

Shakespearean Drama & Language / Essay Prompt

Tragedy: a drama that results in catastrophe (usually death) for the main character(s)

Tragic Hero (Protagonist): central character with a tragic flaw or is the victim of fate

Antagonist: adversary or hostile force opposing the protagonist

Dialogue: two or more characters talking in a play (-*di*- = two; -*log*- = word)

Monologue: one character's long speech, spoken to another character (-*mono*- = one; -*log*- = word)

Soliloquy: a speech given by a character alone, expressing inner thoughts/feelings (-*sol*- = alone)

Aside: a character's brief remark that only the audience hears

Dramatic Foil: character who contrasts sharply with another character, highlighting traits of both

Dramatic Irony: when the audience knows more than the characters

Comic Relief: humorous scene or speech to relieve tension

Allusion: reference to a literary or historical person or event that the audience is expected to know

Pun: humor resulting from words that have similar sounds but different meanings; a play on words

Blank Verse: unrhymed lines of iambic pentameter

[iambic pentameter: 5 unstressed (˘) syllables, each followed by a stressed (ˈ) syllable: ˘˘˘˘˘ˈ˘˘˘˘˘]

Run-on lines: lines of verse that continue into the following line without a pause

End-stopped lines: lines of verse with punctuation at the end, requiring a pause

Couplet: a pair of end-rhyming lines in a row; often signals the end of a speech or scene

Essay Prompt: You have been assigned to carefully analyze one speech from *Romeo and Juliet*, and by now you have at least some idea how that speech fits into the rest of the play. Using quotes from the speech and summaries of the surrounding scenes as textual evidence, **write a multi-paragraph informational essay that explains how at least three (3) of the literary elements listed above are at work in your assigned speech.**

- I. **Introduction:** Attention getter (“hook”); background information (including title of play, Act/Scene, name of character, circumstances surrounding the speech – **DO NOT COPY THE ENTIRE SPEECH INTO THE ESSAY!**); clearly-stated thesis (primary claim) that you will develop in the body of the essay.
- II. **Body Paragraphs:** One for each literary element you intend to address. (The more the better!) Each body paragraph should contain a topic sentence, a brief definition of the literary element, and a thorough explanation of how that element is at work in your speech, what effect it creates, and how it contributes to the overall effect of the speech; the body paragraphs should also contain short, carefully chosen quotations from the speech that illustrate the explanations you are providing. Do not just paraphrase the speech.
- III. **Conclusion:** Restate main points and thesis briefly; close with a memorable final statement.