Poetry Vocabulary
Alliteration:

Definition:

• The repetition of consonant sounds in words that are close together.

Example:

• Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers. How many pickled peppers did Peter Piper pick?
Assonance:

Definition:
• The repetition of vowel sounds in words that are close together.

Example:
• And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
  Of my darling, my darling, my life and my bride.

-Edgar Allen Poe, from “Annabel Lee”
Ballad:

Definition:

• A song or songlike poem that tells a story.

• Examples:
  
  • “The Dying Cowboy”
  
  • “The Cremation of Sam McGee”
Cinquain:
Definition:
• A five-line poem in which each line follows a rule.
  1. A word for the subject of the poem.
  2. Two words that describe it.
  3. Three words that show action.
  4. Four words that show feeling.
  5. The subject word again—or another word for it.
End rhyme:

Definition:

• Rhymes at the ends of lines.

• Example:

  – “I have to speak-I must-I should
    -I ought…
    I’d tell you how I love you if I thought
    The world would end tomorrow afternoon.
    But short of that…well, it might be
    too soon.”

The end rhymes are ought, thought and afternoon, soon.
Epic:

Definition:

• A long narrative poem that is written in heightened language and tells stories of the deeds of a heroic character who embodies that values of a society.

• Example:
  – “Casey at the Bat”
  – “Beowulf”
Figurative language:

Definition:

• An expressive use of language.

• Example:
  – Simile
  – Metaphor
Form:

Definition:

• The structure and organization of a poem.
Free verse:

Definition:

• Poetry without a regular meter or rhyme scheme. These poems may use internal rhyme, repetition, alliteration, onomatopoeia.
Haiku:

Definition:

• Originating in Japan, a Haiku is a three-line poem which contains seventeen syllables.
  – 5 syllables in the first line
  – 7 syllables in the second line
  – 5 syllables in the last line
Imagery:

Definition:
• Language that appeals to the seven senses.
• Example:
  – “Mrs. Flowers”
Internal rhyme:

Definition:
• Rhymes within lines.
• Example:
  – “Back into the chamber turning, all my soul Within me burning.
    -Edgar Allen Poe, from “The Raven”
Limerick:

Definition:

• A very short humorous or nonsensical poem with five lines.
• Example:
  – “I sat next to the Duchess at tea; It was just as I feared it would be;
    Her rumblings were abdominal Were truly phenomenal,
    And everyone thought it was me!”
  -President Woodrow Wilson
Line:

Definition:
• A series of words written, printed, or recited as one of the component’s units of a larger piece of writing, such as a poem.
Lyric poetry:

Definition:

- Poetry that expresses the feelings or thoughts of a speaker rather than telling a story. These poems are usually short and imply, as opposed to stating, a strong emotion or idea.
Metaphor:

Definition:

• An imaginative comparison between two unlike things in which one thing is said to be another thing.
  – Not a simile: metaphors do not use the words “like” and “as”

• Example:
  – Jonny has a heart of stone.
Narrative poem:

Definition:
- A poem that tells a story.
- Not an epic: Epics have superhuman or extraordinary happenings, narratives do not.

Example:
- “Paul Revere’s Ride”
Ode:

Definition:

• A lyric poem, rhymed or unrhymed, on a serious subject. These are typically addressed to one person/thing.

• Example:
  - “Ode to Thanks”
Onomatopoeia:

Definition:
• Using words whose sounds suggest their meaning.
• Example:
  – Buzz
  – Rustle
  – Tinkle
  – Thud
Quatrain:

Definition:

• A poem or stanza of four lines.
• Example:
  - Fly away, fly away over the sea,
    Sun-loving swallow; for summer is done;
    Come again, come again, come back to me,
    Bringing the summer and bringing the sun.
  -Emily Dickinson
Repetition:

Definition:

• Repeating a word, phrase, line, or stanza multiple times within the poem.

• Example:
  – “Go Down, Moses” chorus
Rhyme scheme:

Definition:
• The pattern of end rhymes in a poem. You can identify this by using different letters of the alphabet for each rhyme.
• Example:
  – “A gentleman dining at Crewe, (a)
    Found quite a large mouse in his stew (a)
    Said the waiter, “Don’t shout, (b)
    And wave it about, (b)
    Or the rest will be wanting one too!” (a)
  – The Rhyme scheme of this limerick is aabba.
Rhyme:

Definition:

• The repetition of accented vowel sounds and all sounds following them in words that are close together in a poem.
Rhythm:

Definition:
• A musical quality produced by the repetition of stressed and unstressed syllables or by the repetition of other certain sound patterns.

• Example:
  – “The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
    And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
    And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
    When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.
  -Lord Byron, from “The Destruction of Sennacherib”
Simile:

Definition:

• A comparison between two unlike things, using a word such as like, as, than, or resembles.

• Example:
  – Her face was as round as a pumpkin.
  – The wind is roaring like a banshee.
Sonnet:

Definition:
- A fourteen-line poem, usually written in iambic pentameter.
- 2 kinds:
  - Shakespearean: 3 four-line units and ends with a couplet.
  - Italian: poses a question or makes a point in first eight lines and responds to that in the last six lines.
Sound devices:

Definition:

• Words that explain different sounds and functions within writing.

• Example
  – Alliteration
  – Assonance
  – Rhyme
  – Rhythm
Speaker:

Definition:

• The voice talking to us in a poem. The voice is NOT always the poet.
Stanza:

Definition:

• A group of consecutive lines in a poem that form a single unit. It is comparable to a paragraph in an essay.