

HUMANITIES 001
LITERATURE TERMS

Epic - A lengthy narrative poem, usually episodic, with heroic action and great cultural, political scope.

Narrative - is a story told to an audience by a teller controlling the order of events and the emphasis those events receive.

and/or

Any form that tells a story or recounts a sequence of events (novel, tale, essay, article, film). In story form, recounting.

Episodic narrative - describes one of the oldest kinds of literature, often used in the epic.

and/or

A story composed of separate incidents (or episodes) tied loosely together.

Episode - In Greek tragedy, a section of action between two choruses. In drama and fiction generally, a group of events having unity in itself. A story is created from a series of related episodes. A fiction is said to be episodic if the episodes fall into no logical relationship.

Epithet - A short phrase used to modify a noun by pointing out a salient characteristic. Epithets (e.g., Homer's "swift-footed Achilles") are often used in epic poetry.

Organic narrative - connects every action and every character in subtle ways so that as the narrative unfolds, the reader is given more and more information about all the events of the story.

Imagery - Use a language to represent objects and events with strong appeal to the senses.

Irony - Saying the opposite of what one means.

Metaphor - An implied comparison between different things.

Simile - An explicit comparison between different things, using comparative words such as "like," and "as."

Setting - In literature, drama, dance, and film, the time and place in which the work of art occurs. The setting is established mainly by means of description in literature.

Comedy - A drama that ends happily, intended to provoke laughter from its audience.

Satire - Literature that ridicules people or institutions.
and/or

A mode of expression that criticizes social institutions or human foibles humorously.

Sonnet - A lyric poem of fourteen lines, following one of several conventions. The two main types of sonnet divides the poem into octave (eight lines) and sestet (six lines) and the English (Shakespearean) which divides the poem into three quatrains of four lines each and a final rhyming couplet.

Symbol - An image that suggests an idea, a spiritual or religious concept, or an emotion beyond itself. It differs from *metaphor* in that the term of comparison is not explicitly stated.

Plot - The sequence of actions or events.

Perception - The awareness of something stimulating our sense organs.

Lyric - A poem, usually brief and personal, with an emphasis on feeling as part of the subject matter.

Denotation - a literal level where words mean what they obviously say.

Connotation - a subtler level at which words mean more than they obviously say.

Allegory - The technique of making concrete things, animals or persons represent abstract ideas or morals. A literary allegory usually takes the form of a narrative which may be read on at least two levels; for example Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

Genre - (john'ruh) A literary type or form. Genres include tragedy,

comedy, epic, lyric, novel, short story, essay.

Parody - A work that exaggerates or burlesques another, serious one. Often a parody pokes fun at an author and his style. The parody may be compared to a visual caricature or cartoon.

Oxymoron (ock-see-moh'on) - A figure of speech that brings together two contradictory terms such as "sweet sorrow."

Realism - A movement which began in the mid-nineteenth century and which holds that art should be a faithful reproduction of reality and that artists should deal with contemporary people and their everyday experience.

Satyr (say'ter) Play - A light, burlesque play given along with tragedies and comedies at the festival of Dionysus in ancient Athens.

Tale - A simple narrative, whose subject matter may be real or imaginary, and whose purpose is primarily to entertain. Tales may also make us of "morals" to instruct.

Tragedy - A serious drama that recounts the events in the life of a great person which bring him or her from fortune to misfortune.

Vernacular - The common daily speech of the people; non-literary