

All About Poetry...



Kinds of Poems (Classification)

(1) **NARRATIVE** - a recording of events, or the telling of a story

A) Epic - a long narrative poem about the deeds of a traditional or historical hero or heroes of high station

B) Ballad - a narrative poem, usually simple and fairly short, originally designed to be sung

(2) **Lyric** - a subjective poem expressing the thoughts and especially the feelings of a single speaker

A) Song - a poem in regular metrical pattern designed to be sung

B) Elegy - a dignified poem mourning the death of an individual or of all men

C) Ode - a lyric poem of some length, serious in subject and dignified in style, a poem praising someone or something

D) Sonnet - a verse form containing fourteen lines, in English usually iambic pentameter, and a complicated rhyme scheme

Petrarchan (Italian) Sonnet - a fourteen line poem divided into two parts: (1) the first eight lines, called the octave, rhyme *abbaabba* and (2) the remaining six lines, also called the sestet, usually rhyme *cdecde* or *cdcdcd*. The octave contains the problem or theme which the sonnet will develop. An expression of indignation, desire, or doubt may occur in the opening lines which will be resolved in the sestet.

Shakespearean (English) Sonnet - a fourteen line poem divided into three quatrains and a concluding couplet. The rhyme scheme is generally *abab, cdcd, efef, gg*, or *abba, cddc, effe, gg*. The final couplet expresses the central theme of the poem.

(3) **Dramatic monologue** - a poem consisting of the words of a single character who reveals in his speech his own nature on the dramatic situation (it reveals place, time, and identities of the characters, and discloses the psychology of the speaker at a significant moment)

Poetic Forms



- (1) **Blank verse** - lines in unrhymed iambic pentameter
- (2) **Free verse** - no consistency in line length, meter, rhyme, or stanza form
- (3) **couplet** - a stanza of two lines

Figures of Speech/Poetic Elements

Alliteration - the repetition of consonant sounds, usually at the beginning of words
Example: The blazing brightness of her beauties became

Assonance - the close repetition of similar vowel sounds, usually in stressed syllables
Example: Six thin children of a thin shiftless home

Consonance - the repetition of a pattern of consonant sounds
Example: hill hall live love

Repetition - the repeating of a key word, phrase, or line of a poem in order to emphasize its importance
Example: Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea

Onomatopoeia - the use of words whose sounds seem to express or reinforce their meaning
Example: Hiss, bang, meow

Rhyme - the repetition of similar or duplicate sounds at regular intervals; usually the repetition of the terminal sounds of words at the ends of lines

Rhythm - the sense of movement attributed to the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables

Dissonance - a combination of sound that is not harmonious - the harshness or unpleasantness of sound (cacophony and dissonance are virtually interchangeable)
Example: I loath your foul manner.
Cedric is a snake.

Figures of Speech/Poetic Elements (continued...)



Simile - a direct comparison between things often using clue words such as: like, as, than

Example: Hungry as a wolf

Metaphor - a comparison between two things that is not suggested or implied ("like" and "as" are not used)

Example: I am the rock in my mother's shoe.

Personification - giving human or personal qualities to inanimate things or ideas

Example: The green tress whispered low and mild.

Synecdoche - a part is used to represent a whole

Example: Ten hands manned the pump (*ten hands = five people, hands represent the whole body*)

Metonymy - the use of the name of one thing for that of another which it suggests

Example: The kettle is boiling (*the kettle isn't boiling, the water is, but the kettle suggests the presence of water nonetheless*)

Apostrophe - a figure of speech in which the absent are addressed as if they were present, the dead as if they were living, or an inanimate object as if it were human

Example: *O world! I cannot hold thee close enough* - you're addressing the world as though it were a person

Hyperbole - emphasis is achieved by deliberate exaggeration

Example: She waited an eternity for him.

Euphemism - to express a disagreeable or unpleasant fact in agreeable language

Example: Death - to pass away

Oxymoron - two contradictory terms which express a startling paradox

Example: Jumbo shrimp

Paradox - a statement containing apparent self-contradiction but contains a truth that reconciles seeming opposites

Example: The more you learn, the less you know

Irony - expresses a meaning contradictory to the stated one which lies beneath the surface statement (verbal, situational and dramatic)

Example: A fire hall burning to the ground

Figures of Speech/Poetic Elements (continued...)



Connotation - what a word suggests beyond its dictionary meaning

Example: Home - warmth, comfort, etc.

Denotation - a dictionary definition

Example: Home - place of residence

Imagery - the representation through language of a sensory experience (painting a picture with words)

Example: The clouds were low and hairy like locks blown forward in the gleam of eyes.

Symbol - a figure of speech in which a particular person, situation, or action means more than its face value or literal meaning

Example: The dove is a symbol of peace.

Understatement - representing something as much less than it really is

Example: My husband likes the Calgary Flames (no, he is *obsessed* with the Calgary Flames!)

Pun - a humorous play on words

Example: Some people's noses and feet are built backwards: their feet smell and their noses run.

Idiom - an idiom is a combination of words that has a meaning that is different from the meanings of the individual words themselves; it can have a literal meaning in one situation and a different idiomatic meaning in another situation. It is a phrase which does not always follow the normal rules of meaning and grammar.

Example: *To sit on the fence* can literally mean that one is sitting on a fence. *I sat on the fence and watched the game.* However, the idiomatic meaning of *to sit on the fence* is that one is not making a clear choice regarding some issue. *The politician sat on the fence and would not give his opinion about the tax issue.*

In case you didn't know...

Iambic Pentameter - iambic means the stress is on the second syllable (an example is the word good-bye). Pentameter shows us that a line has 5 feet or clusters of two syllables adding up to 10 syllables a line. Example: Hello/hello/hello/hello/hello (Note: This line has 10 syllables and every second syllable is stressed.)

couplet - 2 line stanza

triplet - 3 line stanza

quatrain - 4 line stanza

quintet - 5 line stanza

sestet - 6 line stanza

septet - 7 line stanza

octet - 8 line stanza

****Any stanza longer than 8 lines is generally not named; rather, it is often referred to as a verse.