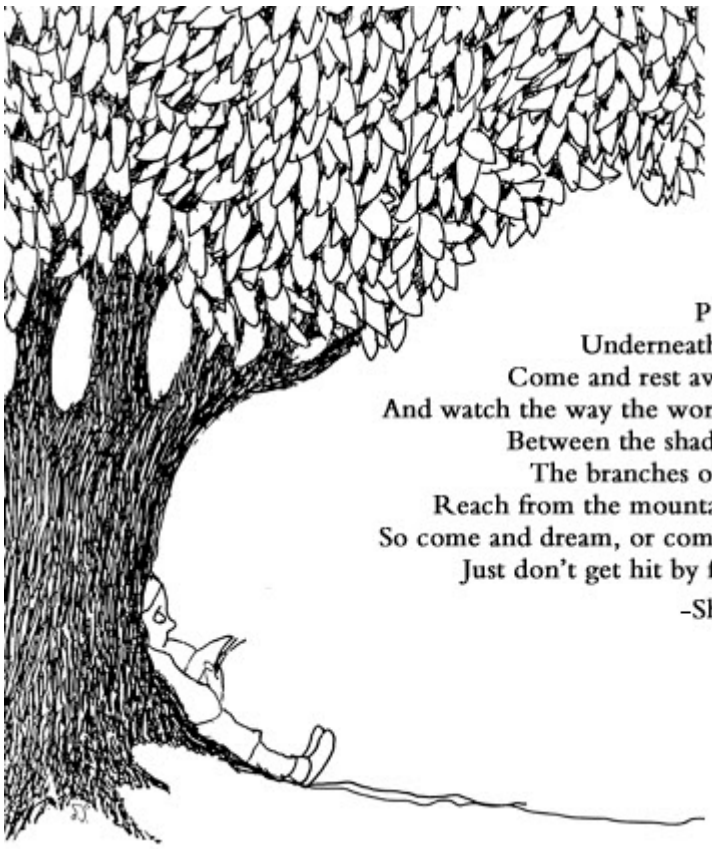
Grade 7 English Poetry



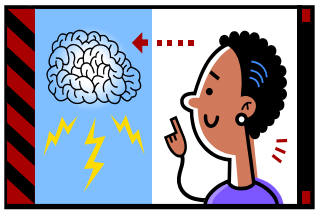
POET'S TREE
Underneath the poet tree
Come and rest awhile with me,
And watch the way the word-web weaves
Between the shady story leaves.
The branches of the poet tree
Reach from the mountains to the sea.
So come and dream, or come and climb—
Just don't get hit by falling rhymes.
-Shel Silverstein

Term 1

Activity 2.1: Poetry Comprehension

Refer to your poetry document to understand the key features in poetry.

Listen to and discuss the poem “Be Specific” by Mauree Applegate.



WHAT IS POETRY?

Exercise 2.1: What is poetry?

What do you think poetry is? Does poetry have to rhyme?

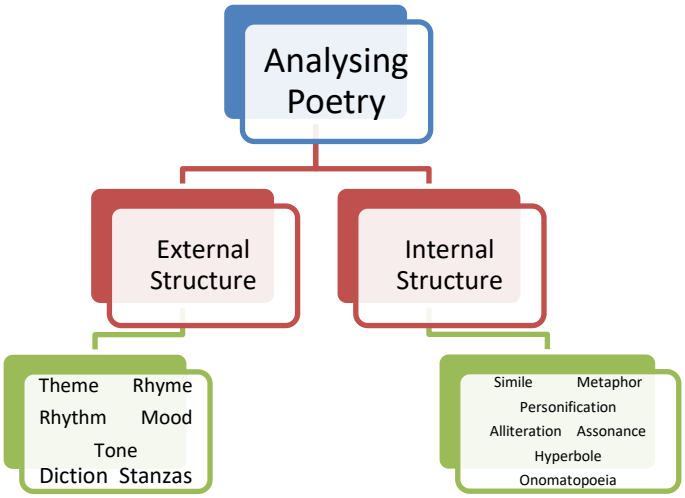
Poetry is any literary text which explores sound and rhythm. In poetry, the expression of feelings and ideas is given intensity by the choice of words used or the structure of sentences. The way these ideas are conveyed to the audience should spark a different experience in each reader.

Occasionally, a reader may find, that each time they read a particular poem, they find a new meaning in it. Poetry is a work of art in which each word depends on the words around it to form patterns, rhythm and meaning. Sometimes a well-written speech can sound like poetry.

The beauty of poetry is that no matter how long or short a poem is, it expresses a complete thought.

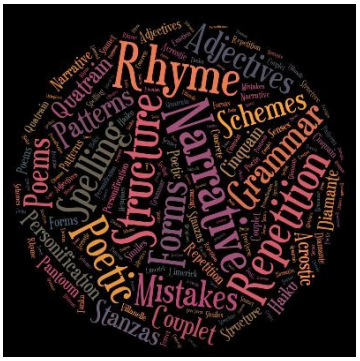
Poetic Devices

Poets have the licence to play with words, the rules of punctuation and grammar. They sometimes create new words and they use figures of speech and sound devices to paint word pictures for their audience.



The external structure of poetry

Structures	Definition	Examples
Theme/ message	To discuss the **idea** being examined in the poem. What is the message or moral within the poem? What does the poem make you think about?	Example: Greed, racism, love.
Rhyme	Words that have the same sound at the **end** of the line. Not all poems have rhyming words. We look at the rhyme scheme of a poem.	Example: feet rhymes with retreat. Love rhymes with dove. A rhyming scheme could look like this; a,b,a,b c,d,c,d
Rhythm	The beat words create using emphasis and syllable counts. NB: Don't put em**PHA**sis on the wrong syl**LA**ble.	Example: There once was a man from Airfield Whose backpack was often never sealed. He returned home at one His tablet was gone And his broken heart was never fully healed.
Mood	The **feeling** the poem gives the reader after reading.	Example: Depressing and solemn, or thought provoking.
Tone	The **voice** that is used by the speaker in the poem. How should the poem be read?	Example: The tone could be serious or humorous.
Diction	The poet's choice of **words**.	Example: as I <u>haunt</u> the sunny streets (rather than just walk).
Stanzas	The **verses** of the poem. The lines a poem is divided into.	



The internal structure of poetry

Structures	Definition	Examples
Simile	A **comparison of 2 things** using "like" or "as".	Example: The room is as cold as ice, it is like a fridge.
Metaphor	A **comparison of 2 things** without using like or as.	Example: The room is a fridge. You are such a pig.
Personification	Giving a non-living object, **living/ human** traits.	Example: the room welcomed the fire's heat.
Alliteration	The repetition of a **consonant** in the beginning of words.	Example: the cold crept closer.
Assonance	The repetition of a **vowel** sound in words close together.	Example: the bear and the hare were there too. Clap your hand.
Hyperbole	An **exaggeration**.	Example: A million eyes stared at me. I could eat a whole horse.
Onomatopoeia	Words that imitate **sounds**.	Example: The door creaked open.

Analyse a poem

What is the theme and mood of the poem?

Is there a rhyming scheme used in this poem?

My Old shoe

By Julius Chongono

Makes little sounds
Clop, clop, clop
Grins broadly
Reveals dirty teeth
Five in number
Embedded in its jaws
Like a swimming fish
As I haunt the sunny streets.

What sound does this represent?

Can a shoe grin? What did they mean by this?

What figure of speech is used here? What does it mean?

What are the teeth?

Oh! It's his toes!

What do the jaws belong to?

Is this a negative or positive word?

Figures of Speech

All the **figures of speech** in these videos are used as **poetic devices.**

In your books, write the date and the heading 'Poetic devices'. Paste the following table into your books. Fill in all the poetic devices demonstrated in the videos and give a short description of each. Give your own examples from some of your favourite songs.

Name	Short description	Example
Simile	A comparison using 'like' or 'as'	As cold as ice
Metaphor		
Personification		
Alliteration		
Assonance		
Hyperbole		
Onomatopoeia		



Class Activity

In pairs, find specific ways to describe things around you. Write them down on a piece of paper (write quite big please). Your teacher will select you, randomly, to present your line of poetry to the class and your paper will be stuck on the classroom wall. You have only 10 minutes.

Note: Use your thesaurus to find new, creative synonyms.

POEM 1

Read the questions, then read the poem and then answer the questions.

Activity 3.1: Poetry Comprehension

Write the date in your books and the heading 'Poem analysis - Be specific'. Refer to the poem above and answer the following questions

1. What point is Mauree Applegate trying to bring across in her poem?
2. What figure of speech is being used in line 8 that reads, 'Gold bubbled like a fountain'?
3. Mauree says, in line 22, that there's a word for every feeling one can feel. How do you feel right now? Describe the emotions you are feeling right now in three different sentences.

Total: 5

Be specific *Mauree Applegate*

Don't say you saw a bird: you saw a swallow,
Or a great horned owl, a hawk or oriole.
Don't just tell me that he flew;
That's what any bird can do;
Say he darted, circled, swooped or lifted in the blue.

Don't say the sky behind was pretty;
It was watermelon pink streaked through with gold;
Gold bubbled like a fountain
From a pepperminted mountain
And shone like Persian rugs when they are old.

Don't tell me that the air was sweet with fragrance;
Say it smelled of minted grass and lilac bloom;
Don't say your heart was swinging;
Name the tune that it was singing,
And how the moonlight's neon filled the room.

Don't say the evening creatures were all playing;
Mention tree toads twanging, screeching fiddle notes,
Picture crickets constant strumming
To the mass mosquitoes humming
While the frogs are singing bass deep in their throats.

Don't use a word that's good for all the senses
There's a word for every feeling one can feel.
If you want your lines to be terrific;
Then do make your words specific,
For words can paint a picture that's real.



Poem 2

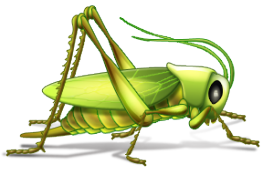
Read the questions, then read the poem and then answer the questions.

Poem 2: My favourite Day

1.	Give a simile and a metaphor used for Saturday. Make sure you label them accordingly.	(1)
2.	Give a simile and a metaphor used for Friday. Make sure you label them accordingly.	(1)
3.	“I yawn like a lion before a nap”, line 11. Why does the writer compare himself to a lion? What figure of speech is being used?	(2)
4.	“My arms and legs and toes are sap.” (Line 12). Why does the writer make this comparison? What figure of speech is being used here?	(2)
5.	What is the main difference between a simile and a metaphor?	(1)
6.	There are four proper nouns used throughout this poem. List them.	(2x½=4)
7.	List two common nouns in lines 15 and 16 of the poem.	(2x½=1)
8.	What is the collective noun for lions?	(1)
9.	Convert line 8 from simple present tense into simple past tense.	(1)
10.	Find a synonym for the word ‘deceased’ in stanza 1.	(1)
11.	Find an antonym for the word ‘alert’ in stanza 3.	(1)
		Total: 14



My Favourite Day



My favourite day is Saturday
I like to go outside and play.
The day is like a burst of light
The day is the moon in the dead of night.

My favourite day is Friday
Saturday's only a day away.
My excitement is a bottled rocket
I feel like the grasshopper in my shirt pocket.

My favourite day is Sunday
Lazy, sleepy, do nothing fun day.
I yawn like a lion before a nap
My arms and legs and toes are sap.

My favourite day is not Monday.
"Get out of bed!" I hear my mom say.
Like a tiger, I growl, "it's not fair!"
Waiting for Friday, I am a bear.





Poem 3

Read the paragraph on Oswald Mtshali.

Oswald Mtshali

Oswald Mtshali is a South African poet. He has written in both Zulu and English. He studied at Columbia University. He now lives in Soweto. Mtshali's poetry reflects his harsh experiences under the apartheid regime. He observed with a bitter eye the grimy beer halls, the crowded trains, the slum housing and the harsh working conditions that made up the lot of black Africans in South Africa. His bitterness finds expression in brilliantly controlled lines etched with an acid irony. Mtshali's poetry is remarkable for its evocative imagery, and his confident and unexpected similes have a rich emotional impact.



Now read the questions first and then the poem. Thereafter, answer the questions.

Poem 3: Men in chains

Read the questions below. Then, read the poem and answer the questions.

1.		Who are these men?	(1)
2		Where are these men going?	(1)
3.	a)	Which one of the following words describe Oswald Mtshali's feelings towards the men? Frustration, compassion, annoyance, sympathy, hatred, empathy	(3)
	b)	Why do you say so?	(2)
4.		Why does Oswald Mtshali say that the train is going 'nowhere'?	(1)
5.	a)	What does "oppression" mean?	(1)
	b)	How is oppression related as a theme to this poem?	(1)
5.	a)	Quote the simile in stanza 2.	(2)
	b)	Explain this simile.	(2)
6.		Which figures of speech are used in these lines and what do they mean?	
	a)	Line 3.	(2)
	b)	Line 16 and 17.	(2)
	c)	Line 20.	(2)
			(20)

Men in chains



The train stopped
at a country station,

Through sleep curtained eyes
I peered through the frosty window,
and saw six men:
men shorn
of all human honour
like sheep after **shearing**
bleating at the blistering wind,
“Go away! Cold wind! Go away!
Can’t you see we are naked?”

They **hobbled** into the train
on bare feet,
wrists handcuffed,
ankles **manacled**
with steel rings like cattle at the **abattoirs**
shying away from the trap door.

One man with a head
shaven clean as a potato
whispered to the rising sun,
a red eye wiped by a tattered
handkerchief of clouds,
“Oh! Dear Sun!
Won’t you warm my heart
With hope?”
The train went on its way to nowhere.