



# Primary English

*Education Consultancy*

## Glossary of Poetic Terms:

**Acrostic** – a poem organised by the initial letters of a key word:

<b>W</b> histling wildly	<b>B</b> lowing
<b>I</b> n a	<b>r</b> ain
<b>N</b> orthern	<b>r</b> ound
<b>D</b> irection	<b>a</b> nd <b>r</b> ound

**Alliteration** - a phrase or nearby words begin with the same phoneme:

*The swish of a silk sari on a summer night.*

**Assonance** - the repetition of vowel sounds.

*Dream team; bright night*

**Ballad** - a poem or song which tells a story.

**Blank verse** - poem with rhythm and metre but no rhyme.

**Calligram** - a poem where the formation of the letters represents an aspect of the poem's theme. E.g. a scary poem might be written in a shaky hand.

**Cinquain** - a poem invented by the American, Adelaide Crapsey containing 22 syllables on 5 lines in the sequence: 2, 4, 6, 8, 2

**Clerihew** - a four-line comic verse with two rhyming couplets. The first line is the name of the person about whom the poem is written:

*Jeremiah Smith  
Is boring to be with  
The company he doth keep  
Will send a person to sleep.*

**Concrete poem** - a poem in which the layout of the words represents an aspect of the subject.

**Couplet** – two consecutive lines of poetry which are paired in length and rhyme.

**Elegy** – a poem which is a lament, usually for someone or something that has died.

**Epic** – a poem about the adventures of an heroic figure.

**Free Verse** – a poem without patterns of rhythm or rhyme.

**Haiku** – A Japanese form of poetry with 3 lines, 17 syllables in the sequence: 5, 7, 5.

*Snowman in a field  
listening to the raindrops*

**Half-rhyme** – words which almost rhyme.

*Polish/relish*

**Internal rhyme** – words that rhyme within the lines of a poem.

*Though the threat of snow was growing slowly...*

**Jingle** – a short verse or rhyme used to attract attention – often used in advertising.

**Kenning** – A poem written as list of characteristics of the subject without naming it:

*Mind boggler  
Strict borer  
Loud voicer  
Writing maker  
Mind filler  
Brain trainer*

*(Teacher)*

**Limerick** – A five-line comic verse following the sequence of syllables: 8, 8, 6, 6, 8 and the rhyming scheme: a, a, b, b, a.

**Metaphor** – 'imaginative substitution'. The writer describes something as if it were something else:

*The sea is a hungry dog.  
Giant and grey.  
He rolls on the beach all day.  
With his clashing teeth and shaggy jaws.*

*From The Sea by James Reeves*

**Narrative poem** – a poem that tells a story.

**Ode** – lyric poem usually addressed directly to the subject and written in the second person.

**Onomatopoeia** – words which echo the sounds of their meaning. *Crash, bang cuckoo*

**Personification** – a metaphor which attributes human characteristics and actions to non-human subjects.

*The sun is smiling upon us today.*

**Poem** – a text which uses features such as **rhythm, rhyme, syntax** or **vocabulary** to convey ideas in an intense way. Poems may also contain **alliteration** and other **figurative language** and techniques.

**Rap** – oral poetry with a strong rhythm and rapid pace. Associated with Caribbean and Afro-Caribbean cultures.

**Renga** – a series of **Haiku**; each linked by two seven-syllable lines. Sometimes written by different poets in turn to form a series of complete poems.

**Repetition** – repeated words or phrases for an effect on the reader.

*The Highwayman cam riding-riding-riding-*

**Riddle** – A question of statement, often in rhyme, which is a puzzle to be solved by the reader.

**Rhyme** – Words which have the same rime in their final syllable, are said to rhyme.

**Shape poem** – A poem which is laid out to take the shape of the subject of the poem.

**Simile** - the writer compares one thing to another in order to create an image.

**Sonnet** a poem of 14 lines which may follow any rhyming scheme.

**Stanza** – a verse or set of lines of poetry, the pattern of which is repeated throughout the poem.

**Tanka** – Japanese poem based upon a **Haiku** but with two additional lines to give a complete picture of the event or mood. (A poet would give his friend a **Haiku** who would then add two lines to create a poem of 31 syllables with the sequence: 5, 7, 7, 7, 7, This would then be returned to the original poet).