

Poetry – Basic concepts



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What is poetry?

- **Poetry definition:** Poetry is a way to elevate language by using words and sounds to express powerful ideas and images. Poetry is a type of language that uses **form** (that is, structure, meter, rhyme, topic, or an established pattern).



Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf's a flower;
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.

(Robert Frost, *Nothing Gold Can Stay*)

Structure

Topic

Pattern



- Poems can be longer or shorter, can have longer or shorter lines... That is the **structure**. Using a particular structure can help the author create different feelings in the readers.
- The **topic** is what the poem is about. There are many poems about love, death, nature, life... But the topic can be anything.
- In poems we often see that some words are repeated, or they are broken down into different paragraphs. This is the **pattern** of the poem.

Meter

Rhyme

- Both meter and rhyme refer to the use of **sounds** in a poem.
- Playing with the stress or the number of syllables in a poem, the writer creates the **meter**. The most common meter is the iambic pentameter.
- Using words that have a similar or identical sound, the writer creates the **rhyme**. The most common ones are assonant and consonant.

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
"Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door—
Only this and nothing more."

(Edgar Allan Poe, The Raven)



Types of rhyme

- **Couplets:** They have two lines, and both rhyme. (AA)
*I saw a **mouse**,
he ate a whole **house***
- **Triplets:** They have three lines. Their rhyming pattern can be:
 - AAA *I went outside one **day**,
to my friend's house to **play**
and we both ran down to the **bay**.*
 - ABA *My mom came into my **room**
and she shouted at **me**
go get the **broom**.*
- **Quatrains:** They have four lines, and their rhyming pattern can be:
 - AABB *One day at **school**
I was so **cool**
I kicked the ball **far**
and became the class **star**.*
 - ABAB *We went to the **park**
to play with my pet **dog**
then it got **dark**
and I tripped over a **log**.*

Stanza

Iambic pentameter

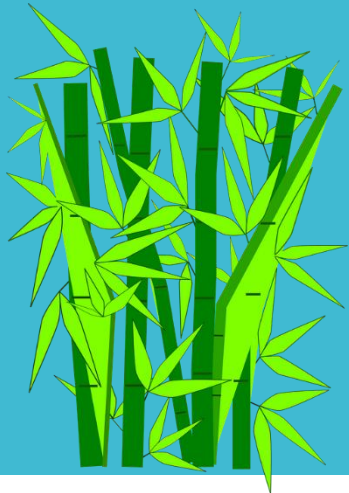
- A **stanza** is a piece of writing that has a metrical rhythm, and normally has a rhyme. It is made of lines and it follows a pattern.
- The **iambic pentameter** is a type of meter where the writer alternated stressed and unstressed syllables to create a sound effect.



"If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.
That strain again! it had a dying fall:
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound,
That breathes upon a bank of violets ..."

(William Shakespeare, Twelfth Night)

Types of poetry



- **Acrostic poetry:** Some words of the poem (normally the first or the last ones) form a Word that is normally the topic.
- **Limerick poetry:** Short, funny stories that normally start with “There was a...” and whose rhyming pattern is AABBA. Lines 1, 2 and 5 should have around 7 to 10 syllables and lines 3 and 4 should have around 5 to 7 syllables.
- **Haiku:** Japanese poem that normally talks about nature and include 3 lines and 17 syllables. Line 1 has 5 syllables, line 2 has 7 syllables and line 3 has 5 syllables.
- **Sonnets:** Poems that have 14 lines divided into three quatrains and one couplet, and their rhyming pattern is abab cdcd efef gg. They are usually written in iambic pentameter.

What type of poem is each one?

How can you know?

Kites

High and smooth, it flew
Into the sky, soaring straight
Flying kites with you.

Unaware, by Kaitlyn Guenther

*Isolation quickly overwhelms me
Begging for forgiveness, a fallen hand
Desolation I now begin to see
Hanging by a thin thread, a single strand*

*I watch them... Their fears, their misbehaviour
Mistreat, abuse.... Completely unaware
I am the land, their glorious saviour
Someday they will learn to treat me with care*

*I wish they would learn to trust each other
To join as one, to stand strong together
A bond, a band and a mighty brother
Forever as one, a powerful tether*

*You may not know, that fear is their captor
So you may not see each special factor*

Running back to where you've already sniffed D

We always wonder where you get to O

Then you come bounding back panting G

Covered in mud but hating bath S

“Little Miss Muffet
Sat on a tuffet,
Eating her curds and whey;
Along came a spider,
Who sat down beside her
And frightened Miss Muffet away.

References

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