

Learning About Poetry

Poets put words together to create a musical quality and highly charged meaning. A poem combines verbal music and meaning to create a fresh outlook on a subject.

Figurative language is imaginative writing or speech that is not meant to be taken literally. Here are some common figures of speech:

- A **simile** uses a word such as *like* or *as* to compare two apparently unlike things:
Her eyes were like beacons of light.
- A **metaphor** compares two apparently unlike things but does not use *like* or *as*:
The grass was a carpet of green.
- **Personification** gives human qualities to nonhuman or inanimate things: *The waves danced in glee.*

Poets use **images**—descriptive, sensory language appealing to the senses: sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. Poets also use various sound devices:

- **Rhyme** is the repetition of sounds at the ends of words.
- **Meter** is the rhythmical pattern—or the arrangement and number of stressed and unstressed syllables—in a poem.
- **Alliteration** is the repetition of consonant sounds in the beginning of words, as in *fearsome foe*.
- **Assonance** is the repetition of similar vowel sounds in stressed syllables that end in different consonant sounds, as in *made* and *rail*.
- **Consonance** is the repetition of final consonant sounds after different vowel sounds in stressed syllables, as in *lend* and *hand*.
- **Onomatopoeia** is the use of words that imitate sounds, as in *rap*, *swish*, and *flutter*.
- **Repetition** is the use of any element of language—a sound, word, phrase, clause, or sentence—more than once.

DIRECTIONS: Circle the letter of the answer that best matches each numbered item.

1. comparison using *like* or *as*
A. metaphor B. personification C. simile
2. *The snow kissed her nose.*
A. assonance B. personification C. limerick
3. sensory language
A. consonance B. imagery C. alliteration
4. pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables
A. free verse B. meter C. consonance
5. a line of poetry that says, "Their words are trumpet blasts."
A. simile B. metaphor C. personification
6. *buzz, clink, toll, hiss*
A. personification B. assonance C. onomatopoeia