**DICTION** – word choice, general character of the language used by the author

**Non standard language** – language deficient in some form or manner

**Vulgarity** – language deficient in taste and refinement; coarse, base.

*(Any swear word)*

**Slang** – refers to a group of recently coined words; slang is ephemeral and exclusionary

*Slang words often come and go quickly, passing in and out of usage within months or years. Example: awesome, phat*

**Jargon** – consists of words and expressions characteristic of a particular trade, profession, or pursuit.

*(gigabyte, logic board, CPU, DVD, burner = __________ jargon?)*

**Cliché** – figurative language used so often it has lost its freshness and clarity.

*(“Slept like a log” “bigger and better” “jump for joy”)*
Colloquial – nonstandard, often regional ways of using language appropriate to informal and conversational speech and writing.

*the characteristic “about” from Canadians or the Southern “y’all” are examples of colloquialisms*

Dialect – a nonstandard subgroup of a language with its own vocabulary and grammatical features.

*Writers often use regional dialects or dialects that reveal a person’s economic or social class. Mark Twain makes use of dialect in The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.*

Informal/standard – language grammatically correct, but conversational.

*Sometimes referred to as Standard American English (SAE)*

Formal diction/elevated language – language appropriate for more formal occasions; often more abstract and more figurative.
• Types of Diction

Concrete vs. abstract – lang. tangible to our five senses vs. lang. conceptual, philosophical

*Concrete diction consists of specific words that describe physical qualities or conditions. The language is specific; tangible things.*

*Abstract diction refers to language that denotes ideas, emotions, conditions, or concepts that are intangible.*

*Girl, flag vs. beauty, patriotism*

Denotation vs. connotation – lang. w/ exact meaning vs. lang. w/ suggested, emotional meaning

*Denotation is the exact, literal definition of a word independent of any emotional association or secondary meaning. Exact meaning.*

*Connotation is the implicit rather than explicit meaning of a word and consists of the suggestions, associations, and emotional overtones attached to a word.*

*For example the word house has a different emotional effect on the reader than does the word home, with its connotations of safety, coziness, and security.*

*Good writers value both denotation and connotation, but while scientists may use more denotative words, literary artists tend to rely more heavily on connotative words*
for deepest meaning and strongest effect. Dress, obese vs gown, plump

Literal vs. figurative – accurate lang. w/out embellishment vs. comparative lang. for a pictorial effect

Frugal vs. tight as bark on a tree

Hyperbole (overstated) vs. understated – lang. deliberately misrepresenting as more vs. lang. deliberately misrepresenting as less

The shot heard round the world vs. The reports of my death are largely exaggerated

Pedestrian vs. pedantic – lang. of the common layman vs. lang. inflated to display importance

Cool vs urbane/cosmopolitan/suave

Active vs. passive – states action vs. states being

The students made progress vs progress was made by the students. Passive is used when author wants to remain vague or conceal information.

Monosyllabic vs. polysyllabic – one syllable in length vs. more than one syllable in length

• Devices of Sound
ALLITERATION – repetition of initial consonant sound in closely associated words

e.g., “the twisting trout twinkled below.”

ASSONANCE – repetition of similar vowel sound in closely associated words (full rhyme)

No pain, no gain

CONSONANCE – repetition of similar consonant sound in closely associated words (half rhyme)

Each slow dusk is a drawing down of blinds.

ONOMATOPOEIA-words whose pronunciation suggest meaning

Buzz, fizzle, hiss

**Never are you allowed to say that “the author uses a lot of diction”

**Whenever the word “diction” is used, it must be accompanied by an adjective to describe what kind of diction.