

Basic Poetry Terms

Contrast -

The state of being strikingly different from something else.

IE- The cheddar cheese was yellow, while the jalapeño cheddar was white.

Couplet -

Two lines of verse, usually in the same meter and joined by a rhyme, that form a unit.

IE- "The time is out of joint, O cursed spite
That ever I was born to set it right!" - Hamlet

Denotation -

The literal or primary meaning of a word, in contrast to the feelings or ideas that word suggests.

IE- If you were to look up "snake" in the dictionary, you would get the definition of a reptile that is legless, scaly, etc. However, in literature a snake would often be referred to as a sneaky person. So if Shakespeare called something a snake, and it was literally a snake, that would be an example of denotation.

Figurative Language -

Language that uses words or expressions with a meaning different from the literal one.

IE- "I'm going to kill myself" said the exasperated Timmy as Sarah failed once again. As you can see, he doesn't mean he's going to literally kill himself, it's just a figure of speech.

Hyperbole -

Exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally.

IE- "I could eat a horse."

Imagery -

Visually descriptive or figurative language, especially in a literary work.

IE- The long brown hair flowed down her back like the graceful willow, blowing back and forth softly as the cool breeze hit it.