

AP ENGLISH
SOME FUNDAMENTALS OF POETRY

METER: Meter is the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables established in a line of poetry. The stressed () syllable is also called the accented syllable. The unstressed () syllable is also called the unaccented syllable. In determining the meter, the importance of the word, the position in the metrical pattern, and other linguistic factors should be considered. In identifying the meter of a line or verse, the type and the number of feet are considered.

FOOT: A foot is a unit of meter. A metrical foot can have two or three syllables. A foot consists generally of one stressed and one or more unstressed syllables. A line may have one foot, two feet, etc. Poetic lines are classified according to the number of feet in a line.

TYPES OF METRICAL FEET: The basic types of metrical feet determined by the arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables are:

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| A. iambic | D. dactylic |
| B. trochaic | E. spondaic |
| C. anapestic | F. pyrrhic |

- A. **IAMB:** The iambic foot is a two-syllable foot with the stress on the second syllable. The iambic foot is the most common foot in English.

A book | of ver | ses un | der neath | the bough.

A jug | of wine, | a loaf | of bread | --and thou.

- B. **TROCHEE:** The trochaic foot consists of a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable.

Dou ble, | dou ble, | toil and | trouble,

Fire | burn and | cauldron | bubble

- C. **ANAPEST:** The anapestic foot consists of three syllables with the stress on the last syllable.

With the sheep | in the fold | and the cows | in their stalls.

- D. **SPONDEE:** The spondaic foot consists of two stressed syllables. Compound words are examples of spondees. They are used for variation.

Heartbreak, childhood, football

- E. **DACYTL:** The dactylic foot contains three syllables with the stress on the first syllable.

Love again, | song again | nest again, | young again.

- F. **PYRRHIC:** The pyrrhic foot consists of two unstressed syllables. This type of foot is rare and is found interspersed with other feet.

KINDS OF METRICAL LINES: The basic kinds of metrical lines are:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A. monometer—one-foot line | E. pentameter—five-foot line |
| B. dimeter—two-foot line | F. hexameter—six-foot line |
| C. trimeter—three-foot line | G. heptameter—seven-foot line |
| D. tetrameter—four-foot line | H. octometer—eight-foot line |

A. **MONOMETER:** Following is an example of iambic monometer from a poem by Robert Herrick.

"UPON HIS DEPARTURE"

Thus I
Pass by
And die,
As one,
Unknown
And gone.

B. **DIMETER:** Below is an example of a poem in trochaic dimeter by Richard Armour.

"MONEY"

Workers earn it,
Spendthrifts burn it
Bankers lend it,
Women spend it,
Forgers fake it,
I could use it.

C. **TRIMETER:** Following is an example of iambic trimeter from a poem by Robert Bridges.

"THE IDLE LIFE I LEAD"

The idle life I lead
Is like a pleasant sleep,
Wherein I rest and head
The dreams that by me sweep.

D. **TETRAMETER:** Below is an example of iambic tetrameter by Henry Leigh.

"NOT QUITE FAIR"

The hills, the meadows, and the lakes,
Enchant not for their own sweet sakes.
They cannot know, they cannot care
To know that they are thought so fair.

E. **PENTAMETER:** Some quotations from Alexander Pope illustrate iambic pentameter.

What oft was thought, but ne'er so well express'd.
The bookful blockhead, ignorantly read,
With loads of learned lumber in his head.

F. **HEXAMETER:** (sometimes called an alexandrine)

If hunger, proverbs say, allures the wolf from wood,
Much more the bird must dare a dash at something good.

G. **HEPTAMETER:** The iambic heptameter example is from a poem by Ernest Thayer.

"CASEY AT THE BAT"

It looked extremely rocky for the Mudville nine that day,
The score stood four to six with but an inning left to play:

H. **OCTOMETER:** Below is an example from a poem by E. A. Poe to illustrate trochaic octometer.

"THE RAVEN"

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,

VERSE FORMS: The kinds of verse forms based on meter and rhyme are (A) rhymed verse, (B) blank verse, and (C) free verse.

RHYMED VERSE: consists of verse with end rhyme and usually with a regular meter

BLANK VERSE: consists of lines of iambic pentameter without end rhyme.

FREE VERSE: consists of lines that do not have a regular meter and do not contain rhyme.

SYLLABIC VERSE: A metrical system which depends solely on syllable count, and which takes no account of stress. This is the norm in most Romance languages (French, Italian, Spanish), but is unusual (and almost always consciously experimental) in English.

DEVICES OF SOUND

A. **RHYME:** is the similarity of likeness of sound existing between two words. A true rhyme should consist of identical sounding syllables that are stressed and the letters preceding the vowels sounds should be different. Thus fun and run are TRUE or perfect rhymes because the vowel sounds are identical preceded by different consonants.

Near, off, or slant rhyme: A rhyme based on an imperfect or incomplete correspondence of end syllable sounds. Common in the work of Emily Dickinson, for instance:

It was not death, for I stood up,
And all the dead lie down.
It was not night, for all the bells
Put out their tongues for noon.

B. **POSITION OF RHYME:** Rhyme may be end rhyme or internal rhyme.

1. **END RHYME:** consists of the similarity occurring at the end of two or more lines of verse:

I wish that my room had a FLOOR
I don't so much care for a DOOR
But this walking AROUND
Without touching the GROUND
Is getting to be quite a BORE!

2. **INTERNAL RHYME**: consists of the similarity occurring between two or more words in the same line of verse.

Once upon a midnight DREARY, while I pondered, weak and WEARY,

- C. **KINDS OF RHYME**: Kinds of rhyme based on the number of syllables presenting a similarity of sound are:

MASCULINE RHYME—occurs when one syllable at the end of a line is a stressed syllable that rhymes with another stressed word at the end of a line: bend and send; bright and light

FEMININE RHYME—occurs when the last two syllables of a word, the last syllable of which is unstressed, rhyme with another word also ending in an unstressed syllable: lawful and awful; lighting and fighting

TRIPLE RHYME—occurs when the last three syllables of a word or line rhyme: victorious and glorious; ascendency and descendency; quivering and shivering; battering and shattering

- D. **RHYME SCHEME**—is the pattern or sequence in which the rhyme occurs. The first sound is represented or designated as a, the second is designated as b, and so on. When the first sound is repeated, it is designated as a also.

Whose woods these are I think I know.	a
His house is in the village though.	a
He will not see me stopping here	b
To watch his woods fill up with snow.	a
My little horse must think it queer	b
To stop without a farmhouse near	b
Beside the woods and frozen lake	c
The coldest evening of the year.	b
He gives his harness bells a shake	c
To ask if there is some mistake	c
The only other sound's the sweep	d
Of easy wind and downy flake.	c
The woods are lovely, dark and deep	d
But I have promises to keep,	d
And miles to go before I sleep	d
And miles to go before I sleep.	d

- E. **ALLITERATION**—is the repetition of the initial letter or sound in two or more words in a line of verse.

A Tutor who tooted the flute
Tried to teach two young tooters to toot;
Said the two to the tutor
"Is it harder to toot, or
To tutor two tooters to toot?" Carolyn Wells

- F. **ASSONANCE**—is the similarity or repetition of a vowel sound in two or more words. *Lake* and *stake* are rhymes; *lake* and *fate* are assonance. *Base* and *face* are rhymes; *base* and *fate* are assonance.

- G. **CACOPHONY**—A term used to characterize harsh, unpleasant combination of sounds or tones. May be used for effect – “We want no parlay with you and your grisly gang who work your wicked will.” W. Churchill
- H. **CONSONANCE**—is the repetition of consonant sounds within a line of verse. Consonance is similar to alliteration except that consonance usually appear in the middle (internally) or at the end of words placed close together.
- I. **EUPHONY**—A quality of good style which demands that one select combinations of words which sound pleasant to the ear.
- J. **HOMOPHONES**: Words which sound exactly the same but which have different meanings (*maid* and *made*)
- K. **ONOMATOPOEIA**—is the use of a word to represent or imitate natural sounds (*buzz, crunch, tingle, gurgle, sizzle, hiss*)
- L. **REFRAIN**—is the repetition of one or more phrases or lines at intervals in a poem, usually at the end of a stanza. The refrain often takes the form of a chorus.

Tobacco is a dirty weed:

I like it.

It satisfies no normal need:

I like it.

It makes you thin, it makes you lean.

It takes the hair right off your bean.

It's the worst darn stuff I've ever seen;

I like it.

G. L. Hemminger

STANZA FORMS

ASTANZA—a division of a poem containing one or more lines, separated by spacing from other like units; a group of lines standing together, apart from other such groups. Stanzas based on form rather than thought are defined according to the number of lines they contain:

a. couplet

b. triplet or tercet

c. quatrain

d. sestet

e. septet

f. octave

two-line stanza or grouping

three-line stanza or grouping

four-line stanza or grouping

six-line stanza or grouping

seven-line stanza or grouping

eight-line stanza or grouping

Stanzas may be of arbitrary length and plan, as in regular stanza forms, or they may be free and irregular, as in the irregular ode or most free verse forms. The thought may be continued from one stanza to another, or the stanza may be a closed thought unit. One stanza may and frequently does constitute a complete poem. On the other hand, many longer poems written in blank verse or heroic couplets are not divided into couplets at all, but consist of an unbroken flow of lines divided, if at all, into larger parts such as numbered sections or cantos.

There are also numerous traditional stanza forms of a set length and rhyme scheme which are listed below. (Benet's Readers Encyclopedia)

HEROIC COUPLET—(sometimes called a closed couplet) consists of two successive rhyming verses that contain a complete thought within the two lines. It usually consists of iambic pentameter lines.

TERZA RIMA—is a three-line stanza form with an interlaced or interwoven rhyme scheme: a-b-a, b-c-b, c-d-c, d-e-d, etc. Usually iambic pentameter.

LIMERICK—is a five-line nonsense poem with an anapestic meter. The rhyme scheme is usually a-a-b-b-a. The first, second, and fifth lines have three stresses; and the third and fourth have two stresses.

BALLAD STANZA—consists of four lines with a rhyme scheme of a-b-c-b. The first and third lines are tetrameter and the second and fourth are trimeter.

RHYME (RIME) ROYAL—is a stanza consisting of seven lines in iambic pentameter rhyming a-b-a-b-b-c-c. It called so because King James I used it.

OTTAVA RIMA—consists of eight iambic pentameter lines with a rhyme scheme of a-b-a-b-a-b-c-c. It is a form that was borrowed from the Italians.

SPENSERIAN STANZA—is a nine-line stanza consisting of eight iambic pentameter lines followed by an alexandrine, a line of iambic hexameter. The rhyme scheme is a-b-a-b-b-c-b-c-c. The form derives its name from Edmund Spenser, who initiated the form for his *Faerie Queene*.

SONNET—is a fourteen-line stanza form consisting of iambic pentameter lines. The two major sonnet forms are the Italian (Petrarchan) and the English (Shakespearean) sonnet.

- **Petrarchan or Italian Sonnet**—is divided usually between eight lines called the *octave*, using two rhymes arranged a-b-b-a-a-b-b-a, and six lines called the *sestet*, using any arrangement of either two or three rhymes: c-d-c-d-c-d and c-d-e-c-d-e are common patterns. The division between octave and sestet in the Italian sonnet (indicated by the rhyme scheme and sometimes marked off in printing by a space) usually corresponds to a division of thought. The octave may, for instance, present a situation and the sestet a comment, or the octave an idea and the sestet an example, or the octave a question and the sestet an answer. Thus the structure reflects the meaning.
- **English or Shakespearean Sonnet**—is composed of three quatrains and a concluding couplet, rhyming a-b-a-b c-d-c-d e-f-e-f g-g. Again the units marked off by the rhymes and the development of the thought often correspond. The three quatrains, for instance, may present three examples and the couplet a conclusion or the quatrains three metaphorical statements of one idea and the couplet an application.
- **English or Spenserian Sonnet** -- The rhyme scheme is interlocking: A-B-A-B B-C-B-C C. Edmund Spenser's sonnets.

VILLANELLE—consists of five tercets and a quatrain in which the first and third lines of the opening tercet recur alternately at the end of the other tercets and together as the last two lines of the quatrain.

ELEGY—usually a poem that mourns the death of an individual, the absence of something deeply loved, or the transience of mankind.

LYRIC—is the most widely used type of poem, so diverse in its format that a rigid definition is impossible. However, several factors run common in all lyrics:

- | | |
|--|---|
| a. limited length | d. expression of thoughts and feelings of one speaker |
| b. intensely subjective | e. highly imaginative |
| c. personal expression of personal emotion | f. regular rhyme scheme |

MIMETIC FORM—when the form or language imitates the theme or subject. Mimetic form may include shape poems (like Herbert's "The Altar" or "Easter Wings") and also poetry like Williams' "The Dance," where the roundness of the figures in the Brueghel painting (which the poem describes) is imitated by the fact that the poem begins and ends with the same phrase (thus forming a circle).

ODE—an exalted, dignified, complex rapturous lyric poem written about a subject

OTHER DEVICES AND STRUCTURES FREQUENTLY USED IN POETRY:

1. **APOSTROPHE**—A figure of speech in which someone (usually absent), some abstract quality, or some non-existent personage is directly addressed as though present. Often found in the invocations to the muses in poetry, and deeply associated with deep emotional expression, the form is readily adopted by humorists for purposes of parody and satire, most often introduced with “O” or “Thou.”
2. **CAESURA**—A pause or break (breathing-place) in a line of poetry, dictated, usually by the natural rhythm of the language. A line may have more than one caesura or none at all. It is often marked by punctuation. Examples:

In squandering wealth // which was his particular art:
Nothing went unrewarded, // but desert.
Beggar'd by fools, // whom still he found too late:
He had his jest, // and they had his estate. (*Absalom and Achitopel* Part I, 559)

*In many lines of blank verse the caesura may be almost inaudible. A medial caesura is the norm: this occurs in the middle of a line. An initial caesura occurs near the start of a line; a terminal caesura near its end.

*A masculine caesura occurs after a stressed syllable, and a feminine caesura occurs after an unstressed syllable.

3. **DECORUM**—in literary parlance, the appropriateness of a work to its subject, its genre, and its audience.
4. **DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE** -- a poem in the form of a monologue which reveals a dramatic situation and the characters of other people besides the speaker solely by means of the speaker's words.
5. **ENJAMBMENT**—in poetry, the continuation of a syntactic unit (sentence) from one line or couplet of a poem to the next without a pause (as indicated by an absence of punctuation). Example:
“Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love/
Which alters when it alteration finds/
Or bends with the remover to remove. . . .”—Shakespeare
6. **END-STOPPED LINE**—A term applied to verse where the sense and meter coincide in a pause at the end of a line. The contrary of enjambment.
7. **EPIC**: An extended narrative poem recounting actions, travels, adventures, and heroic episodes, written in a high style (with ennobled diction, for example), may be written in hexameter verse, especially dactylic hexameter, and it may have twelve books or twenty-four books.

Characteristics of the classical epic:

- The main character or protagonist is heroically larger than life, often the source and subject of legend or a national hero
- The deeds of the hero are presented objectively, revealing his failings as well as his virtues
- The action, often in battle, reveals the more-than-human strength of the heroes as they engage in acts of heroism and courage
- The setting covers several nations, the whole world, or even the universe
- The episodes, even though they may be fictional, provide an explanation for some of the circumstances or events in the history of a nation or people
- The gods and lesser divinities play an active role in the outcome of actions
- All of the various adventures form an organic whole, where each event relates in some way to the central theme

Typical in epics is a set of conventions (or epic machinery).

- Poem begins with a statement of the theme ("Arms and the man I sing")
- Invocation to the muse or other deity ("Sing, goddess, of the wrath of Achilles")
- Story begins *in medias res* (in the middle of things)
- Catalogs (of participants on each side, ships, sacrifices)
- Histories and descriptions of significant items (who made a sword or shield, how it was decorated, who owned it from generation to generation)
- Epic simile (a long simile where the image becomes an object of art in its own right as well as serving to clarify the subject).
- Frequent use of epithets ("Aeneas the true"; "rosy-fingered Dawn"; "tall-masted ship")
- Use of patronymics (calling son by father's name): "Anchises' son"
- Long, formal speeches by important characters
- Journey to the underworld
- Use of the number three (attempts are made three times, etc.)
- Previous episodes in the story are later recounted

Examples: Homer, *Iliad & Odyssey*; Virgil, *Aeneid*; Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered*; Milton, *Paradise Lost*

8. **INTERIOR MONOLOGUE:** a passage of writing presenting a character's inner thoughts and emotions directly.
9. **METAPHYSICAL POETRY:** The term *metaphysical* was applied to a style of 17th Century poetry first by John Dryden and later by Dr. Samuel Johnson because of the highly intellectual and often abstruse imagery involved.

Chief among the metaphysical poets are John Donne, George Herbert, Richard Crashaw, Andrew Marvell, and Henry Vaughan. While their poetry is widely varied (the metaphysicals are not a thematic or even a structural school), there are some common characteristics:

- *Argumentative structure.* The poem often engages in a debate or persuasive presentation; the poem is an intellectual exercise as well as or instead of an emotional effusion.
- *Dramatic and colloquial mode of utterance.* The poem often describes a dramatic event rather than being a reverie, a thought, or contemplation. Diction is simple and usually direct; inversion is limited. The verse is occasionally rough, like speech, rather than written in perfect meter, resulting in a dominance of thought over form.
- *Acute realism.* The poem often reveals a psychological analysis; images advance the argument rather than being ornamental. There is a learned style of thinking and writing; the poetry is often highly intellectual.
- *Metaphysical wit.* The poem contains unexpected, even striking or shocking analogies, offering elaborate parallels between apparently dissimilar things. The analogies or conceits are drawn from widely varied fields of knowledge, not limited to traditional sources in nature or art. Analogies from science, mechanics, housekeeping, business, philosophy, astronomy, etc. are common. These conceits reveal a play of intellect, often resulting in puns, paradoxes, and humorous comparisons. Unlike other poetry where the metaphors usually remain in the background, here the metaphors sometimes take over the poem and control it. Metaphysical poetry represents a revolt against the conventions of Elizabethan love poetry and especially the typical Petrarchan conceits (like rosy cheeks, eyes like stars, etc.).

10. **MOCK EPIC:** Treating a frivolous or minor subject seriously, especially by using the machinery and devices of the **epic** (invocations, descriptions of armor, battles, extended similes, etc.). The opposite of travesty. Examples: Chaucer's *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, "Chanticleer and Pertelote"; Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad* and *Rape of the Lock*
11. **PERSONA**– A voice of character representing the speaker in a literary work.

12. **REPETITION**—in this context is the reiterating of the same word, phrase, or clause within a literary work (both prose and poetry). It draws the reader's attention to the word, phrase, or clause, thereby attaching importance to it. Repetition is used by authors for many purposes, including, but not limited to
- indicating emotional emphasis—i.e. "Life is tragic simply because the earth turns and the sun inexorably rises and sets, and one day, for each of us, the sun will go down for the last, last time." (James Baldwin)
 - indicating a problem—i.e. Annie Dillard's essay in which one paragraph ends with the sentence "And he didn't jump," indicating a literal fact, and the next paragraph begins with the same sentence "And he didn't jump," indicating that something is unusual, wrong, a problem.
 - indicating a new/different level of meaning—i.e. Robert Frost's "I have miles to go before I sleep/ Miles to go before I sleep" which moves from the literal meaning of miles as distance and sleep as sleep to the metaphorical meaning which sees miles as years and sleep as death.

Specific rhetorical devices employing repetition and repetition used in prose are defined in the following section.

DEVICES USED IN LITERATURE

1. **ALLUSION**—a reference in literature or in art to previous literature, history, mythology, current events, or the Bible. Patrick Henry urged his listeners not to be “betrayed with a kiss.”
2. **ANACHRONISM**—an element in a story that is out of its time frame; sometimes used to create a humorous or jarring effect, but sometimes the result of poor research on the author’s part.
3. **ANALOGY**—a comparison between two different things which are similar in some way. “By comparing conducting to politics, Igor Stravinsky helped non-musicians understand his feelings about orchestra conductors.”
4. **APOSTROPHE**—is the act of speaking directly to someone or something or an abstraction usually not present, as though it/they were present. “Captain, My Captain! A fearful trip is done.” — Walt Whitman
5. **ARCHETYPE**—a character, situation, or symbol that is familiar to people from all cultures because it occurs frequently in literature, myth, religion, or folklore.
6. **CHIASMUS**: two corresponding pairs arranged not in parallels (a-b-a-b) but in inverted order (a-b-b-a); from shape of the Greek letter chi (X), or a statement consisting of two parallel parts in which the second part is structurally reversed. “Those gallant men will remain often in my thoughts and in my prayers always.” MacArthur, and “Renown’d for conquest, and in council skill’d.” Addison
7. **COLLOQUIALISM**—informal words or expressions not usually acceptable in formal writing. Huck Finn says “I got the fantods” to describe his nervousness.
8. **CONCEIT**— “A figurative comparison of two strikingly dissimilar entities...,” or a fanciful, particularly clever extended metaphor.
 - **Metaphysical conceits** – “found in the poems of John Donne and his imitators are often described as ‘a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances.’ They are likely to be more unexpected and more original than a Petrarchan conceit. A marriage bed may be compared to a grave, the union of two lovers to an alchemist’s mixture, the parting of friends to the eclipse of the sun. They do not normally idealize women and love; they attempt to define attitudes toward particular women. (“A Valediction Forbidding Mourning” in which Donne compares himself and his wife to the two legs of a compass, one staying in place while the other circles around and eventually joins it.). Sometimes the speaker argues ingeniously in defense of an outrageous position.” (*Poems* 4th ed.)
9. **CONNOTATION**— implied or associative meaning of a word—what a word suggests beyond its basic definition. “*Odor* and *fragrance* literally mean the same thing, but good things have fragrance, while bad things have odor.”
10. **DENOTATION** – the most specific, direct, or literal meaning of a word. “Although the word *home* may suggest safety and comfort, it’s really simply ‘one’s residence.’”
11. **DICTION**—having to do with the word choices made by a writer.
12. **DIDACTIC**—something which has teaching or instruction as its primary purpose. Aesop’s Fables present morals.
13. **EPIPHANY**—a moment of sudden revelation of insight. Example: “Toward the end of the play Othello suddenly realizes that he has been misled.”
14. **EUPHEMISM**: The substitution of a mild or less negative word or phrase for a harsh or blunt one, as in the use of “pass away” instead of “die.” The basic psychology of euphemistic language is the desire to put something bad or embarrassing in a positive (or at least neutral light). Thus many terms referring to death, sex, crime, and excremental functions are euphemisms.

15. **HAMARTIA/TRAGIC FLAW:** “There remains, then, the intermediate kind of personage, a man not preeminently virtuous or just, whose misfortune, however, is brought upon him not by vice or depravity but by some **error of judgment** (*hamartia*.” Aristotle’s *Poetics*
16. **HUBRIS**– Overweening pride which results in the misfortunes of the protagonist of s tragedy. It is the particular form of hubris which results from excessive pride, ambition, and overconfidence. Greek examples include Oedipus, Creon, and Odysseus. The excessive ambition of Macbeth is a standard example of “hubris” in English drama.
17. **HYPERBOLE:** exaggeration for emphasis or for rhetorical effect. It can be used for purposes of persuasion or humor. Examples—“There were at least a million people at the mall yesterday.” “I have a million things to do today.”

OVERSTATEMENT—is an exaggeration for the sake of emphasis and is not to be taken literally. “rivers of blood” “sweat to death.”

18. **IMAGERY**—anything that affects or appeals to the reader’s senses: sight (visual), sound (auditory), touch (tactile), taste (gustatory), or smell (olfactory).
19. **INVECTIVE**—an intensely vehement, highly emotional verbal attack. Speech or writing that abuses, denounces, or attacks. It can be directed against a person, cause, idea, or system. It employs a heavy use of negative emotive language. Example: “I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth.” – Jonathan Swift.
20. **IRONY:** A mode of expression, through words (verbal irony) or events (irony of situation), conveying a reality different from and usually opposite to appearance or expectation. A writer may say the opposite of what he means, create a reversal between expectation and its fulfillment, or give the audience knowledge that a character lacks, making the character’s words have meaning to the audience not perceived by the character.

In **verbal irony**, the writer’s meaning or even his attitude may be different from what he says: “Why, no one would dare argue that there could be anything more important in choosing a college than its proximity to the beach.” In this case the author is pointing out the disparity between how students *should* and how they *really do* choose colleges.

An example of **situational irony** would occur if a professional pickpocket had his own pocket picked just as he was in the act of picking someone else’s pocket. The irony is generated by the surprise recognition by the audience of a reality in contrast with expectation or appearance, while another audience, victim, or character puts confidence in the appearance as reality (in this case, the pickpocket doesn’t expect his own pocket to be picked). The surprise recognition by the audience often produces a comic effect, making irony often funny.

Dramatic irony (a device by which the author implies a different meaning from that intended by the speaker in a literary work. An incongruity or discrepancy between what a character says or thinks and what the reader knows to be true or between what a character perceives and what the author intends the reader to perceive). An example of where the audience has knowledge that gives additional meaning to a character’s words) would be when King Oedipus, who has unknowingly killed his father, says that he will banish his father’s killer when he finds him. .

21. **LITOTES**—a type of understatement in which something affirmative is expressed by negating its opposite. Example: “My parents were not overjoyed when I came home three hours past my curfew.” See *understatement*.
22. **METAPHOR**—is an implied comparison between two usually unrelated things indicating a likeness or analogy between attributes found in both things. A metaphor, unlike a simile, does not use *like* or *as* to indicate the comparison. “Life’s but a walking shadow; a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage.” Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

23. **METONYMY**—is the substitution of a word naming an object for another word closely associated with it. “Pay tribute to the crown.” “The White House has decided.” “He is a man of the cloth.” “The pen is mightier than the sword.”
24. **MISNOMER**- a misapplied or inappropriate name or designation.
Examples:
-Telephone numbers are usually referred to as being dialed although rotary phones are now rare.
-In golf, the clubs commonly referred to as woods are usually made of metal. The club heads for “woods” were formerly made predominantly of wood.
-Koala “bears” are not bears. They are marsupials.
25. **MOTIF**—recurrent image, a standard theme or dramatic situation which recurs in works of literature or poetry. In Shakespeare’s plays mistaken identity and the fall of the mighty occur with great regularity. In Macbeth, Shakespeare’s clothing motif helps to define Macbeth’s status in the play. In *A Tale of Two Cities*, Dickens uses *resurrection* as a motif.
26. **OXYMORON**—a compact paradox—a figure of speech that combines two contradictory words, placed side by side: *bitter sweet, wise fool, living death*. “I must be cruel only to be kind.” Shakespeare, *Hamlet*
27. **PARADOX**—a statement or situation containing apparently contradictory or incompatible elements, that contain truth in it. “What a pity that youth must be wasted on the young.” George Bernard Shaw
28. **PEDANTIC**—an excessive display of learning or scholarship.
29. **PERSONA**: The person created by the author to tell a story. Whether the story is told by an omniscient narrator or by a character in it, the actual author of the work often distances himself from what is said or told by adopting a persona—a personality different from his real one. Thus, the attitudes, beliefs, and degree of understanding expressed by the persona may not be the same as those of the actual author. Example: Jonathan Swift, “A Modest Proposal”
30. **PERSONIFICATION**—the giving of human qualities or characteristics to inanimate objects, ideas, or animals. “The wind whistled.” “Her heart cried out.”
31. **SIMILE**—is a direct or explicit comparison between two usually unrelated things indicating a likeness or similarity between some attribute found in both things. A simile uses like or as to introduce the comparison. In the expression “John swims like a fish,” the grace and naturalism with which John swims is compared with the grace and naturalness with which a fish swims. Literally, it would be impossible for John to swim like a fish because of his human nature. However, we can imagine the figure or image of a very skilled and graceful swimmer beneath the surface. “Let us go then, you and I/ While the evening is spread out against the sky/ Like a patient etherized upon a table...” T.S. Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”
32. **STYLE**—the overall manner in which an individual writer expresses ideas.
33. **SYMBOL**—is a word or image that signifies something other than what it literally represents. The cross is a symbol of Christianity. The donkey and the elephant are symbols of the two American political organizations. There are two general types of symbols: universal symbols that embody universally recognizable meanings wherever used (light to symbolize knowledge, a skull to symbolize death, etc.) and constructed symbols that are given symbolic meaning by the way an author uses them in a literary work (the white whale becomes a symbol of evil in Moby Dick).
34. **SYNECDOCHE**—is the technique of mentioning a part of something to represent the whole. “All hands on deck!” and “I should have been a pair of ragged claws/Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.” T. S. Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” or “Sam finally traded in his old jalopy and got himself a new set of wheels.”

35. **SYNAESTHESIA**- The term is applied in literature to the description of one kind of sensation in terms of another.

EXAMPLE: In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Peter's voice upon entering the Beavers' hiding place is described as being "**tired and pale in the darkness**" (99).

"Pale" is a sight adjective used to describe a sound, "Peter's voice."

36. **SYNTAX**—the manner in which words are arranged by a writer into sentences.

37. **-tone**: The writer's attitude, usually implied, toward his readers or his subject. For example, a writer can be formal, informal, playful, ironic, apologetic, light-hearted, somber, etc..

38. **TRAGIC FLAW**: The quality which leads the hero to his inevitable downfall. This may well be a good quality which held in excess, leads the hero to destruction.

39. **UNDERSTATEMENT**—consists of saying less than one means ("This is quite a shower we're having," said Noah, poking his head out the door of the ark.), or of saying what one means with less force than the occasion warrants.

Litotes: understatement, for intensification, by denying the contrary of the thing being affirmed. Sometimes used synonymously with *meiosis*. "A few unannounced quizzes are not inconceivable" and "War is not healthy for children and other living things."

Meiosis: One nuclear bomb can ruin your whole day.

40. **VERISIMILITUDE**: How fully the characters and actions in a work of fiction conform to our sense of reality. To say that a work has a high degree of verisimilitude means that the work is very realistic and believable--it is "true to life."

STRUCTURES USED IN LITERATURE:

1. **ALLEGORY**—a literary work having a second meaning beneath the surface one in characters, objects, or actions represent abstractions. A system of representation; a symbolic representation. Examples: *Animal Farm* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*.
2. **ANECDOTE**—a short and often personal story used to emphasize a point, to develop a character or a theme, or to inject humor.
3. **ANTITHESIS**—is a balancing of opposing ideas. “Man proposes; God disposes.” —Pope. Extremism in defense of liberty is no vice, moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue. Barry Goldwater. “It was the best times; it was the worst of times.” Charles Dickens
4. **APHORISM**—a terse statement that expresses a general truth or moral principle; sometimes considered a folk proverb. “Early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.”
5. **DICHOTOMY**- Division into two usually contradictory parts or opinions: “*the dichotomy of the one and the many*” (*Louis Auchincloss*).
6. **EPIGRAM**: a short witty poem expressing a single thought or observation, or a concise, clever, often paradoxical statement. It can also be the last two lines of a sonnet.
7. **EPIGRAPH**: a motto or quotation at the beginning of a literary composition, setting forth a theme. T.S. Eliot uses lines spoken by Guido da Montfelftro in Dante’s *Inferno* to begin his poem “The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock.”
8. **FRAME**: A narrative structure that provides a setting and exposition for the main narrative in a novel, play, or collection of short stories. Often, a narrator will describe where he found the manuscript of the novel or where he heard someone tell the story he is about to relate or provide the rationale for the story or stories to be presented. The frame contains the entire work and helps control the reader’s perception of the work; they have also been used in the past to help give credibility to the main section of the novel. Examples of literary works with frames: Mary Shelley *Frankenstein*; Nathaniel Hawthorne *The Scarlet Letter*; Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*; and Shakespeare’s *Taming of the Shrew*.
9. **NARRATIVE POEM**—a poem that tells a story. “Rime of the Ancient Mariner” -- Coleridge
10. **PARABLE**—a short story illustrating a moral or religious lesson. “The Prodigal Son”
11. **PASTORAL**—a poem, play or story that celebrates and idealizes the simple life of shepherds and shepherdesses. The term has also come to refer to an artistic work that portrays rural life in an idyllic or idealistic way.

COMEDIC STRUCTURES AND DEVICES:

1. **BOMBAST** – ranting, insincere, extravagant language. The diction is more grandiose than the emotion warrants. Extravagant imagery in some Shakespearean plays is bombastic. In *Henry IV*, part I, bombast is used to achieve a humorous effect, as Falstaff, pretending to be the king, speaks in an inflated and theatrical manner:
“For God’s sake, Lords, convey my trustful queen!/ For tears do stop the floodgates of her eyes.”
2. **BURLESQUE** – A work designed to ridicule a style, literary form, or subject matter either by treating the exalted in a trivial way or by discussing the trivial in exalted terms (that is, with mock dignity). Burlesque concentrates on derisive or incongruous imitation, usually in exaggerated terms. The comic effect is achieved by presenting the trivial with ironic seriousness or the serious with grotesque levity. Its purpose is frequently critical or satirical, but it may just amuse by extravagant incongruity. Literary genres (like the tragic drama) can be burlesqued, as can styles of sculpture, philosophical movements, schools of art, and so forth. Its main aspects are parody, caricature, and travesty. Example: Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* burlesques chivalry. See **Parody and Travesty**.
3. **CARICATURE**: a method of burlesque that aims at definite portraiture by exaggeration or distortion of easily recognizable features. Example: Lady Bracknell in Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Ernest*.
4. **COMIC RELIEF**: A humorous scene or incident in the course of serious drama; its purpose is to provide relief from emotional intensity and to heighten the seriousness of the story by contrast. Example: drunken porter scene in *Macbeth*
5. **FARCE** – Form of drama which is solely intended to provoke laughter by exaggerating improbable situations, gross incongruities, or horseplay, using gestures, puns, gags, buffoonery, or ludicrous incidents and expressions, as opposed to the language based and more subtle comedy of character or manners. Its most elementary form is found in the gestures and tricks of the circus clown.
6. **HORATIAN SATIRE**. In general, a gentler, more good humored and sympathetic kind of satire, somewhat tolerant of human folly even while laughing at it. Named after the poet Horace, whose satire epitomized it. Horatian satire tends to ridicule human folly in general or by type rather than attack specific persons. Compare Juvenalian satire.
7. **JUVENALIAN SATIRE**. Harsher, more pointed, perhaps intolerant satire typified by the writings of Juvenal. Juvenalian satire often attacks particular people, sometimes thinly disguised as fictional characters. While laughter and ridicule are still weapons as with Horatian satire, the Juvenalian satirist also uses withering invective and a slashing attack. Swift is a Juvenalian satirist.
8. **LAMPOON**. A crude, coarse, often bitter satire ridiculing the personal appearance or character of a person.
9. **PARODY**—a comical imitation of a serious piece with the intent of ridiculing the author, his ideas, or his work. The parodist exploits the peculiarities of an author’s expression—his propensity to use too many parentheses, certain favorite words, or other characteristics. The parody may also be focused on, say, an improbable plot with too many convenient events. It is burlesque when the imitation humorously parallels the styles or mannerisms of a particular author, work, or school.

Spaceballs and the space epic genre, *Hot Shots* and action films, *Thin thighs in thirty Years* and exercise books
10. **PUN**—humorous plays on words that have several meanings or words that sound the same but have different meanings. Puns have both serious and comedic effects. In *Romeo and Juliet*, Mercutio, as he is dying, says, “Ask for me to-morrow, and you shall find me a grave man.”

11. **RIDICULE**: Words intended to belittle a person or idea and arouse contemptuous laughter. The goal is to condemn or criticize by making the thing, idea, or person seem laughable and ridiculous. Ridicule is, not surprisingly, a common weapon of the satirist.
12. **SARCASM**: A form of sneering criticism in which disapproval is often expressed as ironic praise. If you drop your lunch tray and someone says, "Well, that was really intelligent," that's sarcasm.
13. **SATIRE**—the use of humor to ridicule and expose the shortcomings and failings of society, individuals, and institutions, often in the hope that change and reform are possible.

Ridicule, irony, exaggeration, and several other techniques are almost always present. The satirist may insert serious statements of value or desired behavior, but most often he relies on an implicit moral code, understood by his audience and paid lip service by them. The satirist's goal is to point out the hypocrisy of his target in the hope that either the target or the audience will return to a real following of the code. Thus, satire is inescapably moral even when no explicit values are promoted in the work, for the satirist works within the framework of a widely spread value system. Many of the techniques of satire are devices of comparison, to show the similarity or contrast between two things. A list of incongruous items, an oxymoron, metaphors, and so forth are examples.

Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal," in exposing the hypocrisy of the British, exposes the shortcomings of society.

14. **TRAVESTY**. A work that treats a serious subject frivolously-- ridiculing the dignified. Often the tone is mock serious and heavy handed. Example: Pyramus and Thisbe in *A Midsummer's Night Dream*.

LITERARY GENRES

Adventure novel. A novel where exciting events are more important than character development and sometimes theme. Examples:

- * H. Rider Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines*
- * Baroness Orczy, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*
- * Alexandre Dumas, *The Three Musketeers*
- * Alexandre Dumas, *The Count of Monte Cristo*

Apologue. A moral fable, usually featuring personified animals or inanimate objects which act like people to allow the author to comment on the human condition. Often, the apologue highlights the irrationality of mankind. The beast fable, and the fables of Aesop are examples. Some critics have called Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas* an apologue rather than a novel because it is more concerned with moral philosophy than with character or plot. Examples:

- * George Orwell, *Animal Farm*
- * Rudyard Kipling, *The Jungle Book*

Autobiographical novel. A novel based on the author's life experience. Many novelists include in their books people and events from their own lives because remembrance is easier than creation from scratch. Examples:

- * James Joyce, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*
- * Thomas Wolfe, *Look Homeward, Angel*

Coming-of-age story. A type of novel where the protagonist is initiated into adulthood through knowledge, experience, or both, often by a process of disillusionment. Understanding comes after the dropping of preconceptions, a destruction of a false sense of security, or in some way the loss of innocence. Some of the shifts that take place are these:

- * ignorance to knowledge
- * innocence to experience
- * false view of world to correct view
- * idealism to realism
- * immature responses to mature responses

Example:

- * Jane Austen *Northanger Abbey*

Detective novel. A novel focusing on the solving of a crime, often by a brilliant detective, and usually employing the elements of mystery and suspense. Examples:

- * Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*
- * Agatha Christie, *Murder on the Orient Express*
- * Dorothy Sayers, *Strong Poison*

Dystopian novel. An anti-utopian novel where, instead of a paradise, everything has gone wrong in the attempt to create a perfect society. See *utopian novel*. Examples:

- * George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*
- * Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*

Epistolary novel. A novel consisting of letters written by a character or several characters. The form allows for the use of multiple points of view toward the story and the ability to dispense with an omniscient narrator. Examples:

- * Samuel Richardson, *Pamela*
- * Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa*
- * Fanny Burney, *Evelina*
- * C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*
- * Hannah W. Foster, *The Coquette*

Existentialist novel. A novel written from an existentialist viewpoint, often pointing out the absurdity and meaninglessness of existence. Example:

- * Albert Camus, *The Stranger*

Gothic novel. A novel in which supernatural horrors and an atmosphere of unknown terror pervades the action. The setting is often a dark, mysterious castle, where ghosts and sinister humans roam menacingly. Horace Walpole invented the genre with his *Castle of Otranto*. Gothic elements include these:

- * Ancient prophecy, especially mysterious, obscure, or hard to understand.
- * Mystery and suspense
- * High emotion, sentimentalism, but also pronounced anger, surprise, and especially terror
- * Supernatural events (e.g. a giant, a sighing portrait, ghosts or their apparent presence, a skeleton)
- * Omens, portents, dream visions
- * Fainting, frightened, screaming women
- * Women threatened by powerful, impetuous male
- * Setting in a castle, especially with secret passages
- * The metonymy of gloom and horror (wind, rain, doors grating on rusty hinges, howls in the distance, distant sighs, footsteps approaching, lights in abandoned rooms, gusts of wind blowing out lights or blowing suddenly, characters trapped in rooms or imprisoned)
- * The vocabulary of the gothic (use of words indicating fear, mystery, etc.: apparition, devil, ghost, haunted, terror, fright)

Examples:

- * Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*
- * William Beckford, *Vathek*
- * Anne Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*
- * Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*
- * Daphne du Maurier, *Rebecca*

Historical novel. A novel where fictional characters take part in actual historical events and interact with real people from the past. Examples:

- * Sir Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe*
- * Sir Walter Scott, *Waverley*
- * James Fenimore Cooper, *Last of the Mohicans*
- * Lloyd C. Douglas, *The Robe*

Novel of manners. A novel focusing on and describing in detail the social customs and habits of a particular social group. Usually these conventions function as shaping or even stifling controls over the behavior of the characters. Examples:

- * Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*
- * William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*

Picaresque novel. An episodic, often autobiographical novel about a rogue or picaresque (a person of low social status) wandering around and living off his wits. The wandering hero provides the author with the opportunity to connect widely different pieces of plot, since the hero can wander into any situation. Picaresque novels tend to be satiric and filled with petty detail. Examples:

- * Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders*
- * Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*
- * Henry Fielding, *Jonathan Wild*

Pulp fiction. Novels written for the mass market, intended to be "a good read,"--often exciting, titillating, thrilling. Historically they have been very popular but critically sneered at as being of sub-literary quality. The earliest ones were the dime novels of the nineteenth century, printed on newsprint (hence "pulp" fiction) and sold for ten cents. Westerns, stories of adventure, even the Horatio Alger novels, all were forms of pulp fiction.

Regional novel. A novel faithful to a particular geographic region and its people, including behavior, customs, speech, and history. Examples:

- * Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- * Thomas Hardy, *Return of the Native*

Roman a clef. [French for "novel with a key," pronounced roh MAHN ah CLAY] A novel in which historical events and actual people are written about under the pretense of being fiction. Examples:

- * Aphra Behn, *Love Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister*
- * Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*

Sentimental novel. A type of novel, popular in the eighteenth century, that overemphasizes emotion and seeks to create emotional responses in the reader. The type also usually features an overly optimistic view of the goodness of human nature. Examples:

- * Oliver Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*
- * Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling*
- * Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*
- * Thomas Day, *The History of Sandford and Merton*

Setting. The total environment for the action of a fictional work. Setting includes time period (such as the 1890's), the place (such as downtown Warsaw), the historical milieu (such as during the Crimean War), as well as the social, political, and perhaps even spiritual realities. The setting is usually established primarily through description, though narration is used also.

Style. The manner of expression of a particular writer, produced by choice of words, grammatical structures, use of literary devices, and all the possible parts of language use. Some general styles might include scientific, ornate, plain, emotive. Most writers have their own particular styles.

Utopian novel. A novel that presents an ideal society where the problems of poverty, greed, crime, and so forth have been eliminated. Examples:

- * Thomas More, *Utopia*
- * Samuel Butler, *Erewhon*
- * Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward*

Western. A novel set in the western United States featuring the experiences of cowboys and frontiersmen. Many are little more than adventure novels or even pulp fiction, but some have literary value. Examples:

- * Walter Van Tilburg Clark, *The Ox-Bow Incident*
- * Owen Wister, *The Virginian*