

LA#4

LA#8

Questions Galore!

319 S. Naperville Road Wheaton, IL 60187 www.questionsgalore.net
 Phone: (630) 580-5735 E-Mail: info@questionsgalore.net Fax: (630) 580-5765

STUDY GUIDE: POETRY TERMS AND HISTORY

Types of Poetry

There are many different types of poetry. **Lyric** poetry includes forms such as the **haiku**, **sonnet**, **ode**, **limerick**, and **elegy**. **Narrative** poetry tells a story. Its two main subdivisions are **epic** poems, which are long poems with historic or heroic subject matter, and **ballads**, which are shorter stories about an individual. **Dramatic** poetry tells a story through its characters, as in the plays of Shakespeare. **Abstract** poetry is a modern type of poetry that relies on the sound or placement of its words to make a statement.

Poetic Forms

A **ballad** is a poem that tells a story, and it is written to be sung. It usually has stanzas that have four lines with the rhyming pattern of abcb. The first and third lines of the stanza have four accented syllables, and the second and the fourth have only three.

Blank verse is poetry written in iambic pentameter that does not rhyme.

A **cinquain** has five lines, consisting (in order) of two, four, six, eight, and two syllables. Example: Winter

Cold, Dreary, Bleak
 Lasting too many months
 Causing us to bundle up tight.
 Over.

Concrete poetry uses the elements of language visually. For instance, letters may be lowercase for effect. Phrases may be repeated nonsensically. Letters may be formed from sculpture of words placed on art mobiles.

The **elegy** is a poem that mourns for someone who is deceased.

An **epic** poem is a long narrative poem that tells a story. Legendary heroes usually perform fantastic feats. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are two, well-known epics written by Homer.

Page 2, POETRY TERMS AND HISTORY

An **epigram** is a short, witty saying or poem. It is based upon a single thought, and it often uses satire. The ending is usually a surprise. Example of an epigram by Oscar Wilde: "I can resist everything except temptation."

An **epitaph** is a poem inscribed on a tombstone in commemoration of the deceased.

Free verse is a verse without any meter or rhyme.

The **haiku** is a form of poetry that developed in Japan. It consists of three lines, the first containing five syllables, the second containing seven syllables, and the third containing five. Some English adaptations of the form include two lines of ten syllables each. Many haiku poems are based upon nature and natural events.

Example of a haiku: Rain

Cold and damp it falls.
Pelting down with great big drops.
Bringing drinks to plants.

A **limerick** consists of two long lines, two short lines, and one, final long line. The three long lines share the same end rhyme. Likewise, the two shorter lines rhyme. Limericks tend to be silly and fun. Edward Lear was the master of the limerick.

Example of a limerick: "There once was a young man from Kew,
Who found a dead mouse in his stew.
Said the waiter, "Don't shout
Or wave it about,
Or the rest will be wanting one, too!"

A **madrigal** is a short lyric poem that is accompanied by music.

The **ode** is a poem that praises a person, animal, or thing. It usually expresses deep feeling and has an intellectual tone. One of the most popular odes is "Ode on a Grecian Urn" by John Keats.

The traditional **sonnet** contains fourteen lines. The English, or **Shakespearean** sonnet, has a rhyme scheme of abab cdcd efef gg. In the Italian sonnet, or **petrarch**, an eight-line **octave**, with the rhyme scheme abbaabba is followed by a six-line **sestet**, whose rhyme scheme varies. A sonnet is usually written about love. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, John Keats, and William Shakespeare wrote many sonnets.

Elements of Poetry and other Poetic Terminology

An **accent** is the natural emphasis placed upon a certain syllable in a word.

An **acrostic** is a form of poem in which the first letter of every line spells the title.

An **anthology** is a collection of poems.

An **allegory** is an extended metaphor within a piece. For instance, concepts such as virtue and vice might be personified as characters in an extended work.

Alliteration is a type of rhyme called **head rhyme** in which the initial sounds of words are repeated. Example: The tiny turtle tripped over the tall rock.

An **allusion** is a reference to a well-known person or event in history that is used within a poem.

Page 3, POETRY TERMS AND HISTORY

Assonance is a type of rhyme scheme in which vowel sounds are repeated.

Example: "How now brown cow!"

Bard is a synonym for poet, derived from the word for a person who recited poems.

Baroque poetry is flowery, decorative, or expressive.

Classical poetry is in the tradition of the Greeks and Romans.

Consonance is a type of rhyme in which the initial consonant sound is repeated.

A **couplet** is a unit of two lines that rhyme. Both lines usually have the same meter. If a couplet is **closed**, the two lines are a unit to themselves. If a line is **end-stopped**, it pauses. If the idea or phrase runs on to the next line, it is **enjambéd**. If a couplet is **open**, its second line runs into the first line of the next couplet.

A **dactyl** is a foot in poetry that has one accented syllable followed by two unaccented syllables.

An **epistle** is a letter written in verse.

A **fable** is a poem with a hidden moral. Aesop was the master!

Figurative language makes a comparison that implies a relationship. This broad category includes the use of **similes**, **metaphors**, and **irony**.

A **foot** is a unit of rhythm in poetry.

Heptameter is a line with seven feet.

Hexameter is a line with six feet.

Iambic pentameter is the most common meter in English verse. Lines written in iambic pentameter are 10 syllables long, and they are accented on every second beat.

Imagery is the sensory pictures painted by the language in a poem.

Inversion is a reversal of the typical order of words in a phrase.

Ionic feet contain four syllables. The first or second set is either long or short, and the other sets are the opposite.

Irony occurs when the intended meaning of a line is different than its literal meaning.

A **lampoon** is a vicious character sketch of a person.

Measure is another word for foot.

A **metaphor** is a comparison between two things that are dissimilar that makes us regard them in a new light. Metaphors do not use the words "as" or "like" as part of the comparison.

Meter refers to the highly organized, rhythmic characteristic of verse and the pattern that is created by stressed and unstressed syllables.

A **minstrel** was a wandering poet.

Nonsense verse is light verse that is absurd and almost abstract.

Onomatopoeia is attained by using words that sound like their meanings.

An **oxymoron** is a phrase that uses two contradictory words together. Example: "She is just a poor little rich girl."

A **Pastoral**, or **Idyll**, is a poem about shepherds or rural life.

Page 4, POETRY TERMS AND HISTORY

A **Refrain** is a portion of the verse that repeats intermittently throughout the poem, often at the end of a stanza.

Rhyme scheme is the term for a poem whose end words rhyme.

Rhythm is the pulse, flow, or beat of the language.

A **Rondeau** is a form of the French **Rondel** in which thirteen lines using the same two rhymes are divided into three stanzas, and the opening line also forms the refrain of the second and third stanzas.

A **Rondel** is a poem in fourteen lines (usually in two quatrains and one sestet) with two rhyme schemes, whose first two lines are used as a refrain for the second quatrain and the final sestet.

Satire is a scathing mockery of an institution, a person, or an idea the author dislikes.

Scansion is the process whereby meter is determined. For example, an actor in a Shakespearean play must first scan his script to determine the words to stress.

A **simile** is a comparison between two or more things in which the words “as” or “like” are used to make the comparison. Example: Jerry eats like a horse.

A **Stanza** is a group of lines whose pattern repeats throughout the poem.

An **Octave** is an eight-line stanza.

A **Quatrain** is a four-line stanza.

A **Sestet** is a six-line stanza.

A **Symbol** is something that stands for an idea or concept.

Tetrameter is a four-foot line.

Trimeter is a three-foot line.

The History of Poetry

Poetry began as an oral tradition in **Prehistoric times**. In ancient **Greece**, **Homer** continued the tradition with his epic poems, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. The first playwrights, **Sophocles**, **Aeschylus**, **Euripides**, and **Aristophanes**, were among the first dramatic poets. **Sappho**, a Greek woman, wrote many love poems. **Romans** such as **Virgil** followed in their footsteps with the epic work *The Aenid*. **Ovid** was another Roman poet. Several portions of the *Bible*, a record of the oral tradition of the ancient **Hebrews**, are seen as poetry, particularly **Psalms**.

Beowulf is an example of epic poetry from **medieval times**. **Dante's Divine Comedy** came from Italy during this period. In France, noble troubadours performed love poems to music. The anonymous romantic tale, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, came out of England, but England's greatest contributor was **Geoffrey Chaucer**, known for his compiled stories, *The Canterbury Tales*, as well as his romantic poetry.

During the **Renaissance**, **pastorals**, poems of country life, and **madrigals**, dedications of love often accompanied by music, gained popularity. The **alexandrine**, a twelve-syllable line had been introduced. By the 1500s, many poets began to write in **vernacular**, the language of the people, as opposed to the medieval practice of writing in

Page 5, POETRY TERMS AND HISTORY

Latin. Seven Parisian poets who originated this practice called themselves the **Pleiade**. **Shakespeare** and **Christopher Marlowe** were notable dramatic poets of this period.

The **Neoclassical** period began with **Milton's *Paradise Lost***. Poets of this period tried to return to the classic style of Ovid and Virgil. The **heroic couplet**, two lines of iambic pentameter that rhymed, came into style during this period. **Moliere** and **Racine** were two dramatic poets of this period.

The **Romantic Movement** began in the early 1800s with the publication of ***Lyrical Ballads***, by **Samuel Taylor Coleridge** and **William Wordsworth**. It was a move away from structure. Other poets involved in this movement were **William Blake**, **Lord Byron**, **John Keats**, and **Percy Bysshe Shelley**. **Goethe** and **Hugo** were in the same movement abroad, in Germany and France respectively.

Lord Tennyson, **Robert Browning**, **Christina Rosetti**, and **Algernon Charles Swinburne** were representative poets of the **Victorian** period.

Baudelaire, **Mallarme**, **Rimbaud**, and **Verlaine** popularized the **Symbolist** movement in poetry, which focused on images rather than form.

Emily Dickinson and **Gerard Manley Hopkins** were important English poets of the 1900s. **Walt Whitman's** publication of ***Leaves of Grass*** was a landmark in 1855 because he utilized free verse. **Free verse** came into greater style with the **Imagists**, led by **Ezra Pound**. **T.S. Eliot** contrasted with the traditionalists **William Butler Yeats**, **Robert Frost**, and **Dylan Thomas**.

In the **1950s** and **60s**, poetry turned towards the autobiographical and blunt. **Beat** poets such as **Allen Ginsberg** and **Jack Kerouac** attacked the system with their poetry that derived from the **jazz** technique of **scatting**. Confessional poets such as **Sylvia Plath** and **Anne Sexton** shocked society by writing about their personal psychological illnesses.