**Poetry Terms / Figurative Language**

**Alliteration:** repetition of a beginning consonant sound

*Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.*



**Hyperbole:** exaggeration

*I am so hungry, I could eat a horse.*

**Personification:** giving human qualities to something that is not human

*The trees danced in the wind.*

**Simile:** a comparison that uses “like” or “as”

*Her face is like an open book.*

**Metaphor:** a comparison that *does not* use “like” or “as”

*Her face is an open book.*

**Extended Metaphor:** the technique of developing a comparison which has been introduced in the first few lines. It is not limited to one line, but rather present throughout the poem.

**Onomatopoeia:** a word that sounds like what it means

*Crack! Boom! Pop!*

**Oxymoron:** combines contradictory terms

*cruel kindness, irregular pattern, serious joke, friendly fire, quiet riot, sweet sorrow, jumbo shrimp*

**Assonance:** repetition of a vowel sound.

*The sound of the hound was bound to make me crazy.*

*You dip your fingers in other lives as in bowls of fragrant liquid . . .*

**Consonance:** repetition of consonant sounds

*“Such weight and thick pink bulk.”*

**Symbolism:** something that represents or stands for something else.

*A dove is a symbol of peace. A rose is a symbol of love.*

**Irony:** something that is unexpected

*You want your brother to get in trouble, but you get in trouble instead.*

**Imagery:** a picture created with rich evocative words. There are several types of imagery: visual (see), aural (hear), tactile (touch), taste, and smell.

**Metonymy:** when an item is referred to an idea to represent the idea as a whole

*The law is at the door. The kettle is boiling.*

**Apostrophe:** a figure of speech consisting of words addressing an inanimate object, abstract idea, or deceased individual as though the object, idea, or person were alive

*“O Wild West, thou breath of Autumn . .* .” “*Ugh, cell phone, why won’t you load my messages?” “Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are.”*

**Denotation:** the dictionary meaning or the literal meaning of a word

**Connotation:** the implied meaning, emotional associations of a word. It is meant to produce a personal impression.

* *“House” versus “Home”: Both words refer to the structure in which a person lives, yet “home” connotes more warmth and comfort, whereas “house” sounds colder and more distant.*
* *“Cheap” versus “Affordable”: While both words mean that something does not cost a lot, “cheap” can also connote something that it not well-made or of low value, while “affordable” can refer to a quality item or service that happens to be well-priced.*

**Allusion:** a brief reference to a familiar place, event, or a figure from history, literature, mythology, or bible

*He was a real Romeo with the girls. (Alluding to Shakespeare – Romeo and Juliet)*

*It feels like it’s been raining for forty days and forty nights. (Alluding to the bible – Story of Noah’s Arc)*

**Mood:** the atmosphere of a poem. Writers can create a particular mood or atmosphere by carefully choosing words and rhythms to suit the message of the poem, be it happy, sad, or angry.

**Tone:** This is similar to mood. It is the way the poem sounds to you, the impression you get of the poet’s ‘voice’. A tone may be angry, bitter, apologetic, sad, reflective, etc. The poem’s rhythm and language create its tone.

**Theme**: the topic or issue with which the poem is concerned. The theme is usually the idea or attitude that the poet wished to communicate.

**Form:** the shape of the poem – the arrangement of words into lines and lines into verses or stanzas. This can be determined by the poet’s use of rhyme and rhythm.

**Rhyme:** When words at the *ends* of lines finish with the same sound, this is called *end rhyme*. It is the most common in poetry. When words *within* the same line have matching rhyme, this is called *internal rhyme*.

**Free Verse:** verse that does not have regular rhymes or rhythms or traditional stanza pattern. It will have some informal rhyme and rhythm and its form is likely to be highly structured.

**Blank Verse (Iambic Pentameter):**  unrhymed verses often used in Shakespeare plays. a common meter (rhythmic pattern) in poetry consisting of an unrhymed line with five feet (# of times the pattern occurs) or accents, each foot containing an unstressed and stressed syllable.

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*HAMLET: To be, or not to be- that is the question:
Whether ’tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them. To die- to sleep-
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to. ‘Tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish’d. To die- to sleep.
To sleep- perchance to dream: ay, there’s the rub!*

**Ballad:** a story (narrative) told in regular, rhyming, rhythmic stanzas.