

English 3201

EXAMINABLE TERMS: POETRY

allegory	a story, play, poem or visual in which each character or event is a symbol of something else.
alliteration	repetition of the same letter or sound at the beginning of nearby or closely connected words. (On the <u>bold</u> street <u>breaks</u> the <u>blank</u> day)
allusion	a reference in a work to a person, place or event (usually from history, mythology or another work of literature) that is meant to extend the reader's understanding or call something to mind.
analogy	a comparison between two things sharing some similar qualities, usually for the purpose of explanation or clarification
apostrophe	a passage in which a writer addresses directly a dead or absent person or an abstract or inanimate object
assonance	the effect created when two syllables in words close together, especially in poetry, have the same vowel sound but different consonants. (<u>face</u> , <u>mailed</u>)
atmosphere	the feelings or emotions evoked by a work of art or literature
cacophony	a harsh or discordant mixture of sounds; the opposite of euphony .
connotation	the associations (ideas or feelings) that a word or phrase evokes, in addition to its literal or primary dictionary meaning. ("heart" by its dictionary definition is that organ of the body responsible for pumping blood, the connotations of the word include the ideas of love, warmth, affection, goodness, etc.)
consonance	the repetition of the same or similar consonants in neighbouring words (<u>com</u> ing <u>h</u> ome)
couplet	a pair of successive lines of poetry with the same metre, especially ones that rhyme. ("So long as men can breathe or eyes can see/ So long lives this and this gives life to thee.")
denotation	the literal or primary (dictionary) meaning of a term, as distinct from its implications or connotations (The word "heart" is that it is the organ in the body that pumps blood)
diction	the choice of words or phrases in speech or writing
euphony	a pleasing smoothness of sound; especially of words spoken in combination; opposite of cacophony
figurative language	language used in a way that is different from the usual, literal meaning in order to create a particular mental image
figure of speech	a way of using language to convey or suggest a meaning beyond the literal meaning of the words. Metaphors , similes and personification are all examples of figures of speech.
hyperbole	A gross exaggeration
image	in literature, a word or phrase that evokes mental pictures or sensory impressions. Images allow readers to see, hear, feel, smell, taste, think about, or generally understand more clearly what the author is saying. Images may be literal providing a detailed description of a real scene or situation; or they may be figurative , providing a comparison with something that has similar qualities.
juxtaposition	the placement of two elements side by side to highlight a contrast or other effect through their association.
literal meaning	poetry often works on two levels – the literal and the figurative. The literal level is a summary of what is being described in the poem, or what is being stated outright by a narrator. Before interpreting the figurative or thematic message in the words, a literal interpretation shows that you understand the literal meaning of the words.
metaphor	a figure of speech involving an implied (not directly stated) comparison, and without using the words "like" or "as". A poet may base his poem upon an extended metaphor
mood	the pervading feeling associated with a composition, poem, play, etc.
onomatopoeia	a device in which the sound of a word reflects its meaning ("sizzle")
oxymoron	a figure of speech in which apparently contradictory terms are combined for dramatic effect (the word "bittersweet" or the phrase "a deafening silence).

paradox	a seemingly absurd or self-contradictory statement, which, when investigated or explained, may prove to be well-founded or true
personification	a figure of speech in which animals, objects or abstract ideas are given human form, actions, or qualities (“Death lays his icy hands on kings.”)
poetic forms:	form the way a poem is organized on the page in terms of stanzas, line length, etc.
	ballad a narrative poem or song that tells a popular story, often of physical courage or love. Ballads in Western literature usually have four-line stanzas and a refrain. Many early ballads were passed along orally and their original authors are not known.
	refrain a recurring phrase or number of lines, especially at the ends of stanzas
	elegy a type of lyric poem that expresses sadness for someone who has died: traditionally a solemn meditation on a serious subject
	epic a long narrative poem dealing with the actions of legendary men and women or the history of nations, often presented in a grand ceremonious style.
	free verse poetry without a regular metre or rhyme scheme
	lyric a poem which expresses thoughts, feelings and personal imaginings.
	narrative a poem which tells a story (a ballad or an epic)
	ode a lyric poem, usually rhymed and with a varied or irregular metre, and written in the form of an address to a person or object.
	sonnet A lyric poem of fourteen lines, usually written in iambic pentameter, using any of a number of formal rhyme schemes, and usually having a single theme. The Italian (or Petrarchan) sonnet consists of an eight-line octave followed by a six-line sestet. The shift from the octave to the sestet may mark a turn in the argument of the poem. The English (or Shakespearean) sonnet consists of three quatrains and a final couplet. The couplet may mark a turn or twist in the argument.
	quatrain a stanza of four lines
	sestet a stanza of six lines
	octave a group or stanza of eight lines
	rhyming couplet a pair of successive rhyming lines of poetry
simile	a figure of speech involving the explicit comparison of two different things, often using the words “like” or “as” (brave as a lion)
structure	the way in which the argument of a poem is revealed. The poet may structure his poem through the use of comparison, contrast, question/answer, problem/solution, showing how good comes from bad, etc.
symbol	a thing that represents, typifies, or recalls something else (a dove is a symbol for peace)
theme	the central idea or focus in a work of art.
title	(significance)
tone	a writer’s or speaker’s attitude to his or her subject revealed by aspects of the text such as diction, style, use of figurative language.