



Primary English

Education Consultancy

Glossary of Poetic Terms:

Acrostic – a poem organised by the initial letters of a key word:

W histling wildly	B lowing
I n a	r ain
N orthern	r ound
D irection	a nd r ound

Alliteration - a phrase or nearby words begin with the same phoneme:

The swish of a silk sari on a summer night.

Assonance - the repetition of vowel sounds.

Dream team; bright night

Ballad - a poem or song which tells a story.

Blank verse - poem with rhythm and metre but no rhyme.

Calligram - a poem where the formation of the letters represents an aspect of the poem's theme. E.g. a scary poem might be written in a shaky hand.

Cinquain - a poem invented by the American, Adelaide Crapsey containing 22 syllables on 5 lines in the sequence: 2, 4, 6, 8, 2

Clerihew - a four-line comic verse with two rhyming couplets. The first line is the name of the person about whom the poem is written:

*Jeremiah Smith
Is boring to be with
The company he doth keep
Will send a person to sleep.*

Concrete poem - a poem in which the layout of the words represents an aspect of the subject.

Couplet – two consecutive lines of poetry which are paired in length and rhyme.

Elegy – a poem which is a lament, usually for someone or something that has died.

Epic – a poem about the adventures of an heroic figure.

Free Verse – a poem without patterns of rhythm or rhyme.

Haiku – A Japanese form of poetry with 3 lines, 17 syllables in the sequence: 5, 7, 5.

*Snowman in a field
listening to the raindrops*

Half-rhyme – words which almost rhyme.

Polish/relish

Internal rhyme – words that rhyme within the lines of a poem.

Though the threat of snow was growing slowly...

Jingle – a short verse or rhyme used to attract attention – often used in advertising.

Kenning – A poem written as list of characteristics of the subject without naming it:

*Mind boggler
Strict borer
Loud voicer
Writing maker
Mind filler
Brain trainer*

(Teacher)

Limerick – A five-line comic verse following the sequence of syllables: 8, 8, 6, 6, 8 and the rhyming scheme: a, a, b, b, a.

Metaphor – 'imaginative substitution'. The writer describes something as if it were something else:

*The sea is a hungry dog.
Giant and grey.
He rolls on the beach all day.
With his clashing teeth and shaggy jaws.*

From The Sea by James Reeves

Narrative poem – a poem that tells a story.

Ode – lyric poem usually addressed directly to the subject and written in the second person.

Onomatopoeia – words which echo the sounds of their meaning. *Crash, bang cuckoo*

Personification – a metaphor which attributes human characteristics and actions to non-human subjects.

The sun is smiling upon us today.

Poem – a text which uses features such as **rhythm, rhyme, syntax** or **vocabulary** to convey ideas in an intense way. Poems may also contain **alliteration** and other **figurative language** and techniques.

Rap – oral poetry with a strong rhythm and rapid pace. Associated with Caribbean and Afro-Caribbean cultures.

Renga – a series of **Haiku**; each linked by two seven-syllable lines. Sometimes written by different poets in turn to form a series of complete poems.

Repetition – repeated words or phrases for an effect on the reader.

The Highwayman came riding-riding-riding-

Riddle – A question of statement, often in rhyme, which is a puzzle to be solved by the reader.

Rhyme – Words which have the same rime in their final syllable, are said to rhyme.

Shape poem – A poem which is laid out to take the shape of the subject of the poem.

Simile - the writer compares one thing to another in order to create an image.

Sonnet a poem of 14 lines which may follow any rhyming scheme.

Stanza – a verse or set of lines of poetry, the pattern of which is repeated throughout the poem.

Tanka – Japanese poem based upon a **Haiku** but with two additional lines to give a complete picture of the event or mood. (A poet would give his friend a **Haiku** who would then add two lines to create a poem of 31 syllables with the sequence: 5, 7, 7, 7, 7, This would then be returned to the original poet).