The Nuts and Bolts of Knowledge Needed for the AP Test

I- Diction
a. monosyllabic / polysyllabic
b. colloquial / informal / formal / old fashioned / slang
c. denotative / connotative
d. euphonious / cacophonous
e. concrete / abstract
f. jargon / dialect

II- Syntax
a. sentence length
b. sentence pattern
  • Declarative / imperative / exclamatory / interrogative
  • Simple / compound / complex / compound complex
  • Juxtaposition
  • Parallel structure
  • Repetition
  • Rhetorical questioning
c. arrangement of ideas in a sentence
d. arrangement of ideas in a paragraph

III- Treatment of Subject Matter
a. subjectivity
b. objectivity
c. support of main idea
  • Opinion, experiences, observation, reading, expert witnesses, statistical data

IV- Figurative Language (how an author conveys meaning)
a. alliteration: the repetition of initial syllable sounds
b. assonance: the repetition of vowel sounds
c. consonance: the repetition of consonance sounds
d. simile: comparing two unlike things using the words like or as
e. metaphor: comparing two unlike things
f. personification: giving inanimate objects human qualities
g. onomatopoeia: words that imitate the sound they are expressing, example: pop, sizzle, buzz
h. hyperbole: exaggeration
i. understatement (meiosis, litotes)
j. paradox: a seemingly contradictory statement that may in fact be true
k. oxymoron: contradictory statement
l. pun: a play on words or phrases
m. irony: the opposite of what is expected
n. sarcasm: harsh or bitter derision or irony
o. antithesis: the direct opposite
p. apostrophe: an address to someone who is not present or to a personified object or idea
q. allusion: a reference to something else, a work of literature, the Bible, Greek Mythology, etc.
r. metonymy: A figure of speech in which one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it is closely associated (i.e.- scepter for sovereignty or the bottle for strong drink)
s. figure of speech: common saying
t. flashback: an event or scene that is inserted out of chronological order
u. foreshadowing: hints as to what will happen lately
v. imagery: the use of one or more of the five senses to describe something
w. mood: the atmosphere or feeling in a literary work
x. narration
y. plot: the series of events in a literary work
z. point of view: the type of narration, usually 1st or 3rd person, omniscient narration is all knowing
aa. protagonist: main character
bb. rhyme (end / slant / internal / rhyme scheme)
ce. setting: time and place
dd. Structure: shape and form
ee. Style
ff. suspense
gg. symbol: an object that stands for an idea
hh. theme: central idea
ii. allegory: the use of symbolic characters to tell a moral tale

V- Point of View
a. participant (first person)—I, me, my, we, us, our
  • Narrator as major character
  • Narrator as minor character
  • Innocent-eye narrator
  • Stream of consciousness
b. non-participant (third person)—he, him, her, she, they, them
  • Omniscient narrator
  • Selective (limited) narrator
  • Objective narrator
c. second person (participant or non-participant)—you, your, yourself

VI- Archetypes
a. character archetypes
  • Hero
  • Young man from the provinces
  • Initiates
  • Mentors
  • Mentor-pupil
  • Father-son conflict
  • Hunting group of companions
• Loyal retainers
• Friendly beast
• Civil figure with good heart
• Scapegoat
• Outcast
• Devil figure
• Create of nightmare
• Woman figures—
  o Earth mother
  o Temptress
  o Platonic ideal
  o Unfaithful wife
  o Damsel in distress

b. symbolic archetypes
• Light vs darkness
• Water vs desert
• Heaven vs hell
• Innate wisdom vs educated stupidity
• Haven vs wilderness
• Supernatural intervention
• Magic weapon
c. situational archetypes
• Quest-journey
• Task
• Initiation
• Journey – search for truth
• Fall
• Death and resurrection
• Nature vs mechanistic world
• Battled between good and evil
• Unhealable wound
• Ritual

VII- Allusion
a. personal
b. biblical
c. mythological
d. historical
e. literary to literary

VIII- Themes
Abuse / neglect
Alienation
Ambition
Appearance vs reality
Betrayal
Bureaucracy
Children
Courage / cowardice
Chance / fate / luck
Cruelty / violence
Custom / tradition
Defeat / failure
Despair / discontent / disillusionment
Dreams / fantasies
Domination / suppression
Duty / allegiance / blind faith
Escape / confinement
Ethic vs morality / right vs wrong
Exile / persecution
Falsity / pretense / affectation
Family / parenthood / deconstructed family
Gender evolution
The isms (prejudices: sexism, racism, classism, anti-Semitism, sizism, ageism, lookism)
Deconstructed family
Free will / will power
Greed
Heaven / paradise / utopia
Home
Heart vs. reason
Initiation
Illusion / innocence
Instinct
Journey
Law / justice / revenge
Education / school
Loneliness / alienation
Materialism
Memory / past
Mob psychology
Mysterious danger
Nature vs. mechanistic world
Persistence / perseverance
Patriotism
Poverty / class
Prophecy
Redemption / salvation
Repentance
Resistance / rebellion
Revenge / retribution
Ritual / ceremony
Scapegoat / victim / suicide
Media
Search for self
Time
War

***A thematic statement = elevated diction + comment on book

IX- Characterization (POV / narrator)
What or where characters… say, do, think, wear, are; with whom they associate, what others say about them

X- Analyzing Tragedy and Tragic Fiction
Aristotelian Theory:
unity of action  Informative

catharsis  Authoritative

tragedy (hubris)  Increduleous

scene of suffering  Shocked

**XI: Tone (feeling/mood/attitude/effect)**
Lighthearted  Baffled
Confident  Disbelieving
Amused  Urgent
Complementary  Nostalgic
Hopeful  Reminiscent
Cheery  Sentimental
Elated  Whimsical
Passionate  Fanciful
Exuberant  Scornful
Optimistic  Sarcastic
Sympathetic  Critical
Proud  Satiric
Enthusiastic  Bantering
Loving  Taunting
Compassionate  Ironic
Indignant  Amused
Foreboding  Patronizing
Reverent  Pompous
Irreverent  Disdainful
Diffident  Critical
Contemptuous  Satiric
Angry  Bantering
Furious  Taunting
Irritated  Ironic
Accusing  Mock-heroic
Disgusted  Melancholic
Indignant  Mournful
Condemnatory  Apprehensive
Outraged  Despairing
Bitter  Foreboding
Threatening  Resigned
Inflammatory  Elegiac
Disdainful  Sentimental
Formal  Didactic
Ceremonial  Pedantic
Restrained  Disturbed
Detached  Serious
Objective  Fearful
InformatIve  Sober
Candid  Staid
Clinical  Somber
Objective  Sad
Questioning  Solem.
Instructive  Concerned
Matter-of-fact  Gloomy
Admonitory  Hopeless
Learned factual
Didactic
TP-CASTT

A Way to Identify Poetic Devices

T-TITLE: ponder the title before reading the poem

P-PARAPHRASE: translate the poem for meaning beyond the literal and into your own words

C-CONNOTATION: contemplate the poem for meaning beyond the literal

A-ATTITUDE: observe both the speaker’s and poet’s attitude (tone)

S-SHIFTS: note shifts in speaker’s and poet’s attitude

T-TITLE: examine the title again—this time on an interpretive level

T-THEME: determine what the poet is saying

DIDLS

A Way to Understand Poetry Through the Examination of the Author’s Tone or Attitude Towards the Subject

D-DICTION: the connotation of word choice

I-IMAGES: vivid appeals to understanding through the senses

D-DETAILS: facts included or omitted

L-LANGUAGE: overall use of language such as formal, jargon, clinical…

S-SENTENCE STRUCTURE: how structure affects the reader’s attitude