

Glossary of Poetic Terms

1. **Lyric** - having the form and musical quality of a song, and especially a songlike outpouring of the poet's own thoughts and feelings.
2. **Ballad** - a simple narrative poem of folk origin, composed in short stanzas and adapted for singing.
3. **Dramatic monologue** - a poetic form in which a single character, addressing a silent auditor at a critical moment, reveals him/herself and the dramatic situation.
4. **Free verse** - a verse that does not follow a metrical pattern
5. **Ode** - a poem intended to be sung, typically of elaborate or irregular metrical form and expressive of exhaltic or enthusiastic emotion.
6. **Elegy** - a mournful, melancholy, or plaintive poem, written in elegiac meter.
7. **Sonnet (English)** - a poem, properly expressive of a single, complete thought, idea, or sentiment, of 14 lines, usually in iambic pentameter, with rhymes arranged into 3 quatrains followed by a couplet.
8. **Sonnet (Italian)** - a sonnet divided into a major group of 8 lines (octave), followed by a minor group of 6 lines (sestet).
9. **Blank verse** - an unrhymed verse
10. **Epic** - noting or pertaining to a long poetic composition, usually centered around a hero, in which a series of great events is narrated in elevated style.
11. **Soliloquy** - an act of talking while or as if alone, which is often used as a dramatic device to show the character's innermost thoughts.
12. **Onomatopoeia** - the form of imitative and naturally suggestive words for rhetorical, dramatic, or poetic effect. eg "meow", "boom"
13. **Oxymoron** - a figure of speech by which a locution produces an incongruous, seemingly self-contradictory effect. a compressed paradox. eg. Josh Parsons: Please, I didn't kill anyone. I'm an *extreme pacifist*." Doctor Temperance 'Bones' Brennan: That's an oxymoron. You're either *extreme*, or *pacifist*. You can't be both." (Andrew J. West and Emily Deschanel in "The tough man in the tender chicken", *Bones*, 2009)
14. **Metonymy** - a figure of speech that consists of the use of the name of one object or concept, for that of another to which it is related. eg. "Count heads" for "count people"
15. **Synecdoche** - a figure of speech in which a part is used for a whole, or a whole for a part, the special for the general, or the general for the special. (often treated as a type of metonymy) eg. "ABC" for Alphabet
16. **Hyperbole** - an overstatement, obvious and intentional exaggeration. Not intended to be taken taken literally. eg. I have a *ton* of homework! (One won't have an actual *ton* of homework, but with this statement one wants to make clear that they have a lot of homework.)
17. **Litotes** - an understatement, especially that in which an affirmative is expressed by the negative of its contrary.
18. **Apostrophe** - a figure of speech in which someone absent or dead, or something nonhuman is addressed, as if it were alive and present and was able to reply as in "Milton! *Thou* shouldst be living at this hour", out of the sonnet 'Milton' by William

Wordsworth

19. **Metaphor** - a figure of speech in which a term or a phrase is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable in order to suggest a resemblance as in "time is a thief"
20. **Personification** - a trope or a figure of speech (generally considered a type of metaphor) in which an inanimate object or abstraction is given human qualities or abilities as in "Oreo: *Milk's favourite* cookie", slogan on a package of oreo cookies.
21. **Simile** - two fundamentally unlike things are compared, usually in a phrase introduced by *like* or *as*. "He was like a cock who thought the sun had risen to hear him crow." out of 'Adam Bede' by George Eliot, 1859
22. **Alliteration** - the repetition of an initial consonant sound, as in "A peck of pickled peppers"
23. **Assonance** - the repetition of identical or similar vowel sounds in neighbouring words. "I must confess that in my quest I felt depressed and restless." by Thin Lizzy, 'With Love'
24. **Consonance** - broadly, the repetition of consonant sounds; more specifically, the repetition of the final consonant sounds of accented syllables or important words, as in Shakespeare's "Struts and frets".
25. **Allusion** - a brief, usually indirect reference to a person, place, or event--real or fictional. eg "I violated the Noah rule: predicting rain doesn't count; building arcs does." Warren Buffett
26. **Imagery** - vivid descriptive language that appeals to one or more senses, sometimes used to refer to figurative language, in particular metaphors or similes. As in William Carlos Williams' "This is just to say," "I have eaten the plums that were in the icebox/ and which you were probably saving for breakfast / forgive me they were delicious/ so sweet and so cold"
27. **Cadence** - the rhythmic flow of a sequence of sounds or words (in language), a rhythmic pattern that is non metrically structured (in free verse).
28. **End rhyme** - rhyme of the terminal syllables of lines of poetry
29. **Stanza** - an arrangement of a certain number of lines, usually four or more, sometimes having a fixed length, meter, or rhyme scheme, forming a division of a poem
30. **Caesura** - a grammatical pause or break in a line of poetry (like a question mark), usually near the middle of the line. It is usually dictated by sense or natural speech rhythm, rather than by metrics. In poetry scansion, caesura is usually dictated by the symbol //. As in Alexander Pope's 'An Essay on Man' "Know then thyself //, presume not God to scan; the proper study of Mankind // is Man."
31. **Couplet** - a pair of successive lines of verse, especially a pair that rhyme and are of the same length.
32. **Quatrain** - a stanza or poem with four lines, usually with alternate rhymes.
33. **Octave** - a stanza of eight lines, especially the first eight lines of a sonnet in the Italian form.
34. **Sestet** - the last six lines of a sonnet in the Italian form.
35. **Rhyme scheme** - the pattern of rhymes used in a poem, usually marked by letters to

symbolise correspondences, *aabbcc*

36. **Paradox** - a statement or proposition that seems self-contradictory or absurd, but in reality expresses a possible truth.
37. **Dialect** - a special variety of a language.
38. **Epithet** - any word or phrase, applied to a person or thing, to describe an actual or attributed quality.
39. **Allegory** - a representation of an abstract or spiritual meaning through concrete or material forms; figurative treatment of one subject under the guise of another, thus an allegory is a story with two meanings, a literal meaning and an abstract meaning.
40. **Foreshadowing** - to show or indicate beforehand; prefigure.
41. **Pastoral** - portraying or suggesting idyllically the life of shepherds or the country; rural, rustic.
42. **Pun** - the humorous use of a word or phrase so as to suggest or emphasize its different meanings or applications, or the use of words that are alike or nearly alike in sound but different in meaning; a play on words.
43. **Cacophony** - harsh discordance of sounds.
44. **Euphony** - agreeableness of sounds; pleasing effect to the ear especially a pleasant sounding or harmonious combination or succession of words.
45. **Internal rhyme** - a rhyme created by two or more words in the same line of verse.
46. **Narrative** - a story of account of words, experiences, or the like, whether true or fictitious.