

Everything You Need to Know about POETRY

Poetry can be categorized as any of the following:

- 1) Narrative poetry: tells a story
 - a. The Ballad – a simple narrative poem with refrain and repetition that can be spoken or sung
 - i. How do we categorize a poem as a Ballad?
 - a. Simple words and rhyme scheme
 - b. Use of Dialogue and Repetition
 - c. Often Divided into Quatrains
 - d. Basic rhyme scheme with a Refrain – creates songlike quality
 - e. Anonymously written (Folk Ballads, specifically)
 - f. Look for Typical Rhyme Scheme – iambic tetrameter alternating with iambic trimeter
 - ii. Popular Example: “Get Up and Bar the Door” Anonymous
 - b. Dramatic Monologue: speaker converses with the reader as he/she reveals events
 - i. Popular Example: “My Last Duchess”
 - c. Epic Poem: a lengthy elevated poem that celebrates the exploits of a hero
 - i. Popular Example: Beowulf
- 2) Lyric poetry: subjective and emotional – poems can be as simple as sensory impression (“The Red Wheelbarrow”) or elevated as ode or elegy; often reflective
 - a. Ode: type of lyric poem that addresses subjects of elevated stature – praise
 - i. Popular Example: “Ode on a Grecian Urn”
 - b. Elegy: lyric poem written in honor of one who has died
 - i. Popular Example: “In Memoriam A.H.H.”
 - c. Sonnet: lyric poem with 14 lines (more notes later on Sonnets)
 - d. Can also be poems written in free verse
- 3) The Sonnet:
 1. Petrarchan
 - a. Also called Italian
 - b. Made up of Octave and sestet
 - i. Octave:
 1. 2 Italian quatrains: abba abba
 - ii. Sestet
 1. rhyme pattern varies, some variant on c,d, and e
 2. cde cde = Italian Sestet
 3. cd cd cd = Sicilian Sestet
 4. other variants are not named
 - c. Popular Example: On his being arrived . . . – John Milton
 2. Shakespearean
 - a. Also called English
 - b. Contains 3 sicilian quatrains:
 - i. Abab cdcd efef
 - c. Ends with one heroic couplet:
 - i. Gg
 - d. Usually has question or issue in first quatrains, answered in bottom part
 - e. Popular Example: Sonnet 138 – Shakespeare
 3. Spenserian
 - a. Very similar to Shakespearean
 - b. Contains three Sicilian quatrains and one heroic couplet
 - i. Abab bcbc cdcd
 - ii. Ee
 - iii. Interlocks each of the quatrains so their rhyme is connected
 - c. Popular Example: Sonnet 30 – Spenser

4) The Villanelle

a. Rhyme Scheme:

A1 (refrain)

b

A2 (refrain)

a

b

A1 (refrain)

a

b

A2 (refrain)

a

b

A1 (refrain)

a

b

A2 (refrain)

a

b

A1

A2 (refrain)

Once you categorize poetry, you study it for rhythm and meter:

1) Sound/structure

a. Syllables

b. Foot

1. basic building block composed of pattern of syllables
2. These patterns create a meter – pattern of beats or accents based on stressed and unstressed syllables in a line
3. five common patterns:
 1. iamb (u /)
 2. trochee (/ u)
 3. anapest (u u /)
 4. dactyl (/ u u)
 5. spondee (/ /)

c. Lines: how many feet per line

1. Monometer
2. Dimeter
3. Trimeter
4. Tetrameter
5. Pentameter
6. Hexameter
7. Heptameter
8. Octameter
9. Nonometer

d. Stanzas: How lines are divided

1. a line
2. couplet
3. tercet
4. quatrain
5. cinquain

- 6. sestet
- 7. septet
- 8. octave
- e. Cantos

2) Poetic Devices: These are ways that author's make things a little "deeper"

- 1. Imagery: language that appeals to the senses
 - a. Visual
 - b. Auditory
 - c. Gustatory
 - d. Tactile
 - e. Olfactory
 - f. Organic (internal sensation)
 - g. Kinesthetic (movement, tension in muscles and joints)
- 2. Denotation: dictionary definition
- 3. Connotation: emotions and ideas associated with word
- 4. Allusion: reference to something in history or literature
- 5. Irony: discrepancy between expectation and reality
- 6. Understatement: a statement which means less than what is intended
- 7. Hyperbole: a statement of exaggeration
- 8. Paradox: an apparent contradiction that conveys truth
- 9. Simile: direct comparison of two unlike things using like or as
- 10. Metaphor: comparison of two unlike things
- 11. Personification: attribution of human characteristics to a creature, idea or object
- 12. Apostrophe: direct address to an inanimate object or idea
- 13. Symbol: anything that has meaning of its own but also stands for something beyond itself
- 14. Tone: attitude revealed toward the subject

3) Poetic Vocabulary: make sure you can define and use these words to analyze

- 1. Asyndeton
- 2. Polysyndeton
- 3. Enjambment
- 4. Litote
- 5. Internal rhyme
- 6. Dialect
- 7. Metonymy
- 8. Synecdoche
- 9. Antipophora
- 10. Anaphora
- 11. Oxymoron

4) Analysis:

- a. Utilize poetic devices to understand meaning and purpose
- b. Utilize poetic STRUCTURE to find depth in the poem
- c. Interpret the different layers of a poem and how it can be interpreted:
 - 1. Literally
 - 2. Sexually
 - 3. Philosophically
 - 4. Religiously
 - 5. Politically