Literary and Speech Terms*

**acoustics** - the qualities that determine the ability of an enclosure (as an auditorium) to reflect sound waves in such a way as to produce distinct hearing

**ad lib** - to improvise especially lines or a speech

In Die Hard Bruce Willis's lines during the scene when he pulls the glass out of his feet were ad-libbed (made up on the spot and not in the script).

Most commonly, actors in drama often use an ad-libbed line to cover an error.

**allegory** - a writing where the characters, events, and settings represent abstract qualities (creates a second meaning beneath the surface story)

Examples:
Jonathan Swift's Tale of a Tub and Gulliver's Travels
George Orwell’s Animal Farm
Richard Adam's Watership Down
Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment"

**alliteration** - the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words or within words

Five miles meandering with mazy motion
- Samuel Taylor Coleridge (Kubla Khan)

The turtle lives 'twixt plated decks
Which partially conceal its sex.
In such a fix to be so fertile.
- Ogden Nash ("The Turtle")

In a somer seson when soft was the sonne,
I shope me in shroudes as I a shepe were,
Went wyde in this world wondres to here.
- William Langland (“Piers the Plowman”)

* Notice the repetition of the “t” sound and the “x” sound in “The Turtle.”

* Notice the repetition of the "s" sound and "w" sound in “Piers the Plowman.”

**allusion** - a passing reference to historical or fictional characters, places, events, or other works that the writer assumes the reader will recognize

1. An ironic use can be seen in "Miniver Cheevy" when the "labors" of Hercules are alluded to.
2. A humorous use is seen in each of the following lyrics.

Two brothers devised what at sight
Seemed a bicycle crossed with a kite.
They predicted--rash pair!
It would fly through the air!
And what do you know? They were Wright!
- Laurence Perrine

A monkey sprang down from a tree
And angrily cursed Charles D.
“I hold with the Bible,”
He cried. “It’s a libel
That man is descended from me!”
- Laurence Perrine

3. Robert Frost composed a poem about a boy with great potential who dies suddenly and without warning called “Out, Out--”.
This refers to a line in Macbeth by William Shakespeare where Macbeth learns of his wife’s “deathcandle!” in a speech referring to the uncertainty of life.

**analepsis** (see flashback)
**antagonist** - the person or thing that causes conflict for the main character

In William Shakespeare's *Othello* the Moor's antagonist is Iago.
In Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird* the final antagonist is Bob Ewell.
In Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* R.P. McMurphy's antagonist is Nurse Ratched.
In Tom Godwin's *"The Cold Equations"* the stowaway's antagonist is scientific law or the "cold equations."
In Stephen King's *The Stand* the primary antagonist is Randall Flagg.

**assonance** - the close repetition of vowel sounds between different consonant sounds (they are not exact rhymes)

Whinnying, neighed the maned blue wind
- Edith Sitwell ("The Drum")

"mad as a hatter" "time out of mind" "free and easy" "slapdash"

**asyndeton** - the omission of conjunctions for effect

Example:
"I came, I saw, I conquered." ("Veni, vidi, vici.") -----> Taken from Word-A-Day E-mail (Subscribe here)

**autobiography** - a story of a person’s life written by the subject

Examples:
*The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*
*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*
*The Autobiography of Malcolm X*

**ballad** - a sung poem about a hero usually ending in tragedy

See "Ballad of Birmingham"
Also, see "American Pie"
Also, see "The Ballad of Davy Crockett" (be prepared for the tune to start up)
Also, see "The Ballad of Jesse James"  
Also, see "The Devil Went Down to Georgia"  
Also, see "Hotel California"  
Also, see "House of the Rising Sun"  
Also, see "Me and Bobby McGee"  
Also, see "Sir Patrick Spens"

**bias** - a personal and sometimes unreasoned judgment; prejudice

A) Two different 24 hour news networks covered the same investigation at the same time. Which headline shows bias since no conclusions had been reached?

1. Oil for food scandal
2. Oil for food probe

Answer
B) Suffolk University has a simple web page using screenshots to illustrate how bias is used on the internet.

**biography** - a story of a person’s life not written by the subject

Examples:
C. Alexander’s 1998 biography, *The Endurance*, about Sir Ernest Henry Shackleton
blank verse - unrhymed, iambic pentameter

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Was this the face that launched a thousand ships
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
And burned the topless towers of Illium?
(from Dr. Faustus by Christopher Marlowe)

cadence - a rhythmic sequence or flow of sounds in language; the beat or pacing

climax - the point of highest intensity in a story (where the outcome is decided) -- (download a plot line example)

The climax in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is when R. P. McMurphy attacks Nurse Ratched because it determines the ending of the novel.

The climax in *To Kill A Mockingbird* is when the attack occurs after the pageant because it decides the ending of the novel.

colloquialism - a commonly used word or phrase that may be inappropriate for a formal writing (can include words, phrases, aphorisms, slang, jargon, etc.)

Examples:

gonna
ain't nothin'
dead as a doornail
hella cool
and all
raining cats and dogs

connotation - the associated or secondary meaning of a word

1. The word “spring” means a season of the year. This is the denotation. However, spring is associated with rebirth, youth, life, and energy. This is the connotation.

2. The words “childish” and “childlike” both mean characteristic of a child (like a child). This is their denotation. However, “childish” is associated with pettiness, immaturity, and temper tantrums while “childlike” is associated with meekness, innocence, and wide-eyed wonder or awe. These would be the connotations of both words.

consonance - the close repetition of identical consonant sounds before and after differing vowel sounds

The *green* frog *groans* to say the *moon* is *mine*

* Notice how the 'gr' sound begins green and groan while the 'n' sound comes after the different vowel sounds. Also, notice how the 'm' sound begins moon and mine while the 'n' sound comes after the different vowel sounds.

couplets - two consecutive rhymed lines of poetry with the same meter

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Three be the things I shall have till I die:
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Laughter and hope and a sock in the eye.
- Dorothy Parker ("Inventory")

denotation - the primary meaning of a word
See connotation for a more detailed difference between denotation and connotation.

denouement - the outcome of the story (the resolution) -- (download a plot line example)

A classic example of denouement is the final scene of Shakespeare's comedy As You Like It; couples marry, an evildoer repents, two disguised characters are revealed for all to see, and a ruler is restored to power. (4)

dialect - the version of a language spoken by a particular group

Click on this link and then click on the "sample" icon to hear Jeff Foxworthy use a southern dialect. Click here to read a weblog (blog) featuring a public discussion of dialects (there's no telling what might said here).

drama - a work of mainly dialogue meant to be performed

Examples:
The Crucible by Arthur Miller
The Tragedy of Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare
Pygmalion by George Bernard Shaw

dramatic irony - when the audience has knowledge that a character does not

1. In film dramatic irony is employed in scary movies when we see the creature sneaking up on someone, but the character does not know the monster is there.

2. In literature dramatic irony can be seen when a character pretends to be a good guy but is actually not, and the audience knows before the other characters in the story.

3. A classic example of dramatic irony is in The Tragedy of Julius Caesar; when the soothsayer warns Caesar of the Ides of March, the audience realizes that is the day when Caesar dies, but Caesar does not know this.

dynamic character - a character who changes during the course of a story

An example of a dynamic character would be Ebeneezer Scrooge from A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens. Scrooge begins as a remorseless and selfish man, but he becomes a caring and remorseful man.

elegy - a poem of sorrow or mourning for the dead; also a reflective poem in a solemn or sorrowful mood

See "Elegy for Jane: My student, thrown from a Horse"
Also, see "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"

end rhyme - when the rhymes in a poem appear at the end of a line

I dare not ask a kiss,
I dare not beg a smile,
Lest having that, or this,
I might grow proud the while.

No, no, the utmost share
Of my desire shall be
Only to kiss that air
That lately kissed thee.
- Robert Herrick ("To Electra")

enunciation - to utter articulate or pronounce all the sounds of a word or phrase
An important scene in Sophocles’ Antigone between Antigone and Ismene provides the reader with important background information: that the girls’ two brothers are dead, and that the king will only bury one with honors while the other is left to rot outside the city. This information helps the reader to understand the characters’ actions in the play.

**extended Metaphor** – a metaphor that is sustained for several lines or that becomes the controlling image of an entire poem

What syrup, what unusual sweet,
Sticky and sharp and strong,
Wafting its poison through the street,
Has lured this buzzing throng
That swarms along the counters there
Where bargain bait is dangled--
Clustered like flies in honey snare,
Shrill, cross, and well entangled?
– Phyllis McGinley (“Sale Today”)

Life the hound
Equivocal
Comes at a bound
Either to rend me
Or to befriend me.
I cannot tell
The hound’s intent
Till he has sprung
At my bare hand
With teeth or tongue.
Meanwhile I stand
And wait the event
– Robert Francis (“The Hound”)

**external conflict** – a struggle occurring outside the mind of a character

Against nature: Carl Stephenson’s “Leiningen Versus the Ants”
Against fate: The Epic of Gilgamesh
Against another character: Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Cask of Amontillado”

**fable** – a short tale ending with a moral

Read some of Aesop’s fables here.

**falling action** – the events after the climax leading up to the resolution (download a plot line example)

**fantasy** – a story set in an unreal or imaginary place

Examples:
J.R.R. Tolkien’s Lord of the Rings trilogy
Christopher Paolini’s Eragon
C.S. Lewis’ The Chronicles of Narnia series

**first person** – when the narrator is involved in the action and typically uses “I”

1st person: I went to the store.
2nd person: You know I went to the store.
3rd person: She went to the store.

**flashback** – a scene occurring before the action of a story

The television series Lost uses flashbacks in almost every episode.
foil - a character set up in opposition of another usually for comparison

In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain the characters of Huck and Tom are foils. Huck represents pragmatism and realism while Tom represents excess and romanticism.

foot - the basic unit of rhythm consisting of at least one accented syllable (/) and one or more unaccented syllables (~)

- iambic = ~/ (one unaccented followed by one accented syllable)
- trochaic = /~ (one accented followed by one unaccented syllable)
- anapestic = ~~/
- dactylic = /~~
- spondaic = //
- paeanic = /~~~

foreshadowing - hints given by the author about future events

In William Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* the "star-crossed lovers" state that they would rather die than be separated, which foreshadows their demise.

In William Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* references and imagery of battle foreshadow the civil war after Caesar's death.

formal writing - the use of heightened language and precise forms

Formal: Your rhetoric lacks erudition and remains singular in its nature.
Informal: You kinda talk funny.

Free Verse - poetry that is "free" of the regular beat of meter, relying on the poet's sensitivity to the music of natural speech rhythms

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.
- Walt Whitman

genre - a category of artistic composition, as in music or literature, marked by a distinctive style, form, or content

haiku - a lyric and unrhymed poem that captures the sense of a moment in a simple natural image; it consists of seventeen syllables broken down into three lines (5 in the first, 7 in the second, and 5 in the third)

- The cold winter wind writes its message in shivers on the drifting snow.
- The falling flower I saw drift back to the branch
- Was a butterfly.
- I saw drift back to the branch
- - Moritake

hyperbole - obvious exaggeration for humor or emphasis
1. Alfred, Lord Tennyson says an eagle is “Close to the sun in lonely lands” in “The Eagle.”
2. Robert Frost says “I shall be telling this with a sigh / Somewhere ages and ages hence” in “The Road Not Taken.”
3. A frustrated parent says, “I’ve told you a million times not to do that!”
4. A hungry teenager says, “I’m so hungry, I could eat a horse.”

**imagery** - descriptive and colorful writing putting pictures in minds

I love those skies, thin blue or snowy gray,
Those fields sparse-plant, rendering meager sheaves;
That spring, briefer than apple-blossom’s breath,
Summer, so much too beautiful to stay,
Swift autumn, like a bonfire of leaves,
And sleepy winter, like the sleep of death.
- Elinor Wylie (“Puritan Sonnet”)

**inflection** - change in pitch or loudness of the voice

**informal writing** - the use of common language and is loosely formed

Formal: Your rhetoric lacks erudition and remains singular in its nature.
Informal: You kinda talk funny.

**initiation** - when the hero takes the first step on his journey

When Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz places her foot on the yellow brick road and begins to walk, she has initiated her journey to meet the wizard.

When Luke Skywalker discovers his aunt’s and uncle’s corpses in Star Wars, he initiates his journey by deciding to join with Obi Wan Kenobi.

**internal conflict** - a struggle occurring inside the mind of a character

Hamlet, in William Shakespeare’s Hamlet, encounters an internal conflict when he wishes to avenge the death of his father but knows not when or how to do it.

In Mark Twain’s The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn Huck encounters his own internal conflict when deciding whether or not to turn in Jim as a runaway slave or not.

**initial rhyme** - when the rhymes in a poem appear at the beginning of a line

I watch the racers struggle by,
while you breeze through that arduous mile.
May you feel the warmth of triumph upon this day,
and hear the cheers over the melody of the band.
- Chris Cloke (“The Race”)

**internal rhyme** - when the rhymes in a poem appear in the middle of a line

I am the daughter of Earth and Water,
And nursling of the Sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
- Percy Bysshe Shelley (“The Cloud”)

**jargon** - the technical terminology or characteristic idiom of a special activity or group
Examples of baseball jargon
Examples of legal jargon
Examples of military jargon
Examples of poker jargon
Examples of professional wrestling jargon

**memoir** - a work centering on one event usually near a historic moment

Examples:
Stephen King's *On Writing*
Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes*
Elie Wiesel's *Night*

**metaphor** - a comparison without using “like” or “as” (also, see extended metaphor)

Walt Whitman calls grass “the beautiful uncut hair of graves.”
Beatrice Janosco calls a garden hose “a long green serpent / With its tail in the dahlias.”
Eve Meriam says that “morning is / a new sheet of paper / for you to write on.”
Chris Cloke calls the woodlands “a fortress of trees.”

**meter** - the measurable repetition of accented and unaccented syllables in poetry

monometer = 1 foot
dimeter = 2 feet
trimeter = 3 feet
tetrameter = 4 feet
trameter = 5 feet
hexameter = 6 feet
heptameter = 7 feet
octameter = 8 feet
(and so on)

**mood** - the feeling created by an author based on the setting, the connotation of words, or the descriptions of characters or ideas. It is usually described using a feeling adjective (mysterious, depressed, sultry, etc.)

**myth** - an anonymous story dealing with a culture’s beliefs (sometimes seen as legends or folk lore as well)

Examples:
American myth: Paul Bunyan
Greek myth: Hercules
Native American myth: Trickster tales
Norse myth: *Beowulf*

**novel** - a major literary work with many characters, locales, and events

Examples:
*Jurassic Park* by Michael Crichton
*The Stand* by Stephen King
*To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

**novella** - a work the length of a long short story usually centering on one or more major events

Examples:
*Animal Farm* by George Orwell
*Breakfast at Tiffany's* by Truman Capote
Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad
Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck
Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway

onomatopoeia - the use of words whose sound imitates the sound of the thing being named

- bark
- clang
- hum
- hiss
- meow
- twitter
- buzz

parody - the imitative use of the words, style, attitude, tone, and ideas of an author in such a way as to make them ridiculous

So much depends upon
So much more depends upon
a red wheel barrow
a universal remote control
glazed with rain water
sitting on a coffee table
beside the white chickens
beside the TV Guide
- William Carlos Williams
- Chris Cloke

personification - giving non human things human traits

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.
Whatever I see I swallow immediately
Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.
I am not cruel, only truthful--
The eye of a little god, four-cornered.
Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.
It is pink, with speckles. I have looked at it so long
I think it is part of my heart. But it flickers.
Faces and darkness separate us over and over.
- Sylvia Plath (excerpt from "Mirror")

"the sun smiled upon us"
"the wind whispered my name"
"Love captured my senses, locking them away"

plagiarism - using another writer's ideas or words as one's own

A University of Purdue site devoted to helping students avoid plagiarism.

poetry - a form of writing at its most imaginative and intense

Check out this site which focuses on poetry and includes a "poem of the day."

polysyndeton - the overuse of conjunctions for effect

Example:
Uncle Jim gobbled candy and pizza and ice cream and donuts and muffins that night!
-----> Taken from Word-A-Day E-mail (Subscribe here)

projection - the act of control of the volume, clarity, and distinctness of a voice to gain greater audibility

protagonist - the main character

Famous protagonists:
Scout in To Kill A Mockingbird by Harper Lee
R.P. McMurphy and Chief in One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest by Ken Kesey
return - when the hero receives the “prize” and passes it on

In *The Wizard of Oz* Dorothy wakes from her dream and realizes that "there is no place like home" (her prize).

In *Star Wars* Luke Skywalker destroys the Death Star and brings a temporary peace to the region and saves a planet with the base of resistance (his prize).

rhetorical question - a question asked merely for effect with no answer expected

A classic example:

“Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?
When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept:
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
You all did see that on the Lupercal
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?”

- Antony in William Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* (Act III, Scene 2)

Everyday examples:
Are you crazy?
What were you thinking?
Who cares?
Are you kidding me?

rising action - the events leading up to the climax (download a plot line example)

scene - a division of an act usually with a change in time or location

*The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* has five acts.
*The Crucible* has four acts.

science fiction - a story usually in the future using science to predict events

Examples:
*Dune* by Frank Herbert
*Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card
*I Robot* by Isaac Asimov

second person - when the narrator speaks directly to the reader

1st person: I went to the store.
2nd person: You know I went to the store.
3rd person: She went to the store.

separation - when the hero sets himself apart from society

When Dorothy is swept away to Kansas in *The Wizard of Oz*, she becomes separated from her society.
When Luke Skywalker loses his family and leaves Tatooine, he becomes separated from his society.

setting - the time and place of a story

In "The Cold Equations" the setting is the frontier of outer space in the distant future.
In *To Kill A Mockingbird* the setting is 1930s Maycomb, Alabama.

**short story** - a story of 500-15000 words centering on one major event

Examples:
"The Cold Equations" by Tom Godwin
"The Gift of the Magi" by O. Henry
"Teenage Wasteland" by Anne Tyler

**simile** - a comparison using "like" or "as"

Here and there his brown skin hung in strips like ancient wallpaper... sits the squirrel.

- Elizabeth Bishop

- Humbert Wolfe

**situational irony** - when the opposite of what is expected occurs

Example:
In Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* one would expect Caesar to believe the soothsayer's warning since he believes in superstition (ex. Lupercal).

In Anne Tyler's *The Accidental Tourist* Macon writes travel books yet hates to travel.

**slang** - language peculiar to a particular group

Examples:
making it to "the big leagues" = achieving a more prestigious position (baseball slang)
"da bomb" = the best or the coolest (another example of common slang)
"don't feed the bears" = don't get a ticket from the police (CB slang)
"hella" or "hecka" = a lot (common slang)
"hooch" = illegally made alcohol (country slang)
"the 4-1-1" = information (hip hop slang)
"bling" = fancy adornments (hip hop slang)
"LOL" = laugh out loud (internet slang)
"BRB" = be right back (internet slang)
"the head" = toilet or latrine (navy slang)

**sonnet** - a fourteen-line lyric poem in iambic pentameter

Petrarchan Sonnet → “On His Blindness” by John Milton

When I consider how my light is spent
  a
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
  b
And that one Talent which is death to hide,
  b
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
  a
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
  a
My true account, lest he returning chide;
  b
Doth God exact day-labour, light denied,
  b
I fondly ask; But patience to prevent
  a
That murmur, soon replies, God doth not need
  c
Either man’s work or his own gifts; who best
  d
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best, his state
  e
Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed
  c
And post o’er Land and Ocean without rest:
  d
They also serve who only stand and wait.  
  e
Shakespearean Sonnet → Sonnet by William Shakespeare

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time’s waste.
Then can I drown an eye, unus’d to flow,
For precious friends hid in death’s dateless night,
And weep afresh love’s song since cancell’d woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanish’d sight
Then can I grieve at brievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o’er
The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan
Which I new pay as if not paid before.

But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restor’d and sorrows end.

stanza - a section or division in a poem (a grouping of lines in a recurring pattern)

"Annabel Lee" has six stanzas.
"Fire and Ice" has one stanza.
"Miniver Cheevy" has eight stanzas.

static character - a character who does not change during the course of a story

The Widow Wycherly, Mr. Gascoigne, Colonel Killigrew, and Mr. Medbourne do not change in "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

symbol - something that represents itself and something else

Examples:
1. Scales symbolize justice.
2. A clenched fist symbolizes aggression.
3. In "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" by Nathaniel Hawthorne the mirror in the doctor's study symbolizes his guilt over lost patients (even described as having a "gilt" frame).

syntax - the ordering of words in grammatical correctness

theme - a main idea or important idea in a work

In To Kill A Mockingbird by Harper Lee some themes are racism, injustice, and maturation.

third person objective - when the narrator is not involved in the action and can not reveal any characters’ thoughts

(Think of this as the role of a reporter: he/she can only describe what is seen, not what the thoughts of the characters are.)

third person limited - when the narrator is not involved in the action and can only reveal one character’s thoughts

third person omniscient - when the narrator is not involved in the action and can reveal all of the characters’ thoughts

(Remember: "omni-" means all.)
tone - the author’s attitude towards the subject; can be comparable to tone of voice (although often used interchangeably with mood)

* Typically, the tone of a poem is expressed with an adjective such as sarcastic, optimistic, earnest, bitter, etc.

trite - hackneyed or boring from much use: not fresh or original: overused

verbal irony - when the opposite of what is said is meant

Examples:
1. When someone obese walks into a room and is called "slim"
2. When someone very tall walks into a room and is called "shorty"
3. When Antony in Shakespeare’s The Tragedy of Julius Caesar calls Brutus "an honorable man"

Verbigeration - the repetition of meaningless words and phrases

Examples:
"Abominable snowmen of androcratic academia: freezers and packagers of learning; chilling throng of frigid fellows, specialists in verbigeration and refrigeration of knowledge.” Audrey DeLaMartre; Bible Speaks to Fill Readers With Holy Chutzpah, The Star Tribune (Minneapolis); Nov 1, 1987. ----> Taken from Word-A-Day E-mail (Subscribe here)

Verse - often used as a synonym for poetry but usually refers to poems of lesser literary value (though they are still metrical and rhymed)

Villanelle - a poem of five stanzas of tercets (three lines) and one finalquatrain (four lines). The tercets maintain an aba rhyming pattern while the quatrain is abaa.

Also, two refrains are used throughout the poem, consisting of the first and third lines of the first tercet. Example by Dylan Thomas:

Do not go gentle into that good night,  a
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;  b
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.  a

Thou shalt not go gentle into that good night,  a
Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night,  a repeat of line #1

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright  a
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.  a of line #3

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,  a
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,  b
Do not go gentle into that good night,  a repeat of line #1

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight,  a
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.  a repeat of line #3

And you, my father, there on the sad height,  a
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.  b
Do not go gentle into that good night,  a repeat of line #1
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.  a repeat of line #3
* Definitions and examples taken from:

1. Wenatchee High School's literary terms sheets,
2. NTC's *Dictionary of Literary Terms* by Kathleen Morner and Ralph Rausch, and
3. *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* by J.A. Cuddon
4. Wikipedia.org