

LITERARY TERMS

1. Verse

Compositions written in metre (fixed arrangement of accented and unaccented syllables) are known as verse.

2. Fiction

Fiction is any narrative which is feigned rather than factual. In most present day discussions, however, the term 'fiction' is applied primarily to the novel and the short story, and is sometimes used simply as a synonym for the novel.

3. Metaphor

A Metaphor is a phrase which describes one thing by stating another thing with which it can be compared without using the words 'as' or 'like'. Some examples of metaphors;

"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players."

—*William Shakespeare*

"Fill your paper with the breathings of your heart." —*William Wordsworth*

'Miles to go' is a metaphor for continuing journey of life, and 'sleep' is a metaphor of death.

Calling a person a "night owl" or an "early bird" or saying "life is a journey" are common conventional metaphors.

4. Simile

Simile (pronounced sim-uh-lee) is a popular literary term that uses "like" or "as" to compare two things. A simile is different from a simple comparison in that it usually compares two different things. As "She looks like you" is a comparison but not a Simile. On the other hand, "She smiles like the sun" is a Simile, as it compares a woman with the sun. Similes describe subjects in unique and thought-provoking ways by finding similarities in typically different things.

For example, consider the description of a thin woman:

1. *She's as thin as a rail!*
2. *My love for you is as deep as the sea.*

5. Alliteration

The word alliteration comes from the Latin word *latira*, meaning "letters of the alphabet." Alliteration is the repetition of a certain sound at the beginning of successive words or phrases. It is used to create rhythm through repetition and to evoke emotion through connotations attached to certain sounds.

Here are a few examples of alliteration: the alliteration that repeats the 's' and 'l' sounds:

1. Sally sells seashells by the seashore.
2. Peter Piper Picked a Peck of Pickled Peppers.
3. Bret brought bundles of bread to the bakery.

6. Onomatopoeia

Sometimes the sound of words gives great support to the sense. The phrase "cool moonlight" with its long vowels and two l-sounds certainly sounds very restful. "This tendency in words to echo meaning by the actual sound is called onomatopoeia." (Marjorie Boulton) It is found in an almost pure form in many of the words describing sounds, such as *buzz, fizz, crash, bang, thump, miaow, quack, giggle, sizzle, hiss, sneeze, thud and snort*. In other words, it refers to sound, sense device. It is used to create artistic effect.

7. Drama

Drama is a form of literature intended to be performed before an audience in a theatre or on radio and television. It has a plot, characters, dialogues, an atmosphere and an outlook on life. Its full qualities are only revealed in presentation on the stage.

8. Lyric

The term lyric was originally derived from the Greek word 'lyrikos' meaning a poem to be sung to the lyre. It now includes any poem that is short, simple, and subjective, and expresses a single thought.

9. Essay

The term *essay* refers to a discussion in prose of a certain topic. An essay may be classified as formal or informal, depending on its subject and style. The formal essay is characterized by qualities of dignity, serious purpose and logical organization.

In the informal essays the author assumes a tone of intimacy, such as Bacon's periodical essays, and the essays of Addison and Lamb. Among the qualities that mark an essay as informal are: humour, graceful style, a personal element, unconventionality or novelty of theme, and freedom from stiffness and affectation.