

literary terms for Shakespeare's *Hamlet*

aside

- a brief statement uttered by a character in a play, intended to be heard by the audience but not by other characters on the stage

blank verse

- unrhymed poetry written in iambic pentameter
- standard form for all Shakespearean drama

dramatic irony

- words or actions of a character carry meaning that is unperceived by the character but understood by the audience

foil

- a character who, through contrast, highlights the distinctive characteristics of another

foreshadowing

- presentation of material that hints at events to occur in later action
- may take the form of an established atmosphere, a parallel action, a physical object, or the revelation of a decisive character trait

heroic couplet

- a pair of rhyming lines, written in iambic pentameter, that expresses a complete thought
- employed in Shakespearean drama to end a scene and to emphasize character or action

soliloquy

- a speech delivered while a character is alone on stage, which calculatingly reveals to the audience the honest thoughts and plans of that character

tragedy

- drama that relates the fall of a person of high status as a result of the protagonist's tragic flaw
- celebrates courage and dignity as the hero faces inevitable doom
- begins in chaos and ends with the restoration of order