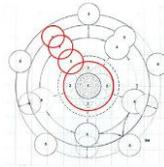


§3.60 My Words. My Rules. My Game. I Win!

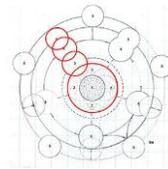


Building a Powerful Normative Language

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Building a Powerful Foundational Normative System Language

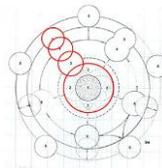
What is 'normative language'; what can normative language do for us; and why do we require a normative System Language for WordSmithing?

P. W. Taylor, in *Normative Discourse* (1961), suggests that normative language is 'The language' we use to 'express evaluations, prescribe acts, and give reasons for or against evaluations and prescriptions' (vi-ix). Whereas normative discourse is 'when we tell someone what [they] ought or ought not to do, and justify such judgments and prescriptions' (11). As for writing [for us, 'writing per'], Taylor concludes that 'words are used in such a way' so that readers are not 'misled' or 'confused', whether by the writer of a text or by the reader's misreading of the writing (258).

'Normative discourse', which for Taylor is primarily in the form of writing, in particular a written text, is characterized by making and justifying 'value judgments and prescriptions' and one 'cannot call anything a word or a sentence unless it is part of that kind of rule-governing process' (263). Therefore, rules 'must be such that' ... 'more than one person knows how to apply them and how to follow them'

(268). The result is that the formulated normative language enables participants [writers and readers] to understand the vocabulary of a particular text and subject (279).

In other words, establishing clear, concise and accredited definitions for keywords, terms, phrases and concepts for writing per se - WordSmithing - essentially serves to establish the 'rules of engagement' for WordSmiths, thereby permitting each of us to claim, regardless of the knowledge domain, and do so with confidence...



My Words. My Rules. My Game. I Win!

Selected Examples of Keywords, Phrases and Concepts in WordSmithing

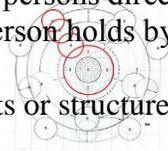
Abstract. Existing in thought or as an idea but not having a physical or concrete existence ... dealing with ideas rather than events / not based on a particular instance; theoretical ... consider something theoretically ... (noun) a summary of the contents of a book, article, or speech separately from (something else) ... (phrases) 'in the abstract', 'in a general way; without reference to specific instances' (ODE, 2010, t140.e0002740).

Abstraction. The quality of dealing with ideas rather than events / something which exists only as an idea / process of considering something independently of its associations or attributes (ODE, 2010, t140.e0002770).

Accredited (with object) (of an official body). Give authority or sanction to (someone or something) when recognized standards have been met (ODE, 2010, t140.e0004370).

Ad Hominem (argument). For Aristotle, a fallacy in which 'persons direct their solutions against the man, not against his arguments' (Woods, 2005, t116.e28); argument to... disprove what a person holds by attacking the person (Blackburn, 2008, t98.e242).

Analytical (analysis). A detailed examination of the elements or structure ... a statement of the result of this (analysis) (OAD, 1999, t21.e1071).



Anecdotal. (of an account) not necessarily true or reliable, because based on personal accounts rather than facts or research (ODE, 2010, t140.e0027380).

Anecdote. A brief story, usually true and intended to amuse (Garner, 2000, t26.e98).

Annotate (verb). Add notes to (a text or diagram) giving explanation or comment: (adjective) annotated bibliography (ODE, 2010, t140.e0029590).

Antagonist. A person who actively opposes or is hostile to someone or something; an adversary (ODE, 2010, t140.e0311460).

Antithesis (*noun*). 1. [as in] **Rhetoric.** An opposition or contrast of ideas, expressed by using as the corresponding members of two contiguous sentences or clauses, words which are the opposites of, or strongly contrasted with, each other; as 'he must increase, but I must decrease,' 'in newness of spirit, not in the oldness of the letter'. 2. The second of two such opposed clauses or sentences; a proposition opposed to a thesis; a counter-thesis or proposition (OED Online, September 2013, e8893).

APA. American Psychological Association. Online Vetted Resource Guides for APA style.

OWL Purdue Online Writing Lab. APA (American Psychological Association) is most commonly used to cite sources within the social sciences. This resource, revised according to the 6th edition, second printing of the APA manual, offers examples for the general format of APA research papers, in-text citations, endnotes/footnotes, and the reference page.
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>.

American Psychological Association: The Basics of APA Style. This tutorial is designed for those who have no previous knowledge of APA Style. It shows users how to structure and format their work, recommends ways to reduce bias in language, identifies how to avoid charges of plagiarism, shows how to cite references in text, and provides selected reference examples.
<http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx>.

Argumentation. The action or process of reasoning systematically in support of an idea, action, or theory (ODE, 2005, t140.e3678).

Argue. Give reasons or cite evidence in support of an idea, action, or theory, typically with the aim of persuading others to share one's view (ODE, 2010, t140.e0039200).

Argument. Exchange of diverging or opposite views, typically a heated or angry one: a reason or set of reasons given in support of an idea (ODE, 2010, t140.e0039220).

Argumentative. Given to arguing ... using or characterized by systematic reasoning: the highest standards of argumentative rigour (ODE, 2005, t149.e3679).

Bogus. Not genuine or true (ODE, 2010, t140.e0089860).

Bona Fide. Genuine; real; (Law) without intention to deceive (ODE, 2010, t140.e0091180).

Cause-and-Effect. A relationship between one variable and another or others such that a change in one variable effects a change in the other variable. A cause-and-effect relationship is claimed where the following conditions are satisfied: the two events occur at the same time and in the same place; one event immediately precedes the other; the second event appears unlikely to have happened without the first event having occurred (Kent, 2006, t161.e1227).

Effect. A change that is a result or consequence of an action or other cause ... used to refer to the state of being or becoming operative ... [as in '*Cause and Effect*'] (McKean, 2005, t183.e24051).

Caution: 'Effect' is often confused and incorrectly used interchangeably with '**Affect**'.

Affect. Have an effect on [not cause]; make a difference to: dampness began to *affect* my health ... your attitude will *affect* how successful you are ... 'pretend to have or feel (something)' ... *affect* most commonly means [to] 'produce an effect on, influence' (McKean, 2005, t183.e1051).

Cause and Effect Essay. A short written composition that discusses a subject or proposes an argument without claiming to be a complete exposition (Baldick, 2008, t56.e421)].

Chat. In medieval times chat was formed as a shorter version of chatter, which itself started life as an imitation of the sound made by people chatting away, rather as jabber ... twitter imitated the sound they described ... success of the website called Twitter has led to heated debate among users as to whether what they do should be called 'to twitter' or 'to tweet' ... yet another word imitating the sound of birds. See also jargon (Cresswell, 2009, t292.e944).

Clause. A grammatical unit operating at a level lower than a sentence but higher than a phrase ... in traditional grammar, a clause has its own subject and a finite verb, and is part of a larger sentence (Chalker & Weiner, 1998, t28.e198).

Colloquial (of language). Used in ordinary or familiar conversation; not formal or literary. From Latin *colloquium* 'conversation' (OAD, 2010, t183.e1234490).

Colloquial Language. Belonging or proper to ordinary conversation; not formal or literary ... ordinary everyday language ... between speakers who know each other well ... colloquial speech is not substandard (or) slang (Chalker & Weiner, 1998, t28.e228).

Compare and Contrast (compare *with*; compare *to*). The usual phrase is *compare with*, which means "*to place side by side, noting differences and similarities between*" ... *Compare to* = *to observe or point only to likenesses between* ... compare and contrast is an English teacher's tautology, for in comparing two things (one thing with another) one notes both similarities and differences (Garner, 2000, t26.e467).

Composition. Older term for 'compounding' ... how words are fused into compounds ... the way in which language is composed of units which incorporate other units ... relationship between the five units of grammatical description ... on a scale of rank (*sentence*,

clause, phrase, word, morpheme) saying that units of higher rank are composed of units of lower rank ... is one of composition (Chalker & Weiner, 1998, t28.e258).

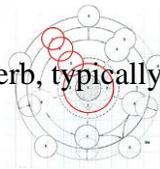
Concept. The term is the modern replacement for the older term idea, stripped of the latter's imagist associations, and thought of as more intimately bound up with language (Rundle, in Blackburn, 2005, t116.e450).

Contention. A dispute or argument; rivalry. A point contended for in an argument (it is my contention that you are wrong) (OAD, 1999, t21.e6758).

Contraction. A word or group of words resulting from shortening an original form [e.g. “goodbye” is a contraction of “God be with you.”] (OAD, 2010, t183.e1235688).

Declarative. The nature of, or making, a declaration ... a declaratory statement or act ... (grammar) a declarative sentence (Abate, 1999, t21.e8017). [See 'thesis statement'.]

Declarative. A sentence in which the subject precedes the verb, typically used for making a statement (Chalker & Weiner, 1998, t28.e354).



Define. State or describe exactly the nature, scope, or meaning of ... (a word or phrase) ... establish the character or essence of ... (ODE, 2005, t140.e19762).

Definition. A statement of the exact meaning of a word, especially in a dictionary ... exact statement or description of the nature, scope, or meaning of something ... the action or process of defining something (ODE, 2010, t140.e0212430).

Denouement. The final part of a play, film, or narrative in which the strands of the plot are drawn together and matters are explained or resolved (ODE, 2010, t140.e0216540).

Discipline. A field of academic study [i.e.] English, which constitutes an area of teaching and research within higher education and in the academic community (Wallace, 2009, t267.e280).

Description. A spoken or written account of a person, object, or event ... the action of giving a spoken or written account: *the emphasis was placed on 'explanation' rather than 'description'*. (ODE, 2010, t140.e0219050).

Describe. Give a detailed account in words ... (ODE, 2010, t140.e0219040).

Descriptive. Serving or seeking to describe ... (Grammar) (of an adjective) assigning a quality rather than restricting the application of the expression modified e.g. blue as distinct from few. Describing or classifying in an objective, non-judgemental way (ODE, 2010, t140.e0219060).

Discourse. Any coherent succession of sentences, spoken or ... written. Thus this entry in the dictionary is an example of discourse; likewise a novel ... a speech ... a lecture to students ... an interview (Matthews, 2007, t36.e927).

Egocentrism. Self-centeredness ... cognitive state in which a child in the pre-operational stage of development comprehends the world only from its own point of view and is unaware that other people's points of view differ from its own. It implies a failure to differentiate subjective from objective ... and it therefore imposes an unconscious personal bias (Colman, 2009, t87.e2642).

English. The Germanic language spoken in England which takes its name from the Angles (who first committed their dialect to writing) and was extended to refer to all the dialects of the vernacular, Saxon and Jutish too. Old English (formerly Anglo-Saxon) is the English language of the period ending soon after the Norman Conquest (c. 1100–50); Middle English is used to describe the language from then to about 1500; Modern English, founded on the dialect of the East Midlands in Middle English ... from 1500 to present (Drabble & Stringer, 2007, t54.e2017).

Equivocal. Open to more than one interpretation; ambiguous (ODE, 2010, t140.e0271470).

Essay. A short written composition in prose that discusses a subject or proposes an argument without claiming to be a complete or thorough exposition (Baldick, 2008, t56.e421).

Exposition. A comprehensive description and explanation of an idea or theory: [e.g.] a systematic exposition of the idea of biodiversity (ODE, 2010, t140.e0281680).

Expose. Make (something) visible by uncovering it (ODE, 2010, t140.e0281660).

Expository. Intended to explain or describe something: an expository prologue (ODE, 2010, t140.e0281700).

Explain. Make (an idea or situation) clear to someone by *describing* it in more detail or revealing relevant facts ... give a reason so as to justify or excuse (an action or event) ... (explain something away) minimize the significance of ... by giving an excuse or justification (ODE, 2010, t140.e0281350).

Explanation. Make (an idea or situation) clear to someone by describing it in more detail or revealing relevant facts ... give a reason so as to justify or excuse ... expand on what one has said in order to make oneself clear (ODE, 2005, t140.e26266).

Explicate. Analyze and develop (an idea or principle) in detail: an attempt to explicate the relationship between crime and economic forces. Analyze (a literary work) in order to reveal its meaning (ODE, 2010, t140.e0281450).

Express. Stated explicitly, not merely implied ... specifically identified to the exclusion of anything else (ODE, 2010, t140.e0281790 [See 'implied']).

Figurative Language. Language in which figures of speech, such as *metaphors* and *similes* freely occur. In classical rhetoric and poetics there is an inherent contrast between figurative or ornamental usage on the one hand and literal or plain and conventional usage on the other; in this contrast, figures of speech are regarded as embellishments that deviate from the 'ordinary' uses of language ... the precise definition of a figure of speech has proved to be as difficult as determining the limits of figurative usage (McArthur, 1998, t29.e464).

Formal Writing. Denoting a style of writing or public speaking characterized by more elaborate grammatical structures and more conservative and technical vocabulary ... officially sanctioned or recognized: a formal complaint ... relating to linguistic or logical form as opposed to function or meaning (ODE, 2005, t140.e29055). [See 'colloquial language'.]

Formulate. Create or prepare methodically ... express (an idea) in a concise or systematic way: the argument is sufficiently clear that it can be formulated mathematically (ODE, 2010, t140.e0311460).

Grammar. The whole system and structure of a language or of languages in general, usually taken as consisting of syntax and morphology (including inflections) and sometimes also phonology and semantics (OAD, 2010, t183.e1251786); The entire system of a language, including its syntax, morphology, semantics, and phonology. Popularly, *the structural rules of a language* (Chalker & Weiner, 1998, t28.e609).

Hypothesis. A proposition put forward as a supposition, rather than asserted. A hypothesis may be put forward for testing or for discussion, possibly as a prelude to acceptance or rejection (Blackburn, 2008, t98.e1547).

Hypothesize. Put (something) forward as a hypothesis (OAD, 2010, t183.e1256682).

Implicit (*adjective*). 1. a. Entangled, entwined, folded or twisted together; involved. Obs. b. Involved in each other; overlapping. Obs. 2. a. Implied though not plainly expressed; naturally or necessarily involved in, or capable of being inferred from, something else. Implicit function (e92481). Implicit definition = contextual definition. a. Of or belonging to the context; depending only on the context (OED Online, September 2013, e40213).

Jargon. Special words or expressions that are used by a particular profession or group and are difficult for others to understand [e.g. 'legal jargon']. ORIGIN late Middle English (originally in the sense 'twittering, chattering,' later 'gibberish') (OAD, 2010, t183.e1259629); Refers to the special, usually technical idiom of any social, occupational, or professional group. It arises from the urge to save time and space - and occasionally to conceal meaning from the uninitiated (Garner, 2000, t26.e1322).

Keyword. A word which acts as the key to a cipher or code ... word or concept of great significance ... a word used in an information retrieval system to indicate the content of a document ... significant word mentioned in an index (ODE, 2010, t140.e0441460).

Learning. Learning -- rather than teaching -- is the central purpose of education. It is usually defined as a change in someone's behaviour, knowledge, level of skill, or understanding which is long-lasting or permanent and is acquired through experiences rather than through the process of growth or ageing. In this sense it is difficult to draw a clear distinction between what is learned through education or training and what is acquired through conditioning or exposure to propaganda. Some educationalists, therefore, would prefer to link definitions of learning to the concept of self-actualization or personal development, situating the process in a humanist context rather than a purely behaviourist one [A Dictionary of Education] (Wallace, 2009, t267.e539).

Lexicon. The vocabulary of a person, language, or branch of knowledge ... a dictionary, especially of [English] Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, or Arabic (ODE, 2010, t140.e0468050).

Medium. The material or the technical process employed in an art or a communication. In literature, the medium is language ... further distinctions are made between the media of speech and print, theatre and cinema, and prose and poetry (Baldick, 2008, t56.e700).

Metaphor. Figure of speech, in which one thing, idea, or action is referred to by a word or expression normally denoting another thing, idea, or action, so as to suggest some common quality shared by the two. In metaphor, this resemblance is assumed as an imaginary identity rather than directly stated as a comparison ... referring to a man as that pig, or saying he is a pig is metaphorical ... whereas he is *like* a pig is a simile (Baldick, 2008, t56.e712).

Mimetic. (*mimesis*) The Greek word for imitation, a central term in aesthetic and literary theory since Aristotle. A literary work that is understood to be reproducing an external reality or any aspect of it is described as (being) mimetic (Baldick, 2008, t56.e724).

Narration. The process of relating a sequence of events; or another term for a narrative . In the first sense, narration is often distinguished from other kinds of writing (dialogue, description, commentary) which may be included in a narrative; it is also distinguished from the events recounted, i.e. from the story, and from the narrative itself (Baldick, 2008, t56.e759).

Narrate. Give a continuous story or account of. Provide a spoken commentary or accompaniment for (a film, etc.) (OAD, 1999, t21.e20353).

Narrative. A spoken or written account of connected events in order of happening. The practice or art of narration (OAD, 1999, t21.e20354); A spoken or written account of connected events; a story: a gripping narrative. The narrated part of a literary work, as distinct from dialogue. The practice or art of telling stories: traditions of oral narrative (ODE, 2010, t140.e0548370).

Narrative. A telling of some true or fictitious event or connected sequence of events, recounted by a narrator to a narratee ... narratives are to be distinguished from descriptions of qualities, states, or situations, and also from dramatic enactments of events ... a narrative will consist of a set of events (the story) recounted in a process of narration (or discourse), in which the events are selected and arranged in a particular order (the plot) (Baldick, 2008, t56.e760).

Neologism. Invented words ... usually demand an explanation or justification ... some become vogue words; others are slow to achieve acceptance ... others, denoting scientific innovations, might never become widely known (Garner, 2000, t26.e1535); A new word or sense of a word and the coining or use of new words and senses. E.g. ---

(1) **COMPOUNDING:** couch potato -- someone constantly slumped on a couch watching television;

(2) **DERIVATION:** yuppie ... formed from yup, the initial letters of the phrase 'young urban professional' by adding the suffix -ie; yuppiedom, the condition of being a yuppie, formed from yuppie by adding the further suffix -dom;

(3) **SHIFTING MEANING:** spin ... journalist's term for a special bias or slant given to a piece of writing ...;

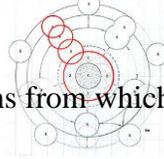
(5) **ABBREVIATION** ... the computer acronym GIGO, meaning garbage in, garbage out (McArthur, 1998, t29.e831).

Normative. Couched in terms expressive of requirements or standards / normative epistemology (prescribes) / descriptive epistemology (describes) (Blackburn, 2008, t98.e2201).

Paragraph. A piece of writing or print of variable length and having a variety of internal structures [e.g. clauses, phrases] arranged as a single block of text. It can contain one sentence, but generally consists of two or more sentences presenting an argument or description. The beginning of a paragraph is usually indented in print ... construction is ... a matter of layout ... content and logical relationship between ... paragraphs (McArthur, 1998, t29.e901).

Phrase. Any syntactic unit that is not a clause but has a function as a whole within a larger construction. E.g. in 'They like the people in the village', the subject is a one-word phrase they; the object is a phrase the people in the village, which includes the smaller phrases in the village and the village (Matthews, 2007, t36.e2550).

Plagiarism. The theft of ideas ... or of written passages or works, where these are passed off as one's own work without acknowledgement of their true origin ... distinguished by its dishonest intention ... person practicing this form of literary theft is a plagiarist (Baldick, 2008, t56.e880).



Premise. A premise of an argument is one of the propositions from which together the conclusion is derived (Blackburn, 2008, t98.e2486).

Punctuation. Cuing system by which writers signal ... readers to slow down, pause, speed up, supply tonal inflections, and otherwise move more smoothly through sentences. Punctuation is like rhetoric: it is a way of giving emphasis and achieving clarity ... punctuation problems are often a prime indicator of poor writing ... punctuating well is essential to writing solid sentences (Garner, 2000, t26.e1785).

Qualitative. Relating to, measuring / by the quality of something rather than its quantity / the quality of something in size, appearance, value (ODE, 2010, t140.e0678330).

Quantitative. Relating to measuring / by the quantity of something rather than its quality: quantitative analysis. Often contrasted with qualitative (ODE, 2010, t140.e0678570).

Question (noun). I. That which is enquired about, discussed, or debated. 1. a. A point or topic to be investigated or discussed; a problem, or a matter forming the basis of a problem. b. (With of). A matter or concern depending on or involving a specified

condition or thing. Now freq. in it is a question of. c. A subject or proposal to be debated, decided, or voted on in a meeting or deliberative assembly, esp. in Parliament; the putting of this proposal to the vote (OED Online, September 2013, e156343).

Question (*verb*). 1. intr. With with. To ask questions of; to hold a conversation with; (also) to discuss or debate with. 2. a. trans. To ask a question or questions of (a person), esp. in an official context; to interrogate. Also in extended use. b. intr. To ask a question or questions of a person. †c. trans. To examine (a person) judicially; to call to account, challenge; (also) to accuse of. Obs (OED Online, September 2013, e156343).

Research (*noun*). 1. The act of searching carefully for or pursuing a specified thing or person; an instance of this. Freq. with after, for, of. Obs. 2. a. Systematic investigation or inquiry aimed at contributing to knowledge of a theory, topic, etc., by careful consideration, observation, or study of a subject. In later use also: original critical or scientific investigation carried out under the auspices of an academic or other institution. Occas. with of; now freq. with into, on. b. Investigation undertaken in order to obtain material for a book, article, thesis, etc.; an instance of this (OED Online, September 2013, e163432).

Rhetoric (*noun*). 1. a. The art of using language effectively so as to persuade or influence others, *especially*, the exploitation of figures of speech and other compositional techniques to this end; the study of principles and rules to be followed by a speaker or writer striving for eloquence... (OED Online, September 2013, e165178).

Rhetoric [as defined by Aristotle in the *Rhetoric* (c.350 BCE)]: 'The faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion. This is not a function of any other art. Every other art can instruct or persuade about its own particular subject-matter ... but rhetoric we look upon as the power of observing the means of persuasion on almost any subject ... that is why we say that, in its technical character, it is not concerned with any special or definite class of subjects' [also read as: 'disciplines'] (I, 2).

Sentence. The largest unit of language structure treated in traditional grammar; usually having a subject and predicate, and (when written) beginning with a capital letter and ending with a full stop (Chalker & Weiner, 1998, t28.e1346).

Simile. A figure of speech, in which a more or less fanciful or unrealistic comparison is made, using *like* or *as*. Some dogs are *like* wolves is a realistic comparison and not a simile, but 'The Assyrian came down *like* the wolf on the fold' (Byron) is a simile because neither savagery nor the Assyrian is physically like a wolf. Everyday usage is rich in similes, many of them idiomatic: (1) '*like*': spread *like* wildfire, sell *like* hot cakes, *like* a fish out of water (said of a person uneasy in an unfamiliar situation). (2) '*as*' ... as: *as* thick as thieves (of people cooperating closely), *as* strong as an ox (of someone very strong) (McArthur, 1998, t29.e1114).

Slang. Language consisting of words and phrases ... regarded as very informal, are more common in speech than writing, and are typically restricted to a particular context or group of people (ODE, 2005, t140.e72485).

Standard English. In everyday usage, *standard English* is taken to be the variety most widely accepted and understood within an English-speaking country or throughout the English-speaking world ... use of 'standard English' relates to social class and level of education, often considered (explicitly or implicitly) to match the average level of attainment of students who have finished secondary-level schooling (McArthur, 1998, t29.e1153).

Style. Any specific way of using language, which is characteristic of an author, school, period, or genre. Particular styles may be defined by their diction, syntax, imagery, rhythm, and use of figures, or by any other linguistic feature (Baldick, 2008, t56.e1095).

Symbiosis (*noun*). 1. Living together, social life. 2. a. Biol. Association of two different organisms (usually two plants, or an animal and a plant) which live attached to each other, or one as a tenant of the other, and contribute to each other's support. Also more widely, any intimate association of two or more different organisms, whether mutually beneficial or not. [Also called commensalism or consortism; distinguished from parasitism, in which one organism preys upon the other. Rarely in extended use, including parasitism; or including mutually beneficial association without bodily attachment]. **Symbiotic** (*adjective*). Associated or living in symbiosis; relating to or involving symbiosis (OED Online, 2013, e196194).

Syntax. The way in which words and clauses are ordered and connected so as to form sentences ... set of grammatical rules governing such word-order ... syntax is a major determinant of literary style ... poets often distort this syntax through inversion ... prose writers exploit elaborate syntactic structures such as the periodic sentence (Baldick, 2008, t56.e1121).

Text. A written text in the usual sense. Extended by some linguists to cover a coherent stretch of speech ... including a conversation or other interchange involving two or more participants ... as well as stretches of writing ... often equivalent to 'discourse' (Matthews, 2007, t36.e3400).

Theme. A salient abstract idea that emerges from a literary work's treatment of its subject-matter; or a topic recurring in a number of literary works (Baldick, 2008, t56.e1141).

Thesis. A statement or theory that is put forward as a premise to be maintained or proved ... (compare with antithesis, synthesis). A long essay or dissertation involving personal research, written by a candidate for a college degree (OAD, 2010, t183.e1298306).

Thesis Statement. Statement or theory that is put forward as a premise to be maintained or proved ... long essay ... involving personal research (ODE, 2005, t140.e79655).

Editorial Commentary. Arguably, most attempts by students in entry-level writing courses to formulate a thesis statement take one of the following forms:

[1] '**question**' [A sentence worded or expressed so as to elicit information ... the raising of a doubt about or objection to something (ODE, 2010, t140.e0680290)];

[2] '**supposition**' [Belief held without proof or certain knowledge (ODE, 2010, t140.e0831790)];

[3] '**perception**' [Ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses ... the way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted (ODE, 2010, t140.e0618760)];

[4] '**hypothesis**' [Proposition put forward as a supposition, rather than asserted A hypothesis may be put forward for testing or for discussion (Blackburn, 2008, t98.e1547)].

Note: Both by definition and syntactically, a question, supposition, perception or hypothesis cannot readily be employed by a writer to formulate a declaration or declarative sentence [The nature of, or making, a declaration ... a declaratory statement or act ... (grammar) a declarative sentence (Abate, 1999, t21.e8017)] for use as a bona fide thesis statement. A thesis statement must also be 'in sync' with the prescribed essay length. Essay length? Yes. The prescribed length of an essay implicitly dictates the scope and establishes topical and word count limits for the argument posed in the thesis statement: e.g. a 'short essay' commands a narrowly focused thesis statement; a 'long essay' permits, even demands, a broader and deeper topical focus for the thesis statement and corresponding discourse. Speaking colloquially, to formulate a bona fide thesis statement a writer must construct an 'in-your-face', 'take-it-or-leave-it' declarative statement; a statement which clearly, concisely, coherently and confidently throws down the gauntlet* with a declarative opinion or point-of-view, which when expressed provokes a responsive demand: e.g. "Oh yeah? Prove it!" A thesis statement must also explicitly set forth the scope of what the writer intends to research, analyze, discuss and prove (within the required word count limits of the writing assignment).

* **Gauntlet.** If someone throws down or takes up the gauntlet, they issue or accept a challenge (Cresswell, 2009, t292.e2231).

Thesis Statement Litmus Test. Ask and answer: Does the proposed thesis or thesis statement contain explicit, narrowly focused argumentative elements [e.g. specific identifiable points-of-contention], to

spark, fuel and drive an authoritative and persuasive thesis argument? If the response is no, or in any way equivocal, the next question must be: What is driving the argumentative discourse? If this cannot be clearly identified, the writer may in reality have constructed and written an analytical expository essay. This is all-too-often the case; especially in entry-level writing and 'English composition' courses.

Theory. A description of nature that encompasses more than one law but has not achieved the incontrovertible status of a law is sometimes called a theory [e.g. Einstein's theory of relativity and Darwin's theory of evolution] (Daintith, 2009, t83.e1680).

Vocabulary. The body of words used in a particular language ... a range of artistic or stylistic forms, techniques, or movements: dance companies have their own vocabularies of movement (ODE, 2005, t140.e86568).

Voice. A vague metaphorical term ... distinctive features of a written work in terms of spoken utterance ... specific group of characteristics displayed by the narrator or poetic 'speaker' ... (or, in some uses, the actual author behind them) ... distinctions between various kinds of narrative voice tend to be distinctions between kinds of narrator in terms of how they address the reader (rather than in terms of ... point of view) (Baldick, 2008, t56.e1216).

Word. Traditionally the smallest of the units that make up a sentence, and marked as such in writing. In practice, words are established by various criteria. They are generally the smallest units that can form an utterance on their own (Matthews, 2007, t36.e3678).

Wordsmith. A skilled user or maker of words (OED, OED Online, September 2013, e271792).

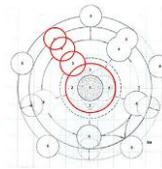
Write (verb). Mark (letters, words, or other symbols) on a surface, typically paper, with a pen, pencil, or similar implement ... compose (a text or work) for written or printed reproduction or publication (ODE, 2005, t140.e89339).

Writer (noun). A person who has written something or who writes in a particular way ... a person who writes ... as a job or occupation (ODE, 2005, t140.e89346).

Writing. Encompasses four pairs of linked senses: (1) an activity (reading and writing) or the product of that activity; (2) a concrete process or concept behind that process; (3) handwriting alone or handwriting and print; (4) a general skill regarded as a social necessity or a minority art form, occupation, hobby, and/or obsession (McArthur, 1998, t29.e1316).

Writing Per Se. Writing by or in itself, intrinsic, self-evident, natural, free of artifactual (man made) constructs [e.g. style, genre, oeuvre, or composition theory] (Beman, 2009, 312-59).

'Enlightenment is achieved only when, in addition to knowing what an author says, you know what *s/he* means and why *s/he* says it'.



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