

Romeo and Juliet

Literary Terms

Allusion- A brief reference to something outside of the text, such as a person, event, or place (real or fictitious) or work of art.

Aside- Words spoken by a character in an undertone, not intended to be heard by other characters on stage. This lets the audience know what a character is *really* thinking or feeling.

Blank Verse- Unrhymed Iambic Pentameter. Basically, the lines are unrhymed and 10 syllables long. They have alternating stresses:

U / U / U / U / U / 10 syllables, 5 "feet"
But **soft**. What **light** through **yonder window breaks**?

Couplet- When Shakespeare rhymes, it's usually in couplets, two consecutive lines of poetry that rhyme.

Example from Juliet: *Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow
That I shall say good night till it be morrow.*

Dramatic Irony- The tension, humor, or suspense created by a situation in which the audience knows something the character or characters do not know.

End-stopped Line- Punctuation is at the end of it. Example from Juliet's speech, Act II, Scene 2:

*O, Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny my father and refuse thy name;
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.*

Foil- A character that is set up as a contrast to another so that each will stand out vividly.

Hyperbole- A figure of speech which is an exaggeration. Persons often use expressions such as "I nearly died laughing," "I was hopping mad," and "I tried a thousand times." Such statements are not literally true, but people make them to sound impressive or to emphasize something.

Malapropism- an inappropriateness of speech resulting from the use of one word for another which resembles it.

- He had to use a fire distinguisher.
- Michelangelo painted the Sixteenth Chapel.
- "Don't" is a contraption.
- *Sweet land of liberty, of thee icing.*

Metaphor- a comparison that does not use like or as.

Monologue- long, uninterrupted speech that is spoken in the presence of other characters.
Example) Mercutio's famous speech on Queen Mab in Act I, Scene IV.

Oxymoron- Of Greek Origin: Oxus (sharp, clever); Moron (dull, foolish). Two opposites combined. Examples: "Loving Hate," "Sweet Sorrow," "Jumbo Shrimp"

Personification- Applying human elements or qualities to non-human things.

Poetry Vs. Prose- PROSE is spoken for the most part by common people and occasionally by Mercutio when he is joking. Most of the other characters speak in POETRY, which is largely written in unrhymed iambic pentameter (i.e., blank verse).

Puns- Play on the multiple meanings of a word or on two words that sound alike but have different meanings. Used for humorous effects.

Repetition- Key words repeated in the course of a speech or conversation for the sake of emphasis.

Run-on Line- No punctuation at the end. Example from Romeo's speech, Act II, Scene 2.

*The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars
As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven
Would through the airy region stream so bright
That birds would sing and think it were not night.*

Simile- A comparison that uses *like* or *as*.

Sonnet: 14-line poem that is usually written in iambic pentameter and that has one of several rhyme schemes. There are two kinds of Sonnets:

- **Italian sonnet (also known as the Petrarchan sonnet)**
 - The first eight lines (octet) pose a question or problem about some subject (for example, love).
 - The concluding six lines (sestet) are a response to the octet.
 - Rhyme Scheme: abba abba cde cde
- **Shakespearean Sonnet**
 - It has 3 four-line units (quatrains) followed by a concluding two-line unit (couplet).
 - Rhyme Scheme: abab cdcd ef ef gg

Soliloquy- a monologue spoken to the audience, often while the character is **alone** on stage. (How is this different from a monologue?)

Examples: Friar Lawrence in Act II and Juliet in Act IV, Scene 3

Splitting Lines- lines split between two characters, typically each character speaks five beats. The splitting of lines usually indicates a close relationship between characters.

Example: Juliet: Take **all** myself.
Romeo: I **take** thee **at** thy **word**.