## Basic Terms for Talking about Meter

### Syllables can either be accented, meaning they are naturally given more emphasis when spoken, or unaccented, meaning they receive less emphasis when spoken. A **poetic foot** is a unit of accented and unaccented syllables that is repeated or used in sequence with others to form the **meter.**

Graphic Scansion:

This is an example of iambic pentameter. Each foot= unstressed, stressed (iambic) Each line of poetry = 5 feet (pentameter)

V

V

V'

V'

V

V V V V V

Made weakI by time I and fate, Ibut strong I in will

To strive,I to seek, I to find, I and not I to yield.

Example of Graphic Scansion:

~ = an unaccented syllable

' = an accented syllable

/= a break between poetic feet

The following are the four most common metrical feet in English poetry:

► **IAMBIC:** an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable, a pattern which comes closest to approximating the natural rhythm of speech.

Example: Destroy

► **TROCHAIC:** a stressed followed by an unstressed syllable.

### Example: Topsy

► **ANAPESTIC:** two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed syllable.

Example: Intervene

► **DACTYLIC:** a stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables.

Example: Merrily

Meter also refers to the number of feet in a line:

Rarely is a line of a poem longer than eight feet seen in English language poetry.

Monometer Dimeter Trimeter Tetrameter Pentameter Hexameter

One Two Three Four Five Six

**Basic Terms for Talking about Sound Patterns**

**Types of Rhyme:**

**Perfect Rhyme:** The words are in complete aural correspondence. An example would be:

*Certain* and *Curtain.*

### **Forced Rhyme:** An unnatural rhyme that forces a rhyme where it should not otherwise be. "A drover rode his horse along the lane - and watched by people through the window pane", is perfect rhyming but poorly constructed verse. The author has deviated from the story merely to get a rhyme.

**Slant Rhyme:** The words are similar but lack perfect correspondence. Example: *found*

and *kind, grime* and *game.*

**Masculine Rhyme:** Has a single stressed syllable rhyme. Example: *fight* and *tight, stove*

and *trove.*

**Feminine Rhyme:** A stressed syllable rhyme followed by an unstressed syllable. Example: *carrot* and *garret, sever* and *never.*

### **Visual Rhyme:** A rhyme that only looks similar, but when spoken sound different. Example: *slaughter* and *laughter.* This type of rhyme can be used more to make a visual pattern than to make an aural rhyme.

**Internal Rhyme:** The rhyme comes in the middle of the line rather than the end. A good example of this is in the first stanza of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven":

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

**Other Matters of Sound**

* **Assonance:** The same or similar vowel sound repeated in the stressed syllable of a word, followed by uncommon consonant sounds. Examples would be: *hate* and *sale,* or *drive* and *higher.*
* **Consonance:** The same or similar consonant sound repeated in the stressed syllable, preceded by uncommon vowel sounds. Examples: *urn* and *shorn,* or *irk* and *torque.*

### **Alliteration:** Repetition of sounds through more than one word or syllable. Example: Take the (extreme use of) the "L" sound that repeats in the following phrase- "The lurid letters of Lucy Lewis are luscious, lucid and libidinous."

*Excerpts taken from the On-line Writing Lab (OWL)* - *Purdue University*

# FIGURES OF SPEECH AND LITERARY DEVICES

* 1. SIMILE • a directly stated comparison of two unlike objects that are like each other in one respect. Usually ·as·or "like" is used, but occasionally words such as •similar to", "than", "as if" or other words might be used instead.

##### Examples: "Thy soul was like a star and dwelt apart."(Wordsworth) His voice was like a buzz saw.

* 1. **MET APHOR •** an indirect or i"l)lied comparison of two unlike objects that are like each other in one way. The comparison is so integrated that ·as" **and i ike"** are not used but one thing is actually said to be the other object.

##### Examples: Aveil of fog hung over the city.

*His voice was a buzz saw.*

* 1. **PERS O NIFICATION** - a type of metaphor in which human qualities or attributes are given to non-human things such as animals, inanimate objects or abstract ideas. It is a type of metaphor in shich the comparison is always associated with human beings. Sometimes the name of the thing being personified is capitalized.

##### Examples: We looked down into the growning barrel of the gun.

*•sport that wrinkled Care derides, And Laughter holding both his sides* • ***And*** *in thy right hand lead with thee*

*The mountain nymph sweet Liberty.· (Milton)*

* 1. **APOSTROPHE** - a type of personification in which we address the absent as if S/he were present or the non-human as if it were human. This figure often begins with a verb used as a command

(addressing the person), with·o•, or with the person's name.

##### ExafTJJles: ·o Wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being"

*(Shelley)*

*"Shine! Shine/ Shine/*

*Pour down thy warmth great sun.•(Whitman)*

*"Milton! Thou shouldst be living at this hour·(Wordsworth)*

* 1. **METONYMY** - a figure of speech in which one word is substituted for another one which it suggests.

##### Examples: a) container for the thing contained: The kettle is boiling.

* + 1. *sign and the thing signified: The pen {bocks newspapers, magazines] is mightier than the sword [*

*armies, navies, weapons].*

* + 1. *an author for his books: I read Dickens*
    2. *a part for the whole lalso called SYNECDOCHEJ: All*

*hands on deck.*

* 1. **ANTITHESIS** - a figure in which phrases or words are set in contrast to each other for emphasis. Usually parallel structure is used.

##### Examples: •c rafty men contemn studies; simple men admire them:

*and* ***wise*** *men use them." (Bacon)*

A *bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.*

* 1. **HYPERBOLE •** an exaggeration not intended to deceive. Frequently the exaggeration involves an amount or a number.

##### Examples: I told her a thousand times not to interrupt.

* *His hands dangled a mile out of his sleeves." (Irving)*
  1. **IRONY**

1. VerhaJ Irony - saying the opposite to what is meant in a manner or tone that makes

clear what the speaker thinks.

*Example: After Jim had spent the entire day watching television, his father suggested he'd better go to bed early to rest after his strenuous efforts that day.*

1. Irony of Sjtuatjon • a certain happening is expected but the opposite really occurs.

*Example:* A *young 'ltOman saves for a long time to buy a certain item.*

*Just as she has saved enough money to make the purchase the ftem is sold to another buyer.*

#### Dramatic fronv • words or actions of a character in a play do not have as significant a

meaning to the speaker as they do to the audience or other actors because they know something s/he does not.

*Example: King Duncan in* ***Macbeth,*** *as he nears Macbeth's castle after a Jong day's travel, refers to it asa •pleasant seat". but*

*the audience knows that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have been planning Duncan's murder in this castle that night.*

#### **REPETITION** - a word, phrase, or sentence given more than once, but not necessarily conserutively.

*Example: ·,rs a warm* ***wind,*** *the* ***west wind,*** *full of birds' cries:*

*I* ***never*** *hear the* ***west wind but*** *tears are in my eyes.·*

*(Masefield) "Rage, rage against the dying of the light." (Thomas)*

#### **SYMBOLISM** - the use of a concrete object to represent or stand for something abstrac,t a concept.

*Example: Symbol*

*white or snow sunset*

*rose*

*Concept*

*innocence, purity end of a person's life love*

#### **ALLITERATION** - the repetition of consonants or consonant blends at the beginnings of words. Tongue twisters are examples of excessive alliteration.

*Exa mple: "And the buds that break*

*Out of the briar's boughs" (de la Mare)*

* 1. **ONOMATOPOEIA**- words that imitate the sounds they mean.

*Example: The water in the river babbled and gurgled.*

#### PUN - a play on words made in such a way that a word in a sentence can have two (or more) different meanings. Homonyms (words that sound the same but are spelled differently and have different meanings) can **be a** form of pun.

*Examples: The tftle of her story was "The Tale of the Rabbit.·*

*When Mercutio in Romeo and Juliet has been mortally wounded in a duel, he states: "Ask for me tomorrow and you shall find me a grave man.· (Shakespeare)*

#### **IMAGERY** - the pictures a reader forms in hiS/her mind due to the descriptive nature of the text. Most imagery is visual, but it can be auditory, olfactory, tactile, or gustatory as well.

*Example: "This city now doth , like a garment, wear*

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*The beauty of the morning: silent, bare,*

*Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie Open unto the fields, and to the sky:*

*All bright and glittering in the smokeless air." (Wordsworth)*

* 1. UNDERSTATEMENT - a statement that is rruch weaker than is warranted.

*Example : After a twenty centimetre rainfall a man might say, "We had a little rain last night.·*

* 1. ALLUSION - a reference to an important historical, religious, or literary figure or event that is not a part of the content of the text being studied.

*Example: He had finally met his Waterloo.*

* 1. **EUPHEMISM** - a figure of speech, frequently mild or roundabout, which seeks to disguise something harsh or unpleasant by giving it an inoffensive name.

*Example: 'Death' is often refeffed to in such terms as 'passed away' or 'gone to his reward.'*

* 1. **ANALOGY** - a comparison that is longer than a simile or a metaphor in which two unlike objects may be alike in several respects.

*Example:* A *person's life might be compared to a journey.*

* 1. **PARADOX** - a statement which, on the surface, seems to be contradictory, *yet* interpreted figuratively contains a truth. An OXYMORON is a specific kind of paradox in which two adjectives or an adjective and a noun are seemingly contradictory.

*Examples: (paradox) 7he child is father of the man...(Wordsworth) (oxymoron) By giving the child everything she wanted, the mother was indeed doing her a cruel kindness.*

* 1. **CONSONANCE** - a literary device *in* which similar consonant sounds are repeated. Unlike alliteration, consonance refers to similar sounds at the encl of words following different vowel sounds.

*Example: 'Yellow' and 'shallow' as well as 'click' and 'flock' are*

*examples.*

* 1. **ASSONANCE** - a literary device in which there is similarity in sound between vowels in two or more syllables. Related to rhyme, assonance is only an approximate resemblance of sound, where rhyme is an exact correspondence.

*Example: 'Love' and 'dove' are perfect rhymes; 'lake' and 'fate' are examples of assonance.*

* 1. **PATHOS** - the portrayal of an incident in such a way as to arouse feelings of pity, tenderness or sadness in the reader or spectator. Excessive use of pathos can result in sentimentality or BATHOS.

*Example: In Shakespeare's Hamlet the description of the death of Ophelia is marked by pathos.*