

Glossary for *Text Structures from Poetry*

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Term	Lesson #	What it means
Alliteration	37	Repeated consonants in close proximity, creating rhythm and sonic coherence.
Allusion	14, 36, 40, 44	A reference, implied or explicit, to well-known people, historical events, texts, or artwork.
Ambiguity	46	A word, phrase or idea that has multiple meanings, such as in “Ozymandias” the image of the “hand that mocked them” is not clear whose hand it is, though there are multiples possibilities that are all plausible.
Anaphora	5	Repeated word or phrase at a beginning of a line, clause or sentence used for emphasis and unity.
Apostrophe (Direct Address)	25, 29	When the speaker addresses an absent object or person as if it were present.
Aside	5	A remark or comment that [in theater] is delivered directly to the audience that reveals what the speaker is thinking. In “I Remember” the aside appears in print in parenthesis.
Capitals	30, 49	Using capital letters to make proper nouns out of ordinary things for emphasis. A technique used by both Emily Dickson and William Wordsworth.
Claim/Evidence	20	Making an assertion and backing it up with evidence.
Conjunctions	1	A word used to connect clauses or sentences. In “Love Waltz with Fireworks” conjunctions affect the stacking of details (and), and rhetorical shifts (but) (except).
Contrast	32, 39	Opposites used to create tension.
Crisp Language	6	Clear, concise, and precise words.
Dashes	30	A punctuation mark, [here, in relation to Dickinson], that creates pause and encourages the reader to consider the meaning of the fragments.
Declarative sentences	44	A sentence that is a statement, creating a voice of certainty such as in Carl Sandburg’s “Grass”: “I am the grass; I cover all.”
Dialect	28	Spoken language of people whose geographic region, position in life, or culture makes the words and grammar distinct to those people, such as in Robert Burns’ “To a Mouse” written in an English language dialect called Scots.
Dialogue	9, 11, 43	Narrative and dramatic device of characters speaking together.
Direct Address	14, 16, 28, 36, 50	When a person, place, thing or idea is spoken to directly.
Direct Quotes	28	Using the exact words someone said. In poetry, authors sometimes use quotation marks and sometimes use italics to denote the quote.
Dramatic Monologue	27	When the narrator addresses and reacts to an unseen listener in the poem or scene, such as in “My Last Duchess.”

Ekphrastic	11	A poem written about or influenced by another piece of art, such as in “ <i>Nighthawks</i> by Edward Hopper” where the speaker imagines the painting in relation to details from his own life.
Enjambment	18, 15, 21, 22, 39	A line ending where the syntax, rhythm and thought are carried over to the next line, such as in “Postcard from Texas” one example [of the many enjambed lines] is “. . . Miss you / means falling”
Epistolary Poem	14	A letter written as a poem meant for instruction or to evoke an emotion, such as “Letter to a Cockroach, Now Dead and Mixed Into a Bar of Chocolate.”
Fictional Narrator	35	When a poet creates a fictional character to tell the story.
Fixed Forms see appendix page		Shakespearean Sonnet 45 Petrarchan Sonnet 26, 46 Villanelle 47
Frame	28, 46	A device where a line, phrase, idea, or theme appears at the beginning of a poem and reappears at the end of the poem to create unity, almost like bookends.
Free Verse	2, 13	Unrhymed and unmetereed verse.
Hyphenated words	37	Using a hyphen to combine two words to create a new, often image-driven noun or verb. For instance, Gerard Manly Hopkins uses “fathers-forth” as a verb to suggest giving birth.
Hypothetical Question	12	Posing a question without expectation of a direct answer, designed to bring to mind a particular thought.
Image	8, 12, 13, 16, 21, 23, 39, 40	A detail that appeals to the senses, creates a visual picture in the mind’s eye, and in many cases can carry multiple meanings (ambiguity). Wilfred Owen’s poem, “Dulce Et Decorum Est” was groundbreaking for its grotesque and vivid images that depicted the horror of WWI.
Imperative sentences	44	A sentence that gives a command, creating a voice of authority such as in Carl Sandburg’s “Grass”: “Pile the bodies high”
Interrogative sentences	44	A sentence that asks a question, creating uncertainty or speculation such as in Carl Sandburg’s “Grass”: “What place is this?”
Inventive Language	2	Playing with language to create images, often resulting in non-standard usage of parts of speech, such as in “At the Lake” we find that “Birch leaves sun flicker” where although “sun” and “flicker” are nouns, in this context they work together as a verb.
Inverted syntax	28, 48	When the standard word order is flipped, often resulting in an elevated or more formal tone, such as in “Regret” with the inverted syntax “No language could my grief define” instead of “My grief could not define any language.”
Irony	40, 46	Stating one thing but meaning another, conveyed through voice, contradiction and the matter at hand, such as in “Dulce Et Decorum Est” the final lines sting with irony. After the gruesome depiction of war, the reader understands that the speaker does not believe that it is sweet and fitting to die for one’s country.
Italics	1, 8, 15, 17	The use of italics to denote dialogue and/or a shift in voice.

List	18	A catalog of details.
Lyric Moment	24	A poem that captures a singular moment, often reflective and intense. This structure resists telling the whole story, but it zooms in on one action.
Metaphor	3, 6, 11, 14, 18, 20, 21, 22	A figurative expression that substitutes one thing for another to create depth and clarity of understanding, such as in “My Mother’s Tortilla” when “each bone’s glow becomes / Venetian glass, then chipped mosaic, then / dust . . .” the reader understands the frailty of the bones in a visceral way.
Meter	See Meter Appendix Page	Iambic pentameter 25, 29, 27, 42, 45 Hymn Meter 32, 35, 36 Trochaic Octameter 41 Iambic Tetrameter 28
Narrative	10, 17	A speaker telling a story.
Parenthetical Voice	7	When the voice shifts tonally, especially when indicated by parentheses. For example, in Vievee Francis’s poem “Still Life With Summer Sausage, a Blade, and No Blood” the voice shifts from an older to younger self: “I remember, we walked (we didn’t walk)”.
Persona/Voice	10	Speaking through the point of view of a character, such as in Amy Ludwig VanDerwater’s “Draw” Cavemom tells the imagined story.
Personification	20, 22, 25, 29, 33, 36, 44, 49, 50	Giving non-living things human qualities and characteristics, such as the grass speaking in Carl Sandburg’s “Grass.”
Perspective (change)	6	When a poem shifts from one scene or thought to another, such as in Joanne Diaz’s “My Mother’s Tortilla” when the speaker looks “beyond her” and out of the window.
Persuasive Techniques	40	One persuasive technique is to address the reader. For example, in Wilfred Owen’s “Dulce Et Decorum Est” the speaker, in the final stanza, addresses “My friend” in an attempt to create a bond and shared understanding.
Pitchfork	19, 22, 37	Embedded lists of words, phrases, clauses or sentences.
Point of view (1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd Person)	13, 14, 17, 23, 50	Point of view (POV) refers to who is telling the story. First person is from the perspective of “I.” Second person is from the perspective of “you.” Third person is from the perspective of “he” or “she.”
Repetition	3, 7, 10, 15, 23, 38, 39	Recurring words, phrases, sounds, syntactical patterns or images to create a particular effect, such as unity, rhythm, emphasis, etc.
Rhyme	See Rhyme Appendix Page	Rhymed couplets 25, 28, 29, 27, 42 Hard rhyme 31, 50 Slant Rhyme 26, 31 Non-standard rhyme 34 Unusual rhyme scheme ABCB, 35 Shortened sonnet, 37 Internal rhyme 41 Alternating rhyme 40 42

Rhythm	7, 10	The musicality of the language. See also, Alliteration and Sound.
Sarcasm	36	When you say the opposite of what you mean. Verbal irony, such as when in the opening line of “Old Ironsides” the speaker says “Ay, tear her tattered ensign down” when really he is in favor of the ship be honored.
Sensory Details	2, 17, 21, 33	Details that engage the senses, enlivening a scene and engaging the reader. For example, in Patricia Smith’s “Fixing on the Next Star” we find that “men stain every room / they enter, drag with them a stench of souring iron” an image that engages the sense of smell and indirectly the sense of taste, bringing to mind something sour.
Simile	3, 4, 6, 8, 14, 16, 24, 32, 49	A figurative expression that substitutes one thing for another using like or as to create depth and clarity of understanding, such as in Sheila Black’s “Possums” the animal is described as having “white fur like a ball of winter,” giving the reader a clear, visual image.
Sonnet	See Fixed Forms Appendix Page	Shakespearean 45 Petrarchan 26, 46
Sound	9, 21	When sound play is a prevailing feature of a poem, enhancing the experience and meaning, such as when in August Kleinzahler’s “Snow in North Jersey” we hear the repeated “s” “a” and “k” in these lines: swirling past the giant cracking stills that flare all night along the Turnpike The sounds create an energy and complexity that enhance our understanding of the harsh, active landscape.
Specificity	2, 9, 18, 44	Using precise, concrete language and details for description.
Spillover Stanza	15	A stanza that ends without punctuation and where the syntax, rhythm and thought are carried over to the next stanza, as in Octavio Quintanilla’s “Parting”: A time came when our parents Sat under a tree And cried for us, their sons On their way To a new country
Time Changes	1	Shifts from past, present, future within the same poem.
Titles	2	Using the title of the poem to name a place to create context for the reader. This is a good strategy to help orient the reader quickly to avoid confusion.
Tone	10, 45	Tone reveals attitude. Tone depends upon word choices, images, details, that indicate the way the speaker feels about what is going on.
Truism	14	A truism is life lesson statement that people generally agree with. Statements that ring true for most people.

Unrhymed Verse	12	See Free Verse
Verbs	6, 49	Action! In most cases, writers can enliven poems and improve their writing by choosing precise, active verbs.
Villanelle	47	See appendix page on Fixed Forms
Volta	42	The turn of thought in a poem, particularly in a sonnet.
White Space	2, 4	Writers use white space to create pause, to suggest gaps in thought, and to control pacing. In Sheila Black's "Possums" irregular lines create more white space, controlling the pace of the reading.
Zooming In	5	Focusing in closely on particular details.