

John Colet School  
English Department  
Key Subject Terminology

Key term	Definition	Example
<b>Adjective</b>	Describes a noun, gives more information about it	Beautiful, stunning, disgraceful, angry
<b>Adverb</b>	Describes a verb, gives more information about it.	Angrily, happily, joyfully.
<b>Allegory</b>	A type of writing in which the settings, characters, or events stand for other, often larger ideas	The novel <i>Animal Farm</i> appears to be about a group of animals, but they represent larger ideas about revolution and politics
<b>Alliteration</b>	The same letter or sound at the beginning of words close to each other.	Brilliant birds Slithering snake Sweet birds sang
<b>Allusion</b>	Making reference to people, places, events, literary works, myths, or works of art	'Don't be such a Scrooge' 'Is there a good Samaritan who can help me?'
<b>Anaphora</b>	Repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive sentences, phrases or clauses	'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times'
<b>Antithesis</b>	A person or thing that is the direct opposite of someone or something else	Love is the antithesis of hate
<b>Assonance</b>	When two or more words close to one another repeat the same vowel sound but start with different consonant sounds.	We light fire on the mountain. I feel depressed and restless.
<b>Caesura</b>	A break or pause in the middle of a line of verse/poetry	'To be or nor to be, that is the question'
<b>Characterisation</b>	How a character is introduced and developed, through what the writer informs us about them	'the noble Harry Potter' 'good Harry Potter'
<b>Cliché</b>	A phrase or opinion that is overused and shows a lack of original thought.	Time heals all wounds Frightened to death
<b>Colloquialism</b>	The use of informal words, phrases or even slang.	Wanna Gonna Go nuts

<b>Connotation</b>	The feelings or associations suggested by words/phrases. These can help to find the hidden meaning.	The word 'discipline' has unhappy connotations of punishment and repression
<b>Dramatic irony</b>	In a Literature text when the audience knows something that the characters don't know	In Romeo and Juliet the audience knows from the start that the main characters will die, but they don't know this
<b>Dramatic monologue</b>	A poetic form that presents the speech or conversation of a person in a dramatic manner	'My Last Duchess' is an example of a dramatic monologue
<b>Enjambement (enjambment)</b>	Where one line in poetry continues to the next line or stanza without any punctuation or pause.	'We were running To find what had happened Beyond the hills'
<b>Figurative language</b>	Using figures of speech (metaphor, simile, hyperbole, personification) to be more effective, persuasive or impactful	Metaphors, similes, hyperbole, personification
<b>Foreboding</b>	When it is implied that something bad or dangerous will happen	Dark clouds could suggest that trouble is on the way
<b>Foreshadowing</b>	Suggesting what is to come later in the piece of writing through imagery, language and/or symbolism	'take care of yourselves - and don't leave the path!'
<b>Hyperbole</b>	Deliberate exaggeration (often used to persuade).	'I've told you a thousand times not to do that'
<b>Imagery</b>	Visually descriptive language ('painting a picture with words')	The night was black as ever, but bright stars lit up the sky
<b>Irony</b>	Using language that normally signifies the opposite of what you actually mean, typically for humorous or emphatic effect.  A state of affairs or an event that seems to be the opposite to what we expect.	"Don't go overboard with gratitude" – to someone who hasn't said thank you.  You laugh at a person who slipped stepping on a banana peel and the next thing you know, you've slipped too.
<b>Juxtaposition</b>	Two contrasting ideas placed close together	It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.
<b>Metaphor</b>	Saying something is something else. A direct comparison which is not meant literally.	He is winter. The house was a pocket of tension.
<b>Narrative voice</b>	How the story is told to the reader, the	'I'm going to share a story with

	point of view from which we hear the events that happen	you...'
<b>Noun</b>	Proper noun - names people or places Common noun - names 'things' (e.g. objects) Abstract noun - names an idea, quality or state rather than a concrete object	Fay, Tim, London, Australia Table, chair, boy, girl Truth, danger, happiness
<b>Onomatopoeia</b>	The formation of a word from an associated sound (a 'sound effect')	Bang Crash Sizzle
<b>Oxymoron</b>	A phrase using contradictory terms (words placed together which mean the opposite to one another).	organised mess controlled chaos adult child loving hate
<b>Pathetic fallacy</b>	The use of weather (or another part of nature) to express emotions of a scene or character.	'When shall we three meet again? In thunder, lightning or in rain'
<b>Personification</b>	Using human characteristics to describe something non-human.	"The clock face stared at me menacingly."
<b>Prefix</b>	Added at the beginning of a word in order to turn it into another word.	Un e.g. unlucky Dis e.g. disorder
<b>Pronoun</b>	Replaces a noun or noun phrase	I, you, we, he, she, me, my, our, your
<b>Repetition</b>	Repeating a sound, word, phrase or stanza for effect.	'Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow' '
<b>Rhetorical question</b>	A question which does not require an answer	'How many times have I told you not to do that?'
<b>Semantic field</b>	When a group of words all link to one overall theme.	Semantic field of nature - flowers, plants, trees, grass, leaves
<b>Simile</b>	The comparison of one thing with another thing of a different kind, using 'like' or 'as.'	As bright as a button As fierce as a lion Like the wild sea
<b>Soliloquy</b>	An extended speech by one character when they are alone and not with any other characters	When Lady Macbeth receives the letter from Macbeth after he has seen the witches

<b>Sonnet</b>	A 14-line poem with a fixed rhyme scheme, often (but not always) about love	'Ozymandias' is written in sonnet form
<b>Suffix</b>	An 'ending', used at the end of one word to turn it into another word.	-ment e.g. embarrassment -ness e.g. sadness
<b>Syllable</b>	Sounds like a beat in a word. Syllables consist of at least one vowel, and possibly one or more consonants.	ha-ppy (2 syllables) pos-i-tive (3 syllables) com-pli-ca-ted (4 syllables)
<b>Symbolism</b>	Where the writer uses a 'thing' (usually a physical object) to represent deeper meanings or themes	Harry Potter's scar is a symbol of his bravery Bears are often seen as symbols of courage
<b>Syntax</b>	The arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences	The boy jumped happily Happily, the boy jumped (here the syntax is varied)
<b>Verb</b>	A 'doing word'/an action	Walks, sashays, bounces

**Additional key terms**

<b>Key term</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Example</b>

