

Romeo and Juliet Vocabulary and Literary Terms

I. Vocabulary

adversary opponent; enemy

ambiguity statement or event in which meaning is unclear

banishment exile

boisterous stormy; violent; rowdy

dexterity skill; cleverness

idolatry extreme devotion to a person or thing

lament to grieve for

nuptial wedding

peruse look over

reconcile to become friendly again

shroud a burial cloth

II. Literary Terms:

allusion a reference in one work of literature to a person, place, or event in another work of literature or in history, art, or music

analogy an extended comparison showing the similarities between two things

antagonist the character or force that works against the protagonist; introduces the conflict

aside words spoken by a character in a play, usually in an undertone and not intended

blank verse unrhymed iambic pentameter

characterization the personality a character displays; also, the means by which the author reveals that personality

climax the point of greatest emotional intensity, interest, or suspense in a narrative

conflict a struggle (between two opposing forces or characters)

couplet two consecutive lines of poetry that rhyme

diction a writer's choice of words for clarity, effectiveness, and precision

dramatic irony a contrast between what the audience perceives and what a character does not know

dramatic structure the structure of a play

epithet a descriptive adjective or phrase used to characterize someone or something. (Peter the Great).

figurative language language that is not intended to be interpreted in a literal sense

foil a character who sets off another character by contrast

foreshadowing the use of hints or clues in a narrative to suggest what action is to come

iambic meter unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable

iambic pentameter five verse feet with each foot an iamb (a total of ten syllables)

imagery language that appeals to any sense (sight, hearing, taste, touch, or smell) or any combination of the senses

irony literary technique that portrays differences between appearance and reality (dramatic irony; situational irony; verbal irony)

metaphor comparison between two unlike things with the intent of giving added meaning to one of them

motivation a reason that explains or partially explains why a character thinks, feels, acts, or behaves in a certain way (Motivation results from a combination of the characters personality and the situation to be dealt with.)

protagonist the main character in a play or story

pun the humorous use of a word or phrase to suggest two or more meanings at the same time

repetition the return of a word, phrase, stanza form, or effect in any form of literature (forms: alliteration; rhyme; refrain)

monologue a long, uninterrupted speech presented in front of other characters

oxymoron a figure of speech that combines apparently contradictory terms

personification a figure of speech in which an animal, object, natural force, or idea is given a personality and described as human

simile a comparison made between two dissimilar things through the use of a specific word of comparison such as *like* and *as*

situational irony a contrast between what is expected and what really happens

soliloquy a speech in which a character is *alone* on stage and expresses thoughts out loud

sonnet a fourteen-line lyric poem, usually written in iambic pentameter, that has one of several rhyme schemes. A sonnet form used by William Shakespeare is called the Shakespearean sonnet. It has three four-line units (quatrains) followed by a concluding two-line unit (couplet). The most common rhyme scheme for the Shakespearean sonnet is *abab cdcd efef gg*.

symbol any object, person, place, or action that has a meaning in itself and that also stands for something larger than itself—such as a quality, attitude, belief, or value.

suspense that quality of a literary work that makes the reader or audience uncertain or tense about the outcome of events

theme the central idea of a work of literature

verbal irony a contrast between what is said and what is meant