

Idyll

Idyll is a simple descriptive work in poetry or prose that deals with rustic life or pastoral scenes or suggests a mood of peace and contentment. It is a narrative poem (such as Tennyson's Idylls of the King) treating an epic, romantic, or tragic theme. The Idylls are lighthearted carefree episodes that are a fit subject for an idyll. It can even mean a romantic interlude in a play.

- o **Poetry** that either depicts a peaceful, idealized country scene or a long poem telling a story about heroes of a bygone age.

Idyll means - "little picture", a short poem of a pastoral or rural character

revived during the Renaissance, when some poets employed

short poetical compositions of the poet

this style was followed by English poets also.

Pastoral - from pastor (Latin word for) "shepherd" presents the life of shepherds and other rural folk free from the complexities and corruption of city life

conventional poems express an Urban poet's nostalgic life

this age often remembered as the lost Golden Age by Classical poets.

Varied forms of the Pastorals -

**Pastoral poetry was very famous among poets
expanded the pastoral mode**

strongly influenced by Italian Renaissance models

Sidney's Arcadia - a long pastoral romance

Marlowe's - The Passionate Shepherd to His Love

Fletcher's - The Faithful Shepherdess

Shakespeare's - As You Like it

**The classical poets - used the pastoral
convention are - Theocritus and Virgil and**

**The English poets are - Spenser, Milton, Shelley
and Matthew Arnold.**

**Edmund Spenser's The Shepheardes Calender
brought about a vogue for the pastoral**

**William Shakespeare's As You Like It which is
itself a pastoral play.**



Epic

What is an epic?

- **A long, narrative poem which tells a story and celebrates the deeds of legendary heroes**
- Characteristics:
 - Traditionally **begins *in medias res***, in the middle of things
 - Is episodic**, or divided into books (rather than chapters or scenes)
 - Involves the supernatural**, usually gods
 - Provides archetypal characters** (the Hero, the Son, the Wife)
- Examples of epics:
 - The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* by Homer
 - The *Aeneid* by Virgil
 - Beowulf*

Characteristics of an EPIC POEM

- 1) **Hero** is a figure of national or cosmic importance.
- 2) **Setting** is on a large scale (the world, universe, etc.)
- 3) **Action** involves superhuman deeds and courage.
- 4) **Supernatural beings** are involved in the action of the story.
- 5) The **Style** of the poem is *elevated*—i.e., there's no overt sex or potty humor.

Conventions of an EPIC POEM

- 1) Poet opens Epic with his *argument* (a.k.a., Epic Theme)
- 2) Narrative begins *in medias res* (“in the middle of things”). In Homer, this gave birth to the *flashback*. (The *exposition* comes later in story.)
- 3) *Catalogues* are used: lists of warriors, ships, armies, etc.
- 4) **Poetic Features** include: *allusions*, *epithets*, and *epic similes*.
- 5) Hero undergoes a *katabasis* *

Some Famous Epics

Homer(Greek): *The Iliad, The Odyssey*

Virgil(Roman): *The Aeneid*

Dante (Italian Renaissance): *The Divine Comedy*

John Milton (English Ren.): *Paradise Lost*

Characteristics of the Epic

Most epics share certain characteristics:

- (1) The hero is of imposing stature, of national or international importance, and of great historical or legendary significance;**
- (2) the setting is vast, covering great nations, the world, or the universe;**
- (3) the action consists of deeds of great valor or requiring superhuman courage;**
- (4) supernatural forces--gods, angels, and demons--interest themselves in the action;**
- (5) a style of sustained elevation is used; and**
- (6) the poet retains a measure of objectivity.**

The Epic Conventions

- High formal diction
- Invocation of the Muse
- "machinery" (i.e. gods or supernatural figures)
- Gods speak to hero in a dream
- The arming of the hero
- Sacrifice to the gods
- Exhortation of the general to the troops
- Catalog of the armies
- Battle scenes
- Descent into the underworld
- Intercession of the gods
- Ascension of the dead into the heavens

An epic poem has...

- a hero who embodies national, cultural, or religious ideals
- a hero upon whose actions depends the fate of his people
- a course of action in which the hero performs great and difficult deeds
- a recognition of -- or intercession by -- divine or supernatural powers
- a concern with eternal human problems
- a dignified and elaborate poetic style

The Epic Form: Epic Conventions & Elements Literary Term Glossary



Term	Definition	Example
Epic Hero	A larger than life figure, typically of noble or semi-divine birth who pits his courage, skill and virtue against evil forces.	Achilles Beowulf
Tragic Flaw	The character defect that causes the downfall of the protagonist.	Achilles: Anger
Archetype	Characters, images, and themes that symbolically embody universal meanings and basic human experiences, regardless of when or where they live.	Common literary archetypes include stories of quests, descents to the underworld, ascents to heaven, etc.
Quest	A perilous journey undertaken by an epic hero in order to prove heroism, win honor, and undying renown.	Gilgamesh: Immortality
Divine Intervention	Help or harm provided to an epic hero by a god or other supernatural force.	Athena helps Achilles in battle with Hector.

Mock Epic – not really epic

- Normally much shorter than true epics.
 - Satirize their subjects instead of extolling them.
 - Treat a trivial subject in a lofty fashion to make it appear ridiculous.
 - Mock epic uses epic conventions, but instead of describing battles and perilous voyages across deep seas, authors depict card games and suitors vying for advantageous positions in the drawing room.
 - Two examples are Pope's Rape of the Lock and Byron's Don Juan.
- Makes fun of the classical epic by making a trivial/silly issue appear to be EPIC
 - Battles
 - Grandiose speeches
 - gods/goddesses

MOCK-HEROIC

MOCK-EPIC

HEROIC-COMIC



SATIRES OR PARODIES

EXAGGERATION

17TH CENTURY ITALY

POST-RESTORATION

AUGUSTAN PERIOD

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

- "The Rape of the Lock" (1712)
- Elegant Satire
- Hysterical Battles between the sexes
- Follies of young
- It consisted of 2 Cantos
- Expanded in 1714
- Consisted of 5 cantos