

**Act I Literary Terms**

1

- **Oxymoron:** words with opposite meanings written side by side
- example - "heavy lightness, serious vanity, loving hate" p.670 lines 1-2

2

- **Character Foil:** characters who are opposites in some way, usually in attitude or personality
- example - Tybalt is the troublemaker; Benvolio is the peacemaker.

3

- **Couplet:** two lines that rhyme and express a complete thought
- example - "My only love sprung from my only hate!  
Too early seen unknown,  
and known too late."

4

- p.686 lines 136-137
- These lines emphasize the idea that Juliet's love is doomed because she has fallen in love with her family's sworn enemy.

5

- **Apostrophe:** figure of speech in which an object or person is spoken to
- example - "Back, foolish tears, back to your native spring"
- Juliet is "talking" to her tears.

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- **Hyperbole:** exaggeration for effect
- example - I'm starving to death. (You are really hungry.)

7

- "Alack, there lies more peril [danger] in thine eye/Than twenty of their swords..." P.694 l. 71-72
- (Romeo says there is more danger in Juliet rejecting him than in 20 of her relatives chasing him with a sword. )

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- **Personification:** give human qualities to something not human
- example - "The gray-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night."
- The morning has gray eyes and can smile. The night can frown, just like humans.

9

- **Simile:** comparison of 2 things using "like" or "as"
- example - "Love goes toward love as schoolboys from their books." p.697 lines 156-157

10

- **Aside:** Statement made by character that is intended for only the audience to hear (not the other characters)
- example - p. 734 l.81 "Villain and he be many miles asunder." Juliet's mother cannot know her true feelings for Romeo.

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- **Soliloquy:** long speech telling the thoughts of a character
- example - p. 585 lines 76-100 Prince's speech
- p. 598-599 Mercutio's speech

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• **Symbolism:** a thing that represents itself and something else

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• **example - p. 759 l. 37-57**  
Apothecary is a symbol of death. In the late Middle Ages, a series of paintings and drawings were created portraying the dance of death. The figure of death was shown as emaciated and improvised, much like the Apothecary.

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• **Suspense:** wondering what will happen next; feeling of expectation, anxiousness, or curiosity created by questions in the reader's mind

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• **example - p. 761** A feeling of anxiousness is created when we see Romeo plan his death, knowing that Romeo hasn't received Friar Lawrence's letter yet.

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• **Theme:** main idea of story  
• **example - Feuding leads to disaster.**

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• **Cliché:** old saying; an expression that has been used so often that it is colorless and uninteresting  
• **example - Juliet's eyes twinkled like stars.**  
• **She was as busy as a bee.**

18

- **Epitaph:** an inscription written to be used on a tombstone or in honor of someone who had died

19

- **example -**
- **Epitaph for Lady Montague -** Here lies a woman who grieved for her son. She died from her grievance because he was her only one.

20

- **Irony of Situation:** the opposite of what you expect to happen occurs
- **example -** The reader might expect Romeo and Juliet to live happily instead of committing suicide.

21

- **Euphemism:** a "nice" or inoffensive term that substitutes for one that may sound too blunt or offensive to a certain audience

22

- **example -** "Someone passed away." instead of "Someone died."
- **Sanitation Technician** instead of garbage man

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- **Dramatic Irony:** something is known by the reader but unknown to the characters
- **Example:** Romeo and Juliet are married, but their parents do not know about the

wedding.

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