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Introduction to Poetry



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Vocabulary, Figurative Language,
Sound Devices, Types of Poetry, How
To Analyze a Poem, & Rhyme Scheme

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In your own words...

Define a poem.



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Poetry Vocabulary

- **poem**: a piece of writing that conveys a message through language and often relates to culture, art, nature, or life. Poetry emphasizes language's musical qualities.
- **speaker**: the voice behind the poem; the character or narrator saying the poem
- **line**: a unit in poetry that consists of any words arranged in one row
- **stanza**: a grouping of lines that form a unit in a poem



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Poetry Vocabulary

- **quatrain**: a four-line stanza or grouping of four lines of verse
- **couplet**: two successive lines of poetry, often rhymed
- **cinquain**: a poem or stanza, also known as a quintain or quintet, composed of five lines
- **tercet**: a set or group of three lines of verse rhyming together or connected by rhyme
- **refrain**: a specific line or lines that are repeated in a poem



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Example Poem

In jars they lie, a perfect pair, serene,
Peanut butter rich, jelly bright and keen.
Swirled together, a dance of sweet delight,
On bread they meet, a symphony ignite.

A taste of childhood, nostalgia's embrace,
Peanut butter and jelly, a timeless grace.

Quatrain

2 Stanzas

Couplet

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Poetry Vocabulary

- **symbol**: an object or action that stands for something beyond itself
- **theme**: the message or idea that an author expresses in a poem about the subject
- **mood**: the feeling(s) and atmosphere that a piece of writing creates within the reader



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Poetry Vocabulary

- **tone**: the attitude of the speaker or author as interpreted by the reader
- **imagery**: descriptive language that invokes any of the five senses to create a set of mental images for the reader
- **juxtaposition**: when two things are placed close together to create a contrasting effect



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Poetry Vocabulary



HARDCORE

- **oxymoron**: a combination of two words that appear to contradict each other (such as: “bittersweet”)
- **pun**: a play on words usually when a single word with more than one meaning is used humorously to exploit both meanings (such as: “Make like a tree and leave.”)
- **paradox**: a situation that appears to be contradictory and absurd but contains some measure of truth (“the days are long but the years are short”)

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Poetry Vocabulary



□ **allusion**: A subtle, intentional reference to a historical, mythic, or literary person, place, event, artwork, or movement

□ Allusion Example: Taylor Swift's "Love Story" Lyrics:

□ Little did I know that you were Romeo

You were throwin' pebbles

And my daddy said, "Stay away from Juliet"

(Alludes to Shakespeare's play Romeo and Juliet)

□ **proverb**: a short saying that states a very general truth or piece of advice ("Beggars can't be choosers")

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Poetry Vocabulary

- **poetic foot**: is a basic repeated sequence of meter composed of two or more accented or unaccented syllables
- **iamb**: a metrical foot consisting of one short (or unstressed) syllable followed by one long (or stressed) syllable
- **iambic pentameter**: a traditional form of rising meter consisting of lines containing five iambic feet, or ten syllables
- **enjambment**: the continuation of a phrase or sentence from one line to another without an end-stop
- **anaphora**: a technique in which successive phrases or lines begin with the same words
- **metonymy**: a word or phrase that replaces the name of an object or concept for another to which it is related (for example, “the Crown” is a metonymy for the monarchy rule)



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Figurative Language

- **simile**: the comparison of two unlike things using the words “like” or “as”
- **metaphor**: the comparison of two unlike things that share something in common without using the words “like” or “as”
- **personification**: when an idea or object is given human attributes and/or feelings as if it were human
- **idiom**: a common expression whose fixed order has a particular meaning that can not be determined from its literal meaning (such as, “You’re in a pickle.”)
- **hyperbole**: an overtly exaggerated statement or claim
- **irony**: when contradictory statements or situations reveal a reality that is different from what appears to be true



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Sound Devices

- **rhyme**: The repetition of sounds at the ends of words (as in *sun* and *one*)
- **rhyme scheme**: the ordered pattern of rhymes at the end of lines in a poem
- **slant rhyme**: a rhyme formed with words with similar but not identical sounds (also called a near-rhyme) *Examples: swarm* and *worm*, or *grace* and *ways*
- **rhythm**: The pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in each line
- **meter**: a regular pattern of rhythm

“Twas the night before Christmas when all through the house,
not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.” Here, the meter
pattern is: unstressed unstressed stressed, unstressed unstressed
stressed.”



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Sound Devices

- **alliteration**: repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words (such as “Mary baked more muffins than any other mom.”)
- **consonance**: repetitive sounds produced by consonants within a sentence or phrase (such as “He stoodu on the roadu and criedu.”)
- **assonance**: repetition in vowel sounds in words that don’t end with the same consonant (such as “I aim to play the main game.”)



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Sound Devices

- **onomatopoeia**: The use of words that imitate the sounds associated with the objects or actions they refer to (such as *boom* or *splat*)
- **repetition**: the technique of repeating the same word or phrase multiple times within a poem

I have been one acquainted with the night.
I have walked out in rain—and back in rain.
I have outwalked the furthest city light.

I have looked down the saddest city lane.
I have passed by the watchman on his beat
And dropped my eyes, unwilling to explain.



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Types of Poetry

- narrative poem
- lyrical poem
- haiku
- ballad
- sonnet
- limerick
- free verse
- acrostic
- concrete
- blank verse
- blues poem
- elegy
- ode
- prose
- villanelle



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Types of Poetry

- **narrative poem**: a form of poetry that tells a story, often using elements of a narrative such as narrator, plot, setting, and characters
- **lyrical poem**: a non-narrative poem, often with songlike qualities, that expresses the speaker's personal emotions and feelings
- **haiku**: a Japanese poem, composed of three lines and seventeen syllables, written in a 5/7/5 syllable count, and often focuses on images from nature
- **ballad**: a plot-driven song with one or more characters and often constructed in quatrain stanzas
- **sonnet**: a fourteen-line poem written in one stanza, traditionally in iambic pentameter and it must have a formal rhyme scheme
- **limerick**: a humorous or nonsensical poem composed of five lines with the rhyme scheme AABBA
- **free verse**: a poem that does not rhyme or contain a structured meter



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Types of Poetry

- **acrostic**: a poem in which words are spelled out through the first letter of each line
- **concrete**: a poem that is as much a piece of visual art made with words as it is a work of poetry
- **blank verse**: poetry that does not rhyme but follows a regular meter, most commonly iambic pentameter
- **blues poem**: a poem that stems from African American culture and the musical tradition of the blues, typically highlighting themes of struggle, pain and despair
- **elegy**: a form of poetry in which the poet or speaker expresses grief, sadness, or loss
- **ode**: a lyric poem that praises or celebrates an event, a person, or a thing
- **prose**: a poem that lacks the line breaks traditionally associated with poetry (a poem written in sentences and paragraphs)
- **villanelle**: a highly structured poem made up of five tercets followed by a quatrain, with two repeating rhymes and two refrains



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How to Analyze a Poem

- First, read the poem once without stopping.
- Then, read the poem again, stopping and reflecting on every line and/or stanza.
- A poem is an intricate form of literature that rarely is understood on the first read. So if you don't "get it" right away, that's NORMAL!
- The form of a poem is part of its meaning. One should observe all features and techniques of a poem to effectively interpret a poem's meaning.



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How to Analyze a Poem

Remember the acronym:

POETTI

- P = Purpose
- O = Organization
- E = Emotions
- T = Themes
- T = Title
- I = Imaginative language



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How to Analyze a Poem

- Purpose = Why was this poem written? Who was it written for?
- Organization = How is the poem organized? What patterns, rhythms, rhyme scheme, structure, or repetition is present?
- Emotions = What is the mood and tone? What feelings does it capture?
- Themes = What is the message, moral, or claim?
- Title = What does the title mean? How does it connect to the theme?
- Imaginative language = What figurative language and imagery is used? What impact does it have?

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Rhyme Scheme

To determine the rhyme scheme that a poem follows, look to the last sound in each line. Label every new ending sound with a new capital letter.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star — A
How I wonder what you are. — A
Up above the world so high, — B
Like a diamond in the sky. — B
Twinkle, twinkle, little star — A
How I wonder what you are. — A



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Rhyme Scheme

Watch out for slant rhymes!

Hope is the thing with feathers –A
That perches in the **soul** –B
And sings the tune without the words –C
And never stops at **all** –B



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Rhyme Scheme

You try one on your own! What is the rhyme scheme?

The shades of night were falling fast,
As through an Alpine village passed
A youth, who bore, 'mid snow and ice,
A banner with the strange device,
Excelsior!

His brow was sad; his eye beneath,
Flashed like a falchion from its sheath,
And like a silver clarion rung
The accents of that unknown tongue,
Excelsior!

"Excelsior" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



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Rhyme Scheme

The shades of night were falling fast, — A
As through an Alpine village passed — A
A youth, who bore, 'mid snow and ice, — B
A banner with the strange device, — B
Excelsior! — C

His brow was sad; his eye beneath, — D
Flashed like a falchion from its sheath, — D
And like a silver clarion rung — E
The accents of that unknown tongue, — E
Excelsior! — C

"Excelsior" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



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