**Poetic Devices and Terms**

**Figurative Language**

(language that is not meant to be interpreted literally)

**Simile:** a comparison between two seemingly unlike things using a connective words such as like or as

*Ex: She moves like a bird*.

*Ex. “It's been a hard day's night, and I've been working like a dog.” -- The Beatles*

**Metaphor**: an implied comparison between two seemingly unlike things without using a connective word

*Ex: My soul is an enchanted boat or*

*The road was a narrow ribbon unwinding before us.*

**Personification:** a kind of metaphor that gives inanimate objects or abstract ideas human characteristics *Ex. The wind shrieked with fury and rained blows on the house.*

**Hyperbole:** exaggeration for effect, emphasis or overstatement

*Ex. The shot was heard ‘round the world.*

**Imagery:** Patterns of words or phrases that evoke sensory response (sight, sound, touch, smell, taste) in the reader

*Ex. The slimy pumpkin seeds slid through my fingers. – Appeals to sense of touch*

**Paradox:** A contradictory statement that reveals a kind of truth.

*Ex. The child is father to the man … --William Wordsworth*

*Ex. It was the best of times; it was the words of times. –Charles Dickens*

**Oxymoron**: A figure of speech that combines opposite or contradictory ideas or terms; a two-word paradox.

*Ex. Sweet sorrow; cold fire; brawling love; O loving hate!*

**Poetic Forms**

**Types of Poems**

**Lyric:** a poem, usually a short one, which expresses a speaker’s personal thoughts or feelings. The elegy, ode, and sonnet are all lyrics.

**Sonnet**: a type of lyric poem that has fourteen iambic pentameter lines.

**Ballad:** a story told in verse and usually meant to be sung.

**Free Verse**: a poem with no regular pattern or structure

**Stanza:** a group of consecutive lines in a poem that form a single unit.

**Quatrain**: a stanza consisting of 4 lines; most common stanza form

**Sestet:** a stanza consisting of 6

**Octave:** a stanza consisting of 8 lines

**Poetic Sound Devices**

**Alliteration:** the repetition of initial sounds in several consecutive or neighbouring words

*Ex. The twisting trout twinkled below.*

**Onomatopoeia:** is the use of words that mimic the sounds they describe

*Ex. Hiss, buzz, bang, the buzzing of bees and the tinkling of bells…*

**Rhyme**: the repetition of sounds in two or more words or phrases that appear close to each other *Ex. Bat/cat see/bee*

**Rhyme Scheme**: a pattern of end rhymes; each sound is represented by the letter of the alphabet (Ex. Abab, abcb, abba, etc.)

*Ex. The wind was a torrent of darkness upon the gusty trees, A*

*The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas, A*

*The road was a ribbon of moonlight looping the purple moor, B*

**Rhythm:** The sense of movement created by the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry or prose.

*Ex. Iambic Rhythm -- an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable (da DUM)*

*Ex. The sea is calm tonight.*

**Foot:** each unit of rhythm is called a foot; it isa combination of a strong stress and a weak stress (plural known as feet)

**Iambic Pentameter**: five feet of unstressed/stressed syllables (x/ x/ x/ x/ x/)

*Ex. I walked, she fled, and day brought back my night.*

**Meter:** how rhythm is measured; measures the sections of rhythm per line

*Ex. Dimiter, trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter, hexameter, heptameter, octameter*

**Misc. Poetry Terms**

**Connotation:** Implications or suggestions that are evoked by a word. They may be highly individual word associations with powerful experiences, or more general, culturally conditioned associations.

Ex. You are such a snake.

**Denotation:** The literal or dictionary meaning of a word.

*Ex. Snake = any of numerous limbless, scaly, elongate reptiles of the suborder Serpents*

**Refrain:** A word, phrase, line, or group of lines repeated regularly in a poem, usually at the end of each stanza

**Colloquial language:** Ordinary, familiar expressions common to conversation rather than literary or formal language. Also known as “colloquialism.” Ex. Contractions are colloquial – ie. can’t, won’t, etc.

**Allusion:** brief reference to mythological, biblical, historical, or literary person/place/thing/idea

*Ex. He met his Waterloo.*

*Ex. Don’t be such a Scrooge.*

**Tone:** the poet’s or speaker’s attitude toward a poem, the subject matter, the reader, himself or herself*.*

*Ex. The poem has a satiric tone.*

**Understatement:** deliberate understatement

Ex*. An atomic bomb could really ruin your day*

**Mood:** words and details that create a feeling in the reader; the prevailing feeling of the scene; created by diction, imagery, description, dialogue, etc.

**These terms are important for your final exam. Don’t lose this sheet!**

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**The Sonnet**

The sonnet is a structured form of a poem with **fourteen iambic pentameter lines**. There are **two types** of sonnets:

1. **the Italian or Petrarchan Sonnet**
2. **a) Elizabethan or Shakespearean Sonnet**

**b) Spenserian Sonnet**

***1. Italian or Petrarchan Sonnet:***

has fourteen lines of rhymed iambic pentameter and is divided into two parts (stanzas). The *octave* (first 8 lines) presents the theme, mood, and the subject matter; it has a rhyme scheme of *a,b,b,a,a,b,b,a.*

The *sestet* (the last 6 lines) can show a change in subject matter (eg. question or problem is presented in the octave; the answer or solution is given in the sestet), and in the mood. The change in subject is called a *turn.*

The rhyme scheme is *c,d,e, c,d,e*

Example: “Composed Upon Westminster Bridge”; “Whoso List to Hunt”

# *2. a) Elizabethan or Shakespearean Sonnet:*

has **fourteen lines** written in **iambic pentameter**. They are divided into **3 quatrains** (4 lines) and end with a **rhyming couplet**. The **rhyme scheme** is *a,b,a,b, c,d,c,d, e,f,e,f, g,g.*

The main idea is generally presented in the *first quatrain* and is developed more fully in the *second quatrain*. There can be a change in subject matter and mood in the *third quatrain*, with a summary given in the *rhyming couplet*. The change in subject is called a *turn*.

**\*\*\*If there is no rhyming couplet it is not a Shakespearean Sonnet.\*\*\***

Example: “Sonnet 18”, “Sonnet 130”

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***2. b) Spenserian Sonnet:***

has fourteen lines written in iambic pentameter. They are divided into 3 *quatrains* (4 lines) and end with a *rhyming couplet*. The rhyme scheme is *a,b,a,b, b,c,b,c, c,d,c,d, ee.* The Spenserian Sonnet follows the same thematic format as the Shakespearean Sonnet—the **only** difference is the rhyme scheme.

\*\*\*If there is no rhyming couplet it is not a Spenserian Sonnet.\*\*\*

Example: “Sonnet 30”, “Sonnet 75”