

Glossary of Key Vocabulary for GSCE English Language and Literature

- **alliteration** is derived from Latin's "Latira". It means "letters of alphabet". It is a stylistic device in which a number of words, having the same first consonant sound, occur close together in a series. Owen: 'the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle'
- **analyse** is 'examine in detail': 'break down in order to bring out the essential elements and/ or structure'. Here both, of course. In OFQUAL's words 'make linkages between writing and its results that are complex and detailed.'
- **antithesis**: opposition; contrast: the antithesis of right and wrong. The direct opposite (usually followed by of or to): her behaviour was the very antithesis of cowardly. The placing of a sentence or one of its parts against another to which it is opposed for a balanced contrast of ideas, as in "*Give me liberty or give me death.*"
- **appropriate**: suitable, relevant, usually to do with making the right supporting references to text to justify what is said.
- **apt**: as for appropriate.
- **assonance**: takes place when two or more words close to one another repeat the same vowel sound but start with different consonant sounds.
- **assured**: confident, convinced.
- **balanced**: both sides of a question/ issue/ statement have been considered in something approaching equal measure: often found in comments on 'compare and contrast' or 'how far' tasks.
- **bathos**: a ludicrous descent from the exalted or lofty to the commonplace; anticlimax. Waugh: 'Sword of Honour' sergeant to senior officer: '*quite frankly sir its time you shut your bloody trap*'. insincere pathos; sentimentality; mawkishness, triteness or triviality in style.
- **characterisation**: the ways in which different people, places and things are described and developed.
- **clarify**: make or become clearer to see or easier to understand.
- **climax**: event or point of greatest intensity or interest.
- **closure**: closing, ending: refers to the ways writers deal with the final moments of their texts.
- **comment**: describe and make some straightforward judgements about: 'give a view of' what has been read and how it works in the light of the task and, critically, support what is said with reference to the text. In its simplest form: 'say something about'.
- **conceptual** ideas that can be read between the lines, infer what is implied (as above). A concept is defined as a 'generalisation or abstraction from experience based on or relating to ideas.' Ideas are 'plans or schemes formed by thinking'.
- **connections** between: 'adduce similarities'.
- **considered** response and **consider(ed)**: 'contemplate mentally, esp. in order to reach a conclusion'; 'look attentively at. to examine the merits of'.
- **consistent**: 'compatible, in harmony with'.
- **context**: both in its generally understood sense: 'parts that precede and follow a word or passage and fix its precise meaning' (OED) in other words its place in the scheme of things: **and** in the sense it has come to have in literary rubrics, 'circumstances'. As described here by 'social, cultural, historical'.
- **conveyed**: 'communicated' (OED) here the plural refers (if not exclusively) to one perspective in each text.
- **critical**: or in this context the work of a **critic**: 'censure, review, judge... merit' here it doesn't refer to the associated sense of 'crisis'. The suggestion is that candidates may find things to criticise as poor/inadequate/could have been better done, as well as praise as merit worthy ('good' in more common parlance). Essential, therefore to see that these judgements are substantiated.
- **culture**: less 'refined understanding of the arts' than 'way of life' in this context.
- **detachment**: this is a challenging requirement: it suggests both engagement and involvement but also taking an overview from a critical distance as well as textual references that are apt, convincing and persuasive. Personal opinions that are unconsidered and unsupported are not judgements. Detailed work is all of the high quality suggested here and fully, aptly supported. Well differentiated, penetrating.
- **developed**: (of a response, essay etc.) continued, followed up, expanded.
- **discourse markers**: A discourse marker is a word or phrase that is relatively syntax-independent and does not change the meaning of the sentence, and is somewhat empty. Examples of discourse markers include the particles "oh", "well", "now", "then", "you know", and "I mean", and the discourse connectives "so", "because", "and", "but", and "or".
- **discuss**: offer a considered and balanced response that includes a range of arguments factors or hypotheses. Opinions or conclusions should be presented clearly and supported by appropriate evidence.
- **dissonance**: inharmonious or harsh sound; discord; cacophony. Blake, 'The 'Garden of Love'. *And Priests in black gowns, were walking their rounds, And binding with briars, my joys & desires.*
- **echo**: repetition of sound; close imitation, reinforce, support, imitate.

- **emotive**: arousing feeling, exciting emotion (possibly at the expense of/ instead of taking a logical route, response).
- **emphathise, empathy**: power of identifying oneself with the thoughts and feelings of another.
- **enigmatic**: puzzling, riddling, ambiguous: a paradox.
- **establish**: set up, argue successfully.
- **evaluation, evaluate**: 'appraisal, assessment'. It certainly includes 'making judgements about'.
- **evidence** both openly stated factual information and what is implied. What a passage says about someone or something and how it is said.
- **explain** is 'make clear or intelligible/ give meaning of/ make known in detail': or slightly more mundanely 'show how it works': starting to analyse with apt supporting examples.
- **explicit**: openly, expressly stated, stated in detail, reading along the lines.
- **explores**: 'travel extensively in order to learn or discover'; 'inquire into'. The 'travel' of course, is metaphorical here: we often speak of reading as a 'voyage of discovery'. It is the candidate's response to this voyage through the texts supported by relevant detail that is wanted in comparative format. The strong suggestion is that candidates can see more than one (or two) ideas and perspectives.
- **form**: the shape and arrangement of parts, usually but not necessarily of a poem, e.g. sonnet, ode, epic etc.
- **genre**: specific type/ kind of literature: gothic novel, fantasy adventure, science fiction story etc.
- **grammar, grammatical**; the rules governing the relations between words; according to the rules of grammar.
- **hierarchy of skills**: the declension of what is required for each band as stated in the band descriptors for each task.
- **hyperbole**: obvious and intentional exaggeration; extravagant statement or figure of speech not intended to be taken literally, as "to wait an eternity."
- **Identify**: retrieve data or facts: show what is explicit and/ or implicit as directed by the task.
- **imbalanced**: more on one text/ issue/ idea etc. than another.
- **impact**: (noun) force, strong effect or influence.
- **influence**: (verb) have a strong effect on; capacity to be a compelling force on opinions.
- **integrated**: 'combine into a whole' another version of 'synthesise'.
- **intentions**: the aims and objectives: of a writer or a candidate in a response to a task.
- **interpret**: read between the lines and make simple inferences, explain what is happening; show what is implied; explain, bring out the meaning of: 'infer'.
- **interpretation**: as a noun of the above.
- **interwoven**: comparison again, the emphasis on a detailed account of the texts which effectively compares and contrasts throughout; intimately blended.
- **irony**: dissimulation, sarcasm, understatement the use of words to convey a meaning that is the opposite of its literal meaning: the irony of her reply, "How nice!" when I said I had to work all weekend. A technique of indicating, as through character or plot development, an intention or attitude opposite to that which is actually or ostensibly stated. A manner of organizing a work (especially in contemporary writing) so as to give full expression to contradictory or complementary impulses, attitudes, etc., especially as a means of indicating detachment from a subject, theme, or emotion.
- **knowledge**: what is known, range of information.
- **limited**: little or nothing given in response.
- **link/s**: the ways different segments of a text are connected, joined together.
- **litotes**: A deliberate understatement for effect; the opposite of **hyperbole**. For example, a good idea may be described as "not half bad," or a difficult task considered "no small feat."
- **meter**: the rhythmical pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in verse.
- **metonymy**: A figure of speech in which a related term is substituted for the word itself. Often the substitution is based on a material, causal, or conceptual relation between things. For example, the British monarchy is often referred to as 'the Crown'. In the phrase "lend me your ears," "ears" is substituted for "attention." "O, for a draught of vintage!" exclaims the speaker in John Keats's *Ode to Nightingale*, with "vintage" understood to mean "wine."
- **mnenomics**: 'aforest' for instance, which can often lead to a distorted or partial view of task and text.
- **parenthesis**: word or clause in a sentence inserted as an explanation or an afterthought or rider which is grammatically complete without it and is usually marked off by brackets, dashes or commas. Not to be overused for effect in writing.
- **pathetic fallacy**: The assignment of human feelings to inanimate objects, as coined by the Victorian literary critic John Ruskin. For him, a poet's tendency to project his or her emotions outward onto the workings of the natural world was a kind of false vision. Today the term is used more neutrally, and the phenomenon is usually accepted as an integral part of the poet's craft. It is related to personification and anthropomorphism, but emphasizes the relationship between the poet's emotional state and what he or she sees in the object or objects.
- **pathos**: writing (or any use of language) that arouses pity or sadness.

- **perceptive**: understanding of similarities.....quick to comprehend': more simply 'shows good/deep/clear understanding'.
- **persona**: literally, an actor's mask: in this context, taking the role, place, personality of: not being simply one's self.
- **perspectives**: the word comes from the Latin perspicio-spect: 'look at' and although there is a detailed technical definition to do with drawing multidimensional objects on a plane surface (which might have some residual metaphorical sense of writers' approaches to their craft) what is meant here is the writer's viewpoint, or way of looking at the material s/he is using. It is about the relationship between the writer, the material and their craft.
- **phrase**: group of words forming a conceptual unit equivalent to a noun, adjective or adverb but not forming a complete sentence.
- **register**: one of the many styles or varieties of language determined by such factors as social occasion, purpose, and audience. Also called stylistic variation. More generally, register is used to indicate degrees of formality in language use. The different registers or language styles that we use are sometimes called codes.
- **reinforce**: make stronger: often used with impact and effect.
- **reorganise**: specifically in English Language AOs 1/1 and 1/2 select from and re-shape what has been read to conform with the requirements of the set task.
- **repertoire**: range of regularly used techniques, styles.
- **repetition**: as a rhetorical device, it could be a word, a phrase or a full sentence or a poetical line repeated to emphasize its significance in the entire text. Repetition is not distinguished solely as a figure of speech but more as a rhetorical device. The following examples of repetition are classified according to the different types of repetition used both in literature and in daily conversations.
Anadiplosis: Repetition of the last word in a line or clause. **Anaphora**: Repetition of words at the start of clauses or verses. **Antistasis**: Repetition of words or phrases in opposite sense. **Diacope**: Repetition of words broken by some other words.
- **response**: the written (or spoken) answer to a specific question or task.
- **rhetoric**: (in writing or speech) the undue use of exaggeration or display; bombast. The art or science of all specialized literary uses of language in prose or verse, including the figures of speech. The study of the effective use of language. The ability to use language effectively. the art of making persuasive speeches; oratory. (in classical oratory) The art of influencing the thought and conduct of an audience.
- **rhetorical question**: a question to which the answer is already known; which is asked for a particular effect.
- **rhyme** identity in sound of some part, especially the end, of words or lines of verse. a word agreeing with another in terminal sound: Find is a rhyme for mind and womankind; verse or poetry having correspondence in the terminal sounds of the lines. A poem or piece of verse having such correspondence.
- **rule of three/ tricolon**: clustering a repetition of the same concept, idea, statement, vocabulary in a set of three for effect. Do not over use in writing.
- **sarcasm**: a form of irony, usually crude; remarks that mean the opposite of what they say, made to criticise someone or something in a way that is amusing to others but annoying and offensive to the person criticised.
- **secure ability**...the candidate clearly understands and can execute what is required.
- **secure understanding**: may be straightforward and workmanlike but is still doing as required with clarity and confidence.
- **select**: choose (usually what is apt, relevant enlightening) detail from texts, a range of vocabulary to show understanding and flair in both reading and writing.
- **sentence lengths**: are denominated by the number of words, phrases, clauses and complexity they contain: can be used for dramatic effect in writing.
- **setting**: the place, time, class, context etc. in which a piece of writing takes place.
- **simile**: an expression including the words 'like' or 'as' to compare one thing with another.
- **skilled analysis** which demonstrates....skill: 'expertness, practiced ability, facility in an action' analyse' as above. The point is that this can be taught and practiced and developed.
- **sophisticated**: 'make worldly wise, cultured or refined'. Beware the overlap with sophistication: 'using sophisms or false arguments': better to think of this as a synthesis of 'polished/accomplished.' Answers in this level will show flair, commonly defined as 'we don't know what the definition is but we know it when we see it'. In fact it means 'the best way of achieving something'.
- **straightforward**: without much subtlety or sophistication but sensible, workmanlike and relevant.
- **structure**: the shape, sequence and linking of a piece of writing (as opposed to 'form' of a poem). Critically, in OFQUAL's words 'it is very difficult to make absolute distinctions between language and structure - though the former may be more about words and phrases; the latter more about sentences, punctuation and paragraphs. We would add that the latter is often less well represented than the former and should include opening, development and closure.
- **summation**: concluding summing up, bringing to a closure.

- **surface features:** what is literally given in a piece of text without the need for inference or suggestion or reading between the lines.
- **sustain/ed:** thoroughly developed with detail and consistency; 'keep up'.
- **symbol:** anything (but in this case a word or phrase) used to represent something else, for example 'Queen Victoria was the symbol of the British Empire'.
- **synecdoche:** a word or phrase in which a part of something is used to refer to the whole of it, e.g. 'a pair of hands' for a worker; 'the law' for a police officer.
- **synthesise** appropriate ideas and evidence from both texts...combine elements into a whole' or, as above 'locate and reorganise'.
- **terminology:** the subject of this glossary: special words or expressions used in relation (here to literary understanding and commentary) to a particular subject.
- **themes:** main ideas concepts and concerns.
- **tone:** quality, sound of voice that expresses the speaker's feelings to either or both what and who is being addressed; mood of something. A key element of responding to texts.
- **transactional:** vending/ giving information about.
- **understanding:** here a sense of 'how' a passage works/ will work rather than 'knowledge': what it says or is going to say.
- **valid:** acceptable because based on what is true and/ or reasonable (and 'validity'; 'validate').