1. **Allegory** - story or poem in which characters, settings, and events stand for other people or events or for abstract ideas or qualities

2. **Alliteration** - repetition of the same initial consonant sound of words that are close in proximity, i.e. “Sally sells seashells by the seashore”; usually only recognized in verse

3. **Allusion** - reference to someone or something that is known from history, literature, religion, politics, sports, science, or another branch of culture; an indirect reference to something, usually from literature

4. **Ambiguity** - deliberately suggesting two or more different, and sometimes conflicting, meanings in a work

5. **Analogy** - comparison made between two things to show how they are alike

6. **Anaphora** - a deliberate repetition of a word, phrase, or clause at the beginning of two or more sentences in a row to help make the writer's point more coherent

7. **Anastrophe** - inversion of the usual, normal, or logical order of the parts of a sentence in order to create rhythm, emphasis, or euphony

8. **Anecdote** - Brief story, told to illustrate a point or serve as an example of something, often shows character of an individual

9. **Antagonist** - opponent who struggles against or blocks the protagonist in a story; not always a human

10. **Antimetabole** - a figure of speech in which words or clauses from the first half of a sentence are repeated in the second half of the sentence in reverse order, i.e. “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.” -JFK or “Fair is foul and foul is fair.” - Shakespeare’s Macbeth

11. **Antithesis** - figure of speech in which a thought is balanced with a contrasting thought in parallel arrangement, i.e. “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.”

12. **Antihero** - central character who lacks all the qualities traditionally associated with heroes, i.e. courage, grace, intelligence, morality, etc.

13. **Anthropomorphism** - a type of personification where human characteristics are attributed to an animal; fables almost always use this literary technique, i.e. “The Tortoise and The Hare.”

14. **Aphorism** - brief, cleverly worded statement that makes a wise observation about life, or of a principle or general truth, i.e. “The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step” - Lao Tau; also known as a **maxim** or **epigram**

15. **Apostrophe** - calling out to an imaginary, dead, or absent person, or to a place or thing, or a personified abstract idea as if he/she/it can hear you or answer you; if the character is asking a deity or supernatural power for help or inspiration, it is called an **invocation**

16. **Assonance** - the repetition of similar vowel sounds of words that are in close proximity; usually only recognized in verse
17. **Asyndeton** - commas used without conjunction to separate a series of words, thus emphasizing the parts equally, i.e. “Are all thy conquests, glories, triumphs, spoils/ Shrank to this little measure?” - Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*

18. **Cacophony** - the usage of several unharmonious or dissonant sounds in a line or passage; include the explosive consonants k, t, g, d, p, and b, and the hissing sounds ch, sh, and s; this is the opposite of **euphony**, i.e. “To be, or not to be: that is the question/ Whether ‘tis nobler in the mind to suffer/ The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,/ Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,/ And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep,” - Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*

19. **Caesura** - a pause for effect in the middle of a line of poetry, usually marked with a period, dash, or semi-colon, i.e. “And I—I took the road less travelled by,” - Robert Frost

20. **Canon** - works generally considered by scholars, critics, and teachers to be the most important to study or read, which collectively constitutes the “masterpieces” or “classics” of literature

21. **Catharsis** - Aristotle’s word for the pity and fear an audience experiences upon viewing the downfall of a hero

22. **Characterization** - the process by which the writer reveals the personality of a character
   - **Indirect Characterization** - the author reveals the personality of a character by describing physical appearance, using dialogue, revealing character’s thoughts or effect on other characters, or through the character’s actions
   - **Direct Characterization** - author tells reader directly what the character is like: sneaky, generous, hateful, etc.; classic romantic literature relied heavily on this form
   - **Static Character** - a character who does not change much throughout the course of the story
   - **Dynamic Character** - a character who changes in some important way as a result of the story’s action; character could change for the better or for the worse
   - **Flat Character** - a character that has only one or two personality traits; one-dimensional
   - **Round Character** - a character that is complex and most like a real person

23. **Chiasmus** - two or more clauses which are related grammatically and conceptually, but in which the grammar and concepts are reversed, i.e. We ran away quickly; speedily, we fled. **Chiasmus** and **antimetabole** are often uses as synonyms, although there is a slight difference.

24. **Colloquialism** - a word or phrase used in everyday conversation and informal writing but is inappropriate for formal situations

25. **Conceit** - an elaborate metaphor that compares two things that are startlingly different; often called an **extended metaphor**

26. **Conflict** - the struggle between opposing forces or characters in a story
   - **External Conflict** - conflicts that can exist between two people or between a person and nature, machine, society, etc.
   - **Internal Conflict** - a conflict involving opposing forces within a person’s mind (man vs. self)

27. **Connotation** - the associates and emotional overtones that have become attached to a word or phrase, in addition to its strict dictionary definition; this is the opposite of **denotation**
28. **Consonance** - the repetition of consonant sounds of words that are in close proximity; usually only recognized in verse

29. **Crux** - the most crucial line(s) in a poem or prose passage; the heart or the main point of the text

30. **Denouement** - the resolution of a plot’s main conflict, always occurring after the climax of the story

31. **Dialect** - a way of speaking that is characteristic of a certain social group or geographical region, i.e. a Southern accent or a Boston accent

32. **Diction** - a speaker or writer's choice of words

33. **Didactic** - a description for fiction or nonfiction that teaches a specific lesson or moral or provides a model of correct behavior or thinking; the most common usage is *didactic verse*

34. **Enjambment** - a line of verse that carries over to the next line without a pause of any kind

35. **Elegy** - a poem of mourning, usually about someone who has died; a *eulogy* is speech of praise or commendation delivered when someone has dies, usually at the funeral or memorial service

36. **Epic** - a long, narrative poem, written in heightened language, which recounts the deeds of a heroic character who embodies the values of a particular society, i.e. Odysseus, Gilgamesh, Beowulf

37. **Epigram** - a brief saying or remark expressing an idea in a clever and amusing way

38. **Epigraph** - a brief quotation at the beginning of a literary work suggestive of the theme

39. **Epilogue** - a section at the end of a book or play that serves as a conclusion to what has happened

40. **Epiphany** - an awakening or sudden burst of insight; a key moment in Greek plays

41. **Epistrophe** - device of repetition in which the same expression (single word or phrase) is repeated at the end of two or more lines, clauses, or sentences; this is the opposite of *anaphora*

42. **Epitaph** - an engraving on a tombstone

43. **Epithet** - An epithet is a nickname or descriptive term that’s added to someone’s name that becomes part of common usage, i.e. Alexander the Great or George Washington, the Father of our Country

44. **Euphemism** - substitute words that sound less offensive or more neutral than others, i.e. when a person says *pass away* instead of *die*

45. **Euphony** - the quality of being pleasing to the ear, especially through a harmonious combination of words and sounds; the opposite of *cacophony*, i.e. “The woods are lovely, dark and deep,/ But I have promises to keep,/ And miles to go before I sleep,/ And miles to go before I sleep.” - Robert Frost

46. **Explication** - act of interpreting or discovering the meaning of a text, usually involves close reading and special attention to figurative language

47. **Fable** - a very short story told in prose or poetry that teaches a practical lesson about how to succeed in life; usually utilizes *anthropomorphism*
48. **Figurative Language** - writing or speech not meant to be taken literally in order to create an effect; figurative language devices include *simile, metaphor, personification, apostrophe, hyperbole, oxymorons, etc.*

49. **Foil** - a character who acts as a contrast to another character; often a villain contrasting the hero

50. **Folk Tale** - a story which has been composed orally and then passed down by word of mouth

51. **Free Verse** - poetry that does not conform to a regular meter or rhyme scheme

52. **Hypophora** - a figure of speech in which the speaker both asks a question and immediately answers it

53. **Idiom** - a saying, phrase, or fixed expression in a culture that has a figurative meaning different from its literal meaning, i.e. It’s raining cats and dogs.

54. **Irony** - a discrepancy between appearances and reality
   - **Verbal Irony** - when someone says something but means something else
   - **Situational Irony** - a discrepancy between what is expected to occur and what actually occurs
   - **Dramatic Irony** - when the audience or reader knows the truth, but the character does not

55. **Juxtaposition** - poetic and rhetorical device in which normally unassociated ideas, words, or phrases are placed next to one another, creating an effect of surprise and wit

56. **Litotes** - a figure of speech in which a negative statement is used to affirm a positive sentiment, i.e. When a person is asked how he or she is doing, and respond with, “I’m not bad.” In fact, this means that the person is doing fine or even quite well.

57. **Maxim** - a short statement expressing a general truth or rule of conduct

58. **Metonymy** - a figure of speech in which a person, place, or thing is referred to by something closely associated with it

59. **Microcosm** - a small “world” that stand for the larger one, i.e. In *Lord of the Flies*, the island is representative of the world’s political realm

60. **Mood** - an atmosphere created by a writer’s diction and the details selected; the feeling the reader gets, not to be confused with the feeling of the writer toward a subject which is called **tone**

61. **Motif** - a recurring image, word, phrase, action, idea, object, or situation used throughout a work (or in several works by the same author), unifying the work by tying the current situation to previous ones, or new ideas to the theme

62. **Paradox** - a statement that appears self-contradictory, but that reveals a kind of truth

63. **Polysyndeton** - the repetition of a number of conjunctions in close succession without the use of commas, i.e. “We have men and arms and planes and tanks.”

64. **Protagonist** - the central character in a story who drives the action; usually the hero or **antihero**; a **tragic hero** will have a **tragic flaw** in his character that will lead to his downfall

65. **Rhetoric** - the art of speaking or writing effectively; skill in the eloquent use of language
66. **Rhetorical Device** - a device used to produce effective speaking or writing

67. **Rhetorical Question** - a question asked for an effect where the speaker does not expect an answer

68. **Stream of Consciousness** - writing that portrays the inner (often chaotic) workings of a character’s mind

69. **Style** - a writer’s typical way of expressing himself or herself; a writer’s distinctive use of **diction**, **tone**, and **syntax**

70. **Symbolism** - to inject an object with a certain meaning that is different from the original meaning or function, so the object stands for something much greater than itself

71. **Synesthesia** - when a writer presents an idea in such a manner that it appeals to more than one sense simultaneously, thus creating additional layers of meaning, i.e. “Back to the region where the sun is silent.” - Dante’s *Inferno*

72. **Syntax** - the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences in a language

73. **Theme** - the insight about human life that is revealed in a literary work

74. **Tone** - the attitude a writer takes toward the subject of a work, the characters in it, or the audience, revealed through diction, figurative language, and organization

75. **Vernacular** - the language spoken by the people who live in a particular locality