“Poetry is when an emotion has found its thought, and the thought has found words.”

- Robert Frost
Working with Poetry

What is Poetry?

- It is something different to everyone.
- It is universal and ancient.
- It is condensed and concise, every word counts, even the title.
- Poetry gives pleasure, it should be enjoyed.
- It can tell a story, express emotions, describe, amuse or convince.
- The experiences of life are the subjects for poetry.

**Poetry is sound.** Poetry a lot of other things, too, of course, like structure and meaning and rhythm, but sound cannot be ignored when writing a poem. Not only the sound of individual words, but the sounds the words make when they are together on the page. The poet is trying to create music with words.

Is music poetry?

Yes, ABSOLUTELY! Poetry, just like music is words put to a specific rhythm and beat.

Does poetry have to rhyme?

No, not at all.

How to Read a Poem

- Read a poem more than once
- Follow the punctuation closely
- Use expression
- Hear the sounds – poetry is written to be heard
- Look for meaning
Understanding Poetry

Every poem has a message. Some poems are silly and humorous, written simply to entertain the reader. Others have more “depth” and tell a story as a message.

When analyzing poetry, we look for the message the author is trying to portray.

Questions to ask when analyzing Poetry

- What is the purpose of this piece of writing?
- What is the author’s point of view or opinion on this topic?
- Does the author use figures of speech to make the writing descriptive?
- How effective is the author in portraying the message?
- What is your impression as a reader?
Elements of Poetry

When writing poetry, there are certain elements that can be used to make your writing more effective.

**Rhyme:** This is a device used in which two or more lines end with the same final sound.

List at least three rhyming words for each of the following words:

- a) Run __________________________
- b) Faking __________________________
- c) Day __________________________
- d) Court __________________________

Rhyming words can be spelled differently, as in *staff/laugh/graph*. Identify a rhyming word that is spelled differently for each of the following words:

- a) Neigh __________________________
- b) Lane __________________________
- c) Bored __________________________
- d) Head __________________________

**Rhymed couplets:** Couplets means two lines. In a rhymed couplet, the last word of each line will have the same sound.

*The outlook wasn’t brilliant for the Mudville nine that day,*
*The score stood four to six, with but one inning left to play.***
Complete each couplet with a rhyming word.

a) I love to see
   The fish in the ________________________________

b) The fish like to eat
   All that they ________________________________

c) Birds can spread their wings and fly
   We must stay on earth and ____________________

d) One cold, starry night
   I saw a great ______________________________

Match the twelve pairs of rhyming words in the list below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tough</th>
<th>Dough</th>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>Blue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toe</td>
<td>Here</td>
<td>Dear</td>
<td>Spite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enough</td>
<td>Should</td>
<td>Mare</td>
<td>Through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread</td>
<td>Made</td>
<td>Pearl</td>
<td>Aisle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twirl</td>
<td>Fly</td>
<td>Die</td>
<td>Weighed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stood</td>
<td>Plight</td>
<td>Smile</td>
<td>Said</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

__________________________  ⇝  ____________________________
__________________________  ⇝  ____________________________
__________________________  ⇝  ____________________________
__________________________  ⇝  ____________________________
__________________________  ⇝  ____________________________
__________________________  ⇝  ____________________________

__________________________  ⇝  ____________________________
__________________________  ⇝  ____________________________
__________________________  ⇝  ____________________________
__________________________  ⇝  ____________________________
__________________________  ⇝  ____________________________
__________________________  ⇝  ____________________________
Some poems have a regular pattern of rhyming lines. These patterns are called rhyme schemes. We identify lines that rhyme by a letter in a rhyme scheme.

Here is an example of an AABB scheme.

“‘Tis morning now, yet silently I stand, 
Uplift the curtain with a heavy hand, 
Look out while darkness overspreads the way, 
And long for day.”

Rhythm refers to the harmonious rise and fall of the sounds of language, produced by patterns, more or less regularly repeated.

In this poem, each line has four strong beats.

“I wish that I was five foot eight, 
I wish that I could figure skate 
I wish that I could twirl and spin, 
I wish I had an Olympic win.”

What is the rhythm pattern of the following poem?

“Here lies the body of Anna, 
Done to death by a banana, 
It wasn’t the fruit that laid her low, 
But the skin of the thing that made her go.”
Some poems have regular rhythm patterns. One type of poem that follows a rhyme and rhythm pattern is a **limerick**.

A **limerick** is a humorous, five line poem, following this pattern:

Lines 1, 2 and 5 rhyme, and have 3 beats
Lines 3 and 4 rhyme, and have 2 beats

“**Young Frankenstien’s robot invention,**
Caused trouble too awful to mention,
Its actions were ghoulissh,
Which proves it is foolish,
**To monkey with Nature’s invention.**”

“A mouse in her room woke Miss Dowd,
She was frightened and screamed very loud,
Then a happy thought hit her,
To scare off the critter,
**She sat up in bed and meowed.**”

**PRACTICE:** In your writing scribbler, write some limericks of your own. Remember to follow the rhyme and rhythm pattern.

Use these as your starting lines.

a) There once was a man in a tree
b) There once was a girl from Kentucky
c) A boy with a puck and a stick.
Figures of Speech

Other elements that are often used to make writing more descriptive and effective are called figures of speech.

**Alliteration** is the repetition of the same letter or sound at the beginning of two or more words in a line in order to emphasize something. It is often found in comic strips.

Examples:

- Hagar the Horrible
- The legend lives on
- The mighty, majestic mountains
- The firing air it felt frozen
- The moon was a ghostly galleon

Alliteration adds variety and interest to language. Fill in the blanks below with a word of your choice that starts with the indicated letter.

a) a plaid, purple **P** __________________
b) curly **C** ___________________________
c) soft, silent **S** ______________________
d) jumping **J** _________________________
e) baseball and **B** _____________________
f) a **M** ________ mess
g) **W** __________ , white **W** ___________

h) the last **L** __________________________
i) a river **R** __________________________
j) a terrible **T** _________________________
Complete the sentences with words beginning with the indicated letter.

a) Messy M________ made more messes in the month of M_______ than M_______, M_______ and M_______ all made in the month of M_______.
b) My dog, D_______, danced with D_______, the D__________.
c) For supper, P________ ate P_______, P_________ and P_______.

Can you identify the common alliteration couples? They are specific words used in common phrases.

a) Spick and __________ b) Wash and __________ c) __________ and sound d) __________ and cheese e) Thick and __________ f) Home and __________ g) __________ and proper h) Sticks and __________ i) Rough and __________ j) Tried and __________ k) Fast and __________ l) Birds and __________ m) __________ and turn

n) __________ and slide o) Hale and __________ p) Black and __________ q) __________ and that r) __________ and steady s) Sweet and __________ t) Wild and __________ u) __________ and roll v) __________ and spice w) Rant and __________ x) Trials and __________ y) __________ and tested z) __________ and hers
Underline the examples of alliteration in each of the following lines of poetry.

a) I have seen old ships sail like swans asleep.

b) Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note.

c) He clasps the crag with crooked hands; Close to the sun in lonely lands.

d) Only the stuttering rifles’ rapid rattle.

e) Its quicksilver bell, beating, beating.

f) Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying.


g) A score of troopers were scattering wide, And a hundred more were ready to ride.

h) Water, water, everywhere, Nor any drop to drink.

i) Eyes full of sparkling wickedness, ears finely cut, flexibly moving.

j) The Miller was a chap of sixteen stone, A great stout fellow big in brawn and bone.

A **tongue-twister** is a poem that is difficult to say because of the extreme use of alliteration. Try this one!

**Betty Botter**

Betty Botter bought some butter,
But, she said, the butter’s bitter;
   If I put it in my batter,
It will make my batter bitter,
But a bit of better butter’s
Bound to make my batter better.
So she bought a bit of butter,
And she put it in her batter
And the batter wasn’t bitter.
So ‘twas better Betty Botter
Bought a bit of better butter.
A **simile** is a direct comparison of two unlike things, using the words “like” or “as”.

“*His coffee was as cold as ice. As sharp as a roller coaster ride.*”

Some similes are used so frequently that they have become “clichés”. Some examples of these are “as red as a rose”, “as green as grass”, or “as quiet as a mouse”.

Using the animals and birds listed in the box, complete the similes below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monkey</th>
<th>Mule</th>
<th>Wolf</th>
<th>Hawk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leech</td>
<td>Lark</td>
<td>Ostrich</td>
<td>Sheep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owl</td>
<td>Hyena</td>
<td>Elephants</td>
<td>Duck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamb</td>
<td>Ox</td>
<td>Coot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) He laughs like a ________________.
b) She’s as hungry as a ________________.
c) He waddled like a ________________.
d) He’s as bald as a ________________.
e) She was as gentle as a ________________.
f) The crowds poured into the oval like ________________ into a paddock.
g) She’s as wise as an ________________.
h) He clung like a ________________ to his surfboard.
i) He’s as strong as an ____________.

j) She wouldn’t listen, she was like an ____________ with its head in the sand.

k) She was as happy as a ____________.

l) The players lumbered like ____________ through the mud to the finish line.

m) She had eyes like a ____________.

n) They clung to the tree’s branches, as agile as ____________.

o) She’s as obstinate as a ____________.

Use the things/objects listed in the box, complete the similes below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Berries</th>
<th>Leaf</th>
<th>Thieves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>Wind</td>
<td>Feather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrow</td>
<td>Ghost</td>
<td>Mustard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Honey</td>
<td>Hammer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whip</td>
<td>Silk</td>
<td>Furnace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) It was as heavy as ____________.

b) You look as white as a ____________.

c) The sprinters ran like the ____________.

d) With a fist like a ____________, he pounded on the desk.

e) They’re as keen as ____________.

f) She’s as sweet as ____________.
g) They’ve been out in the sun all day and now they’re as brown as
    ___________.

h) She’s as light as a _____________.

i) His voice cracked out like a ________________.

j) As straight as an ________________, the road ran from the coast to
    the hills.

k) He was so cold that he was trembling like a _________________.

l) Allow me, it’s as easy as _________________.

m) Out beyond the shade, it’s as hot as a _________________.

n) It’s as smooth as _________________.

o) They’re as thick as _________________.

In the following descriptions, the similes are inappropriate and do not make
sense. Replace the underlined words and create better similes.

a) The old man’s legs moved as slowly and as awkwardly as car tires.
    _______________

b) He called his dog with a whistle as sharp as a cup of coffee.
    _________________

c) His tail wagged like a bicycle tire.
    _________________________

d) The old man’s eyes began to shine like an apple.
    __________________________

e) The old man petted him as tenderly as he would a spice rack.
    __________________________
A **metaphor** is a comparison of two unlike things, without using “like” or “as”. It takes the form of a direct statement.

*The snowflakes were parachutes*

*Happiness is a warm bed.*

Write some original metaphors to complete the following statements.

a) Happiness is _________________________________.

b) Fear is _________________________________.

c) Love is _________________________________.

d) Courage is _________________________________.

e) Loneliness is _________________________________.

**The Toaster**

* A silver-scaled dragon with jaws flaming red,
  Sits at my elbow and toasts my bread.  
  I hand him fat slices, and then, one by one,  
  He hands them back when he sees they are done.*

What two things are being compared in this metaphor poem?

_________________________________________________________

What do the two things have in common?

_________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________
Metaphors can often be found in comic strips.

Identify which of the following expressions are similes and which are metaphors. Underline the expression to show the comparison.

a) Her eyes, they shone like diamonds. ______

b) The moon’s a balloon. ______

c) Suddenly, she arched her back like a horseshoe. ______

d) Silver-hatted mushrooms ______

e) At the end of the street lives small Miss Wing. ______

f) A feathery, fluttery, bird of a thing. ______

g) The truck flew down the empty highway like an arrow. ______

h) Your ears pop like champagne corks. ______

i) His eyes peer from his hair and beard like mice from a load of hay. ______

j) The sea is a mirror for the clouds. ______

k) The shadows were as black as sin. ______

l) The wind was a whip that cracked over our heads. ______

m) I have seen old ships sail like swans asleep. ______
n) He’s as wild as a dingo.

o) The stars are pinpricks in the velvet of the night sky.

p) She came – and then, ghost-like, vanished.

q) Enthusiasm is your key to success.

r) She’s as pretty as a picture.

s) Watch out – it’s that bullet-headed man again!

t) They were as quiet as mice.

u) Teeth like pearls

v) The road arrowed into the hills.

w) Education is your passport to satisfying employment.
Identify all the similes and metaphors used in the following poem.

**Concrete Mixers**

*The drivers are washing the concrete mixers;*
*Like elephant tenders they hose them down.*
*Tough, grey-skinned monsters, standing ponderous,*
*Elephant-bellied and elephant-nosed,*
*Standing in muck up to their wheel-caps,*
*Like rows of elephants, tail to trunk.*
*Their drivers perch on their backs like mahouts,*
*Sending the sprays of water up.*
*They rid the trunk-like trough of concrete,*
*Direct the spray to the bulging sides,*
*Turn and start the monsters moving.*

Concrete mixers
Move like elephants,
Bellow like elephants,
Spray like elephants,
Concrete mixers are urban elephants,
Their trunks are raising a city.

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A. Which two items are being compared? _________________________

B. Underline all the metaphors in BLUE, and all the similes in RED.
**Hyperbole** is saying more than is true. It uses extreme exaggeration and stretches the truth so far that it is not expected to be taken literally.

- I was tickled to death.
- Anger made his blood boil.
- It happens a million times a day.

Write hyperboles to complete each of the following statements.

a) She ran so fast ____________________________.

b) I studied so hard ____________________________.

c) My lawyer is so smart ____________________________.

d) He is so handsome ____________________________.

**Personification** is the giving of living qualities such as habits, actions, feelings, thoughts, even personalities, to things that are not human.

- The headlights winked in the dusk.
- Gentle breezes stroked our faces.
- Fire walked across the hill.

The following passage is from Thoreau’s *Walden*. Underline the similes (red) and the personifications (blue) that he has used to describe the storm.

*As I walked home, the storm began. First, the wind struck me with the force of a prizefighter’s fist. Its claws snatched at my clothes as I bent forward, resisting its explosive burst of force. Suddenly, I could not breathe. I turned my head, gasping as it snatched the air from my lungs like a giant vacuum pump. Finally, I succeeded in reaching the house by walking backwards, all the while feeling the wind thump on my back like a thousand horses straining for the finishline.*
**Practice:** Create a phrase using personification for each of the items listed (give a human quality).

a) Sun __________________________________________
b) winter ______________________________________
c) a cat _______________________________________

**Onomatopoeia** is a sound device used for humour, fun and special effects. It is selecting words based on their sounds – using words to imitate sounds.

- The clanging of a bell
- The clashing of swords
- The click of a key
- The roar of a cannon
- The gurgle of water

### The Sounds of Water

The rusty spigot
Sputters
Utters
A splutter,
Splatters a mattering of drops,
Gashes wider; slash,
**SPLATTERS**
Scatters
**SPURTS,**
Finally stops sputtering
and **SPLASH;**
gushes, rushes, splashes.

clear water dashes.
Onomatopoeia is often used in comic strips, as the cartoonist is trying to create a story in a limited space. Sometimes the writer uses sound words, and sometimes the writer uses onomatopoeic words that have been created just for a certain sound.

My Classroom

I hear...

The screech of the chalk on the blackboard,

The grinding of the pencil in the sharpener,

The tapping of fingers on a desk,

The hush of students taking a test.
**Practice:** Create a poem using onomatopoeia. Select a place, and then use specific sounds for the things you would hear, as shown in the example above.
Working With Poetry

Imagery
An “image” is a picture, or something from your imagination. Writers use images to create pictures by engaging the senses or emotions. Images that are created can be descriptive or symbolic.

- Visual (seen)
  - The sun beaming through the branches of a tree.
- Aural (sound/heard)
  - The rain beating down on a metal roof.
- Olfactory (smell)
  - The acrid smell of smoke hung in the air.
- Tactile (touch)
  - The wind pounded against his body.
- Gustatory (taste)
  - The lemon sherbert fizzing on your tongue.
- Kinetic (movement)
  - A leaf fluttering in the breeze.

Symbolism
A symbol is any word or image that is used to represent something else. Some symbols have universal meaning. The Canadian maple leaf is a symbol for Canada, and the eagle is a symbol for the United States. The dove is a symbol of peace. The balanced scale is the symbol for justice. Writers often use symbols, as they can have a strong, emotional impact.

What are these symbols?

a) The color white
b) Cupid/heart
c) Santa Claus
d) Skull and Crossbones
Creating Poetry

Some poetry is called free verse, and does not follow any specific forms or structures. The author determines what format the poem will follow.

Other poems have given structures that must be followed.

There are three popular poem styles that come from Japanese poetry. Most are usually light and delicate in feeling and are concerned with something lovely in nature, especially the seasons of the year. Sometimes there is a direct contrast within the verse.

a) **Haiku**: A haiku was once part of ancient Japanese courtship rituals. A man would write and send a haiku to the woman he loved. If she returned his affections, she would write a *tanka* in response. A haiku is an unrhymed, Japanese poem of three lines, containing five, seven and five syllables respectively. It does not contain any end punctuation.

**Haiku Structure:**
Line 1 – five syllables  
Line 2 – seven syllables  
Line 3 – five syllables

**Haiku Sample**  
* Loud, crashing thunder  
* And then the rain pouring down  
* The rainbow appears

b) **Tanka**: A tanka is another oriental verse form, written as a response to a haiku. However, it is a five line verse, following the pattern of a haiku for the first three lines, then having two more lines of seven syllables each.

**Tanka Structure:**
Line 1 – five syllables  
Line 2 – seven syllables  
Line 3 – five syllables  
Line 4 – seven syllables  
Line 5 – seven syllables

**Tanka Sample**  
* The great out-of-doors  
* Beckoned to us one and all  
* We sought nature’s joys  
* Along her creeks and rivers  
* And in the cool of the glade.
c) **Lantern:** A lantern is a light and airy, five line Japanese poem that is written in the shape of a Japanese lantern. The lines are written according to the correct number of syllables. It generally does not have end punctuation.

**Lantern Structure:**
- Line 1 – one syllable
- Line 2 – two syllables
- Line 3 – three syllables
- Line 4 – four syllables
- Line 5 – one syllable

**Lantern Sample**

So blue
Many clouds
Above the earth
now

Other types of poems are also written based on the number of syllables in the words, or the types of words themselves.

a) **Septone:** A septone is a seven line, free verse poem based on a telephone number. Each line has the number of syllables to match the number.

**Septone Sample**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A raft on the high seas,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wave crests,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A stone without moss,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ripples,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>A journey that never ends for me,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Highs and lows,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Life!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) **Diamonte:** A diamonte is a seven-line poem written to go from one subject at the top of the diamond to another, totally different (often the opposite) subject at the bottom. The lines are written based on the types of words used.

**Diamonte Structure:**
- Line 1 – One Noun (subject #1)
- Line 2 – Two Adjectives (describing subject #1)
- Line 3 – Three Participles (ending in “ing”, telling about subject #1)
- Line 4 – Four Nouns (1\textsuperscript{st} two about subject #1, 2\textsuperscript{nd} two about subject #2)
- Line 5 – Three Participles (ending in “ing”, telling about subject #2)
- Line 6 – Two Adjectives (describing subject #2)
- Line 7 – One Noun (subject #2)
Diamonte Sample
Cat,
Clever, cuddly,
Crouching, pouncing, purring,
Meow, feline, canine, bark, maturity,
Running, sniffing, helping,
Lovable, smart,
Dog.

Diamonte Sample
Child,
Young, Rambunctious
Playing, Fighting, Tumbling
Growth, Change, Development
Achieving, Working, Striving,
Older, Wiser
Adult.

c) **Parts of Speech Poem:** This poem is an easy way to start to write poetry.
You simply

Follow the structure given, by providing the words and ideas suggested.

**Parts of Speech Structure:**
- **Line 1** – one article and one noun
- **Line 2** – one adjective, one conjunction, one adjective
- **Line 3** – one verb, one conjunction, one verb
- **Line 4** – one noun that relates to the noun in the first line

**Parts of Speech Sample**
The sleeper,
Comfortable and cozy,
Waking and remembering,
His dream.
d) **Sneaky Poem**: A sneaky poem is a five-line poem, where the subject is revealed in the last line. It is written based on the types of words used.

**Sneaky Structure:**

- Line 1 – A Noun
- Line 2 – An Adjective and a Noun
- Line 3 – Two Verbs
- Line 4 – A Thought, Phrase or Sentence about the subject
- Line 5 – The Subject

**Sneaky Sample #1**

*Presents,*

*Decorated trees,*

*Singing, playing,*

*Wishes come true,*

*Christmas.*

**Sneaky Sample #2**

*Moisture*

*Welcome dew,*

* Splashing, falling,*

* Cooling the day*

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e) **Cinquain**: A cinquain is a five-line, unrhymed verse, created by an American writer, Adelaide Crapsey. It follows the style of the Japanese poetry, and can be written following a word structure or a syllable structure.

**Chinquian Structure #1:**

- Line 1 – two syllables (title)
- Line 2 – four syllables (describing)
- Line 3 – six syllables (action)
- Line 4 – eight syllables (feelings)
- Line 5 – two syllables (synonym for title)

**Sample #1**

*Water,*

*Frothy, bubbling,*

*Tumbling, twisting, turning,*

*Roaring like a fierce lioness,*

*River*
Chinquain Structure #2

Line 1 – One word, giving the title
Line 2 – Two words describing the title
Line 3 – Three words about action
Line 4 – Four words about feelings
Line 5 – Another word for the title

Sample #2
Astronaut, Brave, daring,
Floats in space,
Excited, awed, mystified, graceful,
Explorer.

f) Adverb Poem: An adverb poem is written by selecting an adverb (most end in “ly”) and using it as the first word in each line of the poem. All lines should be related to the chosen adverb. (angrily, silently, sweetly, slowly, greedily, awkwardly, quickly)

Adverb Structure:
Use eight lines of rhyming couplets.

Adverb Sample
Slowly
Slowly, snails make their trail,
Slowly, old people grow frail.
Slowly, the sun sets in the west,
Slowly, the boy writes his math test.

Slowly, a child learns to walk,
Slowly, the hunter aims at the hawk.
Slowly, the diver rises from the deep,
Slowly, I prepare for sleep.

g) Colour Poem: A colour poem uses images (descriptive or symbolic) of what colours represent. It can be any length, and can use any colour.

Structure: Follow this sample of using at least five different colours (or five lines using the same colour, and then an end line). You may choose to use a rhyme pattern if you want. Start each line with the colour, and then extend your line, explaining the item.
Color Sample
The Colours of Spring
Yellow is the sun, awakening the world,
Green is the leaf, unfurling after the rain,
White is the last snow, melting in the spring’s warmth,
Blue is the wild flower, struggling to emerge from the Earth,
Red is the robin, returning with its sweet song,
These are the colors of my world.