

Metaphor:

A comparison between two things without using words such as "like" or "as." Metaphors can be extended metaphors when they are drawn out and are central to the organization of the poem. *Examples: Her voice is pure crystal, He was a roaring lion, School is a spring of knowledge.*

Simile:

A comparison between two things using words such as "like," "as," or "than."
Examples: Her hair was like spun gold, She screamed as loud as a foghorn

Personification:

Giving human qualities / characteristics to animals or objects or ideas.
Examples: The branches moaned with the snow's weight, Death stops and lays his hand on all.

Hyperbole:

An over-exaggeration. It may be used for serious or comic effect.
Example: His hands dragged a mile out of his sleeves.

Imagery:

Creating vivid mental pictures through using words that appeal to the senses and emotions.
Example: With a crunching sound / the preying mantis devours / the face of a bee

Symbol:

Using word/gesture/sign to represent something else
Examples: dove = peace / purple = royalty / red = anger love

Oxymoron:

Two words with the opposite meanings, used together to create a new meaning.
Examples: bitter sweet, jumbo shrimp, sweet sorrow

Paradox:

A statement that seems to contradict itself. *Example: In my beginning is my end.*

Irony:

Using words to express the exact opposite of their actual meaning. It also refers to combinations or circumstances that have a result opposite of what is expected.

Synecdoche:

The use of a term for describing *part of something* to represent the whole object.
Examples: We have fifty head of cattle. / Westview played THSS.

Metonymy:

The substitution of a word for a closely related term.
Examples: The crown decided to prosecute. / The pen is mightier than the sword.

Apostrophe:

Device of addressing the absent as if present, or the inanimate (sea, wind, tree, etc.) or the abstract as if it could respond. Often used to express powerful emotions. Used in parody, satire, or humor to exaggerate feelings.

Allusion:

This refers to the inclusion of unacknowledged quotations from other works and references to historical events and any aspect of human cultures.

Tone:

The author's attitude toward his/her subject or reader. It is similar to tone of voice.

Mood:

This is different from tone because it is the emotional colouring of the poem; the feeling it evokes.

Antithesis:

A direct contrast or exact opposite of two characters or ideas. A figure of speech in which sharply contrasting ideas are juxtaposed in a balanced or parallel phrase or grammatical structure.

Example: Hope is the antithesis of despair.

Foil:

One that by contrast underscores or enhances the distinctive characteristics of another: "*I am resolved my husband shall not be a rival, but a foil to me*" (Charlotte Brontë).

SOUND DEVICES

Alliteration: The repetition of the initial (consonant) sounds of words.

Example: The twisted trout twinkled below. / Wild water rippling in the reeds.

Assonance: The repetition of vowel sounds. *Example: mad as a hatter.*

Consonance: The repetition of consonants at the end of words. *Example: odds and ends.*

Onomatopoeia: Words whose sounds seem to resemble the sounds that they describe.

Examples: hiss, buzz, bang, rustle.

Euphony: Speech sounds that sound pleasant or musical to the ear.

Cacophony: The opposite of euphony. A discordant mixture of harsh and unpleasant sounds.

Example: Clocks Clang

POEM TYPES

Concrete:

Poetry that depends in part on the arrangement of words and letters to convey meaning.

Acrostic:

A poem in which the letters of successive lines form a word or pattern.

Limerick:

A humorous 5 line poem that usually tells of the actions of a person.

Couplet:

A pair of lines that rhyme. Couplets may be a part of a longer poem.

Example: The icicles melt, the blue jays sing, My favourite time of year is spring.

Quatrain:

A four line rhyme. The rhyme scheme may be AABB, ABAB, ABCB, or ABBA. Quatrains are combined to form a longer poem.

Haiku:

A form of Japanese verse usually employing allusions and comparisons. A haiku is composed of three lines containing a fixed number of syllables, usually seventeen (5,7,5).

Lyric:

A short, subjective poem with song-like outburst of the author's innermost thoughts and feelings.

Closed Form:

A poem written in a set pattern. For example, the sonnet or the ode are closed form poems, which make certain demands on the poet, regarding structure, metre, rhyme scheme, and sometimes imagery.

Blank Verse:

Poetry that lacks rhyme but has a very specific metre or rhythm called iambic pentameter. Shakespearean drama is written in this form of verse.

Sonnet:

A lyric poem of fourteen lines, with rhymes arranged according to certain definite patterns (rhyme schemes). A sonnet usually expresses a single, complete thought, idea, or sentiment. The two main types of sonnets are: Italian (or Petrarchan) and English (Shakespearian).

Ode:

A poem on an exalted theme expressed in a dignified language, serious tone. An ode usually praises someone or something.

Ballad:

A narrative poem usually containing much repetition and a repeated refrain (songs).

Elegy:

A formal poem, often written as a lament for a departed friend or respected person. The poet usually sets forth his or her ideas about death or some other serious subject.

Narrative:

A poem that tells a story (usually long).

Epic:

An extended poem about heroic action, based on history, legend or myth.

Free Verse:

Rhythmical lines, usually unrhymed that vary in length and follow no strict metrical structure. (Also called "Open Form")

POETIC STRUCTURE

Stanza:

Lines of verse grouped so as to compose a pattern that is usually repeated in the poem.

Refrain:

A reoccurring phrase, stanza, or chorus.

Repetition:

The repeating of a word or phrase to add rhythm or to emphasize an idea.

Example: Her eyes, her eyes, her haunting eyes!

Syllable: The "beat" in a line of poetry.

Metre:

The pattern of stressed syllables which occur at regular intervals and make up the rhythm of a verse. Compositions written in metre are known as verse and have a strict metrical structure.

Foot/Feet: a metrical unit in verse (see "iambic pentameter" next page).

Iambic Pentameter: 10 syllables in a line of poetry. Pentameter means 5 feet, iambic means 2 syllables, one stressed, one unstressed (5 x 2 = 10 syllables). In iambic pentameter the stress is on the second syllable. Sonnets are written in rhymed iambic pentameter. Shakespearian drama is written in unrhymed iambic pentameter.

Rhyme:

The similarity in sound in words. (Words whose final vowels and consonants are the same). Rhyme is used to give a pleasing sound to a poem or a stanza. Much modern poetry does not contain rhyme.

Rhyme Scheme:

The pattern of a rhyme within a stanza or a poem. The rhyme scheme is usually shown by applying to each similar rhyme the same letter of the alphabet.

OTHER TERMS

Connotation: The emotional suggestions attached to words beyond their strict definition.

Denotation: The dictionary definition of a word.

Cliché: a trite or overused expression. Ex. cold as ice / it's raining cats and dogs.

Jargon: technical words. A language of a trade or profession which seems full of unnecessarily complex terminology. Ex. computer jargon.

Colloquial language: suited to spoken language or informal writing; unique expressions that cannot often be literally translated. Ex. He really ticks me off / I'm bored out of my tree.

Genre: a category in literature. A "type" or form of literature. Ex. common genres are: Epic, Tragedy, Comedy, Satire, Novel, Essay, Biography.

DRAMA TERMS

Tragedy: A drama in which the protagonist, a person of nobility, must make a moral decision that influences the outcome of the drama. the protagonist usually has a serious fault, the "tragic flaw," which leads to his downfall and death.

Dramatic Monologue: a "poem" in which a single character, overheard by a silent listener, reveals a dramatic situation.

Soliloquy: An utterance of a character who is talking to himself/herself, unaware of any hearers who may be present. It allows insight into the characters innermost feelings.

Aside: When a character's words are heard only by the audience, not the characters on stage.

Pun: a play on words in which a word or phrase can be taken to mean more than one thing.

Parody:

A ludicrous imitation; usually intended for comic effect but often for ridicule of both the style and content of another work. The humour depends on the reader's familiarity with the original work. Often used in plays (Some of Shakespeare's plays contain parody).

Satire:

A literary work which exposes and ridicules human vices or folly. Usually intended as a moral criticism directed against the injustice of social wrongs. May be witty and funny or angry and bitter.