



Glossary of Terms

Poetry

Basic Elements:

Line: A single row of words in a poem.

Stanza: A group of lines in a poem, set apart by a space or a blank line.

Strophe: A unit of a poem that doesn't have a regular meter and rhyme pattern.

Verse:

- A single line in a poem.
- A stanza.
- Poetry in general.

Stanza Types (based on the number of lines):

Couplet: A two-line stanza.

Tercet: A three-line stanza.

Quatrain: A four-line stanza.

Quintain/Cinquain: A five-line stanza.

Sestet: A six-line stanza.

Septet: A seven-line stanza.

Octave: An eight-line stanza.

Rhyme and Sound:

Rhyme: The repetition of similar sounds (usually the ending sounds) in words, often at the end of lines.



Rhyme Scheme: The pattern of rhymes in a poem, usually shown by using letters to represent rhyming lines (e.g., ABAB, AABB).

An example of an ABAB rhyming scheme is:

*"The cat sat on the mat, (A)
A fluffy friend, so neat and fine. (B)
He watched the birds fly past, (A)
A playful game, he would unwind. (B)"*

An example of an AABB rhyming scheme is:

*"The sun is shining bright, (A)
Filling up the day with light. (A)
The birds are singing songs so sweet, (B)
A lovely melody, a joyful treat. (B)"*

End Rhyme: Rhyming words at the end of lines.

Internal Rhyme: Rhyming words within the same line.

Alliteration: The repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words (e.g., "Peter Piper picked a peck...").

Assonance: The repetition of vowel sounds in words (e.g., "the cat sat on the mat").

Figurative Language:

Metaphor: A comparison between two unlike things without using "like" or "as" (e.g., "He is a lion" or "The world is a stage").



Other examples:

"His laughter was a warm, golden light."

This metaphor compares his laughter to light, highlighting its positive and cheerful nature.

"The city was a concrete jungle."

This metaphor compares a city to a jungle, emphasizing its dense, urban environment and potential for harsh conditions.

"She has a heart of gold."

This metaphor compares her kindness and generosity to gold, highlighting her precious qualities.

"He's a walking encyclopedia."

This phrase is a metaphor because it compares a person's mind, or their knowledge, to a physical encyclopedia.

Simile: A comparison between two unlike things using "like" or "as" (e.g., "She is as brave as a lion").

Other examples:

"He ran like the wind."

"The old man's face was as wrinkled as a dried apple."

"Her voice was as soft as a feather."

"The crowd was as big as the sky."

Imagery: Descriptive language that appeals to the senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch).

Examples:

"Golden leaves":

This phrase immediately evokes a visual image of vibrant yellow or gold leaves, appealing to the reader's sense of sight.

"Rustled":

This word describes the sound the leaves make as they move, appealing to the reader's sense of hearing.

"Autumn breeze":

This phrase further reinforces the visual image and also introduces the sense of touch (feeling the wind) and potentially smell (the scent of fall leaves).



Personification: Giving human qualities to inanimate objects or ideas (e.g., "The wind whispered secrets").

Other Examples:

"The sun smiled down on us"

"The old house groaned in the storm"

"The waves beside them danced" in William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"

"The stars winked in the night sky"

"The road wandered into the unknown"

"The teapot sang as the water boiled"

Symbolism: When a word, image, or idea represents something else. (e.g., *a dark, rainy night might symbolize sadness, or a sunflower could represent happiness and positivity.*

Other Examples:

Color:

Black: Often used to symbolize darkness, evil, or death, as seen in poems about grief or loss.

Red: Can represent passion, love, anger, or blood, depending on the context of the poem.

Green: May signify nature, life, or growth, especially in poems about spring or renewal.

Objects:

Daffodils: In William Wordsworth's poem, "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud," daffodils symbolize the poet's joy and connection with nature, even in moments of solitude.



Rainbows: Often represent hope, a new beginning, or the passing of a storm, as seen in "My Heart Leaps Up" by Wordsworth.

Sunflowers: May symbolize adoration, loyalty, or even a longing for something spiritual, like in [Blake's "Ah! Sun-flower"](#).

Characters:

A character who is always portrayed as kind and generous could symbolize [virtue](#), while someone who is always portrayed as greedy or selfish could symbolize [vice](#), [according to LitCharts](#).

In "The Scarlet Letter" by Nathaniel Hawthorne, the scarlet letter "A" is a multifaceted symbol representing shame, identity, and resilience.

Other Important Terms:

Meter: The rhythmic pattern of a line of poetry, based on stressed and unstressed syllables.

Iamb: A metrical foot with an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable (e.g., "be-LOW").

Additional Example:

A good example of meter in poetry is the line "**Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?**" from **Shakespeare's Sonnet 18**. This line demonstrates [iambic pentameter](#), where each line has five [iambs](#), each iamb consisting of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable.



Here's a breakdown:

- **Shall I:** Shul I (unstressed, stressed) - Iamb
- **com pare:** Com PAR (unstressed, stressed) - Iamb
- **thee to:** Thee TO (unstressed, stressed) - Iamb
- **a sum:** A SUM (unstressed, stressed) - Iamb
- **mer's day?** Mer's DAY? (unstressed, stressed) - Iamb

Free Verse: Poetry that does not follow a set meter or rhyme scheme.

An example of free verse is **Walt Whitman's "I Dream'd in a Dream"**. Free verse poetry is characterized by its lack of a strict meter or rhyme scheme. This means that the lines can be of varying lengths, and the poem doesn't adhere to a specific rhythmic pattern.

Here's another example:

"The Red Wheelbarrow" by William Carlos Williams:

"so much depends
upon a red wheel
barrow
glazed with rain
water
beside the white
chickens."

This poem, while short and simple, demonstrates the key characteristics of free verse: it doesn't have a regular meter or rhyme, and the lines are of varying lengths.

Enjambment: When a line in a poem continues onto the next without a pause or punctuation.

Example:

*"I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills".*



Here's why it's effective:

Flow and Momentum:

Enjambment encourages the reader to move quickly from one line to the next, following the thought or idea as it unfolds.

Emphasis:

By breaking up a sentence or phrase across lines, enjambment can emphasize certain words or phrases, creating a sense of anticipation or urgency.

Complex Thought:

Enjambment allows poets to express more complex thoughts or ideas, as the reader is encouraged to process the entire sentence or phrase at once, rather than pausing at the end of each line.

Rhythm and Sound:

Enjambment can also create a specific rhythm and sound in the poem, as the lines flow together seamlessly.

Refrain: A line or group of lines that are repeated in a poem.

A classic example is **the line "Quoth the Raven 'Nevermore'" in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven"**. This repeated line not only adds to the poem's rhythm but also reinforces the raven's ominous nature and the speaker's despair. Another example can be found in [Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"](#), where the line "And miles to go before I sleep" is repeated, emphasizing the speaker's responsibility and the unresolved nature of their situation.

Here's a more detailed breakdown:

- **Purpose:** Refrains serve to highlight key themes or messages within a poem.
- **Placement:** They are commonly found at the end of stanzas, but can also appear elsewhere in a poem.
- **Variations:** Refrains can be exact repetitions, or they may have slight variations in meaning or form.
- **Types:** Some refrains are single lines, while others consist of multiple lines.
- **Effect:** Refrains create a sense of rhythm and musicality, making the poem more memorable and impactful.



In essence, a refrain is a powerful tool that poets use to emphasize specific ideas and add a layer of depth and complexity to their work.

Example: Shakespeare's "When that I was and a little tiny boy"

When that I was and a little tiny boy,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
A foolish thing was but a toy,
For the rain it raineth every day.

But when I came to man's estate,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
'Gainst knaves and thieves men shut their gate,
For the rain it raineth every day.

Repetition: Using a word or phrase multiple times.

A classic example is **the use of refrains, like in "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night" by Dylan Thomas, where the line is repeated throughout.**

Here's a more detailed look:

Types of Repetition:

Anaphora:

Repeating a word or phrase at the beginning of successive lines or clauses, as in Langston Hughes' "I, Too".

Epistrophe:

Repeating a word or phrase at the end of successive lines or clauses, as seen in Gwendolyn Brooks' "We Real Cool".

Refrain:

Repeating a line or phrase throughout the poem, often at the end of stanzas, as in Shakespeare's song from Twelfth Night, [according to LitCharts](#).

Epizeuxis:

Repeating a word or phrase in immediate succession, as in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Bells," [says Writers.com](#).



Effects of Repetition:

Emphasis:

Repetition can highlight important words or ideas, making them stand out and more memorable, as in "Do Not Go Gentle".

Rhythm:

Repeated patterns can create a musical or rhythmic effect, enhancing the poem's flow and making it more engaging.

Emotional Impact:

Repetition can intensify emotions, as in the repeated "Nevermore" in "The Raven".

Theme Development:

Repeated words or phrases can reinforce a poem's central theme or message, as in "War is Kind".

Examples:

"Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night" by Dylan Thomas:

The phrase "Do not go gentle into that good night" is repeated throughout the poem, emphasizing the theme of defying death.

"The Bells" by Edgar Allan Poe:

The word "bells" is repeated throughout the poem, creating a sense of continuous ringing.

"War Is Kind" by Stephen Crane:

The refrain "Do not weep. War is kind" juxtaposes the brutal reality of war with a false sentiment.

"We Real Cool" by Gwendolyn Brooks:

The word "we" is repeated at the end of each line, highlighting the identity of the speaker.

Tone: The overall feeling or attitude of a poem.

Examples include **a sarcastic tone, a somber tone, or a humorous tone**. Poets can also shift the tone throughout a poem to create a more complex emotional experience for the reader.



What is Tone?

- Tone is the emotional attitude or feeling that a poem evokes in the reader.
- It's not just about the mood of the poem, but also the speaker's attitude towards the subject matter.
- Tone can be conveyed through various literary devices like diction (word choice), imagery, and syntax (sentence structure).

Examples of Tone:

- **Sarcastic:** A poem that uses irony or mockery to convey a critical attitude.
- **Somber:** A poem that evokes a feeling of sadness, seriousness, or melancholy.
- **Humorous:** A poem that aims to entertain or amuse the reader.
- **Hopeful:** A poem that conveys a sense of optimism or positive expectation.
- **Reflective:** A poem that encourages the reader to think deeply about a particular topic.

How to Identify Tone:

- **Look at word choice:** Does the poem use formal or informal language? Are there strong emotions expressed through diction?
- **Consider the imagery:** What are the images being created? Do they contribute to a specific mood or feeling?
- **Pay attention to the rhythm and rhyme:** Does the rhythm create a sense of flow or a feeling of tension?
- **Think about the speaker's perspective:** What is the speaker's relationship to the subject of the poem?

Examples of Tone in Poems:

"Ode to a Nightingale" by John Keats:

The poem shifts from a state of happiness to sadness as the speaker reflects on the beauty and transience of life, [according to a Quora post](#).

"To his Coy Mistress" by Andrew Marvell:

The tone changes from humorous and persuasive to serious and ultimately euphoric, [according to a Quora post](#).



"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" by Robert Frost:

The poem has a melancholy and reflective tone, capturing the speaker's contemplation of the beauty of nature and the demands of life, [according to Scribophile](#).

Theme: The main idea or message of the poem.

A common theme in poetry is [love](#), exploring various aspects such as romantic love, friendship, and familial love. For example, **a poem by Robert Frost like "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" explores the theme of nature and solitude**. Another theme is [death and mortality](#), often reflected in poems that contemplate the passage of time and the inevitability of death.

Here are some examples of themes in poetry:

Love:

Exploring the many facets of love, including romantic love, familial love, and the love of nature. For example, "Love is a long, long journey" by Langston Hughes explores the theme of love in all its complexities.

Death and Mortality:

Reflecting on the human condition and the inevitability of death, often through the lens of nature or personal experience. An example is a poem by William Wordsworth that explores the fleeting nature of childhood and the passage of time.

Nature:

Examining the beauty and power of the natural world, and its impact on human emotions and experiences. For instance, "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost explores the theme of choice and the impact of decisions on one's life path.

Social and Political Issues:

Using poetry to critique or comment on social and political issues, such as inequality, injustice, and war. For example, poems by Langston Hughes explore themes of race, social injustice, and the struggles of the working class.

Identity:

Exploring themes of identity, including race, gender, sexuality, and the search for



one's place in the world. For instance, poems by Sylvia Plath often delve into themes of identity, self-discovery, and the complexities of the human psyche.

Mood: The feeling that the poem creates in the reader.

It's the overall emotional response the poem creates, often achieved through vivid descriptions, imagery, and tone. Examples of mood include:

- **Romantic:** "To My Dear and Loving Husband" by Anne Bradstreet.
- **Humorous:** "The TALE of the BEASTS" by [Robert Louis Stevenson](#).
- **Melancholic:** "The Raven" by [Edgar Allan Poe](#).
- **Reflective:** "Nothing Gold Can Stay" by [Robert Frost](#).
- **Joyful/Uplifting:** Poems celebrating nature, love, or triumph.
- **Whimsical:** Poems with light-hearted and imaginative elements.
- **Dark:** Poems that evoke a sense of unease, dread, or foreboding.
- **Idyllic:** Poems that portray peaceful, serene settings and scenes.
- **Introspective:** Poems that explore the inner thoughts and feelings of the speaker.

Form: The structural or organizing pattern of a poem.

Poetic form refers to the structure and arrangement of a poem, encompassing elements like line length, rhyme scheme, meter, and stanza structure. Some common examples include **sonnets, villanelles, haiku, and free verse**. These forms can influence the poem's tone and purpose.

Elaboration:

Form vs. Structure:

While often used interchangeably, form refers to the type or style of the poem (e.g., sonnet, haiku), while structure refers to the internal organization, including line breaks, stanza divisions, and rhyme schemes.

Types of Forms:

- **Sonnets:** 14-line poems, often with specific rhyme schemes and meter.
- **Villanelles:** 19-line poems with a specific rhyme scheme and repeated lines.
- **Haikus:** 3-line poems with a specific syllable count (5-7-5).



- **Free Verse**: Poems that do not adhere to any specific form, rhyme scheme, or meter.

Impact of Form:

The form of a poem can contribute to its meaning and impact. For instance, the specific structure of a sonnet can convey a sense of formality and deliberation, while a haiku's brevity can create a feeling of immediacy and focus.

Other Forms:

Other examples include ballads, limericks, acrostics, and epic poems, each with its own distinct structure and purpose.