

DIGITAL THEATRE+

AN INTERACTIVE GLOSSARY OF KEY WRITING CONCEPTS AND LITERARY DEVICES

Written by Matteson Claus



Julius Caesar © Illuminations

In this pack you will find a glossary of key writing concepts and literary devices. These are terms you will need to be comfortable with as you study various forms of literature, including plays, novels, and poems.

Most of the terms have examples from our library of productions with links to the interpretation referenced and timecodes for specific quotes where possible.

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GLOSSARY

ALLEGORY

Allegory is when story or poem can be interpreted as having a hidden meaning, particularly a moral or political one.

Examples:

- The title of *A Doll's House* is an allegory for the role of women in society at that time because women were treated like dolls. This is reflected in how Nora's husband and father treat her like a doll.
- *The Scarlet Letter* is an allegory on a number of levels: the scarlet letter is an allegory for sin; the characters are allegories for facets of the human character; overall, the story is an allegory about identity.
- *The Crucible* is an allegory for McCarthyism, as exemplified in Act 3 (2:01:56–2:07:36), which draws parallels between fear of the courts in Salem and fear of the HUAC in America.

ALLITERATION

Alliteration is the repetition of the same letter or sound at the beginning of words that are located near each other in a text.

Examples:

- *Romeo and Juliet*: In the Prologue, (0:01:00–0:02:00), Shakespeare uses alliteration in the “f” sound of “from”, “forth”, “fatal”, and “foes”; he

	<p>also alliterates the “l” sound in “loins”, “lovers”, and “life”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Hamlet</i>: In Act 1, Scene 3, Ophelia says (0:23:26–0:23:50): “Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,/ Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven/ Whiles, like a puff’d and reckless libertine,/ Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads/ And recks not his own rede.” Shakespeare uses alliteration in “p” sound in “pastors,” “puff’d,” “primrose,” and in “r” sound in “reckless,” “recks,” and “rede.”
<p style="text-align: center;">ALLUSION</p>	<p>Allusion is the reference to something such as a well-known character, event, theme, or story.</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>: In Act 1, Scene 1, Lucentio says (0:20:19–0:20:22): “Hear Minerva speak,” alluding to the goddess Minerva. In Act 1, Scene 2, Gremio says (0:41:52–1:41:58): “Leave that labour to great Hercules,” alluding to the Greek hero Hercules.
<p style="text-align: center;">ANACHRONISM</p>	<p>Anachronism is something or someone that is not in its correct historical or chronological time, especially a thing or person that belongs in a different time.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Julius Caesar</i>: Act 2, Scene 1 has references to a clock when Brutus says (0:44:30–0:44:41): “Peace! Count the clock” and when Cassius says: “The clock has stricken three.” The clock is an

	<p>anachronism because it did not exist in ancient Rome.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Macbeth</i>: Act 1, Scene 2 has a reference to dollars in the line (0:06:04–0:06:10): “Till he disbursed at Saint Colme’s inch ten thousand dollars to our general use.” The dollar is an anachronism because dollars did not yet exist at that the time the play is set in. • <i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>: In Act 2, Scene 5, Cleopatra says (0:41:25–0:41:28): “let’s to billiards.” The game of billiards is an anachronism because it was not a game that was played in Ancient Egypt; it was invented later.
<p>ANTHROPOMORPHISM</p>	<p>Anthropomorphism is the act of giving human characteristics to something that is not human.</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Alice in Wonderland</i>: The Caterpillar is human-like and speaks to Alice when they first meet (0:10:08–0:15:02).
<p>AUDIENCE</p>	<p>The audience are the intended readers for a written work or the people listening to a speech or performance.</p>
<p>COLLOQUIALISM</p>	<p>Colloquialisms are Informal or day-to-day conversational language.</p> <p>Examples:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Death of a Salesman</i>: ‘Huh’ is used throughout, one example is Happy line in Act 1 (0:09:57–0:10:10): “All the talk that went across those two beds, huh?”, to which Biff replies: “Yeah. Lotta dreams and plans.” Shortening “a lot of” to “lotta” is a colloquialism. • <i>Pygmalion</i>: In Act 1 Eliza says (0:04:57–0:05:05): “What's that? That ain't proper writing. I can't read that.” The use of “ain’t” is a colloquialism.
<p style="text-align: center;">CONTEXT</p>	<p>The context is the background, setting, and surrounding events in which a written work is situated; the circumstances in which the story is situated.</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The prologue in <i>Antigone</i> (0:01:30–0:08:56) provides context for the play.
<p style="text-align: center;">EUPHEMISM</p>	<p>A euphemism is a word or phrase that is used as a milder substitute for language that is offensive, harsh, or blunt.</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Macbeth</i>: Act 1, Scene 5 sees Lady Macbeth say (0:17:44–0:17:50): “He that’s coming/ Must be provided for; and you shall put/ This night’s great business into my dispatch.” The phrase “must be provided for” is a euphemism for “must be killed.”
<p style="text-align: center;">FLASHBACK</p>	<p>A flashback is an event or scene that takes place before the present time in the story.</p>

	<p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Death of a Salesman:</i> Willy has flashbacks when he relives memories of the past in the present, such as when he has a conversation with his dead brother while playing cards with Charley (0:27:27–0:31:54) and when he remembers his visits with The Woman.
<p>FORESHADOWING</p>	<p>Foreshadowing is an indication, or hint, that something will happen in the future in the story.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Romeo and Juliet:</i> There are several references throughout the play foreshadowing Romeo and Juliet’s death including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) In the Prologue (0:01:05–0:02:11): “A pair of star-crossed lovers... Doth with their death bury their parents’ strife.” 2) In Act 1, Romeo says (0:23:10–0:23:28): “I fear too early, for my mind misgives/Some consequence yet hanging in the stars.” 3) In Act 2, Romeo says (0:38:33–0:38:37): “My life were better ended by their hate/ Than death prolonged, wanting of thy love.” • <i>A Doll’s House:</i> At the beginning of Act 1, Nora eats macaroons (0:02:35–0:03:18), which is something her husband, Torvald, does not want her to do. This foreshadows her rebellion toward Torvald later in the play.

<p style="text-align: center;">FORM</p>	<p>The form is the genre of text as well as the type of text itself, such as play, novel, or poem. Dramatic forms include musical theatre, satire, and farce.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> is a farce. • <i>Lysistrata</i> is a satire. • <i>Into the Woods</i> is a musical.
<p style="text-align: center;">HYPERBOLE</p>	<p>Hyperbole is an obvious exaggeration.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Crucible</i>: In Act 2, John Proctor says (1:10:39–01:10:44): “your justice would freeze beer!” implying Elizabeth has been cold towards him. • <i>Macbeth</i>: In Act 5, Scene 1, Lady Macbeth exaggerates by saying (2:03:59–2:04:11): “All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand”.
<p style="text-align: center;">IMAGERY</p>	<p>Imagery is the use of language in such a way that it appeals to one or more of the physical senses (taste, touch, sight, smell or hearing).</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smell: At the beginning of Act 2 of <i>The Crucible</i>, John Proctor says: “Lilacs have a purple smell.” (1:04:09–1:04:43) to make a comparison with the “smell of nightfall”. • Sight/touch/smell: <i>Macbeth</i> Act 1, Scene 2 sees the Sergeant conjure up imagery as he describes

	<p>Macbeth (0:03:27–0:03:32): “Brandished steel/ Which smoked with bloody execution”. In Act 2, Scene 2, Macbeth’s fear is expressed in his haste to remove blood from his hands (0:43:58–0:44:04) “Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood/ Clean from my hand?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sight: In Act 1, Scene 5 of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> where Romeo begins to describe Juliet as he sees her (0:27:47–0:27:59): “O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright! / It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night / Like a rich jewel in an Ethiopie’s ear...” (Ethiophe is also an allusion). ● Touch: In Act 1, Scene 4 of <i>King Lear</i>, Lear compares having an unthankful child to the pain of touching a serpent’s tooth (0:41:03–0:41:08) “How sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is / To have a thankless child!” ● Sound/sight/smell: In Act 4, Scene 4 of <i>King Lear</i>, Cordelia uses imagery to express her sadness when the King goes missing (1:49:04–1:49:21): “He was met even now / As mad as the vexed sea; singing aloud; / Crowned with rank fumitory and furrow weeds, / With burdocks, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo-flowers”
<p style="text-align: center;">IRONY</p>	<p>Irony is when the intended meaning of a word or phrase is different from its actual meaning; the three types of irony are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Dramatic irony: when the audience knows something about the situation that the character does not. 2) Situational irony: when an unexpected action occurs that is in direct contrast to what one would expect to happen.

	<p>3) Verbal irony: when a character says something contradictory to what they actually mean.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dramatic irony: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <u>Cyrano de Bergerac</u>: In Act 3, Cyrano says to Roxanne (1:15:05–1:15:10): “You have never heard till now/ My heart truly speaking!” It is dramatic irony because the audience knows that it’s Cyrano speaking, but Roxane doesn’t, she thinks it is Christian. 2) <u>Oedipus the King</u>: Oedipus is unaware that he’s cursing himself, but the audience knows that he is in the line (0:22:44–0:23:17): “And the man himself, the murderer... fall on me too as fiercely as on anyone.” • Situational irony: In Act 2 of <u>The Crucible</u>, John Proctor, who has committed adultery, is asked to recite the Ten Commandments (1:27:30–1:28:49). He can only say nine, repeating one of them twice to make ten. His wife corrects him, pointing out the one he missed when she says “Adultery, John.” • Verbal irony: In Act 3 of <u>Cyrano de Bergerac</u>, Cyrano calls Christian “A great success!” (1:11:43–1:11:45) which is ironic because Cyrano means the opposite, as Christian has just made a fool of himself.
<p style="text-align: center;">JUXTAPOSITION</p>	<p>Juxtaposition is when two or more ideas, places, scenes, or characters are placed side by side to compare and/or contrast them.</p>

	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Antigone</i>: Sophocles juxtaposes the characters of Antigone, who takes risks, and law abiding Ismene. • <i>Death of a Salesman</i>: Arthur Miller juxtaposes the scene where Linda reassures Willy he’s a good man with the flashback to The Woman in Act 1, Scene 5 (0:21:32-0:23:30). • <i>A Midsummer Night’s Dream</i>: In Act 5, Scene 1, Theseus makes many juxtapositions as he prepares for The Mechanical’s show (1:36:41–1:36:55): “Merry and tragical? Tedious and brief? That is hot ice, and wondrous strange snow!; How shall we find the concord of this discord?”
<p>LANGUAGE</p>	<p>Language is the style of writing created by the specific word choices of the author.</p>
<p>METAPHOR</p>	<p>A metaphor is a figure of speech that compares two unrelated things that have similar characteristics, without the use of “like” or “as”.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cyrano de Bergerac</i>: In Act 3, Scene 6 Cyrano compares a harsh word to falling and being crushed (1:14:30–1:14:36): “So far, I fear, that one hard word could kill, crushing my heart like a stone.” • <i>The Crucible</i>: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) In Act 1, Giles compares strength of will to the literal strength of iron (0:34:59–0:35:01):

	<p>“I never thought you had so much iron in you.”</p> <p>2) Later on in Act 1, Reverend Parris says (0:41:03–0:41:07): “Why, Rebecca, we may open up the boil of all our troubles today” comparing the trouble the characters are experiencing to opening up a blister.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>As You Like It:</u> In Act 2, Scene 7, the world is compared to a stage and the people, actors (1:03:53–1:03:58): “All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players”.
<p>MOOD</p>	<p>A mood is the feeling that a written work inspires in the reader.</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Hamlet:</u> In Act 1, Scene 1 Shakespeare creates a spooky mood, full of dread, with the lines (0:03:51–0:04:00) "How now, Horatio? You tremble and look pale. Is not this something more than fantasy? What think you on 't?"
<p>MORAL</p>	<p>A moral is the lesson a story teaches.</p>
<p>MOTIF</p>	<p>A motif is an idea that repeats itself throughout a written work.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Antigone:</u> Femininity, and what it means to be feminine, is a motif repeated throughout the play.

	<p>Ismene represents the feminine ideal with lines such as “weak women, think of that, not framed by nature to contend with men” whereas Antigone rebels against traditional roles, insisting on doing things herself, with lines such as “myself will bury him.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pride and Prejudice</i>: Prejudice is a motif, as seen in lines such as: “For what do we live, but to make sport for our neighbours, and laugh at them in our turn?”
<p>ONOMATOPOEIA</p>	<p>An onomatopoeia is a word that imitates the sound of a thing, e.g. buzz.</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Tempest</i>: In Act 3, Scene 2, the words “twanging” and “hum” in the following lines (1:30:14–1:30:27) are examples of onomatopoeia: “Sometimes a thousand twanging instruments/ Will hum about mine ears, and sometime voices”.
<p>PARADOX</p>	<p>A paradox is a statement that seems to contradict itself but, in reality, expresses a truth.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>: In Act 1, Scene 1, Romeo calls love “a choking gall and a preserving sweet,” (0:07:52–0:07:56) two opposites that nonetheless make sense together, and thus a paradox. Other examples include Act 1, Scene 5, in which Juliet calls Romeo “my only love sprung from my only hate” (0:31:25–0:31:30) and Act 5,

	<p>Scene 3 in which Friar Lawrence says (2:10:22–2:10:24): “I am the greatest ye able to do least.”</p>
<p>PERSONIFICATION</p>	<p>Personification is a figure of speech in which an idea or animal is given human attributes.</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>: In Act 1, Scene 2 the month of April is personified in the lines (0:12:35–0:12:39) “When well-apparelled April on the heel/ Of limping winter treads.”
<p>POINT OF VIEW</p>	<p>A point of view is the narrator’s position in relation to how the story is told:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) First-person is when there is a single narrator who tells the story; it uses pronouns like “I” and “we.” 2) Second-person is when the narrator tells a story about “you.” 3) Third-person is when the narrator tells the story about other people; pronouns include “he” or “she.” <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Crucible</i> is third-person omniscient.
<p>PURPOSE</p>	<p>A purpose is the author’s reason for writing.</p>
<p>REPETITION</p>	<p>Repetition is a literary device where words, phrases, or sentences are used more than once, often to achieve a particular effect.</p>

	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Romeo and Juliet:</u> In Act 4, Scene 5 (1:54:04 – 1:54:11), Romeo repeats “Alack the day! She’s dead, she’s dead, she’s dead!” in desperation. • <u>Richard III:</u> In Act 5, Scene 3, King Richard III repeats the words “tongue” and “tale” as he considers his fate (3:31:08–3:31:14): “My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,/ And every tongue brings in a several tale,/ And every tale condemns me for a villain.”
<p style="text-align: center;">SIMILE</p>	<p>A simile is a figure of speech that makes a comparison, showing similarities between two unlike things, using “like” or “as”.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The Crucible:</u> In Act 1, Reverend Parris compares himself to a cat (0:32:22–0:32:29) in the lines: “I do not wish to be put out like the cat whenever some majority feels the whim.” • <u>Macbeth:</u> In Act 1, Scene 5, Lady Macbeth tells her husband how he looks in comparison to a flower with a snake hiding underneath in the lines (0:09:40–0:18:09): “Look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under’t.” • <u>Othello:</u> In Act 5, Scene 2, Othello compares Desdemona’s skin to white marble (2:08:38–2:08:48) with the lines: “Yet I’ll not shed her blood;/ Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,/ And smooth as monumental alabaster.”

<p>SOURCE MATERIAL</p>	<p>Source material is the original information or text on which a written work is based.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The source material for <i><u>Into the Woods</u></i> is a variety of fairy tales. • <i><u>Pygmalion</u></i> became the source material for the musical <i>My Fair Lady</i>. • <i><u>Cyrano de Bergerac</u></i> became the source material for the movie <i>Roxanne</i>.
<p>STRUCTURE</p>	<p>A structure comprises the elements that form the framework of written work, including sentence and paragraph structure, narrative point of view, and sequence of events.</p>
<p>SYMBOLISM</p>	<p>Symbolism is the use of characters, settings, images, or other elements to stand for bigger ideas.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i><u>Long Day's Journey into Night</u></i>: The fog is a symbol of escape from reality. When the foghorn blows, it symbolises the intrusion of reality on the fantasies of the characters. • <i><u>The Crucible</u></i>: The definition of a crucible is a type of container that is used for heating substances to a point where they change. So, the crucible is symbolic of the change the people in the play undergo when the 'heat,' or pressure of the situation, is applied to them.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>A Doll's House</i>: Henrik Ibsen uses the Christmas tree as a symbol of Nora's mental state. At the beginning of the story, the Christmas tree is beautifully decorated, and Nora is happy. But in Act 2, as Nora's mood changes, and she is "walking around uneasily," the Christmas tree is described as dishevelled.
<p>TONE</p>	<p>Tone is the attitude of the writer towards the subject.</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In <i>Macbeth</i>, Shakespeare's tone is menacing and foreboding, but in <i>As You Like It</i>, his tone is humorous and light-hearted.

