker establishes trustworthiness of the audience

**Euphemism:** The act or an example of substituting a mild, indirect, or vague term for one considered harsh, blunt, or offensive: "The drone strike inflicted collateral damage."

**Expletive:** Phrase of emphasis, usually interrupting normal speech to give importance to words on either side: "You know, of course, that this means war!"; also a term used to designate an oath or swear word

**Exposition:** A mode of expression, its intention being to explain

**Fable:** A brief story that teaches a lesson, usually with animal characters

**Farce:** A mostly visual comedy intended to appeal through exaggerated physical action

**Figure of speech:** An expression that uses language in a nonliteral way, such as a metaphor or synecdoche, or in a structured or unusual way, such as anaphora or chiasmus, or that employs sounds, such as alliteration or assonance, to achieve a rhetorical effect

**Foreshadowing:** The use of clues to hint events that will occur later in the plot

**Free verse:** Poetry that does not follow a regular rhythmic pattern or rhyme scheme

**Genre:** The category into which a literary work fits (drama, poetry, prose being the most general, but these may be further subdivided)

**Hendiadys:** A conjunctive rather than a coordinate phrase: "I made it nice and hot, just the way you like it."

**Homily:** (Literally a sermon) A serious expression of moral or spiritual advice.

**Hyperbaton:** Excursion from natural word order in various ways: "Theirs was a glory unsurpassed"; "It is a sad story but true."

**Hyperbole:** A figure of speech in which exaggeration is used for emphasis or effect: "When are we going to have dinner? I'm STARVING!"

**Hypophora:** A type of reasoning in which one or more questions are asked and answered by the same writer/speaker.

**Hysteron-proteron:** A reversal of logical order of elements in a phrase: "Sudden thunder and lightning drove them to shelter."

**Hubris:** Excessive pride or self-confidence; in tragedy it often leads to the hero's downfall

**Infer:** To draw a reasonable conclusion from information provided.

**Imagery:** The use of vivid or figurative language to represent objects, actions, or ideas

**In medias res:** Starting a story in the middle

**Invective:** A violent, emotional verbal denunciation

**Inversion:** The reversal of the normal order of words for rhetorical effect

**Irony:** The contrast between what is stated and what is meant.

Types of Irony:

verbal irony—words used are the opposite of the intended meaning

situational irony—events turn out other than as expected

dramatic irony—facts known to the reader or other characters are unknown to a character

**Litotes:** This is the strategy of understatement often employed to provide subtle emphasis, frequently for ironic effect or to underline a passionate opinion: “The assassin was not unacquainted with danger.”

**Logical Fallacy:** An error in reasoning that may render an argument invalid

Common Types of Logical Fallacies (see Logical Fallacies Handout for a more extensive review):

ad hominem—(literally, “against the man”) when a writer personally attacks his or her opponents instead of their arguments

begging the question—often called circular reasoning, begging the question occurs when the believability of the evidence depends on the believability of the claim

freight-train—sentence consisting of three or more very short independent clauses joined by conjunction

non-sequitur—when one statement isn’t logically connected to another

post hoc, ergo propter hoc—when a writer implies that because one thing follows another, the first caused the second. But sequence is not cause.

red herring—when a writer raises an irrelevant issue to draw attention away from the real issue

straw man—when a writer argues against a claim that nobody actually holds or is universally considered weak. Setting up a straw man diverts attention from the real issue

**Logos:** Logic, reasoning; rhetorical appeal pertaining to the content of the message

**Loose sentence:** a sentence type in which the most important idea is expressed first, with dependent grammatical units following (often conveying informality and a more conversational feel)

**Lyric poetry:** Poetry that expresses emotions or thoughts and does not tell a story

**Meiosis:** A dismissive epithet, such as *treehugger*, or a humorously dismissive understatement (also known as tapinosis), such as the *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* gem “It’s just a flesh wound!”

**Melodrama:** A form of drama that pits purely “good” characters against wholly “evil” ones to elicit audience emotion through dire events and near disasters

**Metanoia:** The qualification of a statement to either diminish or strengthen its tone, as in “She was disturbed — make that appalled — by the spectacle.” Traditionally, *nay* is often a keyword that sets up the shift, but no replaces it in modern usage except in facetious or whimsical writing: “You are the fairest flower in the garden — nay, in the entire meadow.”

**Metaphor:** A figure of speech in which an expression is used to refer to something that it does not literally denote in order to suggest a similarity

**Meter:** The rhythm of piece of poetry as determined by the number and type of feet in a line (see Poetry Primer handout)

**Metonymy:** A figure of speech involving the substitution of the name of an attribute or adjunct for that of the thing meant: “The White House is expected to release a statement later today.”

**Mood:** Temper of mind of mind or the atmosphere conveyed in a piece; it may also refer grammatically to the speaker’s attitude

Grammatical forms of mood:

Indicative—Expresses factual information: “The Sound and the Fury is my favorite novel.”

Subjunctive—Expresses a condition contrary to fact: “If I were you, I wouldn’t wake Ralphie before he finishes his nap.”

***Imperative***—Expresses a command: “Don’t interrupt me when I’m talking!”

**Motif:** In literature, anything with thematic importance that recurs in a work

**Narrative:** A story; a mode of expression, its intention being to tell a story

**Onomatopoeia:** A figure of speech in which words are used to imitate natural sounds: buzz, hum, murmur, etc.

**Organization:** The arrangement of elements within a piece of writing or a speech

**Oxymoron:** The conjoining of contradictory terms: “I going to have the jumbo shrimp.”

**Parable:** A brief story that teaches a lesson, usually with human characters

**Parallelism:** The framing of words, phrases, or clauses to provide structural similarity and symmetry

**Paradox:** The expression of a nonsensical underlying truth through the use of seemingly contrary ideas

**Parody:** The close imitation of style, usually exaggerating the features of the model for comedic effect

**Paronomasia:** Punning wordplay, including any of many types, including homophonic or homographic puns, both of which are included in this example: “You can tune a guitar, but you can’t tuna fish. Unless, of course, you play bass.”

**Pathetic fallacy:** A figure of speech that attributes human emotion to inanimate objects, nature, or animals: “angry storm” or “wise owl”

**Pathos:** A quality that arouses emotions (especially pity or sorrow); the rhetorical appeal concerned with how to reach an audience emotionally

**Pedantic:** Overly scholarly, academic, or bookish (connotation usually negative)

**Periodic sentence:** A sentence in which critical meaning comes only at the end (at the period); in this sentence type, the important independent clause is preceded by dependent phrases or clauses (its effect is often more formal and adds emphasis and variety)

**Persona:** The fictional voice a writer often adopts to tell a story

**Personification:** A figure of speech in which nonhuman things are given human characteristics

**Perspective:** A way of regarding situations or topics

**Pleonasm:** Redundancy for emphasis: “We heard it with our own ears.”

**Point of view:** A manner of viewing things; the perspective from which a story is told:

***first person***—the narrator is a character who tells the story using “I”

***third person limited***—the narrator presents the thoughts and feelings of one character

***third person omniscient***—the narrator presents the thoughts and feelings of all characters with authority at any given moment

**Polyptoton:** Repetition of two or more forms of a word; also known as paregmenon: “You try to forget, and in the forgetting, you are yourself forgotten.”

**Polysyndeton:** Insertion of conjunctions before each word in a list: “My fellow students read and studied and wrote and passed. I laughed and played and talked and failed.”

**Pun:** A humorous play on the multiple meanings of a word or words: “You can tune a fiddle, but you can’t tuna fish—unless you’re a bass player.”

**Quatrain:** A stanza or other group of four lines in poetry

**Repetition:** The act or process or an instance of repeating or being repeated

**Rhetoric:** The art of effective or persuasive communication

**Rhetorical question:** A question used for rhetorical effect

**Satire:** A work that reveals a critical attitude toward some element of human behavior by portraying it in an extreme way, often through the use of humor, and generally intended to point out a flaw and affect a change

**Scesis Onomaton:** Repetition of an idea using synonymous words or phrases: "We succeeded, won, and walked away victorious."

**Sentence structure:** The grammatical arrangement of words in sentences

**Sententia:** The punctuation of a point with an aphorism such as "Don't judge a book by its cover."

**Sentential Adverbs:** These single words or brief phrases emphasize the thought they precede, interrupt, or — rarely — follow. Examples include *however*, *naturally*, *no doubt*, and *of course* — and, in informal writing, phrases such as "you see."

**Simile:** A comparison using "like" or "as"

**Soliloquy:** A long speech in which a dramatic character who is alone on stage expresses inner thoughts or feelings

**Sonnet:** A fourteen-line poem, usually written in iambic pentameter (see Poetry Primer handout for additional information about types of poetry)

**Stream of Consciousness:** A style of writing that portrays the inner (and often chaotic) workings of a character's mind, frequently taking liberties with standard structure and punctuation

**Syllepsis:** Divergent use of a word in two phrases: "We must all hang together or assuredly we will all hang separately."

**Syllogism:** A deductive system of formal logic that presents two premises, the first major and the second minor

**Symbol:** Generally an object that represents an idea (since theme refers to a main idea, which is identified through awareness of its being repeated, symbolism is important in the development of theme)

**Symploce:** A combination of anaphora and epistrophe: "To think clearly and rationally should be a major goal for man; but to think clearly and rationally is always the greatest difficulty faced by man."

**Synathroesmus:** A series of adjectives, also known as *accumulatio*, compiled often in the service of criticism: "You're the most arrogant, selfish, self-absorbed, insufferable narcissist I've ever met!"

**Synecdoche:** A figure of speech involving the substitution of a part for a whole: "A hundred head of cattle were scattered throughout the field."

**Synesthesia:** The figurative use of one sensory description in the depiction of another: "That sure is a loud jacket you're wearing."

**Syntax:** That part of grammar which treats of the construction of sentences; the arrangement of words in sentences establishing their necessary relations in order to convey intended meaning

**Tapinosis:** Invective: "Get out of my way, you mouth-breathing cretin."

**Theme:** The main idea or message of a work, or the insight it offers into life (in order for an idea to be considered the main or central idea, it is generally repeated; theme is determined, then, by identifying an idea that comes up again and again)

**Thesis:** The direct expression of the author's point, meaning, or position

**Tone:** The mood of a piece or the author's attitude toward her subject

**Transition:** A word, phrase, or clause that links different ideas or paragraphs

**Tricolon:** A series of three parallel words, phrases, clauses, or statements: "Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn."

**Understatement:** A statement that is restrained in ironic contrast to what might have been said

**Voice:** A writer's distinctive use of language

**Wit:** The use of language that surprises and delights; it may involve particularly perceptive, humorous, or ingenious thoughts expressed through great verbal power

**Zeugma:** A figure of speech in which one word, usually a verb, applies to at least to other words, usually nouns (one of which is concrete, the other abstract) in two different ways: "My teeth and ambition are bared—Be prepared!"

\*\*\*\*\*Note: New Art and Media Glossary Addendum starts on next page\*\*\*\*\*



## ***A List of Art, Film, and Media Terms***

**Abstract form:** Art that is not representational or based upon external reality or nature; A type of filmic organization in which the parts relate to one another through repetition and variation of such visual qualities as shape, color, rhythm, and direction of movement.

**Academy ratio:** The standardized shape of the film frame established by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. In the original ratio, the frame was 1 1/3 times as wide as it was high (1.33:1); later the width was normalized at 1.85 times the height (1.85:1).

**Aerial perspective:** A cue for suggesting represented depth in the image by presenting objects in the distance less distinctly than those in the foreground.

**Anamorphic lens:** A lens for making widescreen films using regular Academy ratio frame size. The camera lens takes in a wide field of view and squeezes it onto the frame, and a similar projector lens unsqueezes the image onto a wide theater screen.

**Angle of framing:** The position of the frame in relation to the subject it shows: above it, looking down (a high angle); horizontal, on the same level (a straight-on angle); looking up (a low angle). Also called camera angle.

**Animation:** Any process whereby artificial movement is created by photographing a series of drawings (see also cel animation), objects, or computer images one by one. Small changes in position, recorded frame by frame, create the illusion of movement.

**Art Nouveau:** Decorative art style of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, mainly in architecture and graphic arts. Characterized by sinuous, asymmetrical lines.

**Aspect ratio:** The relationship of the frame's width to its height. The standard Academy ratio is currently 1.85:1.

**Assemblage:** Three dimensional artistic composition made from a variety of traditionally non-artistic materials.

**Associational form:** A type of organization in which the film's parts are juxtaposed to suggest similarities, contrasts, concepts, emotions, and expressive qualities.

**Asynchronous sound:** Sound that is not matched temporally with the movements occurring in the image, as when dialogue is out of synchronization with lip movements.

**Auteur:** The presumed or actual author of a film, usually identified as the director. Also sometimes used in an evaluative sense to distinguish good filmmakers (auteurs) from bad ones.

**Avant-garde:** French term describing art or film that is innovative, experimental, or inventive in technique or ideology.

**Axis of action:** In the continuity editing system, the imaginary line that passes from side to side through the main actors, defining the spatial relations of all the elements of the scene as being to the right or left. The camera is not supposed to cross the axis at a cut and thus reverse those spatial relations. Also called the 180° line. (See also 180° system.)

**Backlighting:** Illumination cast onto the figures in the scene from the side opposite the camera, usually creating a thin outline of highlighting on those figures.

**Batik:** Wax-resist dyeing technique used to make highly patterned cloth.

**Bauhaus:** German school of art founded by Walter Gropius in 1919. Aim was to reestablish bond between artistic creativity and manufacturing that had been perceived as lost during the Industrial Revolution.

**Biomorphic:** Artistic approach that uses abstract forms to evoke associations between living forms.

**Boom:** A pole upon which a microphone can be suspended above the scene being filmed and that is used to change the microphone's position as the action shifts.

**Camera angle:** See angle of framing.

**Canted framing:** A view in which the frame is not level; either the right or left side is lower than the other, causing objects in the scene to appear slanted out of an upright position.

**Caricature:** Artistic rendering that exaggerates the feature of a person or thing to satirize a subject.

**Categorical form:** A type of filmic organization in which the parts treat distinct subsets of a topic. For example, a film about the United States might be organized into 50 parts, each devoted to a state.

**cel animation:** Animation that uses a series of drawings on pieces of celluloid, called cels for short. Slight changes between the drawings combine to create an illusion of movement.

**CGI:** Computer-generated imagery: Using digital software systems to create figures, settings, or other material in the frame.

**Cheat cut:** In the continuity editing system, a cut that presents continuous time from shot to shot but that mismatches the positions of figures or objects.

**Cinematography:** A general term for all the manipulations of the film strip by the camera in the shooting phase and by the laboratory in the developing phase.

**Classical:** Art, architecture, or literature relating to ancient Greece or Rome.

**Close-up:** A framing in which the scale of the object shown is relatively large; most commonly a person's head seen from the neck up, or an object of a comparable size that fills most of the screen.

**Closure:** The degree to which the ending of a narrative film reveals the effects of all the causal events and resolves (or "closes off") all lines of action.

**Collage:** Technique and resulting work of art in which fragments are arranged and assimilated into a cohesive work.

**Conceptual Art:** Art that emerged in the late 1960s, emphasizing ideas and theory rather than the creation of visual forms.

**Constructivism:** Art associated with the Russian October Revolution of 1917, the goal of which was to make art universally understandable and essential.

**Continuity editing:** A system of cutting to maintain continuous and clear narrative action. Continuity editing relies on matching screen direction, position, and temporal relations from shot to shot. For specific techniques of continuity editing, see axis of action, crosscutting, cut-in, establishing shot, eyeline match, match on action, reestablishing shot, screen direction, shot/reverse shot.

**Contrast:** In cinematography, the difference between the brightest and darkest areas within the frame.

**Crane shot:** A shot with a change in framing accomplished by having the camera above the ground and moving through the air in any direction.

**Crosscutting:** Editing that alternates shots of two or more lines of action occurring in different places, usually simultaneously.

**Cubism:** Artistic movement begun in 1907 by Picasso and Braque, who developed a visual language in which geometric planes and compressed space challenged conventions of representational painting.

**Cut:** 1. In filmmaking, the joining of two strips of film together with a splice. 2. In the finished film, an instantaneous change from one framing to another. See also jump cut.

**Cut-in:** An instantaneous shift from a distant framing to a closer view of some portion of the same space.

**Deep focus:** A use of the camera lens and lighting that keeps both the close and distant planes being photographed in sharp focus.

**Deep space:** An arrangement of mise-en-scene elements so that there is a considerable distance between the plane closest to the camera and the one farthest away. Any or all of these planes may be in focus. (See shallow space.)

**Depth of field:** The measurements of the closest and farthest planes in front of the camera lens between which everything will be in sharp focus. A depth of field from 5 to 16 feet, for example, would mean everything closer than 5 feet and farther than 16 feet would be out of focus.

**Dialogue overlap:** In editing a scene, arranging the cut so that a bit of dialogue coming from shot A is heard under a shot that shows another character on another element in the scene.

**Diegesis:** In a narrative film, the world of the film's story. The diegesis includes events that are presumed to have occurred and actions and spaces not shown onscreen. See also diegetic sound, nondiegetic insert, nondiegetic sound.

**Diegetic sound:** Any voice, musical passage, or sound effect presented as originating from a source within the film's world. See also nondiegetic sound.

**Direct sound:** Music, noise, and speech recorded from the event at the moment of filming; opposite of postsynchronization.

**Discontinuity editing :** Any alternative system of joining shots together using techniques unacceptable within continuity editing principles. Possibilities would include mismatching of temporal and spatial relations, violations of the axis of action, and concentration on graphic relationships. See also elliptical editing, graphic match, intellectual montage, jump cut, nondiegetic insert, overlapping editing.

**Dissolve:** A transition between two shots during which the first image gradually disappears while the second image gradually appears; for a moment the two images blend in superimposition.

**Distance of framing:** The apparent distance of the frame from the mise-en-scene elements. Also called camera distance and shot scale. See also close-up, extreme close-up, extreme long shot, medium close-up, medium shot, plan américain.

**Distribution:** One of the three branches of the film industry; the process of supplying the finished film to the places where it will be shown. See also exhibition, production.

**Dolly:** A camera support with wheels, used in making tracking shots.

**Dubbing:** The process of replacing part or all of the voices on the sound track in order to correct mistakes or rerecord dialogue. See also postsynchronization.

**Duration:** In a narrative film, the aspect of temporal manipulation that involves the time span presented in the plot and assumed to operate in the story. See also frequency, order.

**Diptych:** Work of art made up of two parts and displayed together.

**Editing:** 1. In filmmaking, the task of selecting and joining camera takes. 2. In the finished film, the set of techniques that governs the relations among shots.

**Ellipsis:** In a narrative film, the shortening of plot duration achieved by omitting intervals of story duration. See also elliptical editing, viewing time.

**Elliptical editing:** Shot transitions that omit parts of an event, causing an ellipsis in plot and story duration.

**Establishing shot:** A shot, usually involving a distant framing, that shows the spatial relations among the important figures, objects, and setting in a scene.

**Etching:** A type of print made by scratching an image onto the surface of a metal plate treated with an acid-resistant waxy ground. When acid is applied to the plate, it bites through the exposed portions of the plate; the raised surface of the plate is inked and the image is pressed onto paper.

**Exhibition:** One of the three branches of the film industry; the process of showing the finished film to audiences. See also distribution, production.

**Exposure:** The adjustment of the camera mechanism in order to control how much light strikes each frame of film passing through the aperture.

**Expressionism:** Artistic movement that flourished internationally between 1905 and 1920, especially in Germany and Austria. It favored the expression of subjective emotions and experience over objective depictions of reality and often included distortion, exaggeration, fantasy, and jarring application of color.

**External diegetic sound:** Sound represented as coming from a physical source within the story space that we assume characters in the scene also hear. See also internal diegetic sound.

**Extreme close-up:** A framing in which the scale of the object shown is very large; most commonly, a small object or a part of the body.

**Extreme long shot:** A framing in which the scale of the object shown is very small; a building, landscape, or crowd of people will fill the screen.

**Eyeline match:** A cut obeying the axis of action principle, in which the first shot shows a person looking off in one direction and the second shows a nearby space containing what he or she sees. If the person looks left, the following shot should imply that the looker is offscreen right.

**Fade:** 1. Fade-in: A dark screen that gradually brightens as a shot appears. 2. Fade-out: A shot gradually disappears as the screen darkens. Occasionally, fade-outs brighten to pure white or to a color.

**Fill light:** Illumination from a source less bright than the key light, used to soften deep shadows in a scene. See also three-point lighting.

**Film noir:** Dark film, a term applied by French critics to a type of American film, usually in the detective or thriller genres, with low-key lighting and a somber mood.

**Film stock:** The strip of material upon which a series of still photographs is registered; it consists of a clear base coated on one side with a light-sensitive emulsion.

**Filter:** A piece of glass or gelatin placed in front of the camera or printer lens to alter the quality or quantity of light striking the film in the aperture.

**Flashback:** An alteration of story order in which the plot moves back to show events that have taken place earlier than ones already shown.

**Flashforward:** An alteration of story order in which the plot presentation moves forward to future events and then returns to the present.

**Focal length:** The distance from the center of the lens to the point at which the light rays meet in sharp focus. The focal length determines the perspective relations of the space represented on the flat screen. See also normal lens, telephoto lens, wide-angle lens.

**Focus:** The degree to which light rays coming from the same part of an object through different parts of the lens reconverge at the same point on the film frame, creating sharp outlines and distinct textures.

**Following shot:** A shot with framing that shifts to keep a moving figure onscreen.

**Foreground:** The area of an image that appears closest to the viewer.

**Form:** The general system of relationships among the parts of a film.

**Frame:** A single image on the strip of film. When a series of frames is projected onto a screen in quick succession, an illusion of movement is created.

**Framing:** The use of the edges of the film frame to select and to compose what will be visible onscreen.

**Frequency:** In a narrative film, the aspect of temporal manipulation that involves the number of times any story event is shown in the plot. See also duration, order.

**Front projection:** Composite process whereby footage meant to appear as the background of a shot is projected from the front onto a screen; figures in the foreground are filmed in front of the screen as well. This is the opposite of rear projection.

**Frontal lighting:** Illumination directed into the scene from a position near the camera.

**Frontality:** In staging, the positioning of figures so that they face the viewer.

**Frottage:** Artistic technique of reproducing a texture or relief by laying paper over it and rubbing with a drawing medium such as pencil or crayon. Surrealists often included such rubbings into paintings by means of collage.

**Function:** The role or effect of any element within the film's form.

**Gauge:** The width of the film strip, measured in millimeters.

**Genres:** Various types of films that audiences and filmmakers recognize by their familiar narrative conventions. Common genres are musical, gangster, and Western films.

**Graphic match:** Two successive shots joined so as to create a strong similarity of compositional elements (e.g., color, shape).

**Goache:** An opaque watercolor paint or a painting produced with such paint.

**Hand-held camera:** The use of the camera operator's body as a camera support, either holding it by hand or using a harness.

**Hard lighting:** Illumination that creates sharp-edged shadows.

**Height of framing:** The distance of the camera above the ground, regardless of the angle of framing.

**High-key lighting:** Illumination that creates comparatively little contrast between the light and dark areas of the shot. Shadows are fairly transparent and brightened by fill light.

**Horizon line:** A line in works of art or film that usually shows where land or water converge with sky.

**Iconography:** Subject matter in visual art that adheres to common representations that are imbued with symbolic meaning.

**Ideology:** A relatively coherent system of values, beliefs, or ideas shared by some social group and often taken for granted as natural or inherently true.

**Impressionism:** A 19<sup>th</sup>-century art movement in which painters used relatively small, thin brushstrokes that coalesced to form a single subject or scene.

**Intellectual montage:** The juxtaposition of a series of images to create an abstract idea not present in any one image.

**Internal diegetic sound:** Sound represented as coming from the mind of a character within the story space. Although we and the character can hear it, we assume that the other characters cannot. See also external diegetic sound.

**Interpretation:** The viewer's activity of analyzing the implicit and symptomatic meanings suggested in a film. See also meaning.

**Iris:** A round, moving mask that can close down to end a scene (iris-out) or emphasize a detail, or that can open to begin a scene (iris-in) or to reveal more space around a detail.

**Jump cut:** An elliptical cut that appears to be an interruption of a single shot. Either the figures seem to change instantly against a constant background, or the background changes instantly while the figures remain constant. See also ellipsis.

**Key light:** In the three-point lighting system, the brightest illumination coming into the scene. See also backlighting, fill light, three-point lighting.

**Lens:** A shaped piece of transparent material (usually glass) with either or both sides curved to gather and focus light rays. Most camera and projector lenses place a series of lenses within a metal tube to form a compound lens.

**Linearity:** In a narrative, the clear motivation of a series of causes and effects that progress without significant digressions, delays, or irrelevant actions.

**Lithography:** A print-making technique based upon the repulsion of oil and water; an oily substance is applied to a medium to transfer ink to a paper surface.

**Long shot:** A framing in which the scale of the object shown is small; a standing human figure would appear nearly the height of the screen.

**Long take:** A shot that continues for an unusually lengthy time before the transition to the next shot.

**Low-key lighting:** Illumination that creates strong contrast between light and dark areas of the shot, with deep shadows and little fill light.

**Mask:** An opaque screen placed in the camera or printer that blocks part of the frame off and changes the shape of the photographed image, leaving part of the frame a solid color. As seen on the screen, most masks are black, although they can be white or colored.

**Masking:** In exhibition, stretches of black fabric that frame the theater scene. Masking can be adjusted according to the aspect ratio of the film to be projected.

**Match on action:** A continuity cut that splices two different views of the same action together at the same moment in the movement, making it seem to continue uninterrupted.

**Matte shot:** A type of process shot in which different areas of the image (usually actors and setting) are photographed separately and combined in laboratory work.

**Meaning:** 1. Referential meaning: Allusion to particular items of knowledge outside the film that the viewer is expected to recognize. 2. Explicit meaning: Significance presented overtly, usually in language and often near the film's beginning or end. 3. Implicit meaning: Significance left tacit, for the viewer to discover upon analysis or reflection. 4. Symptomatic meaning: Significance that the film divulges, often against its will, by virtue of its historical or social context.

**Medium close-up:** A framing in which the scale of the object shown is fairly large; a human figure seen from the chest up would fill most of the screen.

**Medium long shot:** A framing at a distance that makes an object about four or five feet high appear to fill most of the screen vertically. See also plan américain, the special term for a medium long shot depicting human figures.

**Medium shot:** A framing in which the scale of the object shown is of moderate size; a human figure seen from the waist up would fill most of the screen.

**Mise-en-scene:** (pronounced—meez ahwn sane) All of the elements placed in front of the camera to be photographed:

the settings and props, lighting, costumes and makeup, and figure behavior.

**Mixing:** Combining two or more sound tracks by recording them onto a single one.

**Mobile frame:** The effect on the screen of the moving camera, a zoom lens, or certain special effects; the framing shifts in relation to the scene being photographed. See also crane shot, pan, tilt, tracking shot.

**Monochromatic color design:** Color design that emphasizes a narrow set of shades of a single color.

**Montage:** 1. A synonym for editing. 2. An approach to editing developed by the Soviet filmmakers of the 1920s; it emphasizes dynamic, often discontinuous, relationships between shots and the juxtaposition of images to create ideas not present in either shot by itself. See also discontinuity editing, intellectual montage.

**Montage sequence:** A segment of a film that summarizes a topic or compresses a passage of time into brief symbolic or typical images. Frequently dissolves, fades, superimpositions, and wipes are used to link the images in a montage sequence.

**Motif:** An element in a film that is repeated in a significant way.

**Motion control:** A computerized method of planning and repeating camera movements on miniatures, models, and process work.

**Motivation:** The justification given in the film for the presence of an element. This may be an appeal to the viewer's knowledge of the real world, to genre conventions, to narrative causality, or to a stylistic pattern within the film.

**Narration:** The process through which the plot conveys or withholds story information. The narration can be more or less restricted to character knowledge and more or less deep in presenting characters' mental perceptions and thoughts.

**Narrative form:** A type of filmic organization in which the parts relate to each other through a series of causally related events taking place in time and space.

**Nondiegetic insert:** A shot or series of shots cut into a sequence, showing objects that are represented as being outside the space of the narrative.

**Nondiegetic sound:** Sound, such as mood music or a narrator's commentary, represented as coming from a source outside the space of the narrative.

**Nonsimultaneous sound:** Diegetic sound that comes from a source in time either earlier or later than the images it accompanies.

**Normal lens:** A lens that shows objects without severely exaggerating or reducing the depth of the scene's planes. In 35mm filming, a normal lens is 35 to 50mm. See also telephoto lens, wide-angle lens.

**Offscreen sound:** Simultaneous sound from a source assumed to be in the space of the scene but outside what is visible onscreen.

**Offscreen space:** The six areas blocked from being visible on the screen but still part of the space of the scene: to each side and above and below the frame, behind the set, and behind the camera. See also space.

**180° system:** The continuity approach to editing dictates that the camera should stay on one side of the action to ensure consistent left-right spatial relations between objects from shot to shot. The 180° line is the same as the axis of action. See also continuity editing, screen direction.

**Order:** In a narrative film, the aspect of temporal manipulation that involves the sequence in which the chronological events of the story are arranged in the plot. See also duration, frequency.

**Overlap:** A cue for suggesting represented depth in the film image by placing closer objects partly in front of more distant ones.

**Overlapping editing:** Cuts that repeat part or all of an action, thus expanding its viewing time and plot duration.

**Pan:** A camera movement with the camera body turning to the right or left. On the screen, it produces a mobile framing that scans the space horizontally.

**Photojournalism:** A type of journalism that uses film to tell a news story.

**Pixilation:** A form of single-frame animation in which three-dimensional objects, often people, are made to move in staccato bursts through the use of stop-action cinematography.

**Plan américain:** A framing in which the scale of the object shown is moderately small; the human figure seen from the shins to the head would fill most of the screen. This is sometimes referred to as a medium long shot, especially when human figures are not shown.

**Plan-séquence:** French term for a scene handled in a single shot, usually a long take.

**Plot:** In a narrative film, all the events that are directly presented to us, including their causal relations, chronological order, duration, frequency, and spatial locations. Opposed to story, which is the viewer's imaginary construction of all the events in the narrative. See also duration, ellipsis, frequency, order, viewing time.

**Pointillism:** Technique in which small, distinct points of unmixed color are combined to form an image.

**Point-of-view shot (POV shot):** A shot taken with the camera placed approximately where the character's eyes would be, showing what the character would see; usually cut in before or after a shot of the character looking.

**Pop art:** Artistic movement begun in the 1950s and 60s that is characterized by references to imagery and products from popular culture, media, and advertising.

**Postsynchronization:** The process of adding sound to images after they have been shot and assembled. This can include dubbing of voices, as well as inserting diegetic music or sound effects. It is the opposite of direct sound.

**Process shot:** Any shot involving rephotography to combine two or more images into one or to create a special effect; also called composite shot. See also matte shot, rear projection, special effects.

**Production:** One of the three branches of the film industry; the process of creating the film. See also distribution, exhibition.

**Racking focus:** Shifting the area of sharp focus from one plane to another during a shot; the effect on the screen is called rack-focus.

**Rate:** In shooting, the number of frames exposed per second; in projection, the number of frames thrown on the screen per second. If the two are the same, the speed of the action will appear normal, while a disparity will create slow or fast motion. The standard rate in sound cinema is 24 frames per second for both shooting and projection.

**Rear projection:** A technique for combining a foreground action with a background action filmed earlier. The foreground is filmed in a studio, against a screen; the background imagery is projected from behind the screen. The opposite of front projection.

**Reestablishing shot:** A return to a view of an entire space after a series of closer shots following the establishing shot.

**Reframing:** Short panning or tilting movements to adjust for the figures' movements, keeping them onscreen or centered.

**Rhetorical form:** A type of filmic organization in which the parts create and support an argument.

**Rhythm:** The perceived rate and regularity of sounds, series of shots, and movements within the shots. Rhythmic factors include beat (or pulse), accent (or stress), and tempo (or pace).



**Rotoscope:** A machine that projects live-action motion picture frames one by one onto a drawing pad so that an animator can trace the figures in each frame. The aim is to achieve more realistic movement in an animated cartoon.

**Rule of Thirds:** A compositional guideline in art, photography, and film that proposes that an image should be imagined as being divided into nine parts by two equally spaced horizontal lines and two equally spaced vertical lines. Important compositional elements should be placed at the intersection of these points.

**Scene:** A segment in a narrative film that takes place in one time and space or that uses crosscutting to show two or more simultaneous actions.

**Screen direction:** The right-left relationships in a scene, set up in an establishing shot and determined by the position of characters and objects in the frame, by the directions of movement, and by the characters' eyelines. Continuity editing will attempt to keep screen direction consistent between shots. See also axis of action, eyeline match, 180° system.

**Screen printing (also Silk screening):** A printing technique in which areas of a silk screen are selectively blocked off with a non-permeable material (typically photo emulsion or plastic film) to form a stencil negative of the image. Ink is forced through the mesh onto the printing surface with a squeegee, creating a positive image.

**Segmentation:** The process of dividing a film into parts for analysis.

**Sequence:** Term commonly used for a moderately large segment of film, involving one complete stretch of action. In a narrative film, often equivalent to a scene.

**Shallow focus:** A restricted depth of field, which keeps only one plane in sharp focus; the opposite of deep focus.

**Shallow space:** Staging the action in relatively few planes of depth; the opposite of deep space.

**Shot:** 1. In shooting, one uninterrupted run of the camera to expose a series of frames. Also called a take. 2. In the finished film, one uninterrupted image with a single static or mobile framing.

**Shot/reverse shot:** Two or more shots edited together that alternate characters, typically in a conversation situation. In continuity editing, characters in one framing usually look left, in the other framing, right. Over-the-shoulder framings are common in shot/reverse-shot editing.

**Side lighting:** Lighting coming from one side of a person or object, usually in order to create a sense of volume, to bring out surface tensions, or to fill in areas left shadowed by light from another source.

**Simultaneous sound:** Diegetic sound that is represented as occurring at the same time in the story as the image it accompanies.

**Size diminution:** A cue for suggesting represented depth in the image by showing objects that are farther away as smaller than foreground objects.

**Soft lighting:** Illumination that avoids harsh bright and dark areas, creating a gradual transition from highlights to shadows.

**Sound bridge:** 1. At the beginning of one scene, the sound from the previous scene carries over briefly before the sound from the new scene begins. 2. At the end of one scene, the sound from the next scene is heard, leading into that scene.

**Sound over:** Any sound that is not represented as coming from the space and time of the images on the screen. This includes both nonsimultaneous diegetic sound and nondiegetic sounds. See also nondiegetic sound, nonsimultaneous sound.

**Sound perspective:** The sense of a sound's position in space, yielded by volume, timbre, pitch, and, in stereophonic reproduction systems, binaural information.

**Space:** Most minimally, any film displays a two-dimensional graphic space, the flat composition of the image. In films that depict recognizable objects, figures, and locales, a three-dimensional space is represented as well. At any moment, three-

dimensional space may be directly depicted, as onscreen space, or suggested, as offscreen space. In narrative film, we can also distinguish between story space, the locale of the totality of the action (whether shown or not), and plot space, the locales visibly and audibly represented in the scenes.

**Special effects:** A general term for various photographic manipulations that create fictitious spatial relations in the shot, such as superimposition, matte shots, and rear projection.

**Story:** In a narrative film, all the events that we see and hear, plus all those that we infer or assume to have occurred, arranged in their presumed causal relations, chronological order, duration, frequency, and spatial locations. Opposed to plot, which is the film's actual presentation of events in the story. See also duration, ellipsis, frequency, order, space, viewing time.

**Storyboard:** A tool used in planning film production, consisting of comic-strip-like drawings of individual shots or phases of shots with descriptions written below each drawing.

**Style:** The repeated and salient uses of film techniques characteristic of a single film or a group of films (for example, a filmmaker's work or a national movement).

**Superimposition:** The exposure of more than one image on the same film strip.

**Surrealism:** An artistic movement influenced by Freud's writings, this approach considered how the irrational, unconscious mind could move beyond the constraints of the rational world.

**Synchronous sound:** Sound that is matched temporally with the movements occurring in the images, as when dialogue corresponds to lip movements.

**Take:** In filmmaking, the shot produced by one uninterrupted run of the camera. One shot in the final film may be chosen from among several takes of the same action.

**Technique:** Any aspect of the film medium that can be chosen and manipulated in making a film.

**Telephoto lens:** A lens of long focal length that affects a scene's perspective by enlarging distant planes and making them seem close to the foreground planes. In 35mm filming, a lens of 75mm length or more. See also normal lens, wide-angle lens.

**Three-point lighting:** A common arrangement using three directions of light on a scene; from behind the subjects (backlighting), from one bright source (key light), and from a less bright source balancing the key light (fill light).

**Tilt:** A camera movement with the camera body swiveling upward or downward on a stationary support. It produces a mobile framing that scans the space vertically.

**Top lighting:** Lighting coming from above a person or object, usually in order to outline the upper areas of the figure or to separate it more clearly from the background.

**Tracking shot:** A mobile framing that travels through space forward, backward, or laterally. See also crane shot, pan, and tilt.

**Triptych:** A work of art consisting of three parts, displayed together.

**Typage:** A performance technique of Soviet Montage cinema whereby an actor is given features believed to characterize a social class or other group.

**Underlighting:** Illumination from a point below the figures in the scene.

**Unity:** The degree to which a film's parts relate systematically to each other and provide motivations for all the elements used.

**Variation:** In film form, the return of an element with notable changes.

**Viewing time:** The length of time it takes to watch a film when it is projected at the appropriate speed.

**Whip pan:** An extremely fast movement of the camera from side to side, which briefly causes the image to blur into a set of indistinct horizontal streaks. Often an imperceptible cut will join two whip pans to create a trick transition between scenes.

**Wide-angle lens:** A lens of short focal length that affects a scene's perspective by distorting straight lines near the edges of the frame and by exaggerating the distance between foreground and background planes. In 35mm filming, a wide-angle lens is 30mm or less. See also normal lens, telephoto lens.

**Wipe:** A transition between shots in which a line passes across the screen, eliminating one shot as it goes and replacing it with the next one.

**Zoom lens:** A lens with a focal length that can be changed during a shot. A shift toward the telephoto range enlarges the image and flattens its planes together, giving an impression of magnifying the scene's space, while a shift toward the wide-angle range does the opposite.