ENGLISH LITERATURE

Key terms for analysing literature

Theme	A central idea a text explores, such as power, loss or identity.
Tone	The attitude a writer or narrator shows, created through word choice.
Imagery	Descriptive language that appeals to the senses and builds pictures in the mind.
Symbolism	Using an object, colour or image to represent a bigger idea.
Motif	A repeated image, idea or phrase that builds meaning across a text.
Irony	A contrast between what is said or expected and what actually happens.
Dramatic irony	When the audience knows something that a character does not.
Narrative perspective	The point of view a story is told from, such as first or third person.
Context	The social, historical or cultural background that shapes a text.