

## English 1201 Poetic Terms

Alliteration- repetition of consonant sounds, at the beginning of two or more words, other than 's.' E.g. "*With blade, with bloody blameful blade he bravely broached his boiling bloody breast.*"

Allusion- is an indirect reference to a person, story, or situation in literature or history.

Assonance- is the repetition of similar vowel sounds in neighbouring words. An example is *sweet dreams*. This technique is frequently used in poetry.

Ballad- is a narrative poem that tells an exciting story in a series of vivid pictures. The stanzas are usually four lines each with a regular pattern of rhythm and rhyme.

Consonance- is the repetition of similar consonants within words. An example is *wonder/wander*. Consonance is sometimes used as a technique in poetry.

Couplet- is two successive lines of verse that rhyme and have the same number of metrical feet. E.g. *Be not the first by whom the new is tried/Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.*

Figurative Language- is heightened, imaginative language characterized by simile, metaphor, personification, and so on. E.g. *The wind howled like an angry giant.*

Free Verse- is poetry written without using a regular metrical pattern. It is based on natural expression and the rhythms of ordinary language rather than a specific form.

Hyperbole- is the obvious exaggeration of facts for effect. E.g. *Waves high as mountains broke over the reef.*

Imagery- is a technique poets and writers use to describe and appeal to the senses. There are many types of imagery including simile, metaphor, alliteration, and personification.

Metaphor- is a comparison that likens one thing to something else, suggesting that they share a common quality. E.g. *a heart of stone, a copper sky*. As well as painting vivid pictures for the reader, metaphors help to make abstract ideas more concrete, add emotion, and show the writer's feelings.

Mood- the mood or atmosphere is the feeling that pervades a piece of writing or work of art. E.g. *The mood of Frankenstein is sombre and dark*. Mood is created through description, plot, and setting.

Onomatopoeia- refers to words that imitate sounds. E.g. *hiss, thud, crash, and twitter* are examples of onomatopoeic words.

Personification- occurs when non-human things (animals, objects, and ideas) are described as if they were human. E.g. *The storm came marching across the lake* describes a storm as if it had legs to walk on. Personification is used most often in poetry and narrative writing, but it can also be used in other forms.

Quatrain- is a stanza or poem of four lines. It usually had an alternating rhyme scheme, for example, *abab* or *abcb*.

Rhyme- is the repetition of sound in different words, especially at the ends of words. For example, see *rhymes with bee*. Rhyme is one of the main techniques used in poetry.

Rhyme Scheme- is the pattern of end rhymes used in a poem. It is usually indicated by letters, for example, *abba abba cde cde* and *abab cdcd efef gg* are both rhyme schemes for a type of poem called a sonnet.

Rhythm- is the arrangement of beats in a line of poetry. The beat is created by the accented and unaccented syllables in the words used in each line.

Simile- is a comparison that uses the words like or as. E.g. *My ears buzzed like a mosquito*. Similes are used in both prose and poetry.

Sonnet- is a poem with fourteen lines and a specific rhyme scheme. An Italian or Petrarchan sonnet contains an eight-line octave of two quatrains, followed by a six-line sestet. An English or Shakespearean sonnet contains three quatrains and a final couplet.

Stanza- a group of lines of poetry arranged according to a fixed plan. They usually contain the same number of lines, meter, and rhyme scheme and usually refers to groups of four lines or more.

Symbol- is a person, place, thing, or event that stands for or represents something else. For example, a flag is a symbol of a nation.

Tone- is the mood of a piece of writing. It can reflect the author's attitude or feeling toward a subject or a reader- for example, formal, intimate, serious, ironic, or sarcastic.

**POETRY**  
Types of Poetic Verse

**Free Verse:** refers to any poem that does not have a fixed structure. This form of verse often does not have lines that are equal in length or in a regular metre, and often it does not rhyme.

**Ballad:** a ballad is a poem which tells a simple story in a straightforward way. The traditional ballad is written in four-line stanzas with a rhyming scheme of abcb.

**Elegy:** an elegy is a meditative poem that is usually sad and reflective in tone. It is often inspired by the death of a particular person, but may also be a generalized observation or expression of a solemn mood.

**Epic:** an epic is a lengthy narrative poem. The main character is a figure of heroic stature, and of great historic or legendary significance.

**Lyric:** a lyric is a brief, subjective poem expressing the poet's personal imaginings and emotions. Lyric poems come in a variety of rhythm patterns and may be expressed in rhymed or unrhymed verses.

**Blank Verse:** consists of non-rhyming lines written in iambic pentameter. This form of poetry is the most common poetic form of all English poetry.

*Iambic Pentameter:* A metrical line of five feet or units, each made up of an unstressed then a stressed syllable (e.g. I have /thee not/ and yet /I see /thee still. Macbeth, II.1.44)

**Sonnet:** a lyric poem of fourteen lines.