

## Drama Terms

**Aside:** remark made by the character in a play and intended to be heard by the audience, but not by the other characters on stage.

**Allusion:** passing reference, without explanation, to a literary or historical person, place or event.

**Archaic Language:** words or expressions that have become obsolete in common speech.

**Comic relief:** a humorous episode or scene in a serious story or tragedy. It provides relief from tension in the story and heightens the serious elements of the rest of the drama.

**Couplet:** two lines of verse with similar end rhymes. Shakespeare usually uses the couplet to mark the close of scenes or important action.

**Melodrama:** a play based on a romantic plot and developed sensationally.  
-constant appeals to the emotions of the audience  
-usually a happy ending, but sometimes tragedies are referred to as 'melodramatic'.

**Prologue:** a preface or introduction usually associated with drama.

**Sonnet:** a lyric poem of 14 lines.

**Iambic pentameter:** poetic style used by Shakespeare  
-metrical pattern of one unstressed syllable followed by one stressed  
-unstressed + stressed = iamb (one foot of meter) x 5 = pentameter  
-pentameter means five feet in a line.

ie. "O, that this too, too sullied flesh would melt"

**Voice:** the thoughts of the writer are expressed by the characters

**Wit:** cleverly expressing an idea.

le. Thrift, thrift Horatio. The funeral baked meats

did coldly furnish forth the marriage table. (I.ii.183-184)

mother's wedding quickly followed husband's funeral, thus saving money on food

**Soliloquy:** the speech of a character in a play delivered while the speaker is **alone**

- the purpose is to make the audience aware of the character's thoughts or to give information about other participants in the action.

**Pathetic Fallacy:** the idea that nature reflects our moods

le. If we are sad, it rains.

**Tragedy:**

- o Simply, the protagonist dies
- o Have a **tragic flaw** – excess of a character trait (e.g. Pride)
- o Leads to his/her downfall and the downfall of others because of his/her status
  - o E.g. Hamlet: indecision. Because he can't make a decision everyone around him, as well as himself, dies
- o Character must be recognizable as 'real'