

The Wonderful World of Poetry

Poetry vs Prose - poetry is written in short, meaningful phrases that are made up of carefully chosen words. The main idea of poetry is to use the fewest amount of words that create the most amount of meaning. (Like the Sprint commercial, "Get the most for the least.") Prose, on the other hand, is the writing that is most familiar to us such as short stories, essays, novels, articles, etc.

Poetry

- * phrases and stanzas
- * figurative language
- * emotional and subjective

Prose

- * sentences and paragraphs
- * literal language
- * informative and objective

Stanza - a group of lines in poetry arranged according to a fixed plan. Just like the paragraph has a fixed group of sentences, the poem has phrases that are grouped into the stanzas.

Example: If I had a spoon
 Up in the sky
 I'd dish out the clouds
 That go sliding by.

I'd take them in
And let them cook
And see if they tasted
As good as they look.

Rhyme - the consistent pattern of similar sounds in the middle or at the end of each line of poetry

Internal Rhyme - when there is an obvious rhyme within one line of poetry, usually between middle words.

Example -

Now Sam McGee was from Tennessee where the cotton blooms and blows.
Why he left his home in the south to roam through the north , God only knows.

End Rhyme - when the last word of selected lines end on the same sound. There can also be a consistent pattern that is followed throughout the entire poem.

Example -

I eat my peas with honey, A
I've done it all my life B
It makes the peas taste funny A
But it keeps them on the knife. B

(Rhyme scheme is
A,B,A,B)

Literal Language vs Figurative Language - when we speak literally, we mean exactly what we say. When we speak figuratively, we tend to be hinting toward a much bigger idea using language that "represents" the larger idea.

example - I'm so hungry I could eat a horse.
I have a ton of homework.
She has gold hair.

Taken literally, the above would be impossible. The speaker uses exaggeration or comparison in order to demonstrate the qualities more clearly and so that the audience will receive a more vivid image.

That's the beauty of figurative language!

S.H.A.M.P.O.P. - the different types of figurative language can be memorized through this helpful acronym.

Simile - when two unlike objects are compared directly through the use of the words **like, as** or **than**

example - Her eyes are as blue as the sky.
He's as smart as a whip.
Her hair is dryer than straw.

Hyperbole - this also compares unlike objects, but in the manner of an obvious exaggeration that is either funny or dramatic

example - He's as tall as the Empire State Building.
I have a ton of homework.
She's so skinny she could float away.

Alliteration - the repetition of the same sound (vowel or consonant) within the same line of poetry. This repetition creates a sing-song effect.

Assonance - Andy ate the ants angrily. (repetition of vowels)

Consonance - Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers. (repetition of consonant sounds)

Metaphor - the indirect comparison between two unlike objects. The comparison is not obvious, and therefore up to the judgment of the reader.

example - His steel eyes stared at me.
His spaghetti arms wrapped themselves around the pole.
I couldn't see his eyes through the mop on his head.

Personification - when an inanimate object or something that is not human takes on human characteristics.

example - The leaves danced across the lawn.
The wind whispered my name.

Onomatopoeia - the sound of the word itself making the same sound as the word's meaning

example - The bacon sizzled in the pan.
The pop fizzed as we opened the can.

Pun - a pun is one kind of word play. Puns can be made in two ways:

A. Using two different meanings for the same word.

eg. Why do elephants need trunks?
They don't have glove compartments.

What do you think of clubs for teenagers?
I don't like them. Violence is a terrible thing.

Why is an empty wallet always the same?
Because there's never any change in it.

B. Using two different words that sound alike:

eg. I'm a little hoarse this morning.
That's funny... you look more like a goat.

I'd like to have a pane replaced.
Where would you like it to hurt next?

Other Important Types of Figurative Language

Parody - a piece of writing which achieves a humorous effect by mimicking the structure or content of a serious selection

examples - Michael Jackson's "Beat It" becomes Weird Al's "Eat It"
"Like a Virgin" becomes "Like a Surgeon"

Allusion - the reference to another piece of work, famous person or famous event.
This practice of alluding to another similar idea is intended to give the original piece of literature a deeper meaning. The most alluded to references are war, Shakespeare, and the Bible.

Symbolism - the use of objects or actions to suggest or represent other objects, actions, ideas or emotions.

example: dove = peace island = isolation
 flag = patriotism expensive car = wealth / status
 lantern that ran out of oil = death

Oxymoron - derived from the Greek form of oxumoros meaning pointedly foolish. This combines a pair of contrary terms in a single expression.

example: bitter sweet, pleasing pains, loving hatred
 "Parting is such sweet sorrow" - Shakespeare

Imagery - the painting of a picture in one's mind through the use of words; the "filmstrip" that is developed in one's imagination of what is happening in the poem, novel or short story (most vivid in poetry)