

scansion--the analysis of a piece of verse for rhythm and meaning

syllable--the smallest unit of rhythm in a line of verse (usually contains a vowel)

foot--the smallest unit of *repeated* rhythm in a piece of verse

meter--the rhythm of a piece of verse, determined by the number and type of feet in a line

iamb--a poetic foot consisting of an unstressed followed by a stressed syllable

trochee--a poetic foot consisting of a stressed followed by an unstressed syllable

spondee--a poetic foot consisting of two stressed syllables

pyrrhic--a poetic foot consisting of two unstressed syllables

stress-banking--the act of reserving stressed syllables in a line to accent meaning

thought-phrase--a unit of complete thought or image within a line

elision--the act of condensing/eliding syllables within a word to fit the meter of a line; think of probably/prolly/pry.

expansion--the act of adding/expanding syllables within a word to fit the meter of a line; think of "-ed"

feminine ending--an additional/eleventh unstressed syllable at the end of a line

aside--when a character addresses the audience with essential information unheard by the other characters on the stage

"tragedy"--from *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*: "The bad end unhappily; the good unluckily."

alliteration--the repetition of *initial* consonant sounds in a line for a dramatic/emphatic purpose.

assonance--the repetition of vowel sounds in a line for a dramatic/emphatic purpose.

paraphrase--to put something in to your own words.

Quatrain—a stanza or part of a poem consisting of four lines with alternating rhyme.

Heroic Couplet--a pair of rhyming iambic pentameters; used in the last two lines of a sonnet or to indicate the end of a scene.

exeunt--exit many

denouement--final part of a play, movie, or narrative in which the strands of the plot are drawn together and matters are explained or resolved; from the French "to unknot".

dramatis personae--latin for "the characters in the play"