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| **Aubade**A love lyric in which the speaker complains about the arrival of the dawn, when he must part from his lover. John Donne's "The Sun Rising" exemplifies this poetic genre.**Ballad**A [narrative poem](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#narrative_poem) written in four-line [stanzas](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#stanza), characterized by swift action and narrated in a direct style. The Anonymous medieval ballad, "Barbara Allan," exemplifies the genre.**Blank verse**A line of poetry or prose in unrhymed [iambic pentameter](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#iamb). Shakespeare's sonnets, Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost*, and Robert Frost's meditative poems such as "Birches" include many lines of blank verse. Here are the opening blank verse lines of "Birches": When I see birches bend to left and right / Across the lines of straighter darker trees, / I like to think some boy's been swinging them.**Caesura**A strong pause within a line of verse. The following stanza from Hardy's "The Man He Killed" contains caesuras in the middle two lines: He thought he'd 'list, perhaps,Off-hand-like--just as I--Was out of work-had sold his traps--No other reason why.**Closed form**A type of form or structure in poetry characterized by regularity and consistency in such elements as rhyme, line length, and [metrical pattern](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#meter). Frost's "Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening" provides one of many examples. A single [stanza](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#stanza) illustrates some of the features of closed form:Whose woods these are I think I know.His house is in the village though.He will not see me stopping hereTo watch his woods fill up with snow. **Couplet**A pair of rhymed lines that may or may not constitute a separate [stanza](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#stanza) in a poem. Shakespeare's sonnets end in rhymed couplets, as in "For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings / That then I scorn to change my state with kings."**Dactyl**A stressed syllable followed by two unstressed ones, as in *FLUT-ter-ing* or *BLUE-ber-ry*. The following playful lines illustrate double dactyls, two dactyls per line:Higgledy, piggledy,Emily DickinsonGibbering, jabbering. **Denotation**The dictionary meaning of a word. Writers typically play off a word's denotative meaning against its connotations, or suggested and implied associational implications. In the following lines from Peter Meinke's "Advice to My Son" the references to flowers and fruit, bread and wine denote specific things, but also suggest something beyond the literal, dictionary meanings of the words: To be specific, between the peony and rosePlant squash and spinach, turnips and tomatoes;Beauty is nectar and nectar, in a desert, saves--...and always serve bread with your wine.But, son,always serve wine. **Elision**The omission of an unstressed vowel or syllable to preserve the [meter](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#meter) of a line of poetry. Alexander uses elision in "Sound and Sense": "Flies o'er th' unbending corn...."**Enjambment**A run-on line of poetry in which logical and grammatical sense carries over from one line into the next. An enjambed line differs from an end-stopped line in which the grammatical and logical sense is completed within the line. In the opening lines of Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess," for example, the first line is end-stopped and the second enjambed:That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,Looking as if she were alive. I callThat piece a wonder, now.... **Epic**A long [narrative poem](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#narrative_poem) that records the adventures of a hero. Epics typically chronicle the origins of a civilization and embody its central values. Examples from western literature include Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, and Milton's *Paradise Lost*.**Epigram**A brief witty poem, often satirical. Alexander Pope's "Epigram Engraved on the Collar of a Dog" exemplifies the genre:I am his Highness' dog at Kew;Pray tell me, sir, whose dog are you? **Falling meter**Poetic [meters](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#meter) such as trochaic and dactylic that move or fall from a stressed to an unstressed syllable. The nonsense line, "Higgledy, piggledy," is dactylic, with the accent on the first syllable and the two syllables following falling off from that accent in each word. Trochaic meter is represented by this line: "Hip-hop, be-bop, treetop--freedom."**Foot**A [metrical](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#meter) unit composed of stressed and unstressed syllables. For example, an iamb or iambic foot is represented by ˘*'*, that is, an unaccented syllable followed by an accented one. Frost's line "Whose woods these are I think I know" contains four iambs, and is thus an iambic foot.**Free verse**Poetry without a regular pattern of [meter](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#meter) or rhyme. The verse is "free" in not being bound by earlier poetic conventions requiring poems to adhere to an explicit and identifiable meter and rhyme scheme in a form such as the sonnet or ballad. Modern and contemporary poets of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries often employ free verse. Williams's "This Is Just to Say" is one of many examples.**Iamb**An unstressed syllable followed by a stressed one, as in *to-DAY*. See [*Foot*](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#foot).**Lyric poem**A type of poem characterized by brevity, compression, and the expression of feeling. Most of the poems in this book are lyrics. The anonymous "Western Wind" epitomizes the genre:Western wind, when will thou blow,The small rain down can rain?Christ, if my love were in my armsAnd I in my bed again! **Meter**The measured pattern of rhythmic accents in poems. See [*Foot*](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#foot) and [*Iamb*](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#iamb).**Narrator**The voice and implied speaker of a fictional work, to be distinguished from the actual living author. For example, the narrator of Joyce's "Araby" is not James Joyce himself, but a literary fictional character created expressly to tell the story. Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" contains a communal narrator, identified only as "we." See [*Point of view*](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#point_of_view).**Octave**An eight-line unit, which may constitute a [stanza](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#stanza); or a section of a poem, as in the octave of a [sonnet](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#sonnet).**Ode** A long, stately poem in [stanzas](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#stanza) of varied length, [meter](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#meter), and form. Usually a serious poem on an exalted subject, such as Horace's "Eheu fugaces," but sometimes a more lighthearted work, such as Neruda's "Ode to My Socks."**Open form**A type of structure or form in poetry characterized by freedom from regularity and consistency in such elements as rhyme, line length, [metrical pattern](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#meter), and overall poetic structure. E.E. Cummings's "[Buffalo Bill's]" is one example. See also [*Free verse*](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#free_verse).**Personification**The endowment of inanimate objects or abstract concepts with animate or living qualities. An example: "The yellow leaves flaunted their color gaily in the breeze." Wordsworth's "I wandered lonely as a cloud" includes personification.**Point of view**The angle of vision from which a story is narrated. See [*Narrator*](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#narrator). A work's point of view can be: first person, in which the narrator is a character or an observer, respectively; objective, in which the narrator knows or appears to know no more than the reader; omniscient, in which the narrator knows everything about the characters; and limited omniscient, which allows the narrator to know some things about the characters but not everything.**Quatrain**A four-line [stanza](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#stanza) in a poem, the first four lines and the second four lines in a Petrachan sonnet. A Shakespearean sonnet contains three quatrains followed by a couplet.**Rhyme**The matching of final vowel or consonant sounds in two or more words. The following stanza of "Richard Cory" employs alternate rhyme, with the third line rhyming with the first and the fourth with the second:Whenever Richard Cory went down town,We people on the pavement looked at him;He was a gentleman from sole to crownClean favored and imperially slim. **Rhythm**The recurrence of accent or stress in lines of verse. In the following lines from "Same in Blues" by Langston Hughes, the accented words and syllables are underlined:I said to my baby,Baby take it slow....Lulu said to LeonardI want a diamond ring**Rising meter**Poetic [meters](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#meter) such as [iambic](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#iamb) and [anapestic](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#anapest) that move or ascend from an unstressed to a stressed syllable. See [*Anapest*](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#anapest), [*Iamb*](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#iamb), and [*Falling meter*](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#falling_meter).**Sestet**A six-line unit of verse constituting a [stanza](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#stanza) or section of a poem; the last six lines of an Italian [sonnet](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#sonnet). Examples: Petrarch's "If it is not love, then what is it that I feel," and Frost's "Design."**Sonnet**A fourteen-line poem in [iambic pentameter](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#iamb). The Shakespearean or English sonnet is arranged as three [quatrains](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#quatrain) and a final [couplet](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#couplet), rhyming abab cdcd efef gg. The Petrarchan or Italian sonnet divides into two parts: an eight-line octave and a six-line sestet, rhyming abba abba cde cde or abba abba cd cd cd.**Spondee**A [metrical](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#meter) [foot](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#foot) represented by two stressed syllables, such as *KNICK-KNACK*.**Stanza**A division or unit of a poem that is repeated in the same form--either with similar or identical patterns or rhyme and [meter](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#meter), or with variations from one stanza to another. The stanzas of Gertrude Schnackenberg's "Signs" are regular; those of Rita Dove's "Canary" are irregular.**Style**The way an author chooses words, arranges them in sentences or in lines of dialogue or verse, and develops ideas and actions with description, imagery, and other literary techniques. See [*Connotation*](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#connotation), [*Denotation*](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#denotation), [*Diction*](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#diction), [*Figurative language*](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#figurative_language), [*Image*](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#image), [*Imagery*](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#imagery), [*Irony*](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#irony), [*Metaphor*](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#metaphor), [*Narrator*](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#narrator), [*Point of view*](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#point_of_view), [*Syntax*](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#syntax), and [*Tone*](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#tone).**Symbol**An object or action in a literary work that means more than itself, that stands for something beyond itself. The glass unicorn in *The Glass Menagerie*, the rocking horse in "The Rocking-Horse Winner," the road in Frost's "The Road Not Taken"--all are symbols in this sense.**Tercet**A three-line [stanza](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#stanza), as the stanzas in Frost's "Acquainted With the Night" and Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind." The three-line stanzas or sections that together constitute the sestet of a Petrarchan or Italian sonnet.**Trochee**An accented syllable followed by an unaccented one, as in *FOOT-ball*.**Villanelle**A nineteen-line lyric poem that relies heavily on repetition. The first and third lines alternate throughout the poem, which is structured in six [stanzas](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#stanza) --five [tercets](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#tercet) and a concluding [quatrain](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#quatrain). Examples include Bishop's "One Art," Roethke's "The Waking," and Thomas's "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night." |