

FUNDAMENTAL POETIC ELEMENTS

1. Poetry

Poetry is a patterned form of verbal or written expression of ideas in concentrated, imaginative, and rhythmical terms. Poetry usually contains rhyme and a specific meter, but not necessarily.

METER

2. Meter

Meter is the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables established in a line of poetry. The stressed (') syllable is also called the accented or long syllable. The unstressed (-) syllable is also called the unaccented or short syllable. In determining the meter, the importance of the word, the position in the metrical pattern, and other linguistic factors should be considered. In identifying the meter of a line of verse, the type and the number of feet are considered.

3. Foot

A foot is a unit of meter. A metrical foot can have two or three syllables. A foot consists generally of one stressed and one or more unstressed syllables. A line may have one foot, two feet, etc. Poetic lines are classified according to the number of feet in a line.

4. Types of Metrical Feet

The basic types of metrical feet determined by the arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables are:

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| a. iambic foot | d. dactylic foot |
| b. trochaic foot | e. spondaic foot |
| c. anapestic foot | f. pyrrhic foot |

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VERSE FORMS

20. Verse Forms

The kinds of verse forms based on meter and rhyme are:

- rhymed verse
- blank verse
- free verse

21. Rhymed Verse

Rhymed verse consists of verse with end rhyme and usually with a regular meter.

HORSES

They head the list
Of bad to bet on,
But I insist
They're worse to get on.

Richard Armour

22. Blank Verse

Blank verse consists of lines of iambic pentameter without end rhyme.

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from JULIUS CAESAR

Cowards die many times before their deaths;
The valiant never taste of death but once.
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard, ...
It seems to me most strange that men should fear;
Seeing that death, a 'necessary' end,
Will come when it will come.

Shakespeare

23. Free Verse

Free verse consists of lines that do not have a regular meter and do not contain rhyme.

SPLINTER

The voice of the last cricket
across the first frost
is one kind of good-by.
It is so thin a splinter of singing.

Carl Sandburg

DEVICES OF SOUND

24. Rhyme

Rhyme (also spelled "rime") is the similarity or likeness of sound existing between two words. A true rhyme should consist of identical sounding syllables that are stressed and the letters preceding the vowel sounds should be different. Thus *fun* and *run* are true or perfect rhymes because the vowel sounds are identical preceded by different consonants.

8.

25. **Position of Rhyme**
Rhyme may be **end rhyme** or **internal rhyme**.

26. **End Rhyme** / *Exact rhyme*
End rhyme consists of the similarity occurring at the end of two or more lines of verse.

I WISH

I wish that my room had a **floor**; a
I don't so much care for a **door**, a
But this walking **around** b
Without touching the **ground** b
Is getting to be quite a **bore!** a

Gelett Burgess

28 **Internal Rhyme**
Internal rhyme consists of the similarity occurring between two or more words in the same line of verse.

from **THE RAVEN**

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 someone gently rapping, rapping at my chamber
door—
"Tis some visitor," I muttered, "Tapping at my
chamber door—
Only this and nothing more."

Poe

27. **Slant Rhyme / End Rhyme**
Words that sound similar but do not rhyme exactly "That I may prove / therein my love"

from **JESSE JAMES**

28. It was on a Wednesday **night**, the moon was
shining **bright**
They robbed the Glendale **train**,
And the people **they** did say, for many miles
away,
'Twas the outlaws Frank and Jesse James.
Jesse had a **wife**, to mourn all her **life**,
The children they are **brave**.
'Twas a dirty little **coward** shot Mister **Howard**.
And laid Jesse James in his **grave**.
Anonymous
*Howard was the name Jesse was using.

Kinds of Rhyme

The kinds of rhyme based on the number of syllables presenting a similarity of sound are:
a. masculine rhyme
b. feminine or double rhyme
c. triple rhyme

29. **Masculine Rhyme**

Masculine rhyme occurs when one syllable of a word rhymes with another word. (**bend** and **send**, **bright** and **light**)

TAPS

Fading **light** a
Dims the **sight**, a
And the stars gem the **sky**, b
Gleaming **bright**, a
From afar drawing **nigh**, b
Falls the **night**. a

Joseph Esenwein

30. **Feminine or Double Rhyme**
Feminine rhyme occurs when the last two syllables of a word rhyme with another word. (**lawful** and **awful**, **lighting** and **fighting**, **rattling** and **battling**)

HOW ARE YOU

Don't tell your friends about your **indigestion**:
"How are you!" is a greeting, not a **question**.

Arthur Guiterman

31. **Triple Rhyme**
Triple rhyme occurs when the last three syllables of a word or line rhyme. (**victorious** and **glorious**, **ascendency** and **descendency**, **quivering** and **shivering**, **battering** and **shattering**)

THE HIPPOPOTAMUS

I shoot the Hippopotamus
With bullets of **platinum**
Because if I use leaden ones
His hide is sure to **flatten 'em**.

Hilaire Belloc

32. **Rhyme Scheme**
Rhyme scheme is the pattern or sequence in which the rhyme occurs. The first sound is represented or designated as a, the second sound is designated as b, and so on. When the first sound is repeated, it is designated as a-also.

SOME LITTLE BUG

In these days of indigestion a
It is often times a question a
As to what to eat and what to leave alone: b
For each microbe and bacillus c
Has a different way to kill us, c
And in time they always claim us for their own. b
There are germs of every kind d
In any food that you can find d
In the market or upon the bill of fare. e
Drinking water's just as risky f
As the so-called deadly whiskey, f
And it's often a mistake to breathe the air. e

Roy Atwell

PIPPA'S SONG

The year's at the spring a
And day's at the morn; b
Morning's at seven; c
The hillside's dew-pearled; d
The lark's on the wing; a
The snail's on the thorn; b
God's in his heaven — c
All's right with the world! d

Browning

33. **Alliteration**
Alliteration is the repetition of the initial letter or sound in two or more words in a line of verse.
How much dew could a dewdrop drop if a dewdrop did drop dew?

from **MY MADELINE**

My Madeline! my Madeline!
Mark my melodious midnight moans;
Much may my melting music mean,
My modulated monotones.
Walter Parke

A TUTOR

A Tutor who tooted the flute
Tried to teach two young tooters to toot:
Said the two to the Tutor,
"Is it harder to toot, or
To tutor two tooters to toot?"
Carolyn Wells

from **PIED BEAUTY**

Glory be to God for dappled things —
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout and swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pierced-fold, fallow, and
plough;
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.
Hopkins

34. **Onomatopoeia (on o mat o pe' a)**

Onomatopoeia is the use of a word to represent or imitate natural sounds. (buzz, crunch, tinkle, gurgle, sizzle, hiss)

from **THE COMING OF ARTHUR**

Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let the king reign.
Tennyson

from **THE PRINCESS**

The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.
Tennyson

from **THE BELLS**

Hear the sledges with the bells,
Silver bells!
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night!

Poe

35. **Assonance**

Assonance is the similarity or repetition of a vowel sound in two or more words. Assonance is sometimes called partial or near rhyme. Lake and stake are rhymes. Lake and fate are assonance. Base and face are rhymes, but base and fade are assonance.

36. **Consonance**

Consonance is the repetition of consonant sounds within a line of verse. Consonance is similar to alliteration except that consonance doesn't limit the repeated sound to the initial letter of a word.

from **CROSSING THE BAR**

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,

from **IN MEMORIAM**

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

from **THE BUGLE SONG**

The splendor falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story;
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.

37. **Refrain**

A refrain is the repetition of one or more phrases or lines at intervals in a poem, usually at the end of a stanza. The refrain often takes the form of a chorus.

THIS SMOKING WORLD

Tobacco is a dirty weed:
I like it.
It satisfies no normal need:
I like it.
It makes you thin, it makes you lean,
It takes the hair right off your bean,
It's the worst darn stuff I've ever seen:
I like it.

G. L. Hemminger

38. **Repetition**

Repetition is the reiterating of a word or phrase within a poem.

THE HAMMERS

Noise of hammers once I heard,
Many hammers, busy hammers,
Beating, shaping, night and day,
Shaping, beating dust and clay
To a place; saw it reared;
Saw the hammers laid away.
And I listened, and I heard
Hammers beating, night and day
In a palace newly reared,
Beating it to dust and clay;
Other hammers, muffled hammers,
silent hammers of decay.

Ralph Hodgson

DEVICES OF SENSE

39. **Figure of Speech**

A figure of speech is an expression in which the words are used in a nonliteral sense to present a figure, picture, or image.

40. **Kinds of Figures of Speech**

The basic figures of speech are:

- a. simile
- b. metaphor
- c. personification
- d. synecdoche
- e. metonymy
- f. hyperbole
- g. litotes
- h. antithesis
- i. apostrophe
- j. symbol

Imagery: Words or phrases that appeal to one or more of the five senses
a. olfactory - smell
b. aural - sound
c. tactile - touch
d. visual - sight
e. taste

41. **Simile**

A simile is a direct or explicit comparison between two usually unrelated things indicating a likeness or similarity between some attribute found in both things. A simile uses like or as to indicate the comparison. In the expression John swims like a fish, the grace and naturalness with which John swims is compared with the grace and naturalness with which a fish swims. Literally, it would be impossible for John to swim like a fish because of his human nature. However, we can imagine the figure or image of a very skilled and graceful swimmer beneath the surface.

1. He is sleeping like a log.
2. The ball was thrown like a bullet.
3. Marie eats like a bird.
4. John swings like a rusty gate.
5. The dawn comes up like thunder.

from **A RED, RED ROSE**

O my love's like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June:
O my love's like a melodie
That's sweetly played in tune.

Robert Burns

42. **Metaphor**

A metaphor is an implied comparison between two usually unrelated things indicating a likeness or analogy between attributes found in both things. A metaphor, unlike the simile, does not use *like* or *as* to indicate the comparison.

1. All the world's a stage.
2. She was peaches and cream.
3. Fred's a pig at the table.
4. The screaming headlines announced the murder.
5. Life's a short summer, man a flower.

FOG

The fog comes
on little cat feet.
It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

Carl Sandburg

Refrain from **MY LOVE AND MY HEART**

But my love she is a kitten,
And my heart's a ball of string.

Henry Leigh

from **CASEY AT THE BAT**

Ten thousand eyes were on him as he rubbed
his hands in the dirt,
Five thousand tongues applauded when he
wiped them on his shirt;

45. **Metonymy (me ton' e mi)**

Metonymy is the substitution of a word naming an object for another word closely associated with it.

1. Pay tribute to the **crown**.
(crown substituted for king)
2. The **White House** has decided.
(White House = President)
3. The **pen** is mightier than the **sword**.
(pen = reason, sword = brawn)
4. He had to **sweat** for his bread.
(sweat = hard work)

46. **Hyperbole (hi pur' be li)**

Hyperbole is an exaggeration for the sake of emphasis and is not to be taken literally.

1. Sweat to death
2. rivers of blood
3. as old as time
4. million times a day

from **THE MAN WITH THE HOE**

Bowed by the **weight of centuries** he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The **emptiness of ages** in his face,
And on his back the **burden of the world**.

Edwin Markham

43. **Personification**

Personification is the giving of human characteristics to inanimate objects, ideas, or animals.

1. The **wind** whistled.
2. Her **heart** cried out.
3. Bright **April** shakes out her rain-drenched hair.
(Sara Teasdale)
4. The screams of cut **trees** . . .
(Crane)
5. The dusky **night** rides down the sky.
(Henry Fielding)
6. The **waves** beside them danced.
(Wordsworth)
7. **Time**, the subtle thief of youth . . .
(Milton)
8. **Death**, be not proud, though some have called thee Mighty and dreadful, . . .
(Donne)

from **CHICAGO**

Hog-Butcher for the World,
Tool-Maker, Staker of Wheat
Player with Railroads and the Nation's
Freight-handler;
Stormy, husky, brawling,
City of the Big Shoulders:

Sandburg

44. **Synecdoche (si nek' de ki)**

Synecdoche is the technique of mentioning a part of something to represent the whole.

1. All hands on deck! (hands = sailors)
2. Give us this day our daily bread.
(bread = food or sustenance)
3. A sail! A sail! (sail = ship)

from **A RED, RED ROSE**

Till a' the seas go dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun!
And I will love thee still, my dear,
Robert Burns

47. **Litotes (li' to tez)**

Litotes is an understatement and is achieved by saying the opposite of what one means or by making an affirmation by stating the fact in the negative. It can be considered the opposite of hyperbole. An example would be to call a fat boy "Skinny" or to call a slow boy "Speedy."

48. **Antithesis (an lith' e sis)**

Antithesis is a balancing or contrasting of one term against another.

Man proposes, God disposes.
(Pope)

Fair is foul, and foul is fair.
(Shakespeare)

from **A PSALM OF LIFE**

Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.
Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each **tomorrow**
Find us better than **today**.
Art is **long** and Time is **fleeting**
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave,

Longfellow

49. **Apostrophe (a pos' tre fi)**
 Apostrophe is the addressing of someone or something, usually not present, as though present.

O Captain! My Captain! our fearful trip is done,
 (Walt Whitman)

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
 Mighty and dreadful, . . . (John Donne)

Break, break, break,
 On thy cold gray stones, O Sea! (Tennyson)

50. **Symbol**
 A symbol is a word or image that signifies something other than what is literally represented. The cross is a symbol for Christianity. The donkey and the elephant are symbols of two American political organizations.

STANZA FORMS

51. **Stanza**
 A stanza is a division of a poem based on thought or form. Stanzas based on form are marked by their rhyme scheme. Stanzas are known by the number of lines they contain.

52. **Kinds of Stanzas**
 The basic stanza forms are:
 a. couplet — two line stanza
 b. triplet — three line stanza
 c. quatrain — four line stanza
 d. quintet — five line stanza
 e. sestet — six line stanza
 f. septet — seven line stanza
 g. octave — eight line stanza
 h. others are identified as nine-, ten-, or eleven-line stanzas.

THE PURPLE COW

I never saw a Purple Cow. a
 I never hope to see one; b
 But I can tell you; anyhow, a
 I'd rather see than be one. b
 Gelett Burgess

56. **Quintet**
 A quintet is a five line stanza that may have any one of several rhyme schemes.

MY FACE

As a beauty I am not a star, a
 There are others more handsome by far; a
 But my face I don't mind it, b
 For I am behind it, b
 It's the people in front that I jar. a
 Anthony Euwer

57. **Sestet**
 A sestet is a six line stanza. It is sometimes used to refer to the last six lines of a sonnet. (See Sonnet #67)

THE EXAMPLE

Here's an example from a
 A Butterfly; b
 That on a rough, hard rock c
 Happy can lie; b
 Friendless and all alone d
 On this unsweetened stone. d
 Now let my bed be hard, a
 No care take I; b
 I'll make my joy like this c
 Small Butterfly; b
 Whose happy heart has power d
 To make a stone a flower. d
 W. H. Davies

53. **Couplet**
 A couplet is two lines of verse that rhymes a a.
 from HUMPTY DUMPTY'S
 RECITATION

In winter, when the fields are white. a
 I sing this song for your delight— a
 In spring, when woods are getting green, a
 I'll try and tell you what I mean. a
 In summer, when the days are long, a
 Perhaps you'll understand the song: a
 In autumn, when the leaves are brown, a
 Take pen and ink, and write it down. a
 Lewis Carroll

54. **Triplet or Tercet**
 The triplet or tercet is a three line stanza or is three lines of verse within a larger unit that usually rhymes a a a.

THE EAGLE

He clasps the crag with crooked hands, a
 Close to the sun in lonely lands, a
 Ringed with the azure world, he stands. a
 The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls, a
 He watches from his mountain walls, a
 And like a thunderbolt he falls. a
 Tennyson

55. **Quatrain**
 A quatrain consists of four rhymed lines. The rhyme takes various forms, (a-a-a-a, a-b-a-b, a-b-b-a, a-a-b-b, a-b-a-c). The quatrain is the most common stanza form in English.

58. **Septet**
 A septet is a seven line stanza.

THE EMPTY PURSE

One song leads on to another, a
 One friend to another friend; b
 So I'll travel along c
 With a friend and a song — c
 I'll travel along c
 Ten thousand strong c
 To the end. b
 But if all songs should fail me a
 And friend fail after friend, b
 I'll still have you, c
 O tried and true — c
 I'll still have you, c
 And a stone in my shoe c
 To the end. b
 W. W. Gibson

59. **Octave**
 An octave is an eight line stanza. It has numerous possibilities for different rhyme schemes. It is often used to refer to the first eight lines of a sonnet. (See Sonnet #67)

RESUME

Razors pain you; a
 Rivers are damp; b
 Acids stain you; a
 And drugs cause cramp. b
 Guns aren't lawful; c
 Nooses give; d
 Gas smells awful; c
 You might as well live. d

Dorothy Parker

60. Heroic Couplet

The heroic couplet (sometimes called a closed couplet) consists of two successive rhyming verses that contain a complete thought within the two lines. It usually consists of iambic pentameter lines.

from AN ESSAY ON CRITICISM

True ease in writing comes from art, not chance. a
As those move easiest who have learned to dance. a
'Tis not enough no harshness gives offense; b
The sound must seem an Echo to the sense. b

Pope

83. Terza Rima

Terza rima is a three-line stanza form with an interlaced or interwoven rhyme scheme: *a b a, b c b, c d c, d e d*, etc. It too is usually iambic pentameter.

from ODE TO THE WEST WIND

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being, a
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead b
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing, a

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red, b
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou, b
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed c

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low, c
Each like a corpse within its grave, until d
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow c

Shelley

62. Limerick

A limerick is a five line nonsense poem with an anapestic meter. The rhyme scheme is usually *a a b b a*. The first, second, and fifth lines have three stresses; and the third and fourth have two stresses.

There was a young fellow named Hall, a
Who fell in the spring in the fall; a
'Twould have been a sad thing b
If he'd died in the spring, b
But he didn't — he died in the fall. a

Anonymous

63. Ballad Stanza

The ballad stanza consists of four lines with a rhyme scheme of *a b c b*. The first and third lines are tetrameter and the second and fourth are trimeter.

from THE HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

Now let us sing, "Long live the king, a
And Gilpin, long live he"; b
And when he next doth ride abroad, c
May I be there to see! b

84. Rime Royal

Rime royal is a stanza consisting of seven lines in iambic pentameter rhyming *a b a b b c c*. It is so called because a king, James I of Scotland, used it.

from DAUBER

For bells were struck, the watch was called on deck, a
All work aboard was over for the hour, b
And some men sang and others played at check, a
Or mended clothes or watched the sunset glower, b
The bursting west was like an opening flower, b
And one man watched it till the light was dim, c
But no one went across to talk to him. c

John Masfield

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85. Ottava Rima

Ottava rima consists of eight iambic pentameter lines with a rhyme scheme of *a b a b a b c c*. It is a form that was borrowed from the Italians.

from DON JUAN

At six, I said, he was a charming child, a
At twelve he was a fine, but quiet boy; b
Although in infancy a little wild, a
They tamed him down amongst them: to destroy b
His natural spirit not in vain they toiled, a
At least it seemed so; and his mother's joy b
Was to declare how sage, and still, and steady, c
Her young philosopher was grown already . . . c

Lord Byron

86. Spenserian Stanza

The Spenserian stanza is a nine-line stanza consisting of eight iambic pentameter lines followed by an alexandrine, a line of iambic hexameter. The rhyme scheme is *a b a b b c b c c*. The form derives its name from Edmund Spenser, who initiated the form for this *Faerie Queene*.

67. Sonnet

A sonnet is a fourteen-line stanza form consisting of iambic pentameter lines. The two major sonnet forms are the Italian or Petrarchan and the English or Shakespearean sonnet.

68. Italian or Petrarchan Sonnet

The Italian sonnet is a fourteen-line stanza form consisting of an octave and a sestet. The rhyme scheme is *a b b a a b b a* for the

octave and either *c d e c d e* or *c d c d c d* for the sestet. The octave makes a statement or states a problem and the sestet is a summary or gives a solution to the problem in the octave.

DEATH

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee a
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so: b
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow b
Die not, poor Death; nor yet canst thou kill me. a
From Rest and Sleep, which but thy picture be, a
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow; b
And soonest our best men with thee do go — b
Rest of their bones and souls' delivery! a
Thou'rt slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate c
men, c
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell; d
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well d
And better than thy stroke. Why swell'st thou then? c
One short sleep past, we wake eternally, e
And death shall be no more. Death, thou shalt die! e

John Donne

69. English or Shakespearean Sonnet

The English sonnet is a fourteen-line stanza consisting of three quatrains and a couplet. The rhyme scheme is *a b a b, c d c d, e f e f, g g*.

SONNET 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? a
Thou art more lovely and more temperate: b
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, a
And summer's lease hath all too short a date; b
Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines, c
And often is his gold complexion dimmed; d
And every fair from fair sometime declines, c
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimmed. d