

## POETRY TERMS

Rhythm: Pattern of sound—repetition of patterns: sound, phrases, structures.

Rhyme: End rhyme  
Internal rhyme  
Beginning rhyme

Structure: Order and arrangement of a poem's constituent parts—words, images, figures of speech, ideas, everything.

Imagery: 1. Mental pictures suggested by verbal descriptions.  
2. Visual descriptions in poem.  
3. Figurative language (metaphors, similes, analogies).

Symbol: Something which stands for something else. Words or groups of words that have a range of reference beyond their literal denotation.

1. Private symbols: Words, objects, and phrases—usually universal symbols; may take on specific meanings as a result of repeated use by the poet in poem after poem.
2. Myth: Symbols shared within a defined culture.
3. Archetypes: Patterns of experience and action which are similar in different nations and cultures.

Examples: wheat/grain—fertility  
snake—sex/sin  
tree/water--life

Simile: A direct, explicit comparison of one thing to another which usually uses “like” or “as” in drawing the parallel. (If extended and elaborated, it can be an analogy.)

Metaphor: One thing is pictured as if it were something else.

Tenor and Vehicle: The two essential elements of a metaphor. The tenor is the discourse or subject which the vehicle illustrates or illuminates; or stated another way, the vehicle is the figure that carries the weight of the comparison, while the tenor is the subject to which the vehicle refers.

Conceit: A metaphor that compares things which seem radically unlike, but which can be developed into a striking parallel.

Analogy: A simile that develops comparisons (a metaphor that controls long sections of the poem).

Personification: The strategy of giving human qualities to abstract concepts or inanimate things.

Allusion: A reference to something outside the poem that carries a history of meaning and strong emotional associations.

Allegory: The action of the poem consistently and systematical describes another order of things beyond the obvious one.

Motif: A recurrent device, formula, or situation which deliberately connects a poem with common patterns of existing thought.

Carpe Diem: A theme—seize the day; live for the moment.

Cliché: Any expression or idea which, through repeated use, has become commonplace, tiresome, and trite.

Tone: Author's attitude toward what his poem literally says.

Irony: Saying one thing and meaning another; and also any manner of being oblique rather than straightforward; often involves exaggeration or understatement.

Monologue: Once clearly distinguishable speaker does all the speaking.

1. Interior monologue—speaker seems to be thinking rather than to be speaking to someone.
2. Dramatic monologue—set in a specific situation and spoken to someone.
3. Soliloquy—the character is alone and speaking only to himself.

Occasional Poem: About a specific occasion.

Referential: Refers to a specific historical moment or event.

Spatial Setting: Place.

Temporal Setting: Time—date, season, time of day.

Ambiguity: To mean more than one thing.

Precision: Exactness.

Denote: State flatly, exactly.

Denotation: The precise meaning of each word.

Connotations: Suggestions of emotional coloration that imply our attitude and invite a similar one on the part of our hearers. The aura of personal feelings that surround a word.

Alliteration: The repetition of initial identical consonant sounds or any vowel sounds in successive or closely associated words or syllables (breeze, blew, foam, flew).

Assonance: Similar vowel sounds in stressed syllables that end with different consonant sound (lake/fate).

Consonance: The use at the ends of verses of words in which the final consonants in the stressed syllables agree but the vowels that precede them differ (born/burn).  
Example: Dickinson's poems.

Dissonance: Harsh, inharmonious sounds; a marked breaking of the music of a verse of poetry.