

Vocabulary

absolutes	ideas that cannot be doubted or called into question
aesthetic	a term used to refer to ideas about what constitutes beauty
allusion	a figure of speech that refers explicitly or implicitly to a person, place, thing, object, or concept
aside	brief statement of a character's inner thoughts in a drama in words that are heard by the audience but not by other characters onstage
carpe diem	"seize the day" in Latin
catharsis	in poetry, a turn or transition from one position, state, stage, subject, concept, etc., to another
character analysis	a type of literary analysis that focuses on the development of a character over the course of a literary work
classical	an adjective used to describe art, literature, philosophy, and scientific styles that developed in Ancient Greece or Rome
climax	the moment in a plot when the tension is highest
comic relief	a humorous scene set within a tragedy to briefly lighten the mood
conflict	the struggle, interior or exterior, that the protagonist of a literary work confronts
connotation	an idea or feeling that a word suggests
couplet	a pair of successive lines of verse, especially a pair that rhyme and are of the same length
double entendre	a word or expression used in a given context so that it can be understood in two ways, especially when one meaning is risqué
dramatic irony	a contrast between what a character thinks and what the reader or audience knows to be true
exposition	the part of the plot that reveals the background behind the main plot, or what occurred preceding the current action
external conflict	a struggle by the protagonist against a person or persons or forces outside him or her
feminist perspective	a point of view that analyzes individual behavior and social structures in light of differences in male and female attitudes and opportunities
foil	a character with a situation similar to that of the lead character who serves as a thematic contrast
foreshadowing	an incident or description that suggests events to come later in a literary work
Holy Sonnets	a specific group of nineteen sonnets Donne wrote about faith and spiritual matters
humanists	those who place focus on life in the "here" and "now," rather than the afterlife
iambic pentameter	the rhythm of a Petrarchan sonnet—lines consist of ten syllables each, with the accent on the even-numbered syllables
internal conflict	a struggle within the protagonist, as when he or she tries to overcome a character flaw or a destructive tendency
interpretation	determination of meaning in a text
juxtaposition	placing characters, scenes, actions, or descriptions in close proximity to show similarities and differences
lens essay	a type of literary analysis that requires you to analyze a literary work in light of a particular point of view
liberal	generous
metaphor	a figure of speech a comparison of two unlike things that does not use like or as
metaphysical	poetry focused on real life and real life situations, that feature far-fetched metaphors called conceits
metaphysical conceit	an over-the-top, almost tenuous metaphor or comparison
meter	the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry
motivation	the reason a character has for acting in a particular way
octave	the first eight lines of the Petrarchan sonnet, in which the topic is introduced and the problem is established
Onomatopoeia	is defined as a word that sounds like the common sound of the object it is describing. Examples are bang, boom, hiss...
pace	the tempo of incidents in the plot of a literary work
paradigm	pattern or way of thinking
paradox	a literary device that presents two events or ideas that seem impossible to exist together, and then shows that it makes sense in some way
paradox poem	a type of poem that juxtaposes two things or ideas that appear contradictory but within the context of the poem may in fact both hold true
pastoral	a work that idealizes the simple shepherd's life in the country, stemming from the Latin word

pastoral poem	pastor, meaning shepherd. a type of poem that depicts and/or focuses on shepherds and rural life; common themes of pastoral poetry are love, death, country life, and criticism of politics
patronage	in poetry, a turn or transition from one position, state, stage, subject, concept, etc., to another
personification	objects and things given human qualities
problem play	a label given to a few of Shakespeare's plays because they lack the basic characteristics of comedy or tragedy, have a somber mood, and have morally ambiguous characters
protagonist	a lead character in a fictional text
quatrain	a type of stanza, or a complete poem, consisting of four lines
resolution	the section of the plot following the climax, when the conflicts are resolved and loose ends are tied
revenge tragedy	a popular form of Elizabethan drama that centered on the central character's desire to exact revenge for a crime committed against him or his family and ended in many deaths
rhyme scheme	the pattern of rhyme between lines of a poem
rhythm	the sound pattern created in a literary work
sarcasm	irony used in a mocking or mean way
secular humanism	in poetry, a turn or transition from one position, state, stage, subject, concept, etc., to another
secularism	a movement that places focus upon mortal men, rather than God
sestet	the final six lines of the Petrarchan sonnet, in which the problem is reflected upon and resolved
Shakespearean tragedy	a play depicting the fall and death of a prominent character
simile	a figure of speech; a comparison of two unlike things that uses like or as
skeptic	someone who questions what others say is true
soliloquy	long speech revealing a character's inner thoughts in a drama in words that are heard by the audience but not by other characters onstage
sonnet	a poem of fourteen lines, usually in iambic pentameter, with rhymes arranged according to one of certain definite schemes, being in the strict or Italian form divided into a major group of 8 lines followed by a minor group of six lines, and in a common English form into three quatrains followed by a couplet
source	a story from history, folk literature, or other author from which an author draws plots or characters when creating a new work
stanza	a division of a poem consisting of a series of lines arranged together in a usually recurring pattern of meter and rhyme; a verse
symbolism	the use of objects or actions to represent abstract ideas
theme	the subject or subjects that a literary work explores
tone	an author's attitude toward his or her subject; an author's tone can, for example, be serious, playful, mysterious, or nonchalant.
tone	the feeling of the text, e.g., serious, humorous, satiric, etc.
tragic flaw	a fundamental problem in a character that results in the character undergoing suffering
tragic hero	a person of high social position who suffers a reversal of fortune in part because of a tragic flaw and dies but gains insight or a deeper humanity as a result of suffering
transience	lasting for a very short amount of time
twists	unexpected turns in a story
verbal irony	when someone says one thing but means the opposite
vernacular	the native language spoken by the common people of a country or region
volta	the turning point at the beginning of the sestet, where the poet transitions from the problem to reflection and resolution