

Vocabulary

Study the vocabulary words and definitions below.

- ballad** a narrative poem—one that tells a story—meant to be sung; contains strong rhythm and an obvious rhyme scheme; the subject matter of ballads usually deals with the lives and concerns of commoners and countryfolk
- characters** the fictional (or sometimes legendary) people presented in a dramatic or narrative piece of writing; their qualities are expressed by the things they say and do
- drama** comedy or tragedy written to be performed; the story is usually told through dialogue and action
- epic poem** a long poem that tells a story; usually relates the adventures of a hero important to a particular country or region; the subject matter is always serious and the poem uses formal language
- irony** a contradiction—a difference between appearance and reality, expectation and result, or meaning and intention

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- lyric poem** a short poem narrated by a single speaker; the lyric expresses the speaker's personal thoughts and feelings; the subject of lyrics cover a wide range— love, everyday experiences, death—and are highly imaginative; they convey a strong, single impression on the reader
- Modernism** a literary movement between the two world wars in which the Modernists created characters who are most often alienated people searching unsuccessfully for meaning and love in their lives
- narrative** a piece of writing, such as a novel or a ballad, which tells a story; uses dialogue, action, and the thoughts of characters or the narrator to tell the story
- Naturalism** an extreme form of Realism in which the Naturalists accurately portray the world and create characters who are victims of environmental forces and internal drives beyond their understanding and control
- Neoclassicism** an attitude toward life during the Restoration and the 18th century in which the Neoclassicists respected order, reason, and rules and viewed humans as limited and imperfect; the literature was meant not only to delight but also to instruct in moral virtues and correct social behavior

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- novel** an extended work of fictional prose; has characters, plot, and other literary elements
- ode** a type of lyric written in elevated language praising a person, thing, or idea; often, the speaker shows reverence and awe toward the subject; an ode is serious and dignified, appealing to both the reader's feelings and intellect
- plot** the order of events in a dramatic or narrative piece of writing; these events are usually ordered to achieve a certain artistic or emotional effect
- point of view** how a story is told; the eyes through which events are seen
- prose** fiction or nonfiction written in an ordinary form (not poetry or drama)
- Realism** a literary method developed in the 19th century; Realists based their writing on careful observations of ordinary life, often focusing on the middle or lower classes
- rhyme scheme** a regular pattern of rhyming words in a poem

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Romanticism a literary movement during much of the 19th century in which Romantics glorified nature and celebrated the individual; in reaction against Neoclassicism, their treatment of subjects was emotional rather than rational, imaginative rather than analytical

satire a type of writing that ridicules or criticizes the faults of individuals or groups; may be humorous, its purpose is not only to make readers laugh but to correct, through humor, the flaws and shortcomings it points out

setting the place and time in which a narrative or dramatic piece of writing occurs

sonnet a poem consisting of 14 lines with each line of a sonnet consisting of 10 syllables and following an exact rhythm

stanza a grouping of lines in a poem, often marked by a recurring rhyme; each stanza is set off from the next stanza by a space

theme the general concept(s) implied in a piece of imaginative writing; the underlying purpose of the writing

tone the attitude of the author toward the subject matter, the feelings that are conveyed through the writing