Introduction to Poetry

Poetic Devices & Terms

RHYME

The repetition of sounds   End rhyme- the last word on each line rhymes.

Example: hat, cat, brat, fat, mat, sat

My Beard

by Shel Silverstein

My beard grows to my toes,

I never wears no clothes,

I wraps my hair

Around my bare,
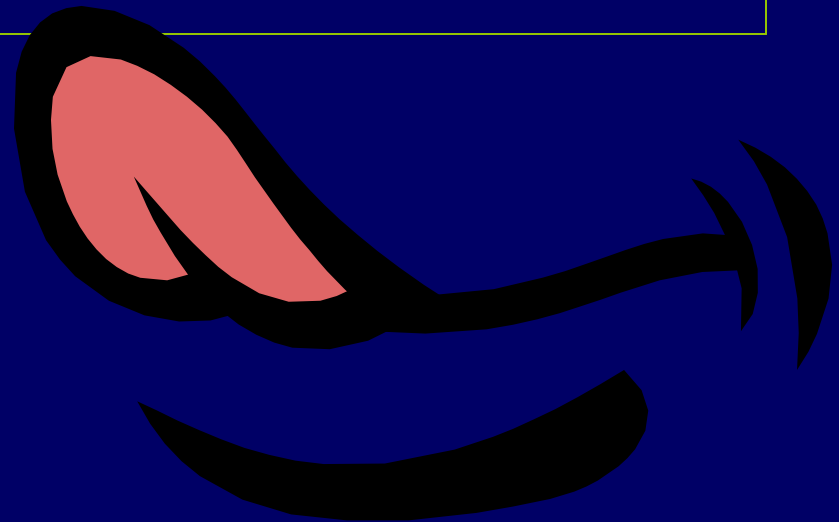
And down the road I goes.

Internal rhyme- Words INSIDE the sentence rhyme.
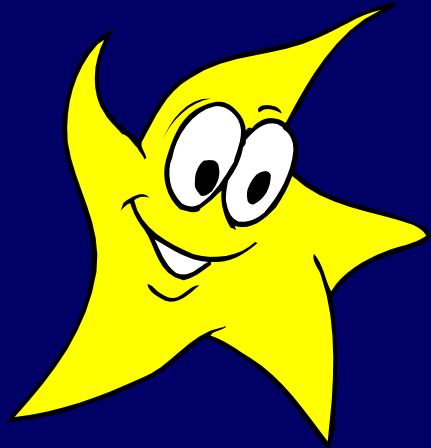
ALLITERATION

The repetition of the initial letter or sound in two or more words in a line.

To the lay-person, these are called "tongue-twisters".

Example: How much dew would a dewdrop drop if a dewdrop did drop dew?

Let's see what this looks like in a poem.

Alliteration

Alliteration

She Walks in Beauty

I.

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which Heaven to gaudy day denies.

Alliteration

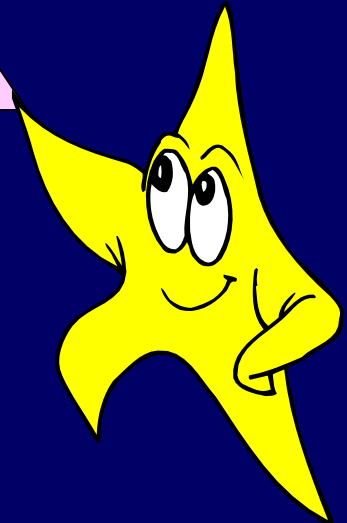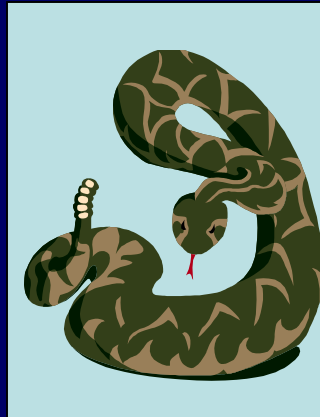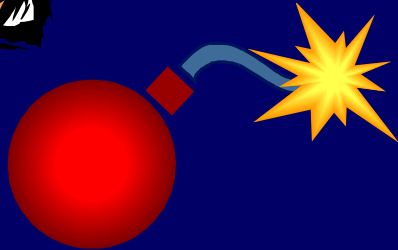These examples use the beginning sounds of words only twice in a line, but by definition, that's all you need.

Onomatopoeia

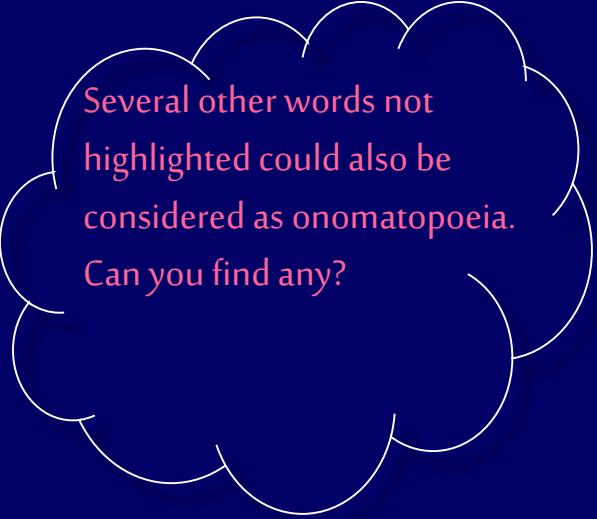Words that spell out sounds; words that sound like what they mean.

Examples: growl, hiss, pop, boom, crack, ptthhhbbb.

Let's see what this looks like in a poem.

Onomatopoeia →

Several other words not highlighted could also be considered as onomatopoeia. Can you find any?

Noise Day

by Shel Silverstein

Let's have one day for girls and boyses

When you can make the grandest noises.

Screech, scream, holler, and yell –

Buzz a buzzer, clang a bell,

Sneeze – hiccup – whistle – shout,

Laugh until your lungs wear out,

Toot a whistle, kick a can,

Bang a spoon against a pan,

Sing, yodel, bellow, hum,

Blow a horn, beat a drum,

Rattle a window, slam a door,

Scrape a rake across the floor . . ..

Simile

A comparison between two usually unrelated things using the word "like" or "as".

Examples:
> Joe is as hungry <u>as</u> a bear.
> In the morning, Rae is <u>like</u> an angry lion.

Let's see what this looks like in a poem.

Ars Poetica
By Archibald MacLeish

A poem should be palpable and mute as a globed fruit,

Silent as the sleeve-worn stone

Of casement ledges where the moss has grown—

A poem should be wordless

As the flight of birds.
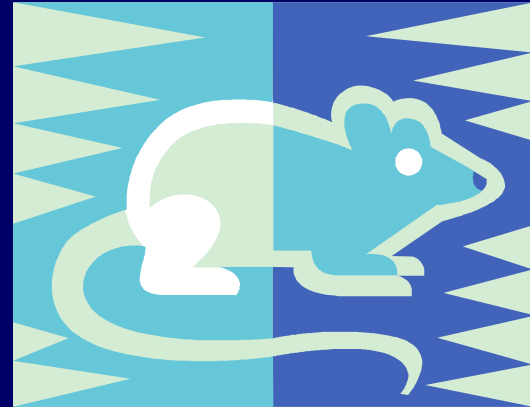
Simile

Simile

Simile

Metaphor

An implied comparison between two usually unrelated things.

Examples:
Lenny is a snake.
Ginny is a mouse when it comes to standing up for herself.

The difference between a simile and a metaphor is that a simile requires either "like" or "as" to be included in the comparison, and a metaphor requires that neither be used.

When it comes to using a metaphor device in poetry, a poet can either make the entire poem a metaphor for something, or put little metaphors throughout the poem.
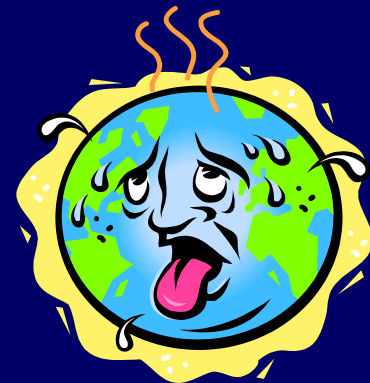
Hyperbole

An exaggeration for the sake of emphasis.

Examples:
   I may sweat to death.
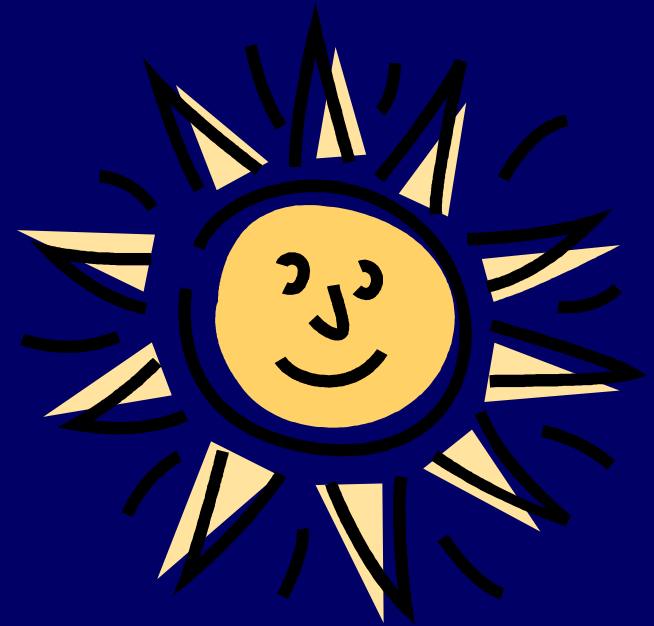   The blood bank needs a river of blood.

Personification

Giving human characteristics to inanimate objects, ideas, or animals.

Example:

The sun stretched its lazy fingers over the valley.

What is Symbolism?

- A **symbol** is <u>something that stands for itself, but also something larger than itself.</u>

  - <u>It may be a person, an animal, an inanimate object, or an action</u>

  - <u>. A writer often uses a concrete object to express an abstract idea, a quality, or a belief.</u>

  - A symbol may appeal <u>to a reader's emotions and can provide a way to express an idea, communicate a message, or clarify meaning</u>

–A writer often uses <u>a concrete object to express an abstract idea, a quality, or a belief.</u>

–A symbol may appeal <u>to a reader's emotions and can provide a way to express an idea, communicate a message, or clarify meaning</u>.

Mother to Son   by Langston Hughes

Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor --
Bare.
But all the time
I'se been a-climbin' on,
And reachin' landin's,
And turnin' corners,
And sometimes goin' in the dark
Where there ain't been no light.

So boy, don't you turn back.
Don't you set down on the steps
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.

Don't you fall now --
For I'se still goin', honey,
I'se still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

Imagery

Using words to create a picture in the reader's mind.

Free Verse

Poetry that follows no rules. Just about anything goes.

This does not mean that it uses no devices, it just means that this type of poetry does not follow traditional conventions such as punctuation, capitalization, rhyme scheme, rhythm and meter, etc.

Fog

The fog comes

on little cat feet.

It sits looking

over harbor and city

on silent haunches

and then, moves on.

No Rhyme
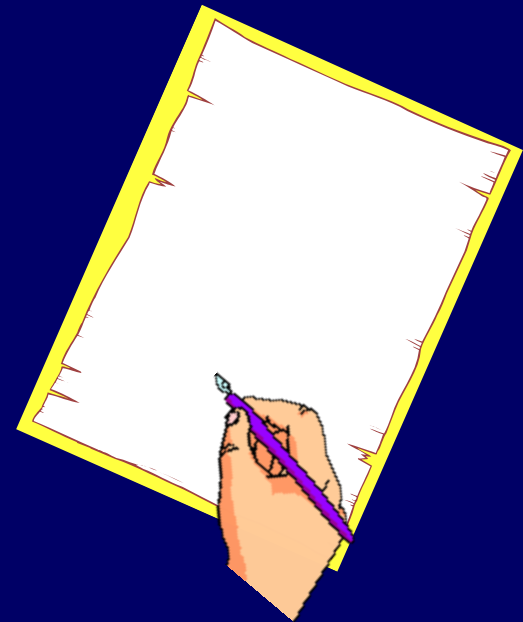No Rhythm
No Meter

This is
free verse.

Allusion

A reference to another piece of literature or to history.

Example: "She hath Dian's wit" (from *Romeo and Juliet*).

This is an allusion to Roman mythology and the goddess Diana.

The three most common types of allusion refer to mythology, the Bible, and Shakespeare's writings.

Rhythm

Rhythm is the flow of the beat in a poem.
Gives poetry a musical feel.
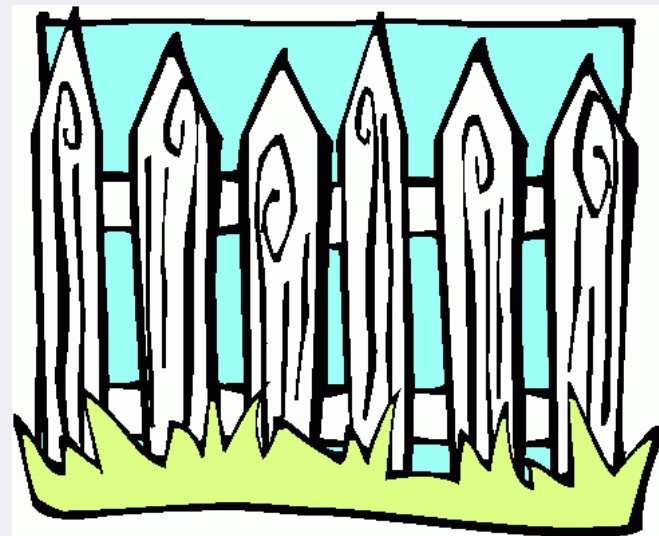Can be fast or slow, depending on mood and subject of poem.
You can measure rhythm in *meter*, by counting the beats in each line.

Rhythm Example

The Pickety Fence by **David McCord**

The pickety fence
The pickety fence
Give it a lick it's
The pickety fence
Give it a lick it's
A clickety fence
Give it a lick it's a lickety fence
Give it a lick
Give it a lick
Give it a lick
With a rickety stick
pickety
pickety
pickety
pick.

The rhythm in this poem is fast – to match the speed of the stick striking the fence.

Rhythm Example

Where Are You Now?

When the night begins to fall
And the sky begins to glow
You look up and see the tall
City of lights begin to grow –
In rows and little golden squares
The lights come out. First here, then there
Behind the windowpanes as though
A million billion bees had built
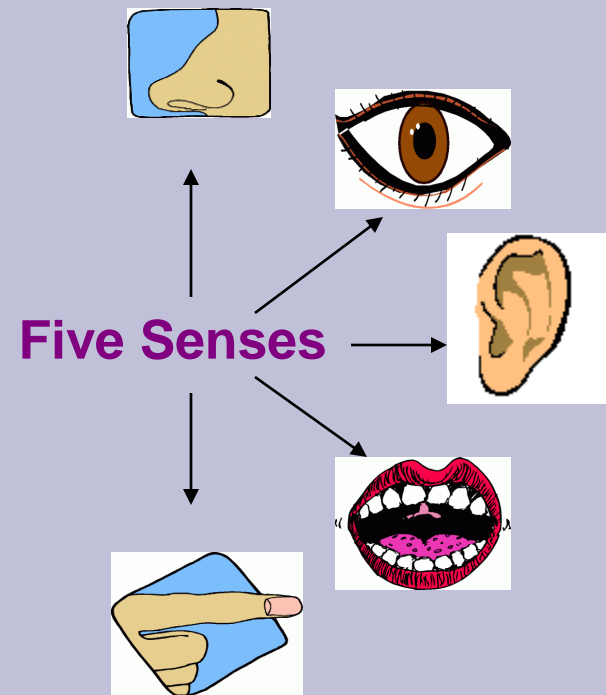Their golden hives and honeycombs
Above you in the air.

By Mary Britton Miller

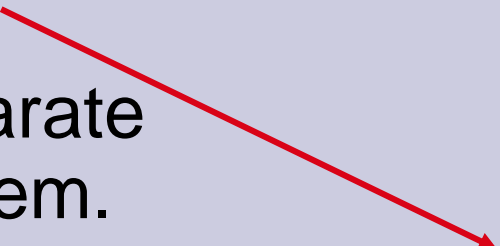**The rhythm in this poem is slow – to match the night gently falling and the lights slowly coming on.**

Imagery

- Imagery is the use of words to create pictures, or images, in your mind.

- Appeals to the five senses: smell, sight, hearing, taste and touch.

- Details about smells, sounds, colors, and taste create strong images.

- To create vivid images writers use figures of speech.

Five Senses

Lines and Stanzas

- Most poems are written in lines.
- A group of lines in a poem is called a stanza.
- Stanzas separate ideas in a poem. They act like paragraphs.
- This poem has two stanzas.

March

A blue day

A blue jay

And a good beginning.

One crow,

 Melting snow –

Spring's winning!

By Eleanor Farjeon

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Free Verse

- A free verse poem does not use rhyme or patterns.
- Can vary freely in length of lines, stanzas, and subject.

Revenge

**When I find out
who took
the last cooky**

**out of the jar
and left
me a bunch of**

**stale old messy
crumbs, I'm
going to take**

**me a handful
and crumb
up *someone's* bed**.

By Myra Cohn Livingston

Mood

- Mood is the atmosphere, or emotion, in the poem created by the poet.
- Can be happy, angry, silly, sad, excited, fearful or thoughtful.
- Poet uses words and images to create mood.
- Author's purpose helps determine mood.
- (See slides 65-72 for examples.)

Mood - *Barefoot Days*

Barefoot Days by Rachel Field

In the morning, very early,
  That's the time I love to go
Barefoot where the fern grows curly
  And grass is cool between each toe,
    On a summer morning-O!
    On a summer morning!

That is when the birds go by
  Up the sunny slopes of air,
And each rose has a butterfly
  Or a golden bee to wear;
And I am glad in every toe –
    Such a summer morning-O!
    Such a summer morning!

The mood in this poem is happy. What clues in the poem can you use to determine the mood?

Mood - *Mad Song*

Mad Song

I shut my door
To keep you out
Won't do no good
To stand and shout
Won't listen to
A thing you say
Just time you took
Yourself away
I lock my door
To keep me here
Until I'm sure
You disappear.

By Myra Cohn Livingston

The mood in this poem is angry. What clues in the poem can you use to determine the mood?
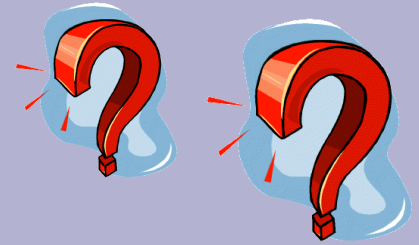
Mood - *Poem*

Poem

I loved my friend.

He went away from me.

There's nothing more to say.

The poem ends,

Soft as it began –

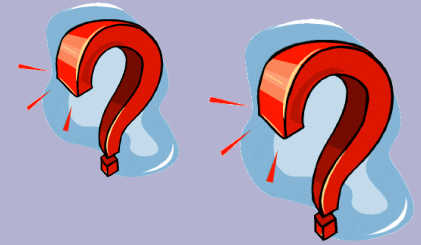I loved my friend:

By Langston Hughes

The mood in this poem is sad. What clues in the poem can you use to determine the mood?

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Diction

- Diction refers to the language of a poem, and how each word is chosen to convey a precise meaning.
- Poets are very deliberate in choosing each word for its particular effect,
- It's important to know the denotation and connotations of the words in a poem, not to mention their literal meaning, too.

Diction

- Example:
- T.S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton

  "Words strain,
  Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
  Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
  Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,
  Will not stay still."

  Notice the choice of harsh words like "burden" and "strain".

Tone.

Tone is the attitude writers take towards their subject .

Would this poem have a different meaning for the reader if the tone was changed?

Yes

There's this that I like about hockey, **old chap**
I think you'll agree that I'm right;
Although you may get an occasional rap,
There's always **good fun** un in the fight.
So toss in the puck, for the players are set;
Sing ho! For the dash on the **enemy net**
And ho! For the smash as a challenge is met;
And hey! For a **glorious night**
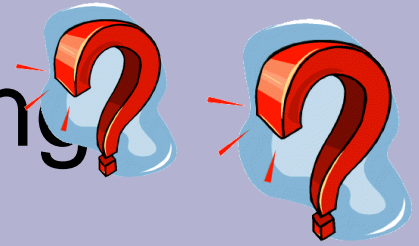
Author's Attitude towards Hockey

Author is speaking to

Don't Confuse *Tone & Mood*!

*Tone and mood are two different aspects of a poem!

* Tone is the <u>author's</u> or the poet's attitude <u>towards</u> his or her subject.

*Mood is how the poem makes the <u>reader</u> or the listener feel.

Reading for Meaning

- To find meaning in a poem, readers ask questions as they read. There are many things to pay attention to when reading a poem:

Title – Provides clues about – topic, mood, speaker, author's purpose?
Rhythm – Fast or slow? Why?
Sound Devices – What effects do they have?
Imagery – What pictures do we make in our minds?
Figures of Speech – What do they tell us about the subject?
Voice – Who is speaking - poet or character; one voice or more?
Author's Purpose – Sending message, sharing feelings, telling story, being funny, being descriptive?
Mood – Happy, sad, angry, thoughtful, silly, excited, frightened?
Plot – What is happening in the poem?

Remember, to make meaning, readers must make connections and tap into their background knowledge and prior experiences as they read.

Acknowledgements

Books (Continued):

Random House Book of Poetry: A Treasury of 572 Poems for Today's Child. Selected by Jack Prelutsky. NY: Random House, 1983.

Recess, Rhyme, and Reason: A Collection of Poems About School. Compiled and annotated by Patricia M. Stockland. Minneapolis, MS: Compass Point Books, 2004.

Teaching 10 Fabulous Forms of Poetry: Great Lessons, Brainstorming Sheets, and Organizers for Writing Haiku, Limericks, Cinquains, and Other Kinds of Poetry Kids Love. Janeczko, Paul B. NY: Scholastic Professional Books, 2000.

Tomie DePaola's Book of Poems. Selected by Tomie DePaola. NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1988.

The Twentieth Century Children's Poetry Treasury. Selected by Jack Prelutsky. NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999.

Weather: Poems. Selected by Lee Bennett Hopkins. NY: HarperCollins, 1994.

Writing Poetry with Children. Monterey, CA: Evan-Moor Corp., 1999.

Acknowledgements

Clip Art and Images Resources:

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