

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 ✓ Example: the band Veruca Salt is an allusion to the character Veruca Salt in the film <i>Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory</i> .
analogy	an extended comparison showing the similarities between two things ✓ Example: Juliet's comparison of a rose and Romeo in her soliloquy
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 ✓ Example: My only love, sprung from my only hate! Too early seen unknown, and known too late!
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 <u>not</u> know
dramatic structure	the structure of a play
epithet	a descriptive adjective or phrase used to characterize someone or something. (Peter <i>the Great</i>). ✓ Example: Romeo! Humors! <i>Madman!</i> <i>Passion!</i> <i>Lover!</i> (II.i.7)
figurative language	language that is <u>not</u> 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 ✓ Example: ă gain
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 ✓ Romeo: The game was ne'er so fair, and I am done . Mercutio: Tut! Dun 's the mouse, the constable's own word! If thou art Dun , we'll draw thee from the mire. (I.iv.39-41)
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 ✓ "sweet sorrow"; "loving hate"

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 <i>like</i> and <i>as</i>
situational irony	a contrast between what is expected and what really happens
soliloquy	a speech in which a character is <i>alone</i> 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 <i>abab cdcd efef gg</i> .
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