

LANGUAGE FEATURES ACROSS GENRES

allusion	<p>A text can make reference to another well-known text, quotation or event; such a reference is an allusion. Biblical allusions are the most common.</p> <p><i>Example:</i> When McMurphy, from <i>One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest</i>, is about to get electric shock treatment he says, 'Do I get a crown of thorns?' (a Biblical allusion to Christ's crown of thorns at his crucifixion).</p>
ambiguity	<p>A phrase or expression of which the meaning is unclear because of the construction or vocabulary.</p>
anachronism	<p>A reference that is out of place in time.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> having a wristwatch in a production of <i>Julius Caesar</i>, or using an electronic alarm bell to summon Macbeth (instead of a hand bell, as would have been used in Shakespeare's day).</p>
analogy	<p>A word, object, idea or story chosen for the purpose of comparison to explain similarities.</p>
anecdote	<p>A short account of an interesting or entertaining incident to make a point.</p>
anti-climax	<p>A drop from an exalted to a less exalted tone.</p> <p><i>Example:</i> 'He lost his wife, his family, his home, and five shillings.'</p>
antithesis	<p>The placing together of two contrasting or opposing ideas for effect.</p> <p><i>Example:</i> 'Their intentions were admirable, their achievements negligible.'</p>
attitude	<p>The writer's opinions and feelings about a topic or idea.</p>
audience	<p>The target group(s) at which the text is aimed.</p>
cliche	<p>An overworked expression, made boring by frequent repetition. Example: 'At the end of the day...'</p>
colloquialism	<p>Words suitable for informal conversation or familiar writing but not for use on formal occasions.</p>
connotation	<p>The meaning or shade of meaning of a word in the context in which it occurs; what the word is linked to in our minds.</p>

	<i>Examples: A rose suggests passion, thorns, love and beauty. A seed has connotations of growth and renewal.</i>
contractions	Two or more words that are 'run together' and the missing letter(s) are replaced by an an apostrophe. <i>Example: 'Don't instead of 'do not'.</i>
denotation	The literal (dictionary) definition of a word.
dialect	A variety of language peculiar to a particular region.
dialogue	Two or more people involved in talking. Often used to distinguish literary speech from genuine conversations but strictly speaking should include conversation.
direct address	Addressing the reader, viewer or listener directly by using the pronoun 'you' to include them in the experience.
elision	Where a vowel is omitted in pronunciation. <i>Example: y'know, s'long.</i>
emotive language	Language that expresses or arouses feelings.
euphemism	The usage of a word with a gentler connotation than one might normally expect. <i>Example: 'He passed away' instead of 'He died'.</i>
formal	Situations where slang and colloquialisms would be inappropriate and where conventional language would be expected.
hyperbole	An exaggeration used for either serious or comic effect. <i>Example: 'All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.' - Shakespeare, Macbeth</i>
idiom	A vocabulary usage specific to a particular group or culture, often difficult to understand by new language learners.
imagery	The use of language to represent objects, actions, feelings, thoughts, ideas, states of mind or experience; powerful language which creates images to evoke a response.

informal	Language used in casual situations where less conventional language may be acceptable, such as amongst friends and family.
irony	The humorous (often sarcastic) use of words to imply the opposite of what is actually stated.
jargon	Technical language of a particular profession or restricted group. <i>Example: cricket jargon silly mid-off, slips, duck).</i>
juxtaposition	The technique of placing close together, or side by side, ideas or objects to emphasise and compare some particular aspect of them.
malapropism	The unintentional confusion of one word with another and its subsequent misuse, often intended to sound intellectual. <i>Example: 'Comprehend that man!' instead of 'Apprehend that man!'</i>
motif	A dominant idea or repeated phrases and images in a literary work. <i>Example: The 'dome' in Samuel Coleridge's poem '</i>
neologism	A word that has been newly created. <i>Example: byte.</i>
opinion	A view held as probable but not necessarily proven.
oxymoron	Two startlingly opposing terms used together. <i>Example: 'Loving hatred'.</i>
paradox	This is a statement which seems contradictory, yet makes sense after careful consideration. <i>Example: Deep down, he's very shallow'.</i>
personal pronouns	Pronouns such as 'I' and 'we' that are used to personalise the experience and include the reader.
propaganda	Persuasive language used to promote a particular belief or value system.

pun	A play on words where one word has two or more meanings, in a single phrase or sentence. <i>Example:</i> Driving drunk is a grave mistake
purpose	The aim of the language being used, such as to inform, persuade, entertain, socialise.
register	The tone or level of a piece of language
rhetorical question	A question used for effect to which no answer is expected. <i>Example:</i> 'Who could ask for more?'
slang	Popular or modern uses of language, often colourful, informal and invented. Much slang eventually becomes part of standard English.
statistics	Facts and figures used to justify an opinion or claim
stream of consciousness	A technique used by a writer for presenting the psychological aspects of a character's thoughts through an unbroken flow of emotions, ideas and thoughts that are going through the character's mind.
symbol	A word or object that is used to represent something else. <i>Examples:</i> The Cross symbolises the Christian religion. The colour white represents purity and innocence.
syntax	Sentence structure
tense of (verb)	The form of the verb indicating the time frame as occurring in the past, the present or the future.
tone	A writer's attitude towards the subject matter, often conveyed by the language chosen (the tone then sets the mood or atmosphere for the reader). <i>Examples of types of tone:</i> bitter, condescending, stern, enthusiastic, sarcastic and so on.