

Poetry Vocabulary



Alliteration:

Definition:

- The repetition of consonant sounds in words that are close together.

•Example:

- Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers. How many pickled peppers did Peter Piper pick?

Assonance:

Definition:

- The repetition of vowel sounds in words that are close together.

•Example:

- And so, all the night-ide, I lie down by the side

Of my darling, my darling, my life and my bride.

-Edgar Allen Poe, from “Annabel Lee”

Ballad:

Definition:

- A song or songlike poem that tells a story.

• Examples:

- “The Dying Cowboy”

- “The Cremation of Sam McGee”

Cinquain:

Definition:

- A five-line poem in which each line follows a rule.
 1. A word for the subject of the poem.
 2. Two words that describe it.
 3. Three words that show action.
 4. Four words that show feeling.
 5. The subject word again-or another word for it.

End rhyme:

Definition:

- Rhymes at the ends of lines.

- Example:

- “I have to speak-I must-I should

- I ought...

- I'd tell you how I love you if I thought

- The world would end tomorrow afternoon.

- But short of that...well, it might be
too soon.”

The end rhymes are ought, thought and
afternoon, soon.

Epic:

Definition:

- A long narrative poem that is written in heightened language and tells stories of the deeds of a heroic character who embodies that values of a society.
- Example:
 - “Casey at the Bat”
 - “Beowulf”

Figurative language:

Definition:

- An expressive use of language.
- Example:
 - Simile
 - Metaphor

Form:

Definition:

- The structure and organization of a poem.

Free verse:

Definition:

- Poetry without a regular meter or rhyme scheme. These poems may use internal rhyme, repetition, alliteration, onomatopoeia.

Haiku:

Definition:

- Originating in Japan, a Haiku is a three-line poem which contains seventeen syllables.
 - 5 syllables in the first line
 - 7 syllables in the second line
 - 5 syllables in the last line

Imagery:

Definition:

- Language that appeals to the seven senses.
- Example:
 - “Mrs. Flowers”

Internal rhyme:

Definition:

- Rhymes within lines.
- Example:
 - “Back into the chamber turning, all my soul
Within me burning.
-Edgar Allen Poe, from “The Raven”

Limerick:

Definition:

- A very short humorous or nonsensical poem with five lines.

- Example:

- “I sat next to the Duchess at tea;
It was just as I feared it would be;

Her rumblings were abdominal

Were truly phenomenal,

And everyone thought it was me!”

-President Woodrow Wilson

Line:

Definition:

- A series of words written, printed, or recited as one of the component's units of a larger piece of writing, such as a poem.

Lyric poetry:

Definition:

- Poetry that expresses the feelings or thoughts of a speaker rather than telling a story. These poems are usually short and imply, as opposed to stating, a strong emotion or idea.

Metaphor:

Definition:

- An imaginative comparison between two unlike things in which one thing is said to be another thing.
 - Not a simile: metaphors do not use the words “like” and “as”
- Example:
 - Jonny has a heart of stone.

Narrative poem:

Definition:

- A poem that tells a story.
 - Not an epic: Epics have superhuman or extraordinary happenings, narratives do not.
- Example:
 - “Paul Revere’s Ride”

Ode:

Definition:

- A lyric poem, rhymed or unrhymed, on a serious subject. These are typically addressed to one person/thing.
- Example:
 - “Ode to Thanks”

Onomatopoeia:

Definition:

- Using words whose sounds suggest their meaning.
- Example:
 - Buzz
 - Rustle
 - Tinkle
 - Thud

Quatrain:

Definition:

- A poem or stanza of four lines.
- Example:
 - Fly away, fly away over the sea,
Sun-loving swallow; for summer is done;
Come again, come again, come back to me,
Bringing the summer and bringing the sun.
-Emily Dickinson

Repetition:

Definition:

- Repeating a word, phrase, line, or stanza multiple times within the poem.
- Example:
 - “Go Down, Moses” chorus

Rhyme scheme:

Definition:

- The pattern of end rhymes in a poem. You can identify this by using different letters of the alphabet for each rhyme.
- Example:
 - “A gentleman dining at Crewe, (a)
Found quite a large mouse in his stew (a)
Said the waiter, “Don’t shout, (b)
And wave it about, (b)
Or the rest will be wanting one too!” (a)
 - The Rhyme scheme of this limerick is aabba.

Rhyme:

Definition:

- The repetition of accented vowel sounds and all sounds following them in words that are close together in a poem.

Rhythm:

Definition:

- A musical quality produced by the repetition of stressed and unstressed syllables or by the repetition of other certain sound patterns.
- Example:
 - “The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.
-Lord Byron, from “The Destruction of Sennacherib”

Simile:

Definition:

- A comparison between two unlike things, using a word such as *like*, *as*, *than*, or *resembles*.
- Example:
 - Her face was as round as a pumpkin.
 - The wind is roaring like a banshee.

Sonnet:

Definition:

- A fourteen-line poem, usually written in iambic pentameter.
- 2 kinds:
 - Shakespearean: 3 four-line units and ends with a couplet.
 - Italian: poses a question or makes a point in first eight lines and responds to that in the last six lines.

Sound devices:

Definition:

- Words that explain different sounds and functions within writing.
- Example
 - Alliteration
 - Assonance
 - Rhyme
 - Rhythm

Speaker:

Definition:

- The voice talking to us in a poem. The voice is NOT always the poet.

Stanza:

Definition:

- A group of consecutive lines in a poem that form a single unit. It is comparable to a paragraph in an essay.