**AP Language Rhetorical Terms: List 2**

1. ***ad hominem* argument**- An argument that attacks the integrity or character of an opponent rather than the merits of an issue. (*Ad hominem* is Latin for "to the man.") It is also informally known as "mud-slinging."

2. **analogy**- A comparison that attempts to explain one idea or thing by likening it to another. Analogy is

useful if handled properly, but it can be a source of confusion if the compared items are basically unalike

3. **anecdote** – a brief narrative offered in a text to capture the audience’s attention or to support a generalization or claim.

4. **appeal to *ethos*** *–* one of three strategies for persuading audiences—appeal to ethics

5. **appeal to *logos***– appeal to logic

6. **appeal to *pathos*** – appeal to emotion, an appeal to feelings rather than to strict reason; a legitimate ploy in an argument as long as it is not excessively or exclusively used.

7. **begging the question** – the situation that results when a writer or speaker constructs an argument on an assumption that the audience does not accept. Example:

8. **causal relationship (cause-and-effect relationship):** The relationship expressing, “If X is the cause, then Y is the effect,” or “If Y is the effect, then X caused it”—for example, “If the state builds larger highways, then traffic congestion will just get worse because more people will move to the newly accessible regions,” or “If students plagiarize their papers, it must be because the Internet offers them such a wide array of materials from which to copy.”

9. **colloquialism** - a word or expression acceptable in informal usage but inappropriate in formal discourse. A given word may have a standard as well a colloquial meaning. *Bug*, for example, is standard when used to refer to an insect; when used to designate a virus, i.e. "She's at home recovering from a *bug*," the word is a colloquialism.

10. **conclusion**- The final paragraph or paragraphs that sum up an essay and bring it to a close. Effective conclusions vary widely, but some common tacks used by writers to end their essays include summing up what has been said, suggesting what ought to be done, specifying consequences that are likely to occur, restating the beginning, or taking the reader by surprise with an unexpected ending. Most important of all, however, is to end the essay artfully and quietly without staging a grand show for the reader’s benefit.

11. **connotation** - the implication of emotional overtones of a word rather than its literal meaning. *Lion*, used in a literal sense, denotes a beast (see denotation). But to say that Winston Churchill had "the heart of a *lion*" is to use the connotative or implied meaning of lion.

12. **emphasis**- A rhetorical principle that requires stress to be given to important elements in an essay at the expense of less important elements. Emphasis may be given to an idea in various parts of a composition. In a sentence, words may be emphasized by placing them at the beginning or end or by judiciously italicizing them. In a paragraph, ideas may be emphasized by repetition or by the accumulation of specific detail.

13. **essay** - From the French word *essai*, or “attempt,” the essay is a short prose discussion of a single topic. Essays are sometimes classified as formal or informal. A formal essay is aphoristic, structured, and serious. An informal essay is personal, revelatory, humorous, and somewhat loosely structured.

14. **euphemism**- from the Greek word for “good speech,” euphemisms are a more agreeable or less offensive substitute for a generally unpleasant word or concept. The euphemism may be used to adhere to standards of social or political correctness or to add humor or ironic understatement. Saying “earthly remains” rather than “corpse” is an example of euphemism.

15. **example** - an instance that is representative of an idea or claim or that otherwise illustrates it. The example mode of development is used in essays that make a claim and then prove it by citing similar and supporting cases. See, for example, the essays in Chapter 7.

16. **generalization** - a statement that asserts some broad truth based upon a knowledge of specific cases. For instance, the statement "Big cars are gas guzzlers" is a generalization about individual cars. Generalizations are the end products of inductive reasoning, where a basic truth may be inferred about a class after experience with a representative number of its members. One should, however, beware of rash or faulty generalizations—those made on insufficient experience or evidence. It was once thought, for example, that scurvy sufferers were malingerers, which led the British navy to the policy of flogging the victims of scurvy aboard its ships. Later, medical research showed that the lethargy of scurvy victims was an effect rather than the cause of the disease. The real disease was found to be a lack of vitamin C in their diet

17. **logical fallacy**- Errors in reasoning used by speakers or writers, sometimes in order to dupe their

audiences. Most logical fallacies are based on insufficient evidence ("All redheads are passionate

lovers"); or *irrelevant information* ("Don't let him do the surgery; he cheats on his wife"); or *faulty logic* ("If you don't quit smoking, you'll die of lung cancer").

18. **objective and subjective writing** - Two different attitudes toward description. In objective writing the author tries to present the material fairly and without bias; in subjective writing the author stresses personal responses and interpretations. For instance, news reporters should be objective whereas poetry can be subjective.

19.**red herring** - A side issue introduced into an argument in order to distract from the main argument. It is a common device of politicians: “Abortion may be a woman’s individual right, but have you considered the danger of the many germ-infested abortion clinics?” Here the side issue of the dirty clinics clouds the ethical issue of the right or wrong of having an abortion.

20.**sarcasm -**  from the Greek meaning “to tear flesh,” sarcasm involves bitter, caustic language that is meant to hurt or ridicule someone or something. It may use irony as a device, but not all ironic statements are sarcastic, that is, intending to ridicule. When well done, sarcasm can be witty and insightful; when poorly done, it’s simply cruel.

21.**satire -** Satire – Often an attack on a person. Also the use of wit and humor in order to ridicule society’s weaknesses so as to correct them. In literature, two types of satire have been recognized: *Horatian satire*, which is gentle and smiling; *Juvenalian satire* which is sharp and biting.

22.**subordination** – Expressing in a dependent clause, phrase, or single word any idea that is not significant enough to be expressed in a main clause or an independent sentence:

* 1. *Lacking subordination*: John wrote his research paper on Thomas Jefferson; he was interested in this great statesman.
  2. *With subordination*: Because John was interested in Thomas Jefferson, he wrote his research paper on this great statesman.

23.**tone** - In every writing, tone is the reflection of the writer’s attitude toward subject and audience. The tone can be personal, formal or informal, objective or subjective. Tone may also be expressed by a tone of voice such as irony, sarcasm, anger, humor, satire, hyperbole, or understatement.

24.**understatement** *-*  A way of deliberately representing something as less than it is in order to stress its

magnitude. Also called *litotes*. A good writer will restrain the impulse to hammer home a point and will

use understatement instead. An example is the following line from Oscar Wilde's play The Importance

of Being Earnest: "To lose one parent, Mr. Worthing, may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose both

looks like carelessness."

25. **voice** - The presence or the sound of self chosen by the author. Most good writing sounds like

someone delivering a message. The aim in good student writing is to sound natural. Of course, the

voice will be affected by the audience and occasion for writing. Voice is closely related to style.