POETRY QUESTION STRATEGIES YOU'VE TRIED BEFORE... MAYBE!

As you begin your Advanced Placement English course, recall question strategies you have learned in prior courses; often, they will serve you well this year, even as you learn more sophisticated questioning strategies. Aim at emulating Joseph Heller's main character in *Catch-22*, whom Heller describes as "a collector of good questions."

1. Levels of Meaning Questions:

   Level 1 Questions: What's on the page? i.e. What is Cinderella's slipper made of?

   Level 2 Questions: What's between the lines? i.e. Why does Cinderella's stepmother not want Cinderella to go to the ball?

   Level 3 Questions: What's off the page? What broader issues (of a philosophical sort) does the story raise? i.e. What is the meaning of "happy ever after" in modern life? or, How is the movie *Pretty Woman* like the Cinderella story?

2. What, How, Why Questions:

   What do you notice? (e.g. a simile)

   How does it work? (e.g. it compares a lover to a "red, red rose that's newly sprung in June"; a lover is like a "red, red rose... newly sprung in June" in the following ways: x, y, and z.

   Why does the poet place the simile here; how does this simile, at this point in the poem, contribute to the poem's main idea(s)

   Note: the What/How/Why sequence of questions works particularly well with art as well

3. SOAPS:

S = Subject: what is the subject of the poem?
O = Occasion: What is the occasion in the poem?
A = Audience: Who is to hear/read the poem?
P = Purpose: What is the purpose of the poem?
S = Speaker: Who is saying the words of the poem?

Note: The two "S" elements of the acronym may easily be reversed; Perrine's questions that follow, for example, ask first "who is the speaker," and later ask about "subject." In fact, the elements may be examined in any order. Often it is possible to analyze a poem effectively simply by addressing each of the five elements of "SOAPS" in a paragraph! If all else fails, try this on the AP exam!

4. TP-CASTT:

T = Title: Ponder the title before reading the poem.
P = Paraphrase: Translate the poem into your own words.
C = Connotation: Contemplate the poem for meaning beyond the literal.
A = Attitude: Observe both the speaker's and the poet's attitude (tone)
S = Shifts: Note shifts in speakers and in attitudes.
T = Title: Examine the title again, this time on an interpretive level.
T = Theme: Determine what the poet is saying

Note: This is not a lockstep sequential approach, but rather a fluid process in which one moves back and forth among the various concepts. For example, in examining connotations of a line, a reader may also notice a shift, which may in turn provide an insight to theme.

5. DIDLS: (especially for analyzing tone in poetry)

D = Diction: the connotation of word choice
I = Images: vivid appeals to understanding through the senses
D= Details: facts that are included or those omitted
L = Language: the overall use of language, such as formal, clinical, jargon
S = Sentence structure: how structure affects the reader's attitude

Note list of "tone words" on the following page

QUESTIONS TO USE WITH POEMS

From Laurence Perrine's *Sound and Sense*

Approach any poem by trying the following questions, in the order they are presented; be patient--these questions will "unlock" most poems you will encounter in this course!

Note: Even before addressing the following issues, be sure to:

1. Read the poem, aloud, several times...be very careful to follow punctuation clues
2. Look up *any* words you are not sure you can understand/define
3. Consider the poem's title carefully; WHY this title? See #10.

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1. Who is the speaker? What kind of person is s/he?
2. To whom is s/he speaking? What kind of person is s/he?
3. What is the occasion?
4. What is the setting in time (hour, season, century, etc.)?
5. What is the setting in place (indoors or out, city or country, land or sea, region, country, hemisphere, etc.)?
6. What is the central purpose of the poem?
7. State the central idea or theme of the poem in a sentence.
8. Discuss the tone of the poem. How is it achieved?
9. a. Outline the poem so as to show its structure and development, or
   b. Summarize the events of the poem (note: you may want to try illustrating the poem with "stick" figures)
10. Paraphrase the poem. Consider the title again.
11. Describe the form or pattern of the poem. Sonnet? Volta(s)?
12. Discuss the diction of the poem. Point out words that are particularly well-chosen, and explain why.
13. Discuss the imagery of the poem. What kinds of imagery are used? Any extended images? Any patterns, repetitions?
14. Point out examples of metaphor, simile, personification, and metonymy and explain their appropriateness; WHY does the poet make the comparisons he does...and, can you EXPLAIN the comparisons?
15. Point out and explain any symbols. If the poem is allegorical, explain the allegory.
16. Point out and explain examples of paradox, overstatement, understatement, and irony. What is their function?
17. Point out and explain any allusions. What is their function?
18. Point out significant examples of sound repetition and explain their function (i.e. alliteration, consonance, assonance, etc.)
19. a. What is the meter of the poem?
    b. Copy the poem and mark its scansion.
20. Discuss the adaptation of sound to sense.
21. Criticize and evaluate the poem.

END BY READING POEM ALOUD ONCE MORE

SWIMTAG
($SW_2IM_2T_2AG$)
Poetry Analysis

The College Board *Teacher's Guide to AP Latin* includes a valuable approach to poetry analysis. Chapter 8 of the guide features "SWIMTAG," offered by Sally Davis, and this question pattern seems equally valuable as an approach to poetry analysis in AP English Literature. AP English Literature students will find these practical suggestions to be an excellent anchor for their written comments upon poetry passages selected for the AP exam, passages they are encountering for the first time.

AP English Literature students and teachers should work with SWIMTAG frequently, in both take-home and timed (40 minutes) writing assignments. Students often benefit from small-group, seminar-type group SWIMTAG analysis prior to individual written response. Or, students might complete SWIMTAG analyses at home, prior to facing an in-class, timed writing assignment. And of course, their homework or group notes might be appropriate aids early in the year, during first semester writings. As the AP exam approaches in the second semester, however, they will need practice applying SWIMTAG quickly on timed writings, within the "20% window," or eight minutes of the 40 minutes typically allowed for reading and responding to an AP prompt.

Before Writing:

- Read the question several times. Make certain you know exactly what it is you are being asked to do. Remember: **"AP" = "Answer Prompt."** If you are asked to "compare and contrast," then do both and not one or the other. If the question asks for a "well-organized essay," make a scratch outline and, as you are doing this, jot down or underline the quotations you will use to support your thoughts.
- Read the passage several times to see what offers the most fruitful opportunity for discussion. Consider all of the topics on the SWIMTAG list, but concentrate on the ones you can use to answer the question that is being asked.
- Plan to do more than merely labeling and listing the elements of SWIMTAG.
- Consider what specifics you will use in your essay. For example, if you decide to write about a simile, plan to copy the simile (or, if in a hurry, give the line numbers), and paraphrase closely. Then, most importantly, plan to discuss the simile in terms of the point you are making. Plan to tell how and what the simile adds to the poem, to explain ***why*** it is there.
- Plan to use the whole poem in your discussion, not just a word here and there, or a part or two: one word citations usually do not provide convincing support. And, remember: a brilliant essay with little support from the poem will receive little credit.
- *Summary:* Be sure you are answering the exact question being asked ("A.P." = "Answer Prompt.") Concentrate on the *content* of the poem, and try to say something of your own. Use the question and the poem given as a springboard for your own observations. Take this opportunity to show that you can handle poetry analysis and that you can think for yourself about what the author, through the poem, is saying. Remember, ***poems have no life until you interact with them!***

$SW_2IM_2T_2AG$:
A Starting Point for Writing AP Poetry Essays

SWIMTAG is a mnemonic device for a list of topics you can consider as you approach the task of analyzing and writing about a poem (or poetry excerpt) on the AP English Literature examination.

S = Sound (Consider *Sound* with *Meter*)

- Read the passage aloud (or subvocalize) several times, noting only *obvious* effects
- What strikes you ear?
- Listen for alliteration, assonance, anaphora, and repetition of words or sounds.
    1. B D G, P T K = stops, "explosive" consonants (harder, harsher sounds)--cacophony often suggests protest, tension, stress, anger, struggle
    2. S F Z H , along with the "liquid" consonants M N (nasals...moaning, humming) and L R (flowing, trilling)--euphony often suggests softness, delicacy, harmony, beauty...but also sadness, melancholy
- Also listen for:
    1. polysyndeton (heaping, piling-on: drawing out of action, or rushing)
    2. anaphora (demands attention)

W = Word Order (syntax)

- *First* and *last* position in line are places of importance
- Note *series* of words, phrases, sentences
- Note juxtaposition, inversion, oxymoron
- Asyndeton (non-stop action?)
- Ellipsis

W = Word Choice (diction)

Look for any unusual words, or unusual use of ordinary words. Are there echoes of the language of law, religion, or of other literary passages; exotic or foreign words; puns, or other types of wordplay?

I = Images

What pictures form in your mind as you read? Note similes, metaphors, hyperbole, contrast, colors, concrete objects, striking details, images of action sequences.

M = Meter

Scan by reading aloud; determine the poem's dominant metrical pattern, and Then note important variations: spondees? The poem's rhythm often Reflects the pace or mood of the poem.

M = Mood

What feelings come through? Look at adjectives, verbs. Is the mood formal, tragic, frightening, joyous, foreboding, humorous? Or a mixture?

T = Tone

Can you sense or infer the author's attitude about the characters, the action, the setting, the subject (from word choice or actual comments to the reader)? Is the author sympathetic, sarcastic, amused, judgmental?

T = Theme

Are there references to philosophical beliefs and/or political programs? What does the poem seem to say about universal human concerns, such as love, nature, death, friendship, and the like?

A = Allusions

Note proper nouns: characters and/or places from myths, customs, beliefs, history, geography, famous literature. Note the significance and how and what they add to the poem.

G = Grammar

Look at the pattern of the verb tenses. Are any unexpected? Look at the *person* of the verb. Who speaks, and to whom? Is there an exchange? (This makes the poem much more dramatic). Follow the sentences in the poem, and the punctuation in general; note end-stopped lines, and run-on lines (enjambment).

The Vendler Poetry Checklist

Harvard's Helen Vendler supplies the following poetry-analysis checklist in her book *Poems, Poets, Poetry*. When you are looking for useful ways to describe a poem, this checklist of questions can guide your exploration.

1. ***Meaning:*** Can you paraphrase in prose the general outline of the poem?
2. ***Antecedent scenario:*** What has been happening before the poem begins? What has provoked the speaker into utterance? How has a previous equilibrium been unsettled? What is the speaker upset about?
3. ***Division into parts:*** How many? Where do the breaks come?
4. ***The climax:*** How do the other parts fall into place around it?
5. ***The other parts:*** What makes you divide the poem into these parts? Are there changes in person? In agency? In tense? In parts of speech?
6. ***Find the skeleton:*** What is the emotional curve on which the whole poem is strung? (It even helps to draw a shape --a crescendo, perhaps, or an hourglass-shape, or a sharp ascent followed by a steep decline--so you'll know how the poem looks to you as a whole.)
7. ***Games with the skeleton:*** How is this emotional curve made new?
8. ***Language:*** What are the contexts of diction; chains of significant relation; parts of speech emphasized; tenses; and so on?
9. ***Tone:*** Can you name the pieces of the emotional curve--the changes in tone you can hear in the speaker's voice as the poem goes along?
10. ***Agency and its speech acts:*** Who is the main agent in the poem, and does the main agent change as the poem progresses? See what the main speech act of the agent is, and whether that changes. Notice oddities about agency and speech acts.
11. ***Roads not taken:*** Can you imagine the poem written in a different person, or a different tense, or with the parts rearranged, or with an additional stanza, or with one stanza left out, conjecturing by such means why the poet might have wanted *these* pieces in *this* order?
12. ***Genres:*** What are they by content, by speech act, by outer form?
13. ***The imagination:*** What has the poem invented that is new, striking, memorable--in content, in genre, in analogies, in rhythm, in a speaker?

READING POETRY, continued

In addition to such abbreviated approaches as SOAPS, TP-CASTT, and DIDLS (perhaps familiar from middle school), and Perrine's twenty-one "Questions to Use with Poems" from *Sound and Sense*, these additional suggestions from Dr. Helen Vendler's course at Harvard University should sharpen your skills of close reading and critical analysis. Be aware that Harvard (and other universities) provides help via the internet these days, and sometime during the semester visit:

http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~wricntr/closerea.html

There, you should find helpful additional coaching! Meanwhile, throughout the year in AP English, visit the following suggestions often! And remember always that you are cultivating a SKILL, and that learning a skill involves practice, and repetition. Remember always the old saying,

> "Give me a fish, and I eat for a day; teach me to fish, and I eat for a lifetime."

Remember also the idea that "the average person sees one thing, where the person of talent sees three things, and the person of genius sees ten things." Reading poetry is really about strengthening skills and learning to see. It is also about acquiring the vocabulary of literary criticism, labeling what you see. By the end of the course, you'll be good at this.

When one approaches a poem, one looks at many things; first of all,

1. Meaning

This is the ususal sort of information retrieval, less useful in poetry than in prose, because there is less to retrieve (in many poems, there is no "lesson," "message," or "information" in the ordinary sense; no elaborate cast of characters; no setting; no narrative; no visible anthropological or historical or sociological or political machinery). Because "information" as such can be apparently absent, or, if present, so scanty as to be unhelpful, one moves hopefully on to

2. Dramatic Situation or, maybe more accurately, Antecedent Scenario.

"Antecedent," because many things have already happened in the "plot" before the utterance begins; "Scenario," because a whole plot, rather than just a situation within a plot, is often implied. But this is hard to deduce unless the whole poem is already clear, so in the hopes of clarifying the relations of the parts, one moves hopefully on to

3. A Division into Parts.

Because small units are more easily handled than big ones, and because even a short poem, when it is complex, can't be addressed all at once with a question like "What's at issue here?" or "What does the poem say?" (because it's likely to be saying at least several things) one tries to divide the poem into parts. You know a new part has started when the ongoing inertial movement natural to all progress has been disturbed. "I love you; and I loved you yesterday; and I love you for lots of reasons: BUT" (change in logical contrast); or "This is Italy; it is a country I visit often, O ITALY, YOU WELCOME ME AGAIN" (change of person and tone); "The mansion is old; its windows are broken; WHO ARE THESE CHILDREN IN THE YARD?" (change of topic). Divide a poem along such "fault lines" into its component parts, and then move hopefully on to

4. Locating the Climax.

Of course, it would be possible to consider the parts in sequence, but because auxiliary parts of a lyric tend to cluster around a node of special significance--which its attendant parts lead up to, lead away from, help to clarify, etc.--one might as well jump right away to that node, if it obtrudes itself (by a greater intensity of tone, by a change in rhetorical posture, by a specially significant metaphor, by a change in rhythm). Having decided which part is the climax, one moves hopefully on to

5. Ways of Describing a Part of a Poem.

These ways depend on the poem at hand. A Shakespeare quatrain is not like a Whitman inventory; a Yeats epigram is not like a Keats sestet. There is a general inventory one can run through, but a better path is to ask what is distinctive in the passage at hand, especially by contrast to the other members of the poem. Is the rhythm odd? Is a new person suddenly addressed? Does the ongoing metaphorical system in the poem shift gears?

Does the tone change? Does the tense shift? Does the predominant grammatical form change (i.e. from nouns to participles?) Having described the nature of the climax, one can move hopefully on to

6. Relating the Climax to the Rest.

At this point, one is playing the game called "Find the Skeleton." Some of the well-known skeletons in Octave/Sestet Italian sonnets, for instance, are Question/Answer, Assertion/Negation, Personal/General, Mythological/Personal (and reversals of all the above). Skeletons are the Algebra of poems; they give the formula by which the poem articulates itself as it unfolds. (By giving his sonnets four pieces instead of two, for instance, Shakespeare increased the possible permutations of structure.) Having found the structure, one can move on to

7. Games with the Skeleton

A) Content: if this is a Question/Answer poem, what games are being played with the convention of Question/Answer? If it's a Them-versus-Us poem, what interesting variation on the Them is being invented? Or is it a variation on the Us? And so on, by which one can move on to

8. Games with the Skeleton, continued

B) Form: if this is a Question/Answer poem, what games of form correspond to the games of content? Is the answer given before the question? Are two answers given to the same question? Is the question frustrated by being left answerless? Is the language used for the question framed in a different register of diction from the language used for the answer? After these larger games, one can move on to a scan of

9. Language.

Of course one has been scanning language all along, but less self-consciously. This is meant to be very conscious, and very evidential. How many sentences? Do they resemble each other? What parts of speech predominate in each section of the poem? Why? In what person is the poem spoken? Does this change? What registers of diction are present?

eg. by content, such as religious, legal, scientific;
by status, such as gender, class-specific, ethnic-specific;
by etymology, such as Latinate, Anglo-Saxon, Romance
by social occasion, such as the language of hierarchy, or the

administering of a sacrament, of a wedding;
by profession, such as the language of a cleric, or a banker, or an instructor, etc.

10. Tone.

Again, one has been taking it in all along, but this is the time to make it consciously available, along its fault lines. The most helpful analogies are musical and painterly: would you score this for percussion? or for a single flute? Or is it for a flute until a passage arrives marked tutti? Would this look like a Dutch genre painting or like a still life by Chardin, or like an abstract expressionist painting? Where the tone changes, the poem takes on new life, and exhibits a moment of strenuous invention. What has caused this? LJHS note: here you may wish to consult the list of "tone" words from class, but avoid slavish dependence!

11. This is the point for Might Have Been.

What are the roads not taken in the poem? Is Yeats in "Sailing to Byzantium" ever gathered into the "artifice of eternity" with the sages? What would have happened to the poem if he had been? What would have happened in Shakespeare's Sonnet 129 if it had been written in the first person, like most of the sonnets? What would have had to happen to "O Captain, My Captain" to turn it into "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd?" What would Keats's ode "To Autumn" gain by introducing Demeter and Persephone and Pluto? Or lose? These roads not taken have of course to be plausible ones for the poet in question to have taken. It doesn't make much sense to ask what would have happened to "Sailing to Byzantium" if it had been entitled "Sailing to La Jolla," or to ask what "Lilacs" would sound like as a Petrarchan sequence.

12. The presumptions so far have been towards Unity. Try Disunity for a change of perspective.

What slippages or evasions does the poem embody? Is it conscious of its own evasions (as, e.g., by irony)? Moments of disunity often betray themselves by logical incoherences, changes in metaphorical reference, and apparently irrelevant stylisitic or thematic allusion, and so on. Why, after a season and a day in the preceding quatrains, does Shakespeare's Sonnet 73 abandon the time-line structure and invoke a fire? Where is the missing mean between the extremes of Keats's "Ode on Melancholy"? Why does Yeats change from third person to second person to first person in "In Memory of Eva Gore-Booth?"

13. Genre. –

Is this an Epithalamion, an Elegy, an Epigram, or all three together? Generic expectations often determine how we read. Two different readings often mean two different sets of generic expectations. If you read Yeats's "Easter 1916" as Elegy, you come out with a different poem from a person who reads it as Inner Debate, or what Arnold called "the dialogue of the mind with itself"; and both of you will read it differently from persons reading it as a Topical Poem or a Political Poem.

14. Speech-Act.

Is this a Boast, or an Apology, or a Prayer? Or a Letter, or an Indictment, or an Inventory, or an Argument? Or a Calendar, or a Game, or a Riddle? (Speech-acts and genres overlap, but when we think of a riddle as a speech-act, we think of it as addressed to an addressee, for a speech-purpose.)

15. Since this could go on forever, at some point one moves on to Beauty/Invention.

What was in it for the author to make this up? How is the author giving new life to old goods (since there is nothing new under the sun)? This often means giving new life to his or her own past forms, especially in the case of poets who either have a restricted subject matter ("Oh know, sweet boy, I always write of you,/ And you, and love, are all my argument") or, like Shakespeare in the sonnets and Dickinson throughout her oeuvre, a restricted prosodic form. How is the game made new? What causes the sensation of surprise, pleasure, shock, conclusiveness, to which we give the name "aesthetic effect?"

16. And one could close, perhaps, where one implicitly begins: with the Imagination (not quite the same thing as Beauty/Invention, since it precedes embodiment in form).

The first man who wrote in a woman's voice showed Imagination; the inventor of Olympus and its gods showed Imagination. Stevens distinguishes in poetry "two poetries: the poetry of the Idea and the poetry of the words." The first is what we generally call Imagination. Poems often enact their own astonishment at the advent of Imagination by contrasting a non-imaginative state with an imaginative one (cf. Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud," or Whitman's pre-swamp descriptions with

in-swamp descriptions in "Lilacs"). To define the imagination which engendered a poem is possible only when everything else about it has become clear.

17. No one has yet made any sensible advances in Connecting Prosody and Sound to Content (cf. Pope: "the sound must seem an echo to the sense," and Poe, who describes poetry as "music...combined with a pleasurable idea"). But one always wants to try.

As with tone, the interesting moments are the ones that break the surface of repetition. Prosodic patterning is deduced from the stanza, not the line. Many of Shakespeare's pentameter lines, looked at singly, can be scanned as having three or four beats instead of five. It is only in the context of a repeated pattern (of which, in lyric, the stanza is the exemplar) that we can tell how many beats any particular line is to be given. Similarly, rhyme is a function of the stanza. Words which rhyme (love, enough, of, move) in a poem where the stanzas exhibit rhyme would not count as rhyming with each other when they came at the end of lines of blank verse. The whole unit is always the director of rhyme and rhythm, not the individual line. The only time when an established prosodic form (e.g. the Shakespearean sonnet, the Yeatsian trimeter) needs commenting on is when it is doing something different from what it normally does--when it is slowed down beyond its normal pace, or written in one-line units (sonnet 66) instead of the more "normal" four-line or two-line ones. While one can scan separately for prosodic variation, as for tonal or grammatical variation, scanning of each of these is a preparation for writing, and should not govern the order of commentary, which is an expository order designed to introduce a reader to problems or questions about literature. The interests of and potential problems of the reader should govern the order of commentary, into which the results of all the scannings above, and the contextualizings above, will enter and be integrated.

18. Context

"Each poem proves another and the whole" (Stevens). The first context for each poem is the rest of the volume in which it first appeared; the next is the Collected Poems of its author; the next is the Collected Works of its author; the next is the books its author is known to have read; the next is the sum of poems in the language in which it was written; the next is the sum of poems in its culture; the next is its culture proper (as for Shakespeare's sonnets, the cultural context includes the English language, monarchy, Christianity, a poetics of compliment, aristocratic love-traditions,

etc.); the next is its historical epoch; the next is the history of its reception over time. One never knows enough.

19. Disagreements.

The most likely cause for disagreements among critics is their use of different adjunct disciplines. If I come to Hamlet from ethics, and you come from tragedy, and X comes from women's studies, and Y comes from linguistics, and Z comes from history, we will all be selecting evidence via different sieves, and the play will sound different in each person's hands. When two people using the same adjuct discipline disagree (a more interesting case), there is some possibility for agreeing on evidence and arguing the difference. Another cause for disagreement is temperamental (the famous question, whether the glass is to be described as half-full or half-empty). A third cause is the penumbra of connotations around each work when words are used with weight and richness, as they are in literature. Differences can often be explained via a painstaking spelling-out on each person's part what connotations are being attached to what words.

PROSODY

Poetry- form and structure, a.k.a. scansion:

Here we go- take a deep breath and jump...

Feet- a foot, when we're talking about poetry, refers to a unit of two or sometimes three syllables, but the feet that are made from just two are really the most common. Usually the more common feet have two kinds of syllables- stressed and unstressed. Example: the word poem, when you say it out loud, comes out with the first syllable of the word, *po*-, stressed more than the last (poem). This foot, visually, is represented like this: u - the stressed syllable, DUM, is represented by the u, and the unstressed syllable is represented by a short straight line (-). When we are working on a poem, we divide the feet first, by using a diagonal line (/). Sometimes the line cuts a word in half, into more than one foot, and sometimes a foot consists of two small, one-syllable words. Here's a list of feet:

+1. iamb- da DUM
2. trochee- DUM da
3. pyrrhic- da da
4. spondee- DUM DUM
5. anapest- da da DUM
6. dactyl- DUM da da
7. amphibrach- da DUM da
8. amphimacer- DUM da DUM
*9. tribrach- da da da
*10. molussus DUM DUM DUM

Each of these feet would be used in a larger unit, a line of poetry. The length of a poem's lines are measured by the number of feet per line, and this measurement is the ***meter*** of the poem- pretty simple really:

monometer- one-foot line
dimeter- two-foot line
trimeter- three-foot line
tetrameter- four " "
+ pentameter- five " "
hexameter- six " "
septameter- seven " "
octameter- eight " "

(+) This is by far the most common foot and meter in poetry, probably because it most closely duplicates our own natural speech patterns (especially in a pentameter line). A connection between the iambic foot and the two-part beat of the human heart has also been proposed by some, the poetic foot reflecting the measured beat that times our very existence.
(*) These are so incredibly rare you may never even see one, if you look your entire life.

"MASCULINE," OR SINGLE SYLLABLE RHYMES (RAIN/SPAIN) ARE MORE POWERFUL THAN "FEMININE," OR MULTI-SYLLABLE RHYMES (SPINNING/WINNING). It has to do with the direct nature of a single, forced syllable on the ear. As soon as you go to two-syllable rhymes, a softening occurs. "Sweet" poems tend to have a lot of multisyllabic end-rhymes. So do comedic poems, like limericks. This doesn't mean you CAN'T use them, but understand their effect, and your own purpose in employing them, because they are like pink packets of saccharine in your coffee. Unless your intent is to be sweet, or funny, use single syllable rhymes more often than not.

There once was Drover from Dover
whose sheep disappeared in the clover. (Big clover. Giant shamrocks. Good luck with this poem, except when reciting in a bar.)

(How about:)
Do not go gentle into that good night
rage, rage, against the dying of the light.

Dylan Thomas-- (Quite a strong, simple masculine rhyme there, in a great poem, and by a poet known to recite in bars! But now, tack on the word ",sir" at the end of each of his lines, and see what that does.)
OFF-RHYMES (BELT/DELVE, FROND/LAND) ARE LESS OBVIOUS THAN EXACT RHYMES. You can rhyme the vowel sound, but end with a sightly different sound (the former), or use a different vowel sound, and have your end-sound be identical (the latter). Usually, its a good idea to mix exact and off-rhymes.

Here you stay
in my way
I can't think
sleep a wink
you're a bum
I'm so dumb.

Exact rhymes only.

Instead, how about:

Here you stay
in the wake
bobbing blue, you
deny the truth
the signal lost,
my tiller fixed
on the Southern Cross.

A mix of exact and off-rhymes:
stay, wake (off-rhyme)
blue, you, truth (exact and off-rhyme)
deny, my (exact rhyme)
lost, Cross (off-rhyme)

Now, you can get real technical talking about types of rhyme--well beyond the above. Such things as identicals (lay, Mandalay), weak rhymes (braid, late-- an imperfect sort of off-rhyme) are yet looked upon as worthy rhyme forms by some (including me quite often), but as anathema to others. Let's just say, use what works for your own ear. If it does, it'll probably work for the reader, too. READING ALOUD helps you to hear the sound effects you create. So do it.

Also, know that the effect of a rhyme can be controlled by the distance the word is from its rhyming mate. Too many rhymes too close together can ruin a poem rather than perfume it. (It's like pouring Chanel No. 5 or Halston on your head, rather than dabbing it on your neck.) The further away the rhyme actually hits--not only on the same line but also separated by many previous lines-- will soften the effect accordingly.) This calculated spacing of rhymes works especially well in internal rhyme schemes--rhymes that do not necessarily come at the ends of lines.

In any event, I'm trusting you now to use the device of rhyme wisely, or not at all, right... OK? (Yeah, like now we can sleep nights!) Enjoy.

Rhyme schemes and fixed forms

We've looked at the smaller units that make up poetry, the syllables and the feet they are organized into, and you have a guide for scansion. This is a quick reference for rhyme schemes, fixed forms, and types of verse.

First, the ***stanza***- this is Italian for room, space, or place to end. A stanza is a group of lines, separated from another stanza by space on a page. Stanzas of different sizes (different numbers of lines) have their own names:

Couplet- a two-line stanza (usually rhymed at the end- *aa*)

tercet- a three-line stanza (*aaa, bbb, ccc* ...)

quatrain- four lines (*abab, cdcd, efef,* ...)

cinqain- five lines

A six-line stanza is called a **sestet**, and an eight-line stanza is an **octave**.

** The italicized letters you see after some of the above indicate a rhyme scheme- each letter (*aa, bb, cc, etc.*) stands for the last word or syllable in a line that rhymes- "hickory dickory dock", line one (*a*), rhymes with "the mouse ran up the clock", line two (*a*), and so on. Many specialized forms require that you shift rhymed words in a pattern, either alternating within a stanza, or with every new stanza. There is no reason you can't come up with your own rhyme scheme if you enjoy working with rhyme in your poetry, but there are some *fixed forms* from "classic" poems that have remained popular for a very long time.

1. **Terza Rima**- tercets that use the middle line of each tercet as the first and third of the next- *aba, bcb, cdc,* etc.
2. **Heroic stanzas** are quatrains of iambic pentameter that rhyme *abab*- see Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard".
3. **The Burns Stanza**- rhymes *aaabab,* with the *a*- lines tetrameter, and the *b*- lines dimeter. Named for Robert Burns (see "To a Mouse").
4. **Rhyme Royale**- seven -line stanzas rhyming *ababbcc*. See Wordsworth, "Resolution and Independence".
5. **Ottava Rima**- Italian for "eight-line rhymes"- eight line stanzas rhyming *abababcc*- see Yeats, "Sailing to Byzantium".
6. **Spenserian Stanza**- the only named nine-line stanza- *ababbcbcc*- see *The Faerie Queene*.
7. **English Sonnet**- 3 quatrains and a couplet at the end for a total of fourteen lines. Rhymes *abab, cdcd, efef, gg.* See Shakespeare.
8. **Italian or Petrarchan Sonnet**- Dante and Petrarch used this form- eight-line stanza followed by a six-line stanza. This one is a bit tricky: there is a rhyme scheme for both the end of the line and the beginning in the sestet. This is represented by a double letter code for each line: stanza one (octave) *abbaabba,* stanza two (sestet) *cc dd ec cd dc ed.*
9. **Spenserian sonnet**- rhyme linked quatrains- *ababbcbccdcdee.* See "Amoretti".
10. **Sestina**- six line stanzas- same six words end each line, but switch position each stanza in a rotation. Each word is numbered here: stanza one-1,2,3,4,5,6 stanza two- 6,1,2,3,4,5 stanza three- 5,6,1,2,3,4 etc. See Sidney's "Ye goatherd Gods"- this is a popular form with modern poets.
11. **Villanelle**- a nineteen-line poem that consists of a rhyme scheme and repeating lines (entire line repeats word for word- represented by capitol letters). The repeated lines still fall into the rhyme scheme. *A b A, ab A, ab A, ab A, ab A, ab A A* . See Dylan Thomas, "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night".
12. **Blank Verse**- unrhymed iambic pentameter- very popular even today, well suited for longer works that are more narrative (epics).

Sonnet

Sonnet-a fourteen line poem written in iambic pentameter (each line contains 10 syllables, five of which are usually stressed). Comes from the Italian word *sonetto* which means 'little sound' or 'little song.' Originated in Italy in the thirteenth century.

In the fourteenth century Petrarch produced what was to become the most important group of sonnets in European literature. He wrote 317 sonnets. The Italian sonnet was introduced to English poetry by Sir Thomas Wyatt

During the Elizabethan period the sonnet became very popular. Sidney wrote "Astrophel and Stella," the first great sonnet in English about 1582. It started a vogue, producing a sonnet cycle was considered fashionable for an aspiring writer.

The central theme on these sonnet cycles was the love of the poet for a beautiful but unattainable woman.

Italian Sonnet : Also known as the "Petrachan" sonnet. Rhyme scheme of the poem is organized into three groups which divides the poem into an octave (the first 8 lines) and a sestet (the last six lines). The rhyme scheme of the octave is ABBAABBA. The rhyme scheme of the sestet may rhyme in various ways: CDECDE; CDCCDC; CDCDCD. The shift from octave to sestet is often a point of dramatic change, sometimes called the "volta" or turn. The subject of the poem, the narrative, the proposition, or the question is often presented in the octave, and the significance of the subject, an abstract comment or the solution to the problem in the sestet.

English Sonnet: Also known as the "Shakespearean" sonnet. The lines are organized into three groups of alternating rhymes plus a final couplet. The four line groups are called quatrains. The rhyme scheme is usually ABAB CDCD EFEF GG. The couplet at the end is usually a commentary on the forgoing quatrains.

Spenserian Sonnet: It is characteristic of Spenser to have invented his own sonnet form with complicated interlocking rhymes: ABAB BCBC CDCD EE. Combines Italian and Shakespearean form. Uses three quatrains and a couplet but employs linking rhymes.

English	Italian	Spenserian
4	8	14
4	6	
4		
2		

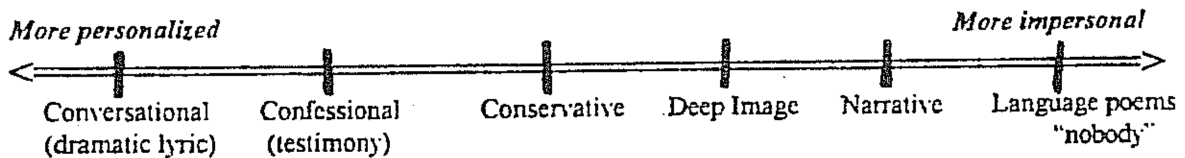
Free Verse

Free verse was a poet's answer to freeing the writing from the constraints of a fixed form. However, this is not entirely possible, unless we can develop a new way of thinking and speaking that does not conform in any way to the patterns that invade the English language.

What has changed, however, with free verse, is the importance of the physical structure of the poem- often as important as the pace or rhythms of the language itself. Free verse often forces the reader to take an unnaturally long pause for effect or reflection, or stops a line one syllable or word before we would if simply speaking, to make an effective point, or to help burn an image into the reader's mind. Free verse makes use of the "spaces" between words and lines for isolation or emphasis, and often seems to have no apparent structure within the stanzas or groups of lines, other than the structure of the creating thought. For this reason, free verse takes an infinite number of shapes and forms. However, if you look hard enough, many poems written in "free verse" have an underlying structure that may be unknown to the beginner, and quite possibly carefully planned to the veteran.

Free verse defies categorization by its very nature, but it can be separated based on some basic criteria, best represented by a linear chart of sorts:

*from Jonathan Holden's "scale of analogue", taken from his essay, "Post-Modern Poetic Form: A Theory".



Haiku

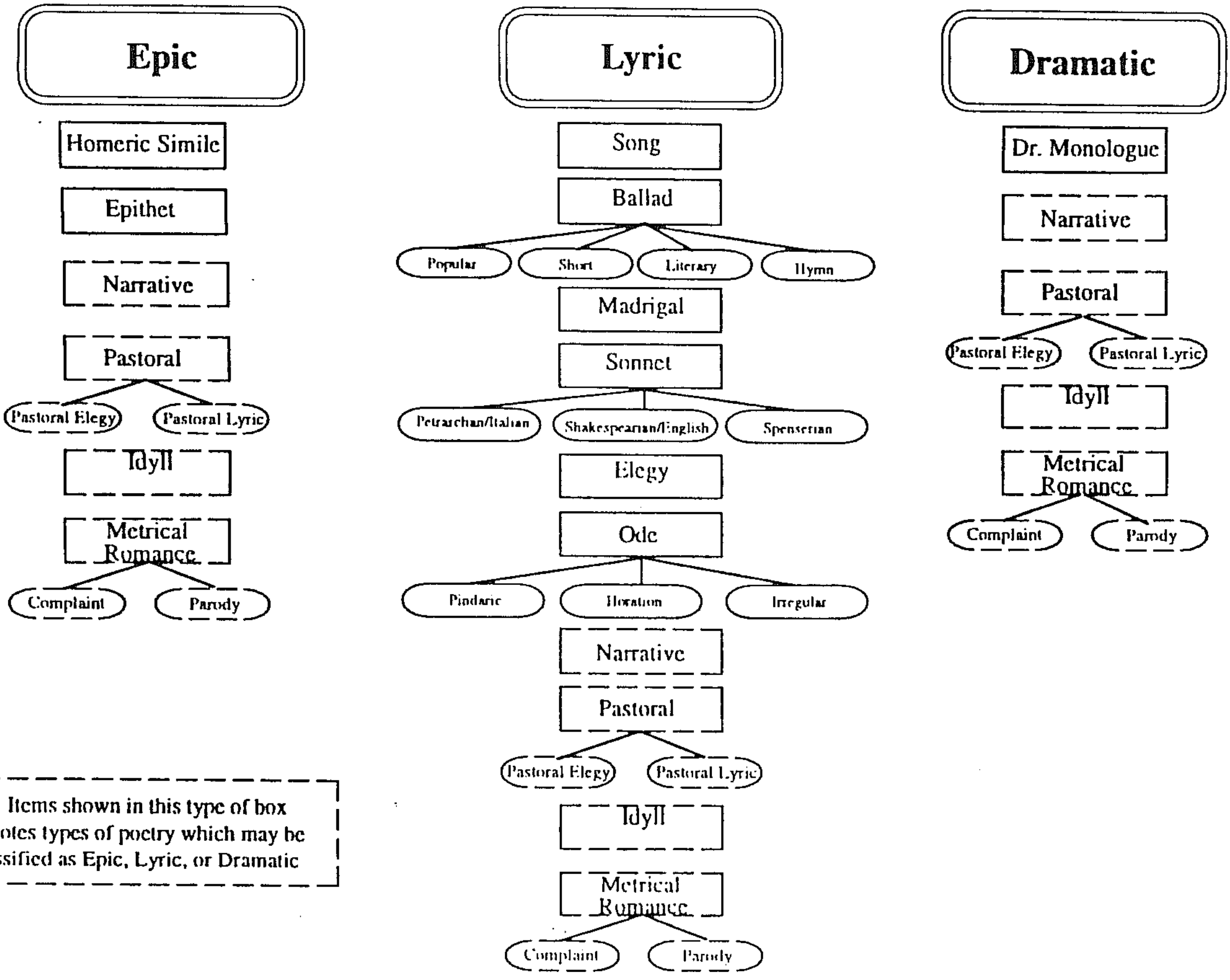
Haiku is an ancient form that depends on the reader's powers of awareness and perception. The poetry should grow in meaning every time it is read and re-read. Reading and interpreting a haiku takes intuition.

Traditional haiku consists of seventeen syllables (not feet!), arranged in three lines. Line one has five syllables; line two has seven syllables; and line three has five again. Many traditional haiku carry some reference to the season, and express the poet's union with nature

Variations

Waka- a haiku is actually the first part of a *waka*, a verse of five lines arranged in a sequence of 5,7,5,7,7 syllables (also known as *tanka* and *uta*).

Renga- renga is a form of poetic dialogue. The first three lines of 5-7-5 are composed by one person and the next two lines of 7-7 by another as a response or continuation. The dialogue then repeats the 5-7-5, 7-7 pattern. This dialogue could be between two poets or a hundred.


Types of Poetry
Epic
Homeric Simile
Epithet
Narrative
Pastoral
Pastoral Elegy
Pastoral Lyric
Idyll
Metrical Romance
Complaint
Parody
Lyric
Song
Ballad
Popular
Short
Literary
Hymn
Madrigal
Sonnet
Petrarchan/Italian
Shakespearian/English
Spenserian
Elegy
Ode
Pindaric
Horation
Irregular
Narrative
Pastoral
Pastoral Elegy
Pastoral Lyric
Idyll
Metrical Romance
Complaint
Parody
Dramatic
Dr. Monologue
Narrative
Pastoral
Pastoral Elegy
Pastoral Lyric
Idyll
Metrical Romance
Complaint
Parody
* Items shown in this type of box denotes types of poetry which may be classified as Epic, Lyric, or Dramatic

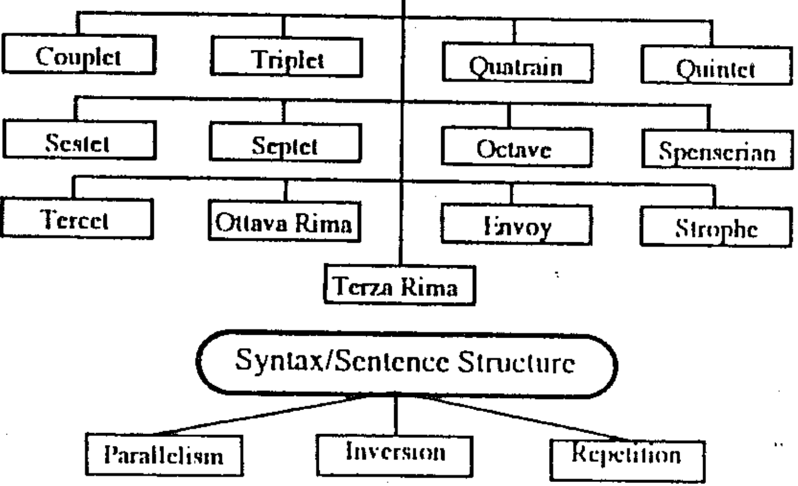
Poetic Form and Structure

Poetic Forms

- Sestina
- Sonnet (Sect.I)
- Villanelle
- Rhyme Royal
- Limerick
- Haiku

Poetic Structure

- Enjambement
- End Stop
- Refrain
- Stanza
  - Couplet
  - Triplet
  - Quatrain
  - Quintet
  - Sestet
  - Septet
  - Octave
  - Spenserian
  - Tercet
  - Ottava Rima
  - Envoy
  - Strophe
  - Terza Rima
- Syntax/Sentence Structure
  - Parallelism
  - Inversion
  - Repetition



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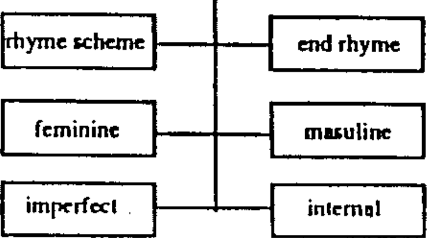
Poetry --

Sound

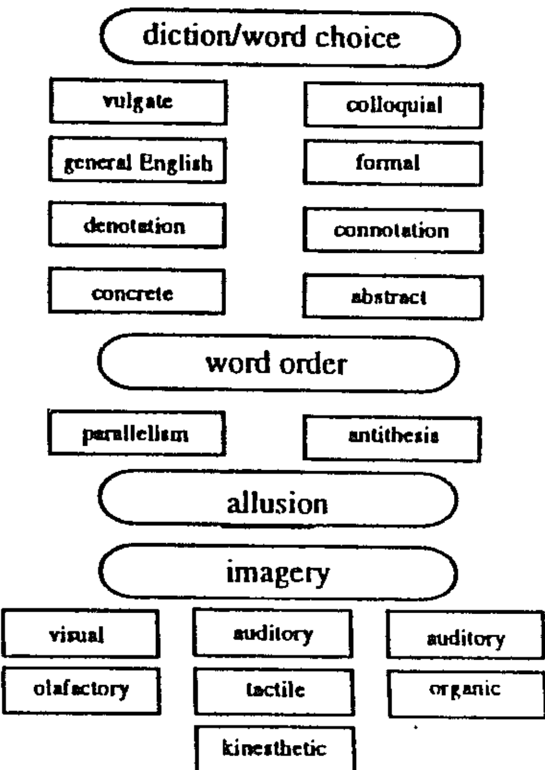
- alliteration
- assonance
- onomatopoeia
- euphony
- cacophony
- consonance
- rhyme (rime)

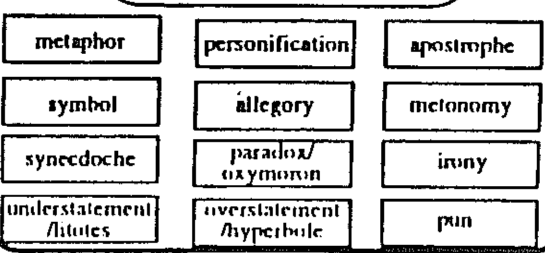


Voice

- tone/attitude
- mood/atmosphere
- shift
- speaker/persona
- stream of consciousness

Language of Poetry





POETRY GLOSSARY

Items marked with an asterisk (*) are explained more fully (with examples) in other lists as noted in parentheses at the end of the definition. Pronunciation aids are immediately after the entry word. See also List 94, Figures of Speech.

***alliteration** (uh-lit-er-RAY-shun)—Repetition of consonant sounds, usually at the beginnings of words, to create smoothness and effect. (See List 99, Alliteration from A to Z.)

alexandrine (al-uhks-ZAN-dreen)—One line of iambic hexameter. Ex: Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above. (Shelley, *Adonais*)

***assonance** (ASS-uh-nuhns)—Repetition of internal vowel sounds for aural effect. (See List 100, Assonance.)

***ballad** (BAL-luhd)—Songlike, narrative poetry; usually simple, rhyming verse using *a b c b* rhyme scheme. (See List 85, Ballad.)

***ballade** (buh-LAHD)—French poetic form, usually having three stanzas and concluding with an *envoy*. Do not confuse with *ballad* above. (See List 88, French Verse Forms.)

caesura/cesura (si-ZUHR-uh)—Pause in a line of poetry before the end of the line.

cinquain (SEEN-kayn)—Five-line poetic form, with twenty-two total syllables divided according to a set pattern. (See List 103, Stanza Type and Typical Arrangement.)

***couplet**—Two consecutive, rhymed lines of poetry; rhyme pattern: *a a*. (See List 103, Stanza Type and Typical Arrangement.)

couplet, heroic—Two, consecutive, rhymed lines of poetry written in iambic pentameter. Ex: "But I have told them, 'Since you will be true,/You shall be true to them, who're false to you.'"—Donne

dramatic poem—Play written in verse. Ex: *Prometheus Bound*—Percy Bysshe Shelley.

***elegy** (El-uh-gee)—Poetic form lamenting the death of a person or decline of a situation. (See List 87, Elegy.)

enjambment (in-JAMB-muhnt)—Continuation of meaning from one poetry line to the next; run-on lines.

***envoy/envoi** (EN-voy)—Conclusion in last stanza or lines in certain verse forms. (See List 96, Sestina.)

***epic**—Long narrative poem, usually telling of heroic deeds, events of historic importance, or religious or mythological subjects. Examples: *Iliad; Odyssey; Beowulf.* (See List 46, Epics.)

***figure of speech**—Use or arrangement of words for specific effects. (See List 94, Figures of Speech.)

***foot**—Smallest unit of poetic measurement; lines are divided into metrical groups (feet), with from one to three syllables in each. (See List 105, Versification: Meter.)

***grue** (GROO)—Short, simple, *gruesome* rhyme, coined by writers such as Robert Louis Stevenson. (See List 89, Grue.)

***haiku** (heye-KOO)—Japanese unrhymed poetic form with one observation in three lines, seventeen syllables. (See List 90, Haiku and Tanka.)

***limerick**—Poem (often humorous) with five lines and sing-song rhythm of three beats in first, second, and fifth lines, and two in the remainder; typical rhyme pattern: *a a b b a*. (See List 91, Limerick.)

***metaphysical** (met-uh-FIZ-uh-kuhl)—Refers to seventeenth-century English poets who used far-fetched imagery, spiritual topics, and witty arrogance. (See List 133, Authors by Group.)

***meter**—Rhythm of poetry; stressed and unstressed syllables in the lines. (See List 105, Versification: Meter.)

ode—Form of lyric poetry characterized by giving praise or showing appreciation. (See List 93, Ode.)

***onomatopoeia** (on-uh-mah-tuh-PEE-uh)—Words that sound like what they represent. Ex: *burp*. (See List 101, Onomatopoeia.)

***pantoum** (pan-TOOM)—Malayan rhymed poetic form with stanzas of four lines each, according to a set pattern. A "modified" pantoum is an unrhymed pantoum. (See List 94, Pantoum.)

pastoral—Poem about country life (originally about shepherds).

***pentameter, iambic** (pen-TAM-uh-ter, eye-AM-bik)—Poetic meter; ten-syllable lines, stressed on every second beat. (See List 104, Versification: Feet and List 105, Versification: Meter.)

***pictogram, poetic**—Poetry arranged in lines that form a shape or make a picture about the subject; sometimes called "shaped poem." Ex: Christmas tree. (See List 95, Pictogram and Parallel Poem.)

poem—Literature other than prose, often with rhythm, rhyme, and lines making up stanzas.

***poem, parallel**—Poem with each line starting or ending with same word or phrase. Example: I remember . . . (See List 95, Pictogram and Parallel Poem.)

poetry, dramatic—Poetry with characters who speak and act. Ex: Shakespearian plays.

***poetry, lyric**—Short poetry usually expressing one emotion. Ex: sonnets, elegies, odes, songs. (See List 92, Lyric Poetry.)

poetry, narrative—Poetry that tells a story. Included in this category are ballads, epic poetry, and metrical romances.

poetry, occasional—Poetry written for a particular occasion.

***prosody** (PRAH-suh-dee)—The study of versification: meter, rhyme, and stanza form. (See List 103, Stanza Type and Typical Arrangement; List 104, Versification: Feet; and List 105, Versification: Meter.)

***quatrain** (KWAH-trayn)—Poem or stanza containing four lines. (See List 103, Stanza Type and Typical Arrangement.)

***refrain**—Repetition of words or phrases at the end of each stanza in poetry or song. (See List 102, Repetition.)

rhyme—Words that sound like another word or have similar-sounding parts; often used in poetry. Example: *should/could*.

romance, metrical—Poetry dealing with chivalry, love, romance, and religion. Ex: *Idylls of the King*—Tennyson.

***rondeau** (RAHN-doh)—French verse form with set pattern of fifteen lines. (See List 88, French Verse Forms.)

***rondel** (rahn-duhl)—French verse form with set pattern of thirteen lines. (See List 88, French Verse Forms.)

***sestina** (ses-TEEN-uh)—Six-stanza poetic form plus a three-line envoy, arranged in a specific pattern. (See List 96, Sestina.)

***sonnet**—Lyric poem expressing one idea, containing fourteen lines of iambic pentameter and set rhyme scheme. (See List 97, Sonnet.)

***sonnet, Petrarchan** (Italian Sonnet)—Sonnet with an octave (eight lines) expressing the main theme and a sestet (six lines) expanding or contradicting the main theme. (See List 97, Sonnet.)

***sonnet, Shakespearian**—Sonnet with three quatrains (stanzas of four lines each) and ending with a couplet. (See List 97, Sonnet.)

***stanza**—Group of lines of poetry, usually with a common form and spaced apart from each other; commonly called a *verse*. (See List 103, Stanza Type and Typical Arrangement.)

***tanka** (TAHN-kuh)—Japanese poetic form with a total of thirty-one syllables divided into five lines. (See List 90, Haiku and Tanka.)

***triolet** (TREE-uh-LAY)—French poetic form with two rhymes in eight short lines, with set pattern. (See List 88, French Verse Forms.)

***verse, blank**—Unrhymed iambic pentameter. Ex: Shakespeare's tragedies. (See List 86, Blank Verse and Free Verse.)

***verse, free**—Also called **vers libre** (ver-LEE-bruh). Poetry without standard meter or rhyme, but rhythmical arrangement of lines for effect. Ex: Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. (See List 86, Blank Verse and Free Verse.)

***villanelle** (VIL-uh-NEL)—French poetic form; two rhymes and six stanzas in a set pattern. (See List 88, French Verse Forms.)

Literary Techniques

Imagery: Language that appeals to the senses (sight, sound, taste, touch, smell)
Example: "Oh full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife."

Denotation: Dictionary definition of a word

Connotation: Emotions and ideas associated with a word
Example: "Oh, that is lovely."

Allusion: Reference to something in history of literature
Example: Like Abraham, I was tested.

Irony: Discrepancy between expectation and reality or between words and intention.
Dramatic: The viewer or reader knows what is going on, but the character doesn't.
Verbal: A difference between the words and what is really being said.
Example: The best substitute for experience is being 16.
Situational: The actual outcome is very different than the desired outcome.

Understatement: A statement which means less than what is intended.
Example: It will be nice when summer break arrives.

Hyperbole: A statement of exaggeration.
Example: I was on the phone for 17 hours with my mom.

Paradox: An apparent contradiction that conveys truth.
Example: The coach considered this a good loss.

Simile: Direct comparison of two essentially unlike things, using "like" or "as."
Example: The frog is as slippery as an ice cube.

Metaphor: Comparison between two unlike things.
Example: "Life is but a walking shadow" Macbeth

Personification: Attribution of human characteristics to a creature, idea, or object.
Example: "Gluttony…His belly was up-blown w/ luxury.", Edmund Spenser, "Faerie Queen."

Apostrophe: Direct address to an inanimate object or idea.
Example: "Roll on thou deep and dark blue ocean – roll." Lord Byron, "Apostrophe to the Ocean."

Symbol: Anything that has meaning of its own, but also stands for something beyond itself.
Example: The pig in *Lord of the Flies*

Tone: Attitude revealed toward the subject.
Example: Sarcastic, serious, empathetic, argumentative, etc.

This test will include concepts covered in Poetry Test I.

Rhyme and Sound:

Rime: old spelling of rhyme, which is the repetition of like sounds at regular intervals, employed in versification, the writing of verse.

End Rhyme: rhyme occurring at end of verse line; most common rhyme form.

Internal Rhyme: rhyme contain within a line of verse.

Rhyme Scheme: pattern of rhyme within a unit of verse; in analysis, each end rhyme-sound is represented b y a letter (abab cdcd).

Masculine Rhyme: rhyme in which only the last, accented syllables of the rhyming words correspond exactly in sound; most common kind of end rhyme.

Feminine Rhyme: rhyme in which two consecutive syllables of the rhyme-words correspond, the first syllable carrying the accent; double rhyme.

Trembling, hoping, lingering, flying,
______O the pain, the bliss of dying!
(Alexander Pope, "Vital Spark of Heavenly Flame")

Slant Rhyme (Half Rhyme): imperfect, approximate rhyme.

In the mustardseed sun
By full tilt river and switchback sea
Where the cormorants scud,
In his house on stilts high among beaks...
(Dylan Thomas, "Poem on His Birthday")

Assonance: repetition of two or more vowel sounds within a line.

Consonance: repetition of two or more consonant sounds within a line.

Alliteration: repetition of two or more initial sounds in words within a line.

Onomatopoeia: the technique of using a word whose sound suggests its meaning.

Euphony: the use of compatible, harmonious sounds to produce a pleasing, melodious effect.

Cacophony the use of inharmonious sounds in close conjunction for effect; opposite of euphony.

The **Irregular Ode** , which was developed by the 17th Century poet Abraham Cowley, imitated the spirit of the Pindaric ode but disregarded the strophe and stanza rules. It is very flexible, and has become the most common ode in English poetry.

11. **Pastoral:** although many forms of literature fit this category, its setting is a created world marked by constant summer and second nature.

12. **Rondeau** a French poem for light topics; 15 lines, with short refrains at lines nine and fifteen, rhymed *aabba, aaba, aabbac.*

13. **Rondel** very similar to rondeau with 13 or 14 lines.

14. Song: a poem for musical expression, usually brief, straightforward, and emotional.

→ **15. Sonnet:** a lyric poem of fourteen lines, usually in iambic pentameter, written about one important subject. The two main types are the Italian (or Petrarchan) sonnet and the English (or Shakespearean) sonnet. The **Italian sonnet** has two sections, an octave and a sestet., with a rhyme scheme of abba abba cde cde 9 or cdc cdc). The octave develops a question, story, or idea, and the sestet presents an answer, comment or proposition. The **English sonnet** has four sections, three quatrains developing a subject and a couplet providing a closing comment. Many variations of these occur in English poetry.

16. **Threnody:** similar to a dirge; in Greek poetry it mourns the dead and is sung by a chorus.

→ **18. Villanelle:** A highly specialized French verse form with 19 lines divided into 5 tercets and 1 quatrain. Two rhymes or repeated lines predominate. With the rhyme scheme aba aba aba aba aba abaa, line 1 is repeated exactly in lines 6, 12, and 18, while line 3 is repeated exactly in lines 9, 15, and 19. Refer to Dylan Thomas' "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night," in which the repeated lines develop meaning over the course of the poem without seeming trite or repetitive.

→ **Narrative Poem:** tells a story. The poem may be simple or complicated, brief or very long, as in an epic. Almost the opposite of the lyric poem, a narrative poem is commonly highly objective, told by a speaker detached from the action whose thoughts and feelings to not enter the poem. It has a regular rhyme scheme.

→ **Blank Verse:** unrhymed iambic pentameter.

→ **Free Verse**: verse without rhyme or meter.

→ **Dramatic Monologue:** Another form of the lyric poem, a dramatic monologue is a poem told by one speaker about a significant event. In his own words, the speaker reveals some dramatic situation in which he is involved. He addresses a listener who does not engage in dialogue. The speaker characterizes himself through the poem. Refer to Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess."

→ NEED FOR AP EXAM

Poetry Terms

alliteration
allusion
ambiguity
anapest, anapestic
antithesis
approximate rhyme (see slant rhyme)
assonance
aubade
audience
ballad
blank verse
cacophony
caesura
carpe diem
conceit
connotation
consonance
couplet
dactyl, dactylic
denotation
diction
dimeter
dramatic monologue
dramatic situation
elegy
end rhyme
end-stopped line
English sonnet aka Shakespearean
enjambment
epithet
euphony
exact rhyme
extended metaphor
feminine rhyme
foot
free verse
hexameter
hyperbole
iamb, iambic
imagery
implied metaphor
internal rhyme
irony
Italian sonnet aka Petrarchan sonnet
litotes
lyric poem
masculine rhyme
metaphor
metaphysical poetry
meter
metonymy
monometer
narrative poem
octave
ode
onomatapoeia
oxymoron
paradox
parallelism
pentameter
personification
phonetic intensives
quatrain
rhetorical question
rhyme scheme
run-on line (enjambment)
scansion
sestet
simile
slant rhyme (approximate or near rhyme)
sonnet
speaker
spondee, spondaic
stanza
synecdoche
syntax
tercet
tetrameter
theme
tone
trimester
trochee, trochaic
villanelle
volta
zeugma

ANNOTATED GLOSSARY: LITERARY TERMS

ALLITERATION: the repetition at close intervals of the initial consonant sounds of accented syllables or important words

example: "Why brand they us/With 'base,' with 'baseness.' 'bastardy,' 'base,' 'base...'" (*King Lear* I.ii.9-10)

function: Edmund's use of alliteration emphasizes his revoking of the Great Chain of Being and stresses his belief in himself and nature as his goddess. Repetition of the letter "b" further suggests a battle march; a march to reclaim all the honor and dignity he feels he deserves. Edmund believes that being an illegitimate son does not mean he is any lower in wit or strength. Hence the b-alliteration, a cacophonous sound created by explosive consonants, foreshadows the disruption Edmund intends toward his family and others who embrace the Great Chain of Being as he confidently proceeds toward the triumph he hopes to achieve. (Weigel)

example: "And let not women's weapons, water drops,/Stain my man's cheeks!"(*King Lear,* II.iv.279)

function: Shakespeare intends the repeated soft "w" sound to echo the soft falling sound of dropping tears. In this scene, Lear has been betrayed by his daughters Goneril and Regan, and is feeling forsaken and put out and is trying not to weep at his loss; the w-alliteration evokes this sense of loss nicely. (Morris)

ALLUSION: a brief reference in literature, explicit or indirect, to a subject the writer assumes his reader will recognize, such as: 1)mythology, 2) the Bible, 3)other works of literature, 4)historical events, figures and 5)places.

example: "But two months dead...so excellent a king, that was to this Hyperion to a Satyr..." (*Hamlet,* I.ii.138-140)

function: After the passing of two months since his father's death, Hamlet compares his dead father, Hamlet Sr., to his uncle/stepfather, Claudius, by alluding to two figures of Greek mythology. Cemented in an unhappy situation, Hamlet longs for and idealizes the past when his father was alive, remembering his father as Hyperion, the beautiful sun god of ideal, manly beauty. On the other hand, Hamlet refers to Claudius as a Satyr, a half-man,

half-goat mythical creature noted for cruelty and lust--an insulting association resulting from Hamlet's resentment towards Claudius for taking his father's place and marrying his mother, Gertrude, so quickly after his father's death. Shakespeare alludes to mythical figures of opposite nature to stress the difference Hamlet believes he sees between his father and Claudius. (Lee)

ASIDE: In dramatic works, a short speech or remark directed either to the audience or to another character, which by convention is supposed to be inaudible to the other characters on the stage.

example: "O, tis too true! How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience! /The harlot's cheek, beautied with plast'ring art,/Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it/Than is my deed to my most painted word. /O heavy burden." (*Hamlet*, III.i.57-62)

function: With this aside, Shakespeare reveals Claudius' guilt to the audience. This admission of guilt is the source of much dramatic irony, as the audience knows an important truth Hamlet must discover. Shakespeare's aside reinforces the tension between appearance and reality in the play, building upon the "paint" imagery and other images of outer appearance; Claudius has been hiding his evil deed beneath a cover of "painted" words. Perhaps most of all, Shakespeare emphasizes with this soliloquy the difficulty of Hamlet's quest for the truth--the audience knows of Claudius' guilt, and empathizes with Hamlet as he strives to "catch the conscience of the king."

EUPHONY: a smooth, pleasant-sounding choice and arrangement of sounds.

example: "So smooth, so sweet, so silvery is thy voice,
...Melting melodious words to lutes of amber."
("Upon Julia's Voice," Herrick)

function: Herrick's euphonious sounds replicate the beauty he perceives in Julia's voice. The soft "s" and "v" sounds of the first line flow and soothe the ear. In the last line, Herrick's liquid consonants "l," "m," and "n" function in the same way--to describe futher Julia's voice, creating an effect that is pleasing to the ear--like Julia's voice would be. (Hartsuyker)

HYPERBOLE: a figure of speech in which exaggeration is used in the service of emphasis.

example: "This heart/Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws/Or else I'll weep." (*King Lear*, II.iv.)

function: Toni Morrison uses personification to avoid embarrassing the child who is involved. In this scene the child, Denver, has put on her best dress and gone to visit an old friend in search of work. In order not to mix the friend's thoughts with what the reader is supposed to visualize, Morrison gives the human emotion of embarrassment to an inanimate object, the chair. Also, the chair's needlepoint design would be "loud," making the personification especially apt here. (Morris)

example: "I love Death--not morbidly, but because He explains. He shows me the emptiness of money." (Forster, *Howard's End*, p.188)

function: Helen personifies Death to Leonard Bast in this passage. We know that death is not a person, as does Helen. But Forster personifies death to make not only Leonard, but the reader, realize death's value in the novedl. By making death a person("He"), Forster underscores its importance; after death, money no longer matters. In life, one must cling to more important things than money, so that one may live a happier, fuller life. (McKinney)

SYNTAX: the way in which words and clauses are ordered and connected so as to form sentences; poets often distort the normal "subject-verb-object" English sentence through inversion.

example: "She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love."
(Wordsworth, "She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways," lines 3-4)

function: the irregular syntax in this stanza functions to manipulate the words in line 3 that would ordinarily be written, "there were none to praise this maid," in order to preserve the structure of the quatrain. The inverted syntax maintains the alternating iambic pentameter and iambic trimeter, along with the alternating end rhymes, abab. Furthermore, the inversion emphasizes the word "praise," placing it at the end of the line. (Rakestraw)

example: "My face I'll grime with filth...Edgar I nothing am." (*King Lear*, II.iii.9, 21)

function: Shakespeare inverts the syntax to begin with the direct object in this soliloquy of Edgar. Edgar begins line 9 with "my face," in order to underscore what he will actually change. He changes his physical appearance, assuming a new identity. When he says, "Edgar I nothing am," again inverting syntax, he denounces only what people perceive from without, what first meets the eye. This inversion of

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ANNOTATED GLOSSARY: LITERARY TERMS

Complete annotated glossary entries according to the following format, selecting your illustrations from course readings.

FORMAT:

Term: definition(see *Sound and Sense,* handouts)

Example(s): quotation, followed by source, including title, page/line number

Function: author's purpose in employing this language resource, at this point in the work; comment on theme, character, setting, etc.

SAMPLE STUDENT GLOSSARY ANNOTATIONS:

allusion: a brief reference in literature, explicit or indirect, to a subject the writer assumes his reader will recognize, such as: 1) mythology; 2) the Bible; 3) other works of literature; 4) historical events, figures; 5) places

example: "Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell." (*Macbeth,* IV.iii.22.)

function: Malcolm's line *alludes* to Lucifer, the "brightest angel," who rebels against God in the Biblical account. Even the name "Lucifer" suggests light("luz") or brightness. Malcolm's *allusion* to Lucifer serves to explain the nature of grace to Macduff, and it helps illuminate the character of Macbeth, the "brightest" of Duncan's nobles at the outset of the play, who succumbs to the "common enemy of mankind" in killing his king/guest/cousin. The allusion also compliments the light-dark image pattern in *Macbeth.*

alliteration: the repetition at close intervals of the initial consonant sounds of accented syllables or important words.

example: "Were they not forced with those that should be ours,/ We might have met them dareful, beard to beard,/ And beat them backward home." (*Macbeth,* V.v.5-7)

function: "B"-*alliteration* emphasizes the meaning and importance of Macbeth's lines, lines that precede the well-known(and *alliterative)* "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow" soliloquy. The *alliteration* of the explosive consonant "b" sound echoes the sounds of battle, for which Macbeth is preparing. These "b" sounds explode to accentuate Macbeth's harshness, his stressed and battle-weary mind. This cacophonous *alliteration* appropriately mirrors Macbeth's situation in the play.

Sample Term Papers

I

Allusion

"Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell."
(*Macbeth,* IV.iii.22)

Early in Malcolm's encounter with Macduff before the king's palace in England in Act IV, scene iii of *Macbeth*, Malcolm ***alludes*** to Lucifer, the "brightest angel," who rebels against God in the Biblical account. Even the name "Lucifer" suggests light ("luz") or brightness. Malcolm's ***allusion*** to Lucifer serves to explain the nature of "grace" to Macduff, and it helps illuminate the character of Macbeth, the "brightest" of Duncan's nobles at the outset of the play, who succumbs to the "common enemy of mankind" in killing his king, guest, and cousin in the person of Malcolm's father. The ***allusion*** nicely compliments the light-dark image pattern in *Macbeth,* and suggests Malcolm will embody the "king-becoming graces" when he is invested with the crown as Scotland's next ruler.

Note: This sample resulted from at least one revision. Only periods, commas, and parentheses supply punctuation here, but the active voice pleases, as do the quotations skillfully integrated within the student's text. See As You Read It Quiz 4, question 29, for the impetus for this term paper. I find the As You Read It questions tend to foster a heightened student sensitivity to specific detail, particularly to quotations.

II

Alliteration

Were they not forced with those that should be ours
We might have met them dareful, beard to beard,
And beat them backward home.
(*Macbeth,* V.v.5-7)

The "b" ***alliteration*** here reinforces Macbeth's protest, and his combative nature, as he finds himself increasingly deserted in Act V. The explosive consonant "b" sound ***alliterates*** and seems an anticipatory echo of the the sounds of battle, for which Macbeth is preparing. These "b" sounds explode to accentuate Macbeth's harshness, his stressed and battle-weary mind: "beard...beard...beat." The initial explosive "d" in "dareful" adds appropriately to the cacophony in these lines, which precede the well-known (and ***alliterative***) "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow" soliloquy.

Note: See As You Read It Quiz 5, question 21, for the source of this term paper. Written early in the semester as was sample I above, this term paper offers but one colon. Still, it is in active voice, present tense, and it reflects the connection between sound and sense.