**AP Language and Composition**

**Vocabulary List Week 3**

**Quiz will be held on Thursday, 09/05.**

**You will need to use these words in a compound-complex sentence (one with two independent clauses and one dependent clause) that shows comprehension.**

**figurative language –** Writing or speech that is not intended to carry literal meaning and is usually meant to be imaginative and

vivid.

**figure of speech –** A device used to produce figurative language. Many compare dissimilar things. Figures of speech include

apostrophe, hyperbole, irony, metaphor, oxymoron, paradox, personification, simile, synecdoche, and understatement.

**generic conventions –** This term describes traditions for each genre. These conventions help to define each genre; for example,

they differentiate an essay and journalistic writing or an autobiography and political writing. On the AP language exam,

try to distinguish the unique features of a writer’s work from those dictated by convention.

**genre –** The major category into which a literary work fits. The basic divisions of literature are prose, poetry, and drama.

However, genre is a flexible term; within these broad boundaries exist many subdivisions that are often called genres

themselves. For example, prose can be divided into fiction (novels and short stories) or nonfiction (essays, biographies,

autobiographies, etc.). Poetry can be divided into lyric, dramatic, narrative, epic, etc. Drama can be divided into tragedy,

comedy, melodrama, farce, etc. On the AP language exam, expect the majority of the passages to be from the following

genres: autobiography, biography, diaries, criticism, essays, and journalistic, political, scientific, and nature writing.

There may be fiction or poetry.

**homily –** This term literally means “sermon,” but more informally, it can include any serious talk, speech, or lecture involving

moral or spiritual advice.

**hyperbole –** A figure of speech using deliberate exaggeration or overstatement. (The literal Greek meaning is “overshoot.”)

Hyperboles often have a comic effect; however, a serious effect is also possible. Often, hyperbole produces irony. The

opposite of hyperbole is *understatement*.

**imagery –** The sensory details or figurative language used to describe, arouse emotion, or represent abstractions. On a physical

level, imagery uses terms related to the five senses: visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory, and olfactory. On a broader and

deeper level, however, one image can represent more than one thing. For example, a rose may present visual imagery

while also representing the color in a woman’s cheeks and/or symbolizing some degree of perfection. An author may use

complex imagery while simultaneously employing other figures of speech, especially metaphor and simile. In addition,

this term can apply to the total of all the images in a work. On the AP language exam, pay attention to *how* an author

creates imagery and to the effect of this imagery.

**inference/infer –** To draw a reasonable conclusion from the information presented. When a multiple choice question asks for an

inference to be drawn from a passage, the most direct, most reasonable inference is the safest answer choice. If an

inference is implausible, it’s unlikely to be the correct answer. *Note that if the answer choice is directly stated, it is* ***not***

*inferred and it is wrong.* You must be careful to note the connotation – negative or positive – of the choices.

Adapted from V. Stevenson, Patrick Henry High School, and Abrams’ *Glossary of Literary Terms*

**invective –** an emotionally violent, verbal denunciation or attack using strong, abusive language. (For example, in *Henry IV, Part*

*I,* Prince Hal calls the large character of Falstaff “this sanguine coward, this bedpresser, this horseback breaker, this huge

hill of flesh.”)

**irony/ironic –** The contrast between what is stated explicitly and what is really meant, or the difference between what appears to

be and what is actually true. Irony is often used to create poignancy or humor. In general, there are three major types of

irony used in language:

(1) *verbal irony* – when the words literally state the opposite of the writer’s (or speaker’s) meaning

(2) *situational irony* – when events turn out the opposite of what was expected; when what the characters and

readers think ought to happen is not what does happen

(3) *dramatic irony* – when facts or events are unknown to a character in a play or piece of fiction but known to

the reader, audience, or other characters in the work.