

English 9

Composition Terms

Aside

In drama, an aside is a speech directed to the audience that supposedly is not audible to the other characters onstage at the time.

Example. When Hamlet first appears onstage, for example, his aside, "A little more than kin, and less than kind!" gives the audience a strong sense of his alienation from King Claudius.

Bias

A bias is a particular tendency or inclination, especially one that prevents unprejudiced consideration of a question; prejudice.

Example. Mrs. McAllister thinks her son is beautiful, but that is her biased opinion, because she is his mother. 😊

Cliché

A cliché is an idea or expression that has become tired and trite from overuse, its freshness and clarity having worn off. Clichés often anesthetize readers, and are usually a sign of weak writing.

Example. Soft as a baby's bottom. Life is like a box of chocolates. Seeing life through rose-coloured glasses.

Irony

Irony is a literary device that uses contradictory statements or situations to reveal a reality different from what appears to be true. Simply: the opposite of what's expected happens.

Example. It is ironic for a firehouse to burn down or for a police station to be burglarized.

- Verbal irony is a figure of speech that occurs when a person says one thing but means the opposite. "Well, this is a beautiful day for a picnic," said in the middle of a torrential rainstorm. See also "Sarcasm."
- Dramatic irony creates a discrepancy between what a character believes or says and what the reader or audience member knows to be true. For example, in *Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo kills himself because he believes Juliet to be dead, while the audience knows that she is actually in a death-like sleep in order to be with him when she awakes.
- Situational irony exists when there is an incongruity between what is expected to happen and what actually happens due to forces beyond human comprehension or control, like rain on one's wedding day.

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Sarcasm

In using sarcasm, the speaker or writer uses words that mean the opposite of what is really meant. Often, sarcasm has the intent to offend or hurt another person, and is expressed in a sharp, caustic manner. It is the lowest form of humour.

Example. (Being said about a person who is obviously unappealing) He/she is hot!

Satire

Satire is the literary art of ridiculing a folly or vice in order to expose or correct it. The object of satire is usually some human frailty; people, institutions, ideas, and things are all fair game for satirists. Satire evokes attitudes of amusement, contempt, scorn, or indignation toward its faulty subject in the hope of somehow improving it.

Example. In George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, Orwell uses animals rather than people to poke fun at the political world he does not agree with.

Understatement

An understatement is the opposite of hyperbole. Understatement refers to a figure of speech that says less than is intended. Understatement usually has an ironic effect, and sometimes may be used for comic purposes.

Example. After a car accident that has resulted in a huge dent in the driver's car, he/she says, "It's just a scratch."

The above definitions constitute the terms related to composition that are examinable in English 9.

These definitions were gathered from public domain content at wikipedia.org, dictionary.com, for students in the Saint Thomas Aquinas High School English Department.

Composition refers to the skill or art of creating written works or pieces of literature. While this can be in the form of poetry, drama, essays or prose, the terms on this list would apply mostly to students' own writing.

English 9 Composition Terms

Compare

Contrast

Description

Expository

Genre

Narrative

Persuasion; persuasive

These terms were learned in English 8. They are examinable in English 9.