

Pre-Rhetoric Literature

Unit Two Literary Terminology

Tragedy: a dramatic opposition, often in verse, dealing with a serious or somber theme

Characterization: the ways in which an author enables the reader to get to know his characters

Iambic pentameter: a poetic line made up of five iambic feet, resulting in a total of ten syllables, with all the even-numbered syllables stressed and the odd ones unstressed

Comedy: a play, movie, etc., of light and humorous character with a happy or cheerful ending

Soliloquy: a speech given in drama, when characters speak their thoughts aloud while alone on stage

Archetype: a person, place, thing, pattern, event, image, or idea that is used repeatedly throughout literature because it is naturally understood in the same way by people in all times and places

Sonnet: a poem composed of fourteen lines of iambic pentameter, with a set pattern of rhymes

Foot: a pattern of stressed or unstressed syllables, which can be arranged in different groupings to create different poetic meters

Allusion: referring to historical figures or events, fictional characters, places, or other things that the author assumes the reader will know and understand

History: drama representing historic events or the life of a historic person

Comic Relief: the interjection of humorous elements into a work of literature, in order to provide moments of relief from more weighty, serious, or sad elements

Archaic Diction: Language that is rarely used, except to give a feel of older times to the texture of a literary work

Low Diction: Language borrowed for literary use from everyday speech