

Romeo and Juliet

Key Terms

PETRARCHAN LOVER

- **Meaning:** A man who is hopelessly and unrequitedly in love with a woman who does not return his affections. Often the woman is unaware she is the object of such love.

Example sentence:

*The character of Romeo, in William Shakespeare's play Romeo and Juliet, is presented in Act 1 scene 1 as a **Petrarchan lover***

IAMBIC PENTAMETER

- **Meaning:** A metrical form consisting of ten syllables with five metric feet with one stressed syllable and one unstressed syllable following it. The stressed and unstressed syllable are often reflected through the sound "didDUM".

Example sentence:

*In Shakespeare, often the characters speak in **iambic pentameter**, and we can see this in the line "Two households both alike in dignity". **iambic pentameter** typically denotes high status within a character, yet also is used alongside Romeo to compound his effeminate nature within his speed.*

PROPHESED

- **Meaning:** A future that has been foretold for someone or something.

Example sentence:

*Romeo and Juliet's death was **propheised** in the prologue of the play*

DETERMINISM

- **Meaning:** The idea that all human actions are pre-determined and that we ultimately have no choice over the decisions we make as they are all pre-determined.

Example sentence:

*Romeo and Juliet, as a play, evokes themes of **determinism** as the prologue shows the lovers are inextricably bound to their fate- no matter the love they possess for each other they can not surmount fate.*

HAMARTIA

- **Meaning:** Fatal flaw that leads to a characters downfall.

Example sentence:

*Romeo and Juliet's **hamartia's** are there extreme impulsiveness and rash nature. This accelerates their descent to tragedy.*

CELESTIAL BODIES

- **Meaning:** Astronomical objects such as planets, stars, the moon etc.

Example sentence:

*the Elizabethans believed in the power of celestial bodies and how this can dictate one's future. Queen Elizabeth had her own astrologer who helped her determine her fate based on these **celestial bodies**.*

DRAMATIC IRONY

- **Meaning:** The concept that the audience knows more than the characters in the play in regard to the plot. i.e. The audience knows what is going to happen before the characters do.

Example sentence:

*The prologue of Romeo and Juliet tells us what is going to happen within the play, which creates **dramatic irony** as the audience now know how the play will end but the characters within the play do not.*

CLASSICAL REFERENCES

- **Meaning:** Any reference to a classic text or piece of literature.

Example sentence:

*Mercutio's reference to "love's wings" is a **classical reference** as it alludes to cupid. Thus he tries to contort these tropes of love and render them with negative connotations.*

PRECEDENCE

- **Meaning:** The quality of being superior.

Example sentence:

*Shakespeare explores how love should take **precedence** over hate, and when hate takes **precedence** over love, mass tragedy ensues.*

GENERATIONAL FEUDS

- **Meaning:** Feuds or rivalries that span over generations.

Example sentence:

*Shakespeare shows the dire implications of **generational feuds** and how this can detrimentally impact one's mental and physical health.*

NAÏVE

- **Meaning:** The quality of being unaware of something.

Example sentence:

*Romeo is **naïve** of the rashness of his love because of his youth. Juliet extends this notion as she too is **naïve** to the consequences of the pursuit of their forbidden love, even in the face of hatred and familial feuds.*

PATERNAL

- **Meaning:** Fatherly.

Example sentence:

*Friar Lawrence is a **paternal** figure for Romeo, both in a religious sense (he is an extension of God) and a literal sense as he provides Romeo guidance alike to what a father would.*

ABSTRACT NOUN

- **Meaning:** A noun that describes an idea, a quality or a state rather than a concrete thing (a regular noun).

Example sentence:

*the **abstract noun** "passion" adds to the semantic field of love. Yet, as it is non-tangible, this could showcase how their love is not based in reality but is a fantastical non-tangible idea.*

DOUBLE ENTENDRE

- **Meaning:** A word or phrase that could have two possible interpretations.

Example sentence:

*the word father is a **double entendre** in the play because there is the religious definition and also paternal definition.*

SYNONYMOUS

- **Meaning:** Being a synonymous / having the same meaning of another word.

Example sentence:

*Romeo begins to understand that marriage is not **synonymous** with happiness but has been socialised to believe he has to marry- Shakespeare subtly critiques the idea that these societal ideas are deeply ingrained within individuals and it is sometimes to their detriment.*

MARITAL SYSTEMS

- **Meaning:** The systems of marriage in place during this era.

Example sentence:

*The **marital systems** of Shakespeare's time ultimately disregarded the feelings of those who were married within them.*

TOXIC MASCULINITY

- **Meaning:** Masculinity that is so extreme to the extent that it is harmful for those around the person possessing the trait

Example sentence:

*Tybalt's toxic masculinity makes him fiery and quick to anger. This **toxic masculinity** taints every male in the play, including the more emotional Romeo. Romeo's obsession with protecting his reputation, and thus his hubris, derives from the **toxic masculinity** that plagued society.*

PATRIARCHAL / PATRIARCHY

- **Meaning:** A male dominated system or hierarchy that benefits men over women.

Example sentence:

*Shakespeare lives during a time which was dominated by the **patriarchy**. He shows the detrimental effects of the **patriarchy** to both of those who are oppressed (women like Juliet) and the oppressors (men like Lord Capulet).*

EFFEMINATE

- **Meaning:** Having or possessing feminine characteristics.

Example sentence:

*Romeo is **effeminate** in his openness with his emotions, his use of iambic pentameter compounds this as he is inherently feminine in his speech.*

PALPABLE

- **Meaning:** The quality of being physical or tangible; the ability to touch or interact with something physically.

Example sentence:

*In exclaiming the word "exile" Romeo make it almost **palpable** which highlights his deteriorating mental state.*

REPETITION

- **Meaning:** The action of repeating something multiple times.

Example sentence:

*The **repetition** of the word "banished" puts emphasis on the concept.*

EJAMBMENT

- **Meaning:** The way a sentence is extended through punctuation such as comas, semicolon etc. it is often used to achieve a desired effect.

Example sentence:

*His use of **enjambement** makes Romeo sound rambling and overly articulate. When used in conjunction with speech about love, it represents the continuousness of love.*

PERSONIFICATION

- **Meaning:** The attribution of human qualities to an inanimate object or concept.

Example sentence:

*Mercutio **personifies** love by saying "if love be rough with you". This makes love appear to be an omnipotent force, one that is more powerful than the people involved in it. This creates an element of determinism in that love, almost alike to a person, has control and influence over the lovers and thus they are powerless to the course of action it chooses.*

EQUILIBRIUM

- **Meaning:** A state of balance where two opposing sides are weighted equally.

Example sentence:

*Romeo and Mercutio counteract each other with their opposing personalities, creating an **equilibrium** which is disrupted upon Mercutio's death.*

PARODY

- **Meaning:** Ridiculing something / making a joke out of something / making something humorous.

Example sentence:

*Mercutio **parodies** the Petrarchan lover through his Queen Mab speech, ridiculing the idea of love as an extension.*

STAGING

- **Meaning:** The process of organising the movements of actors around the stage, coordinating props, costumes and organising lighting and sound logistics.

Example sentence:

*The **staging** of Romeo and Juliet would involve a lot of planning and forethought.*

CONSUMMATION

- **Meaning:** The officiation of marriage through intercourse / coitus.

Example sentence:

*Romeo sneaks into Juliet's room to **consummate** their marriage.*

PROTAGONIST

- **Meaning:** The central character of a play of work of literature.

Example sentence:

*Romeo is a **protagonist** of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet.*

INNAMORATA

- **Meaning:** A female object of love or adoration (Innamorato is the male version).

Example sentence:

*Juliet is Romeo's **inamorata***

STAR CROSS'D

- **Meaning:** The concept of someone having their stars crossed comes from the Elizabethan belief that the stars held immense power over person's fate. Having crossed stars translates to having bad fate or luck.

Example sentence:

*Romeo and Juliet are "**star cross'd lovers**" and thus, due to celestial bodies, their fate has been determined by the celestial bodies.*

PYRAMUS AND THISBE

- **Meaning:** Mythical lovers who originate in Ovid's metamorphoses. Their story is extremely similar to that of Romeo and Juliet, and they are the inspiration for Shakespeare famous tragedy.

Example sentence:

***Pyramus and Thisbe** were the inspiration for **Romeo and Juliet**.*

RAISON D'ETRE

- **Meaning:** A French phrase which loosely translates to 'reason to exist' or 'reason to be'.

Example sentence:

*Juliet is Romeo's **raison d'être**, thus when he believes Juliet is no longer alive, he loses this reason to exist.*

TROPE

- **Meaning:** A recurrent theme or motif within a play or a text.

Example sentence:

*The **trope** of star-crossed love originates from Shakespeare's **Romeo and Juliet**. Forbidden love is also a **trope** within **Romeo and Juliet** as this permeates the entirety of the play and is the basis for their love, heightening the dramatic irony and sense of tragedy.*

PHENOMENA

- **Meaning:** A thing that has been observed or that exists.

Example sentence:

*The **phenomena** of people feeling a certain lightness before their imminent death.*

MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE

- **Meaning:** Two events that cannot occur at the same time.

Example sentence:

*The play explores how the concept of love and hatred being **mutually exclusive** is untrue. In act 3, love and hatred blend together as violence becomes mixed with their relationship.*

MULTIFACETED

- **Meaning:** The quality of being complex of having many facets or sides.

Example sentence:

*love is an extremely **multifaceted** concept as it evokes an array of emotions from those who are directly and indirectly involved in love.*

CATALYST

- **Meaning:** Something that accelerates the onset of another thing.

Example sentence:

*Juliet's death was **catalyst** for her mother's confrontation with reality.*

SUBMISSIVE

- **Meaning:** The quality of being pliant or obedient to another person.

Example sentence:

*Women are expected to be **submissive** by society. Juliet adheres to this societal expectation at the beginning of the play, then rejects the idea of **submission** and becomes more defiant and rebellious.*

DISCERNED

- **Meaning:** Discovering something or revealing information or a key meaning.

Example sentence:

*Iambic pentameter makes the audience consider the meaning to be **discerned** from the line it features in.*

CONVENTIONAL

- **Meaning:** Something or someone following conventions or traditions usually set by society.

Example sentence:

*It was **conventional** for women to marry young in the Elizabethan era, hence by Juliet being 13 years old in the play and being expected to marry, this was part of societal norms at the time.*

ALLITERATIVE

- **Meaning:** The re-appearance of the same letter at the beginning of two syntactically close words.

Example sentence:

*The **alliterative** sound seen in "old desire doth in his death bed lies". The **alliteration** on "desire doth" places emphasis on how his desire for Juliet seems almost "old" as it appears sempiternal.*

PASSIVE

- **Meaning:** The quality of lacking activeness/assertiveness or agency.

Example sentence:

*Women were expected to be **passive** in the Elizabethan era which conforms to the patriarchal expectations set out for them.*

RHYMING COUPLES

- **Meaning:** A pair of rhymes which occur with quick succession or close to each other.

Example sentence:

Shakespeare uses the rhyming couplets "eye" and "fly"

DIALOGUE

- **Meaning:** Spoken line between two or more characters.

Example sentence:

*The **dialogue** between Romeo and Juliet is witty and flirtatious in order to establish the instant repour and connection they built when they met. This heightening the element of tragedy as their connection and love for each other ultimately leads to their demise.*

WITTY

- **Meaning:** The quality of being intelligent or funny in writing or discourse.

Example sentence:

*Romeo is **witty** in his language and Juliet emulates this when they first meet. This demonstrating that she is immediately influenced by Romeo and adapts every part of herself in order to be better suited with him.*

CONCEIT(EXTENDED METAPHOR)

- **Meaning:** When a metaphor is continually alluded to throughout a poem, text or play.

Example sentence:

*There is an **conceit** of pilgrims in Act 2 Scene 5 of Romeo and Juliet to convey the sacred and holy nature of their love.*

LINEAGE

- **Meaning:** A person's heritage or ancestry linking to generations of their family.

Example sentence:

*Juliet betrays her **lineage** by eloping with Romeo.*

GODDESS DIANA

- **Meaning:** The Roman Goddess Diana is the goddess of virginity and hunting.

Example sentence:

*Romeo praises Juliet's virginity through referencing **Goddess Diana**, therefore highlighting how Juliet has not succumb to temptation before and is still a virgin and pure. This heightens his beliefs that their love is pure and untainted.*

FOLLY OF YOUTH

- **Meaning:** The flaws or mistakes of young people.

Example sentence:

*Juliet and Romeo are hasty in love, which Shakespeare shows to be the **folly of youth**.*

JUXTAPOSITION

- **Meaning:** Two things in close proximity which contradict or contrast against each other.

Example sentence:

*The violence of Romeo's suicide, **juxtaposes** against the peace he is achieving by committing it.*

INNATE

- **Meaning:** When a quality is intrinsic or embedded within a person.

Example sentence:

*Love is **innate** for Romeo as he is a loving, emotional and passionate person.*

SEMANTIC FIELD

- **Meaning:** A lexis of semantically similar terms. Terms which mean the same semantically.

Example sentence:

*Shakespeare creates a **semantic field** of love with the words "cupid", "wedding", "bride" and "romance".*

OPPOSING CLANS

- **Meaning:** Families, groups or gangs of people which have a grudge / vendetta or are partaking in a war against each other.

Example sentence:

*The Capulet's and the Montague's are **opposing clans**.*

PARAMOUNT

- **Meaning:** Quintessential or important to.

Example sentence:

*Emotional support is **paramount** to create healthy parent child relationships. This is demonstrated through the harsh realisation of Lord and Lady Capulet following Juliet's suicide in realising if they emotionally supported Juliet, not valuing feuds over love, then she may have survived.*

PERMEATE

- **Meaning:** To pervade or penetrate a literary text. Usually creates an atmosphere.

Example sentence:

*Conflict **permeates** Romeo and Juliet in both the conflict due to familial feuds and conflict between love and duty.*

PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE

- **Meaning:** To be aggressive, normally linguistically, in a passive, non-direct way.

Example sentence:

*Lady Capulet **passive aggressively** suggests her daughter ought not be so argumentative.*

MARRED

- **Meaning:** To ruin or spoil the quality of something.

Example sentence:

*Juliet's tears had **marred** her face.*

DESPONDENT

- **Meaning:** In low spirits, melancholy, lost hope.

Example sentence:

*Juliet is **despondent** when she discovers she must marry Paris and, as a woman in the patriarchal society, she knows she is voiceless and has to be submissive.*

SUBSERVIENT

- **Meaning:** Submissive, passive, obedient.

Example sentence:

*Juliet is expected by society to be **subservient** because she is a woman.*

RELIGIOUS IMAGERY

- **Meaning:** Imagery which has religious connotations.

Example sentence:

The scene has immense religious connotations.

ORNAMENTAL

- **Meaning:** Something that is decorative in nature or adorns something.

Example sentence:

*Women were largely seen as **ornamental** by men in Shakespeare's time. This is clearly shown through Mercutio's **ornamental** view on women, which is also demonstrated through the objectifying and **ornamental** view Romeo possessed towards Rosaline.*

OBSEQUIOUS

- **Meaning:** Excessively or overly polite usually in the context of etiquette of service.

Example sentence:

*Juliet is humorously **obsequious** towards her father when she pretends to agree to marry Paris. She is aware of the subservient and submissive role expected of her and therefore conforms to it to appease her father.*

IMPETUOUS

- **Meaning:** To act rashly or hastily without forethought.

Example sentence:

*Juliet is **impetuous** in her decision to take the sleeping draught.*

SOLILOQUY

- **Meaning:** A prolonged monologue, spoken aloud and alone. It is used to express a character's thoughts and feelings in a play.

Example sentence:

*Friar Lawrence enters the play with a **soliloquy**, this allows the audience to gain a deeper insight and understanding to his moral character and religious values.*

TRAGEDY

- **Meaning:** A genre of play which is inherently tragic and melancholic, especially in its ending.

Example sentence:

*Romeo and Juliet is a **tragedy**.*

SOCIAL NORMS

- **Meaning:** Standards or conventions set by society that people are socially pressured to adhere to.

Example sentence:

*Marrying girls at a young age was a **social norm** of Shakespeare's time.*

MATERNAL

- **Meaning:** Relating to a mother.

Example sentence:

*Juliet lacks **maternal love** and thus seeks this from the nurse. Her formal language towards her mother denotes respect but a lack of a close genuine relationship.*

LIBERTY

- **Meaning:** Juliet lacks maternal love and thus seeks this from the nurse. Her formal language towards her mother denotes respect but a lack of a close genuine relationship.

Example sentence:

*the **liberty** to choose their own partners was not something women of Shakespeare's era had.*

CANNOT

- **Meaning:** The connotations or thematic synonyms of a word.

Example sentence:

*The phrase "prick love for pricking" **connotes** violence.*

PATRIARCH

- **Meaning:** A word that references a father.

Example sentence:

*Lord Capulet is the **patriarch** of the family and thus possesses the most power.*

TYRANNOUS

- **Meaning:** Evil or villain like.

Example sentence:

*Lord Capulet is **tyrannous** when he forces Juliet to marry Paris*

LAMENT

- **Meaning:** To mourn or to complain or talk about in a melancholic manner.

Example sentence:

*Romeo **laments** that he cannot have Rosaline which further extends the audiences ridicule for him as a Petrarchan lover.*

CUPID

- **Meaning:** The Roman God of love and son of Venus.

Example sentence:

*Mercutio mocks love through his language surrounding **Cupid**.*

PESSIMISM

- **Meaning:** Being negative in disposition or manner or attitude.

Example sentence:

*Mercutio is **pessimistic** about love, mocking and ridiculing Romeo for the love he has for Juliet.*

ZOOMORPHISM

- **Meaning:** To attribute animal like qualities to a human.

Example sentence:

*Mercutio **Zoomorphises** Tybalt by calling him "King of Cats showing him to have these animalistic savage instincts.*

IMPULSIVITY

- **Meaning:** Acting without thought or being impetuous.

Example sentence:

*Juliet **impulsively** decides to elope with Romeo.*

OMNISCIENT

- **Meaning:** All powerful.

Example sentence:

Friar Lawrence appears **omniscient** in his foreseeing of the plays events.

PANSOPHIC

- **Meaning:** Being all knowing in philosophical, spiritual terms.

Example sentence:

Friar Lawrence appears almost **Pansophic** when he speaks of the nature of the universe.

MEDIATOR

- **Meaning:** A person acting as a middle ground, non-biased conflict resolver.

Example sentence:

Friar Lawrence is the **mediator** of the play.