

DICTION

Use adjectives to describe diction. Do not just say authors use diction because every writer uses words.

Words to describe diction:

1. Words can be *monosyllabic* (one syllable in length) or *polysyllabic* (more than one syllable in length). The higher the ratio of polysyllabic words, the more difficult the content.
2. Words can be *colloquial* (slang), *informal* (conversational), *formal* (literary) or *old-fashioned*.
3. Words can be mainly *general* or *specific*
4. Words can be mainly *denotative* (containing an exact meaning, e.g., dress) or *connotative* (containing suggested meaning, e.g., gown)
5. Words can be *concrete* (specific) or *abstract* (general or conceptual).
6. Words can be *euphonious* (pleasant sounding, e.g., languid, murmur) or *cacophonous* (harsh sound, e.g., raucous, croak).
7. Words can be *contrasting*. We often call this *juxtaposition* of imagery, descriptions, etc.

Other words to describe diction:

Archaic	old, ancient, primitive	Literal	apparent, word for word
Artificial	false, insincere, contrived	Modern	new, contemporary
Bombastic	pompous, ostentatious	Moralistic	puritanical, righteous
Colloquial	vernacular (slang)	Nostalgic	sentimental, wistful
Concrete	actual, specific, particular	Obscure	unclear, confusing, vague
Connotative	alludes to; suggestive	Obtuse	dull-witted, undiscerning
Cultured	cultivated, refined, enlightened	Ordinary	plain, obvious, clear, common
Detached	cut-off, removed, separated	Pedantic	didactic, scholastic, bookish
Emotional	sentimental, loaded	Picturesque	graphic, vivid, strong imagery
Esoteric	secretive, mysterious, abstruse	Poetic	lyrical, melodious, songlike
Euphemistic	insincere, affected	Precise	exact, accurate, decisive
Exact	verbatim, precise	Pretentious	pompous, gaudy, inflated
Extravagant	ornate, showy, elaborate	Provincial	rural, rustic, unpolished, local
Fanciful	whimsical, unrealistic, visionary	Romantic	idealistic, fanciful, imaginative
Figurative	metaphorical, illustrative	Scholarly	intellectual, academic
Formal	academic, conventional	Sensuous	passionate, romantic
Grotesque	hideous, deformed	Shocking	startling, appalling, disgusting
Homespun	folksy, homey, native, rustic	Simple	clear, intelligible
Idiomatic	Peculiar, vernacular	Sincere	frank, candid, honest
Informal	casual, relaxed, unofficial	Slang	lingo, colloquialism
Inflammatory	passionate, provocative	Symbolic	representative, metaphorical
Inspid	uninteresting, tame, dull	Tame	subdued, softened, meek
Jargon	vocabulary for a profession	Trite	common, banal, stereotyped
Learned	educated, experienced, erudite	Vulgar	coarse, indecent, tasteless