Basics of English Studies:
An introductory course for students of literary studies in English.
Developed at the English departments of the Universities of Tübingen, Stuttgart and Freiburg

Glossary

ab ovo beginning: the narrative or play starts at the beginning of the story and (usually a narrator) provides all necessary background information before the ‘story proper’ starts.

accentual metre: see metre.

ad spectatores: ‘to the spectators’: type of utterance in drama where the actor directly addresses the audience.

alexandrine: an iambic hexameter.

alienation effect / estrangement effect: the audience is distanced from the action presented on stage (by the introduction of narrative elements for instance), the aim is to impede audience involvement in and identification with the characters and conflicts of the story.

allegory: a narrative, whether in prose or in verse, in which characters and actions, and sometimes the setting as well, are contrived by the author to make coherent sense on the ‘literal’/primary level of significance and at the same time to signify a second, correlated order of signification.

alliteration: the same sound is repeated at the beginning of several words or stressed syllables in words that are in close proximity.

alternate rhyme: rhyme pattern abab.

amphitheatres: type of theatre or stage, typical for example for theatre performance in classical antiquity (Greece and Rome), amphitheatres had a round stage almost entirely surrounded by the audience.

anachronological: non-chronological presentation of events on discourse level.

anadiplosis / reduplicatio: (Greek for ”doubling back”) the word or phrase that concludes one line or clause is repeated at the beginning of the next.

analepsis: see flashback.

analytic plays: plays which start in ultimas res.

anapaest: see metre.

anaphora: a word or phrase is repeated at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses or lines.

antagonist: the (influential) opponent of the protagonist.
**antithesis:** opposition, or contrast of ideas or words in a parallel sentence construction.

**aposiopesis:** the speaker fails to complete his sentence, (seemingly) overpowered by his emotions.

**apostrophe:** addressing an absent person, a god or a personified abstraction.

**apron stage:** the apron is that part of the stage which projects beyond the proscenium arch; any stage which consists primarily or entirely of an apron and on which the action is not seen as framed within the proscenium; the apron stage was used in the Elizabethan theatre.

**aside:** a type of utterance in drama where the actor speaks away from other characters, either to himself, secretly to other characters or ad spectatores.

**assonance:** the repetition of the same or similar vowel sounds in the stressed syllables of words that are in close proximity while the consonants differ.

**asyndeton:** the omission of conjunctions to coordinate phrases, clauses, or words where normally conjunctions would be used (opposite of polysyndeton).

**authorial characterisation:** characterisation by the narrator in narratives or in the secondary text of a play.

**authorial narrative situation:** part of the terminology introduced by the critic Franz Stanzel to denote a narrative situation where the narrator is not a character in the story but who knows everything about it.

**autodiegetic narration:** part of the terminology introduced by the critic Gérard Genette to denote a narration where the narrator tells his or her own story.

**ballad stanza / chevy chase stanza:** usually a four-line stanza which alternates tetrameter and trimeter and usually rhyme *abxb*.

**ballad:** a form of folk poetry or derived from folk poetry, a poem or song which tells a story.

**bildungsroman (novel of education):** a type of novel which depicts the development of the protagonist’s mind and character from childhood to maturity and the acceptance of his or her identity and role in society.

**biographical criticism:** a theoretical approach to literature which focuses on the author’s biography to explicate the text.

**blank verse:** non-ryhming iambic pentameter.

**block characterisation:** an explicit characterisation given in a block, usually when a character is introduced.

**caesura:** a pause that occurs within a line of poetry.

**catachresis:** a mixed metaphor.

**catastrophe:** in Gustav Freytag’s terminology the final stage of development in a tragedy usually involving the death of the protagonist.

**catenation:** the way words are linked in pronunciation.
catharsis: in Aristotle’s terms the cleansing emotional effect achieved by drama as a result of the audience’s emotional involvement in the plot and the feelings of the characters in the play.

chain rhyme: rhyme pattern \textit{aba bcb cdc}...

character: the agents in narrative, narrative poetry or drama.

chiasmus: from the shape of the Greek letter ‘chi’ (X); sequence of two phrases or clauses which are parallel in syntax but reverse the order of the corresponding words (a-b, b-a).

chorus: a group of people situated on stage and commenting throughout the play on events and the characters’ actions.

climax / gradatio (Greek for “ladder”): arrangement of words, phrases, or clauses in an order of ascending power.

close reading: a critical practice which closely investigates the composition of texts with regard to their unifying principles.

closed structure/form: the individual acts of a play are tightly connected and logically built on one another, finally leading to a clear resolution of the plot.

comedy: a dramatic work in which the materials are selected and managed primarily in order to amuse the audience and make it laugh; the ending is by convention good and resolves previous problems, sub-categories of comedy are, for instance, the comedy of manners, the comedy of humours, romantic comedy or satiric comedy.

comment: a narrative mode where the narrator explicitly or implicitly evaluates events or characters in the story.

communication model: a model developed by the linguist and critic Roman Jakobson which describes literary communication as a process involving six elements: sender, message, receiver, channel (or contact), context and code.

confidant: a close friend of the protagonist in whom he/she can confide and thus disclose his/her innermost thoughts.

configuration: the sequential presentation of different characters together on stage.

consonance: two or more consonants are repeated, but the adjacent vowels differ.

constellation: overall structure of the groups of characters within a play or a narrative.

contaminatio: see portmanteau word.

continuous rhyme: sequence of the same rhymes: \textit{aaaaaa}...

couplet: a unit of two lines of verse, usually linked by rhyme.

covert narrative situation: a narrative situation where the personality of the narrator is hardly noticeable (opposite: overt narrative situation).

dactyl: see metre.

decollection: a poststructuralist approach to literature which owes its development to the writings of the French philosopher Jacques Derrida.
Deconstructive theory claims the basic instability of all meaning and it explores the heterogeneity of meaning in literature.

deforum: the diction, theme or action which are thought appropriate in literary texts or theatre performances, concepts of decorum change over time.

defamiliarisation: an effect of literary (‘poetic’) texts: ‘deviations’ from ordinary language use (foregrounded properties/artistic devices) disrupt the modes of everyday perception and renew the reader's capacity for fresh sensation.

dénouement: solution at the end of the plot.

description: a narrative mode that represents things that can be seen, heard or felt in some way. One distinguishes between the description of place, the description of time and the description of character.

dialogue: utterance in drama or narrative which involves two or more characters speaking.

diction: the choice and use of words in a text.

diegesis: the verbal representation of events.

discourse: the level of transmission, HOW a story is told.

discourse-time: the time it takes to tell the story.

drama: the form of composition designed for performance in the theatre, in which actors take the roles of the characters, perform the indicated action, and speak the written dialogue.

dramatic irony: involves a situation in a play or narrative in which the audience or reader shares with the author or narrator knowledge of present or future circumstances of which a character is ignorant. In that situation, the character unknowingly acts in a way we recognise to be grossly inappropriate to the actual circumstances, or expects the opposite of what we know fate holds in store, or says something that anticipates the actual outcome, but not at all in the way that the character intends.

dramatic monologue: a type of poem consisting of the speech of a single character which, often unintentionally, reveals the speaker's character or thoughts.

dramatis personae: the characters in a play.

duration: a category in the analysis of the relation between story-time and discourse time. There are five basic sub-categories: summary, scene, pause, ellipsis, stretch.

dynamic character: a character that undergoes a development throughout the narrative or play.

elegy: a poem which presents a sustained meditation on a solemn theme, usually death.

elision: unstressed syllables are not pronounced in a particular line in order to make the line fit the metre.
**ellipsis**: a word or phrase in a sentence is omitted though implied by the context. Also a category in the analysis of the relation between story time and discourse time when discourse skips to a later part in story time.

**embracing rhyme**: rhyme pattern *abba*.

**end-rhyme**: rhyme at the end of a line.

**end-stopped line**: a syntactical unit comes to a close at the end of the line.

**epanalepsis**: see *redditio*.

**epic theatre**: a theatrical movement originating with Bertolt Brecht which developed in reaction against realistic theatrical traditions and attempts to prevent the audience’s emotional involvement and identification with characters or plot using effects (alienation or estrangement effects) such as a narrator for instance to constantly emphasise the ‘artificial’ (i.e. non-realistic) nature of the theatre event.

**epic**: a long narrative, usually in verse, which deals with an event of major national or cultural importance written in a sublime style.

**episodic**: see *loose plot*.

**epistolary novel**: a type of novel where the narrative is conveyed entirely by an exchange of letters.

**epistroph**: a word or expression is repeated at the end of successive phrases, clauses or lines.

**epithalamion**: a poem celebrating a wedding.

**epizeuxis**: see *geminatio*.

**eponymous hero**: the name of the protagonist is also the title of the narrative or play.

**euphemism**: substitution of an agreeable or at least non-offensive expression for one whose plainer meaning might be harsh or unpleasant.

**event**: something that happens in the story (with a discernable agent: action, without agent: happening).

**existent**: a character in a story or the setting.

**expansion**: syllables that are usually unpronounced are pronounced in a particular line of poetry in order to make the line fit the metre.

**experiencing I**: in a homodiegetic narrative situation the narrator’s perception of events at the time of their occurrence (compare narrating I).

**explicit characterisation**: a characterisation which is made directly either by the narrator or another character.

**exposition**: the beginning of a play, in this part the audience is informed about the ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘where’, ‘when’ and ‘why’ of the events which are to follow.

**falling action**: the fourth part in Gustav Freytag’s model to describe the overall structure of plays, in this part new tension is created through further events that delay the final catastrophe or dénouement.

**farce**: sub-genre of comedy that presents highly exaggerated and caricatured types of characters and often an unlikely plot.
feminine rhyme: a two-syllable rhyme.

figura etymologica: see polyptoton.

figural characterisation: characterisation made by characters in the narrative or play.

figural narrative situation: the term introduced by the critic Franz Stanzel to denote the narrative situation of heterodiegetic narrator and internal focalisation.

first person narrative situation: the term used by the critic Franz Stanzel to denote a narrative situation where the narrator is also a character in the story and refers to him- or herself using the first person pronoun (equivalent to Genette’s homodiegetic narration).

flashback / analepsis: an event is presented later than it would take place in a natural chronology of the story.

flashforward / prolepsis: future events of the story are anticipated at the discourse level, an event is made present at discourse level earlier than it would take place in the assumed chronology of the story.

flat character: a character who has only few character traits and does not develop or change during the play; term introduced by the writer and critic E.M. Forster.

focalisation: an aspect of narratiion which deals with the question ‘who sees’, ‘whose perspective is adopted?’ External focalisation has the centre of perception outside the story and thus this type of focaliser is also called narrator focaliser, in internal focalisation the focus of perception of a character in the story is adopted. This type of focaliser is thus also called character focaliser.

foil character: a character who represents a sharp contrast to the protagonist and thus serves to stress and highlight the protagonist’s distinctive temperament.

foot: the single unit of stress and non-stress in any given metre.

free indirect discourse: see interior monologue.

free verse: type of verse using irregular patterns of stress and numbers of syllables.

frequency: the aspect of time analysis that relates to the frequency of references which are made at discourse level to any given event on the story level.

Freytag’s Pyramid: the model to describe the overall structure of plays developed by Gustav Freytag.

full rhyme: a type of rhyme where the sound of the rhyme words is identical from the last stressed syllable onwards.

geminatio / epizeuxis: the repetition of the same words immediately next to each other.

gender studies: an approach in literary analysis which scrutinises gender roles and gendered perspectives in literary texts.
**genre**: types or classes of literature, its members share many resemblances in form, types of characters, theme, structure, etc..

**gnomic present**: a present tense used for generic statements that claim general validity.

**gothic novel**: sub-genre of the novel which flourished in the late 18th and during the 19th century, usually set in the medieval period, the plots in gothic novels develop an atmosphere of gloom or even terror, they make liberal use of mystery, desolate castles with secret passages, sensational or supernatural occurrences.

**Haiku**: a form of syllabic verse originating in Japan. The traditional Haiku has three lines, the first line has five, the second has seven and the third has five syllables.

**half-rhyme / pararhyme**: a rhyme where only the consonants (consonance) or the vowels (assonance) or the spelling (eye-rhyme) is identical.

**hamartia**: tragic flaw of a character which causes the downfall of this character.

**heterodiegetic narration**: a narration which is told by a narrator who is not a character in the story, terminology introduced by the critic Gérard Genette.

**high comedy**: a type of comedy that appeals to the audience’s intellect and has a serious purpose.

**historical novel**: a sub-genre of the novel which takes its setting and some of the (main) characters and events from history.

**homodiegetic narration**: a narration which is told by a narrator who is also a character in the story, terminology introduced by the critic Gérard Genette.

**homonym**: words with the same pronunciation and / or spelling but with different meanings.

**hyperbaton** (*see also* inversion) (Greek for “stepping over”): a figure of syntactic dislocation where phrase or words that belong together are separated.

**hyperbole**: obvious exaggeration for emphasis or for rhetorical effect.

**hypotaxis**: clauses and sentences are arranged with subordination, usually longer sentence constructions (opposite of parataxis).

**iamb**: *see* metre.

**I-as-witness**: a homodiegetic narrator who witnesses and reports the events that are narrated but who is not the protagonist.

**identical rhyme**: a rhyme which repeats the same words.

**implicit characterisation**: a characterisation which is made indirectly through description of action or appearance of a character or other characters’ attitudes to this character.
in medias res beginning: the narrative or play begins in the middle of the story, when developments might already be under way without a preceding introduction or exposition to characters and situation.

in ultimas res beginning: the discourse of the narrative or play begins at the actual outcome or ending of the story and then proceeds to relate preceding events in non-chronological order.

indirect speech: a narrative mode in which direct speech is reported rather than reproduced by another character or the narrator.

interior monologue: the character’s consciousness is recreated apparently without any interfering agency (i.e. narrator) who tries to put it into well-turned English. The character’s thoughts are presented directly, imitating as much as possible the character’s mind style.

internal focaliser: see focalisation.

internal rhyme: words within a line rhyme with each other or with the end of the line. See also leonine rhyme.

interplay: the tension between the abstract metrical grid and the actual linguistic and metrical realisation of verse, the term was introduced by the critics W.K. Wimsatt and M.C. Beardsley.

inversion: the usual word order is rearranged, often for the effect of emphasis or to maintain the meter (a type of hyperbaton).

irony: a discrepancy between the expression of something and the intended meaning; the words say one thing but mean another.

isotopy: a concept introduced by the critic A.J. Greimas to denote a sequence of expressions or forms joined by a common ‘semantic denominator’.

iterative reference: an aspect of frequency in time analysis: an event takes place several times and is referred to only once.

leonine rhyme: an internal rhyme where the middle of the line rhymes with the end of the line.

limerick: a stanza form used mainly for nonsense verse, commonly rhyming aabba.

literary canon: a set of ‘important’ or ‘major’ literary works agreed by convention to be of a higher quality than other texts.

literary competence: the ability to produce and understand literary texts.

litotes: see meiosis.

loose plot / episodic plot: a plot where there is little emphasis on the causal connections between events in the narrative, episodes might be linked by a common character or a common theme, also called episodic plot (opposite: tight plot).

low comedy: emphasis is placed on situation comedy, slapstick and farce.

lyric poetry: comparatively short, non-narrative poetry in which a single speaker presents a state of mind or an emotional state.

major characters: characters who are central to the plot and who appear frequently in the play or narrative.
Marxist criticism: an approach to literature under Marxist premises.

masculine rhyme: a one-syllable rhyme.

maximisation principle: the principle which suggests that among possible interpretations of any given line of verse the one that maximises the regularity of metre for the entire poem should be chosen (i.e. the one that requires the smallest number of irregularities), the term was introduced by the critic Rulon Wells.

meiosis (understatement): a rhetorical trope where an idea is deliberately expressed as being less important than it actually is; a special case of understatement is litotes, which denies the opposite of the thing that is being affirmed (sometimes used synonymously with meiosis).

metabolism: see polyptoton.

metafiction: a type of fiction (usually a novel) which takes the writing process as its topic.

metaphor: a figure of similarity, a word or phrase is replaced by an expression denoting an analogous circumstance in a different semantic field. The comparison adds a new dimension of meaning to the original expression. Unlike in simile, the comparison is not made explicit (‘like’ or ‘as’ are not used).

methodology: set of analytical tools used to investigate systematically a certain phenomenon.

metonymy: a figure of contiguity, one word is substituted for another on the basis of some material, causal, or conceptual relation.

metre: the measured arrangement of accents and syllables in poetry. One distinguishes between accentual metre, which counts the number of accents in each line, syllabic metre, which counts the number of syllables in each line and accentual-syllabic metre, which counts both the number of accents and the number of syllables in each line. In accentual-syllabic metre each single unit of stress and non-stress is called foot. The most important foot measures are: iamb, a metrical measurement of two syllables where the first syllable is unstressed and the second syllable is stressed. (da-DUM); trochee, a metrical measurement of two syllables where the first syllable is stressed and the second syllable is unstressed. (DUM-da); dactyl, a metrical measurement of three syllables where the first syllable is stressed and the next two syllables are unstressed. (DUM-da-da); anapaest, a metrical measurement of three syllables where the first two syllables are unstressed and the third syllable is stressed. (da-da-DUM) and spondee, a metrical measurement of two syllables where both syllables are stressed. (DUM-DUM).

metrical grid: the metrical pattern that is established as an abstract expectation in the head of the reader on the basis of the maximisation principle, i.e. the reader or listener expects the metrical pattern to continue as it started.

Middle English Period: literary period 1066-1500.

mimesis: the direct presentation or reflection of the world in art.

mind style: the way in which one expects the character to use language in his/her own mind.
**minor characters**: characters who are not that important for the plot and appear infrequently.

**mixed metaphor**: see catachresis.

**mock-epic**: a type of text (narrative prose or verse) which uses the conventions of epic for insignificant occurrences.

**Modern Period**: literary period from 1914 onwards.

**mono-dimensional character**: a character who is presented with only a few or even just one characteristic, mainly minor characters.

**monologue**: a type of utterance in drama, narrative prose or poetry where one character speaks for a lengthy period of time while other characters are present though they do not speak.

**morality play**: type of medieval drama which presented allegories of man’s life and search for salvation.

**motif**: the frequent repetition of one significant phrase or image within one work or a type of situation or formula that occurs frequently in literature, see also topos.

**multi-dimensional character**: a character with a number of defining characteristics, which are sometimes even conflicting, usually major characters.

**multiple plots**: several plot lines in one narrative or play.

**mystery play**: type of medieval drama based on the Bible; ‘mystery’ is used in the archaic sense of the ‘trade’ conducted by each of the medieval guilds who sponsored these plays.

**mythos**: the term used by Aristotle to denote the material (the story) on which a literary text is based.

**narrated monologue**: a technique for the representation of a character’s consciousness: the character’s thoughts are reproduced in a way one would imagine the character to think, though the narrator continues to talk of the character in the third person. The voices of the narrator and the character are momentarily merged, they become a ‘dual voice’, also called free indirect discourse.

**narrate**: the imaginary reader or character who is the recipient of the narrative in the text.

**narrating I**: in a homodiegetic narrative situation the narrator’s person and perception of events at the time of narration (compare experiencing I.

**narrative modes**: the kinds of utterance through which a narrative is conveyed.

**narrative past**: the past tense used to tell a narrative.

**narrative poetry**: poetry that gives a verbal representation of a sequence of connected events.

**narrative present**: the present tense used to tell a narrative.

**narrator comment**: see comment.

**narrator focaliser**: see focalisation.
narrator: the one who tells us what is going on in the story-world.

naturalistic writing: a writing style practised especially from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, following the French writer Émile Zola, it typically aims for scientific objectivity, elaborate documentation; characters who exhibit strong animal drives such as greed and sexual desires, and who are helpless victims both of glandular secretions within and of sociological pressures without; the end of the naturalistic novel is usually ‘tragic’ because the protagonist, a pawn to multiple compulsions, usually disintegrates, or is wiped out.

Neoclassical Period: literary period 1660-1785.

New criticism: a textimmanent approach to literature.

new historicism / cultural materialism: an approach to literature which regards the literary text as part and expression of the culture it is embedded in, influenced by Marxist criticism, analysis of the text focuses on the discovery of power structures.

novel: an extended piece of prose fiction.

nursery rhymes: traditional little poems for children, often nonsense-verse.

occasional poetry: poetry that was composed for a specific occasion.

octave: eight lines (usually of a sonnet), marked as separate entity by the rhyme pattern (for example: abba abba).

ode: a long lyric poem with a serious subject written in an elevated style.

Old English Period: literary period 450-1066.

Old English Poetry: Poetry written during the Old English Period typically using accentual metre.

onomatopoeia: the sound of the word imitates the sound of the thing which that word denotes.

open end: the difficulties of the plot are not resolved into order or a preliminary conclusion.

open structure/ form: the scenes of a play or individual parts of the narrative only loosely hang together (and are even exchangeable at times), the ending does not really bring about any conclusive solution or result, see also loose structure.

order: an aspect of time analysis referring to the order in which events are presented on discourse level.

ottava rima: an eight line stanza rhyming abababcc.

overstructuring: a term deriving from formalist and structuralist theories indicating a greater use of phonological, morphological, syntactic or structural patterns in literary texts, especially poetry, than in other types of text.

overt narrative situation: a narrative situation where narrator is present as a distinct personality.

overt narrator: a narrator with a distinct personality who makes his or her opinion known (opposite: covert narrator).
oxymoron (Greek for “sharp-dull”): a paradoxical utterance that conjoins two terms that in ordinary usage are opposites.

paradox: a daring statement which unites seemingly contradictory words but which on closer examination proves to have unexpected meaning and truth.

parallelism: the repetition of identical or similar syntactic elements (word or word type, phrase, clause).

parataxis: clauses or sentences are arranged in a series without subordination, usually shorter sentence constructions (opposite of hypotaxis).

paronomasia / pun: wordplay, using words with the same or similar sounds or spelling but different meanings, usually for comic or satirical effect.

pause: an aspect of duration in time analysis: story-time comes to a standstill while discourse-time continues.

pejorative: the use of words with disparaging connotations.

peripety: the turn of fortune at the climax of the plot, usually in the third act, in Gustav Freytag’s structural model of a play.

periphrasis: a descriptive word or phrase is used instead of a proper name; or, conversely, the use of a proper name as a shorthand to stand for qualities associated with it.

personification / prosopopoeia: animals, ideas, abstractions or inanimate objects are endowed with human characteristics.

picaresque novel: an early form of the novel, some critics call it a precursor of the novel, originating in Spain, which tells of the escapades of a lighthearted rogue or rascal, usually episodic in structure.

picture frame stage (also proscenium stage): the modern stage form which places the audience in front of the stage (as opposed to around the stage): giving the audience a view of the stage as though it were looking at a picture, the ‘picture’ being revealed by opening a curtain; dramatic conventions associated with this type of stage often involve the illusion of looking into a room through an invisible ‘fourth wall’.

played time: see story time.

playing time: time it takes to stage a play, see also discourse time.

play-within-the-play: a play is staged within a play as part of its story, typical feature of revenge drama.

plot lines: different elaborations of parts of the plot which are combined to form the entire plot.

plot: the way events are causally and logically connected.

poetic function: the element of a text which draws attention to itself as verbal message, term originated with the linguist Roman Jakobson and refers to one of the six functions of literary communication as schematised in the communication model.
**poetic justice**: signifies the distribution, at the end of a literary work, of earthly rewards and punishments in proportion to the virtue or vice of the various characters.

**poetic licence**: the licence that is allowed a poet to deviate from common usages of language.

**point of attack**: the place in the story where the narrative’s discourse begins.

**polyptoton /metabole**: one word is repeated in different grammatical or syntactical (inflected) forms. A special case of polyptoton is the figura etymologica which repeats two or more words of the same stem.

**polysyndeton**: the unusual repetition of the same conjunction (opposite of asyndeton) in order to join words, phrases or sentences.

**portmanteau word** (blend, contaminatio): word formed by blending two words into one.

**postcolonialism**: approaches to literary criticism influenced by postcolonial theories which investigates, for example, aspects of national identities, hybrid cultures, the significance of indigenous cultures etc.

**poststructuralism**: approaches to literary criticism influenced by poststructuralist philosophy, one of its chief tenets is the denial of the existence of universal principles which create meaning and coherence.

**pragmatic function of language**: the function of language that refers to the mere transmission of information, the term refers to one of the six functions of literary communication as schematised by the linguist Roman Jakobson.

**primary text**: direct speech/ text spoken by the characters of a play.

**primum comparandum**: one of the three elements of a verbal comparison: the original item that is to be described by the help of an image, in a metaphor the primum comparandum is not necessarily mentioned explicitly.

**prolepsis**: see flashforward.

**proscenium arch frames**: the front of the stage, the structure separating the main acting area from the auditorium; it usually forms a rectangular ‘picture frame’.

**proscenium stage**: see picture frame stage.

**prosody**: the systematic study of versification, i.e. the principles and practice of metre, rhyme and stanza forms, sometimes the term “prosody” is extended to include also the study of sound effects such as alliteration, assonance, or onomatopoeia.

**prosopopoeia**: see personification.

**protagonist**: the central character of a narrative or play.

**psychological/psychoanalytical criticism**: an approach to literary criticism influenced by the work of Sigmund Freud which attempts to interpret literary texts with regard to the author’s psychological state or the psychology of the text itself.
psychonarration: a type of representation of consciousness: the narrator reports the character’s thoughts in his or her (the narrator’s) language, the level of mediation remains noticeable.

pun: see paronomasia.

quatrain: a stanza of four lines.

reader response theory / reception theory: approaches to the analysis of literature which focus on the relation between reader and text.

redditio / epanalepsis (framing): a syntactic unit or verse line is framed by the same element at the beginning and at the end.

Renaissance (Early Modern Period): literary period 1500-1660.

repartee: quick response given in order to top remarks of another speaker or to use them to one’s own advantage.

repetitive reference: an aspect of frequency in time analysis: an event takes place once but is referred to or presented repeatedly.

report: a narrative mode where speech, thought or action are rendered indirectly thus creating a distance between the event, the utterance and the reader’s perception of it, in most cases it informs about events in the story.

revenge tragedy: type of tragedy which focuses on the revenge for an injustice to the protagonist or his family.

reavenger type: major character in revenge tragedies who seeks revenge for some injustice done to him or his family (usually the death of a beloved person or a family member).

rhetorical device: departure from what speakers of a particular language apprehend to be the standard meaning of words, or the standard order of words used to achieve some special meaning or effect, rhetorical devices can be divided into rhetorical schemes (or figures) and rhetorical tropes.

rhetorical schemes: describe the arrangement of individual sounds (phonological schemes), words (morphological schemes) or sentence structure (syntactical schemes).

rhetorical trope: a device of figurative language which represents a deviation from the common or main significance of a word or phrase (semantic figures) or include specific appeals to the audience (pragmatic figures).

rhyme royal: a seven-line stanza in iambic pentameter rhyming ababbc used, among others, by James I of Scotland.

rhyme: two words that have the same sound (phoneme) from the last stressed vowel onwards (full rhyme).

rhythm: a series of alternations of speed and emphasis through linguistic and formal devices tending towards regularity.

rich rhyme: two rhyme words with the same sound (phoneme) from the least stressed vowel onwards and the same consonant preceding the last stressed vowel.

romance: a fictional narrative (prose, poetry or drama) which represents a chivalric theme or relates improbable adventures of idealised characters in
some remote or enchanted setting. Characters are usually sharply discriminated as heroes or villains, masters or victims. The protagonist is often solitary and isolated from a social context, the plot emphasises adventure, and is often cast in the form of a quest for an ideal or the pursuit of an enemy.

**romantic comedy**: type of comedy which usually presents a pair of lovers and their struggle to be united.

**Romantic Period**: literary period 1785-1830.

**round character**: a character who displays several character traits and tends to develop throughout the plot, term introduced by the writer E.M. Forster.

**run-on-line (enjambment)**: a syntactical unit carries over into the next verse line.

**Russian formalism**: a theory which considers literary language as deviant from everyday language and postulates the concept of poetic function of literary texts.

**satiric comedy**: a type of comedy that has a critical purpose, usually attacking philosophical notions or political practices as well as general deviations from social norms through ridicule.

**scansion**: the visual representation of the distribution of stress and non-stress in verse.

**scene**: an aspect of duration in time analysis: story-time and discourse-time are equal.

**science fiction**: a form of (prose) fiction which explores the positive or disastrous effects of future scientific discovery.

**secondary text**: those parts of the dramatic text which are not spoken on stage: stage directions, description of setting etc.

**secundum comparatum**: one of the three elements of a verbal comparison: the actual image that is used to describe an object/person; this image part of the comparison is also called vehicle (see also primum comparandum, tertium comparationis).

**self-characterisation**: a character characterises himself/herself.

**semantic field**: groups of words and phrases that express similar ideas or concepts.

**Senecan tragedy**: a type of tragedy modelled on the tragedies written by the Roman poet Seneca entailing a five-act-structure, a complex plot and an elevated style of dialogue.

**sestet**: a stanza of six lines or the last six lines in a sonnet linked by the rhyme pattern.

**setting**: the general locale, historical time and social circumstances in which the action occurs; the particular physical location in which the story of a narrative or dramatic work is set.

**short story**: a short piece of prose fiction organised into a plot and with a kind of dénouement at the end.
showing: the direct (mimetic) presentation of speech or action (opposite: telling).

signified: the concept which a sound image (signifier) denotes, signified and signifier are inseparable like the two sides of a coin, taken together they are the sign which refers to an object in reality (referent).

signifier: the sound image used to refer to a concept (signified), signified and signifier are inseparable like the two sides of a coin, taken together they are the sign which refers to an object in reality (referent).

simile: two things are openly compared with each other, using ‘like’ or ‘as’.

single plot: narratives or plays with only one plot line.

singulative reference: an aspect of frequency in time analysis: an event takes place once and is referred to once on the discourse level.

slow-down: see stretch.

social novel: also industrial novel or Condition of England novel, associated with the development of nineteenth-century realism gives a portrait of society, especially of lower parts of society, dealing with and criticising the living conditions created by industrial development or by a particular legal situation.

sociolect: linguistic style which reveals a speaker’s social background and origin.

soliloquy: a form of monologue, where no other person is present on stage beside the speaker, usually reveals the speaker’s thoughts or feelings.

sonnet: a lyric poem consisting of a single stanza of 14 lines linked by an intricate rhyme scheme.

speech: the most mimetic narrative mode, since it seems to give an almost unmediated representation of ‘actual’ speech events.

speed-up: see summary.

Spenserian stanza: a nine-line stanza rhyming abahbebe, the first eight lines are iambic pentameters, the last line is an alexandrine.

spondee: see metre.

sprung rhythm: a type of syllabic metre introduced by the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins where only the number of stresses in a line are counted the number of syllables between the stresses vary.

stage conventions: conventions concerning the actual performance of plays.

stage props: properties (i.e. objects) used on stage.

stanza: a sub-unit into which the sequence of lines which make up a poem is separated.

static character: a character who shows little or no development throughout the narrative or play, mainly minor characters.

stichic verse: a continuous run of lines of the same length and the same metre, no subdivision into stanzas.
**stichomythia**: a special turn allocation where the speakers’ alternating turns are of one line each.

**story time**: the temporal span of the sequence of events which is described in the narrative or play.

**story**: the chronological sequence of events and actions involving characters.

**stream of consciousness**: a concept developed in psychology by William James which denotes the idea that one’s thoughts are not orderly and well-formulated but more of a jumbled-up sequence of associations, these are not necessarily verbal but also include other sensual perceptions.

**stretch**: an aspect of duration in time analysis discourse-time is longer than story-time.

**structuralism**: an approach to literary analysis influenced by semiotics and structural linguistics; structuralist analysis focuses on the discovery of structures and their functions in literary texts.

**style**: the way in which language is used. Two major aspects have to be regarded when examining the style of a text: diction and syntax.

**subplot**: plot which is less important than and separate from the main plot though usually linked to it.

**substitution**: one metrical foot from a regular pattern is replaced by another one, this does not change the overall metrical pattern.

**summary**: an aspect of duration in time analysis: discourse-time is shorter than story-time.

**suspense**: the tension that the reader or audience experiences when the outcome of events or the cause for certain results in a narrative or play are uncertain.

**syllabic metre**: a metrical pattern in which each line has a prescribed number of syllables but the number of stresses varies.

**symbol**: an object or event representing an abstract concept.

**symbolic space**: spaces which point towards secondary levels of meaning in the text.

**symploce**: a combination of anaphora and epistrophe, so that one word or phrase is repeated at the beginning and another word or phrase is repeated at the end of successive phrases, clauses or sentences.

**synaesthesia**: the description of one kind of sensual perception in terms of another.

**synecdoche**: a figure of contiguity (form of metonymy), the use of a part for the whole, or the whole for the part: ‘pars pro toto’ or ‘totum pro parte’.

**synonym**: use of words with the same or similar meanings.

**tail rhyme**: rhyme pattern \( aab ccb \) where \( b \) is the tail rhyme.

**tautology**: the same idea or concept is repeatedly expressed through additional words, phrases, or sentences.

**telling name**: explicit characterisation of a character through his/her name.
**telling**: a form of presentation where the mediator is very noticeable.

**temporal frame**: deals with the question ‘in what time / when does the action take place?’

**tenor**: the meaning of an image, term introduced by the critic I.A. Richards who distinguishes between tenor and vehicle (the actual image used).

**tercet**: a three-line stanza.

**tertium comparationis**: the element of similarity in a metaphor or simile, which provides the common ground between the two parts of the image (primum comparandum and secundum comparatum).

**terza rima**: a sequence of three-line stanzas rhyming *aba bcb cdc* etc.

**theme**: the abstract topic which a literary text represents to the reader or audience.

**three unities**: in the 16th and 17th centuries, critics of the drama in Italy and France added to Aristotle’s ‘unity of action’ two other unities, to constitute one of the rules of drama known as ‘the three unities’; on the assumption that the achievement of an illusion of reality in the audience of a stage play (verisimilitude) requires that the action represented by a play approximate the actual conditions of the staging of the play, they imposed the ‘unity of place’ (that the action represented be limited to a single location) and the requirement of the ‘unity of time’ (that the time represented be limited to the two or three hours it takes to act the play, or at most to a single day of either 12 or 24 hours).

**tight plot**: a type of plot where everything happens for a reason or a purpose and one event is the consequence of another (opposite: loose or episodic plot).

**topos**: a commonplace, an older term for motif deriving from classical rhetoric and denoting recurring formulas or types of situation in literary texts.

**tragedy**: dramatic sub-genre marked by representations of serious actions which end in disaster for the protagonist.

**tragicomedy**: a sub-genre of tragedy which intermingles conventions derived from both comedy and tragedy, usually with a tragic ending.

**triple rhyme**: a rhyme on three syllables.

**trochee**: see metre.

**turn allocation**: the number of lines in a character’s speech in a play.

**type**: characters who are representatives of a single and stereotyped character category.

**understatement**: see meiosis.

**unity of place, unity of plot, unity of time**: see three unities.

**unreliable narration**: a narration where there is reason to distrust the truthfulness or penetration of the narrator’s version of events.

**vehicle**: the image which conveys the meaning in a metaphor or simile, terminology introduced by the critic I.A. Richards who distinguishes between tenor (the meaning that is conveyed by the image) and vehicle.
**Victorian period**: literary period 1832-1901.

**villanelle**: a stanza from originating in France with an intricate verse and rhyme pattern.

**wit**: brief verbal expression which is intentionally contrived to create comic surprise, combining humour and intellect.

**word scenery**: rhetorically created setting in a play.

**word-painting**: the creation of vivid images of scenery and atmosphere in the viewer’s mind by means of rhetorical devices.

**zeugma** (Greek for "yoking"): one verb controls two or more objects that have different syntactic and semantic relations to it.