



Mr. Williams' AP English Literature DICTION Vocabulary list

Below are just a few words that you may use to **describe the type of diction** used by the writer.

You may want to add words to this **list or circle** the ones you use frequently.

affectionate - warmly attached; loving
archaic – marked by time; ancient ; old
abstract –difficult to understand; abstruse
academic - scholarly
abstruse – hard to understand; recondite
ambiguous-unclear; multi-meaning
artificial - forced ;contrived

biting-cutting; sarcastic; caustic
 bombastic - inflated; pompous; pretentious
 brusque –blunt; rough, abrupt

cacophonous –strident; dissonant; grating
 casual – offhand; careless; tackless
 caustic-biting; sarcastic; mordant
 concrete – real; pertaining to particular things;
 instances
 colloquial – familiar; informal
 colorful - picturesque; graphic; spirited
 common – familiar; everyday
 connotative – suggestive of...
 cultured - refined
 crisp – invigorating; fresh, bracing
 curt –abrupt; rude; short; brief; concise

denotative –dictionary specific
detached- unbiased; impartial; objective;
aloof
divisive – creating discord

emotional –temperamental; effusive;
 sentimental
 euphemistic –less offensive; mild
 everyday –trite; stale; hackneyed
 euphonious –pleasant sounding; sweet to hear
 esoteric – understood by/meant for only a few
 exact –using strict accuracy
fanciful – capricious; whimsical; illusionary
flowery-showy; bombastic
figurative – not literal meaning
formal –traditional meaning; usage
folksy – friendly; for the common man
forced –presumptuous; bloated

grandiose – pretentious; ostentatious
 grotesque – bizarre; odd; weird
haughty – snobbish; arrogant
homespun-plain; unpolished; simple

hackneyed- stale; trite idiomatic
 – slang usage; colorful
 inflammatory –arousing anger; fiery passion;
 provocative
 inflated-facitious; presumptuous
 informal - familiar, but educated;
 unconventional; causal
 insincere – hypocritical; disingenuous
 insipid-bland; nondescript

jargon- unique to a particular profession,
group, etc. lyrical-
 songlike qualities; flowing; easy; spontaneous
 learned –scholarly; erudite
 literal–not figurative or metaphorical
 loaded-prejudiced that hinders rational ideals

monosyllabic-comprised of mostly one
syllable, simple words
moralistic – narrow-minded morality;
preachy
melodious – sweet sounding; tuneful
 nostalgic- wistful desire for the old or to return
 to past values, happiness

obscene-indecent; immoral
 obscure- not plain or clear; ambiguous
 ornate-ostentatious; extravagant
 offensive- insulting; displeasing
 ordinary- plain; simple; nondescript

picturesque-strikingly vivid; graphic
plain – without intricacies; ordinary
passionate-ardent; zealous; fiery
patriotic-love for one's country
pedantic-formal; educative
poetic – romanticized notions of topic
political-relating to government; civic
polysyllabic-more than on syllable
precise – defined; fixed; explicit
pretentious-ostentatious; extravagant
preachy- tediously didactic provincial-
local (to an area/group)

romantic-celebrates nature, the ordinary
 person, freedom of spirit; idealistic;
scholarly - academic
sentimental-maudlin; overly emotional

shocking-staggering; appalling
sincere – free of deceit, hypocrisy, or
 falseness
slang – very informal; idiomatic
subdued-controlled; repressed; inhibited
symbolic – characterized by symbols
sensuous-of/relating to the senses
sarcastic-biting; caustic; cutting
simple-not grand or sophisticated

tame-dull; insipid; meek; subdued
 technical-specific to a certain profession,
 science, etc.
 trite-stale; hackneyed

unifying-combine; merge; fuse
 uppity-snobbish; presumptuous; inflated

verbose –wordy; too many word **vulgar**
 – indecent; displays lack of good breeding
vague –unclear
meaning; not explicitly stated

wry- devious in purpose; misdirected
 whimsical-unpredictable; capricious; erratic;
 juvenile