Poetry

1. Look at the items. One has already been defined. Identify the other four and write the appropriate definition for each of them.

A. ________________________                 B. __________________________
C. __________________________            D. ____________________________
E.    Ti

PEANUT BUTTER BLOSSOMS

Prep: 15 minutes   Bake: 10 minutes per batch

1/4 cup shortening
1/4 cup peanut butter
1/4 cup granulated sugar
1/4 cup packed brown sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1 egg
2 tablespoons milk
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
1/4 cup granulated sugar

Mix cookies bases or trees

8. In a large mixing bowl beat the shortening and peanut butter with an electric mixer on medium speed for 30 seconds. Add the granulated sugar, brown sugar, baking powder, and baking soda. Beat until combined, scraping the sides of bowl. Beat in egg, milk, and vanilla until combined. Beat in as much of the flour as you can with the mixer. Mix in remaining flour (see photo 1, page 86).

9. Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Roll the balls in the 1/4 cup granulated sugar. Place 2 inches apart on an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) for 10 to 12 minutes or until edges are firm and bottoms are lightly browned. Immediately press a chocolate kiss into each cookie center. Transfer cookies to a wire rack. Let cool. Makes about 44 cookies.

E.    Timetable

Glasgow Queen Street   Bishopsbriggs   Lenzie
Monday to Saturday between 12:00 & 3:00 p.m.

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In Victorian times, Edinburgh was a large, sprawling city with numerous streets and buildings. The streets were often narrow and winding, and the buildings were tall and narrow. The streets were lined with trees, and the buildings were often painted in pastel colors. The streets were usually not well maintained, and the buildings were often in poor condition.
What helped you in your choice was the layout. Now focus on the image of the poem. As you can see, it is set out in lines. This is the first thing that distinguishes a poem from a prose passage.

2. The following texts are two poems written all together. Read them, then in groups of four organize the layout and punctuation to make two poems out of them. (Remember that, usually, a line starts with a capital letter).

1. I too sing America I am the darker brother they send me to eat in the kitchen when company comes but I laugh an‘eat well and grow strong to morrow I‘ll sit at the table when company comes nobody‘ll dare say to me “eat in the kitchen” then besides they‘ll see how beautiful I am and be ashamed I too am America.

2. seeker of truth follow no path all paths lead where truth is here

When you have finished all the class will compare the texts and discuss the criteria of the layout.
Then write the original poems with the help of your teacher.

Do you find differences in meaning between your division and that of the author? Which ideas did the poet want to highlight, and how did he use the layout to do so?
3. Below you will find another poem, divided into stanzas of four lines each. Some words are missing. Your task is to decide what words are appropriate to fill in the blanks. (Pair work).

**Robert Frost**

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Whose woods these are I ____________ I know.
His house is in the village though,
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen ____________
The darkest evening of the ____________.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask it there is some ____________.
The only other sound’s the ____________
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to ____________,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

( year, sweep, think, mistake, lake, keep)

The layout is not the only thing that distinguishes verse from prose. Another important feature of traditional poetry emerges here. What is it?

4. This is one of the so called ‘sound devices’. It is the easiest to pick out, but the others are equally important. It must be remembered that everything in a poem confirms, or emphasizes, the meaning emerging from verbal language.

The sound devices are: **alliteration, assonance, consonance, onomatopoeia, rhyme, rhythm**.

Here below are their definitions. They are followed by examples, in jumbled order. Read the definitions carefully and match them to the appropriate examples.

**SOUND DEVICES**

a) **Alliteration**: repetition of the previous consonant, usually at the beginning or in the main stressed syllable of words that are next or close to each other.

b) **Assonance**: repetition of a vowel sound with a different end consonant.

c) **Consonance**: repetition of the end consonant with a different vowel sound.

d) **Onomatopoeia**: creation and use of words which imitate the sound that they describe.

e) **Rhyme**: identity of sound in the final syllables of words. It usually occurs at line endings.

f) **Internal Rhyme**: two rhyming words appearing within the same line.

g) **Rhythm**: the beat, or rather internal pulse, created by the arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables, whose combination gives a particular sense of movement and is meant to appeal to the ear as well as to reinforce meaning.
1. “It cracked and growled, and roared and howled”  
(S.T. Coleridge, from The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.)

2. “I met a little cottage girl:  
She was eight years old, she said;  
Her hair was thick with many a curl  
That clustered round her head.”  
(W. Wordsworth, from We are Seven.)

“Cobbler, cobbler, mend my shoe  
Get it done by half-past two,  
Half-past two is far too late  
Get it done by half past eight.”  
(A. A. Milne, from Winnie-the-Pooh.)

3. “Full fathom five thy father lies”  
(W. Shakespeare, from The Tempest, Act I, Scene II.)

“Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell”  
(W. Shakespeare, from Sonnet 71)

4. “Scarlet leather, sewn together”  
(W. Allingham, from The Leprecaun; Or, Fairy Shoemaker.)

“Get him in sight, hold him tight”  
(W. Allingham, from The Leprecaun; Or, Fairy Shoemaker.)

“At length did cross an Albatross”  
(S.T. Coleridge, from The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.)

5. “How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.”  
(G. Byron, from She walks in Beauty)

“Curse, bless me now with your fierce tears, I pray,”  
(D. Thomas, from Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night.)

“Those are pearls that were his eyes.”  
(W. Shakespeare, from The Tempest.)
6. “Tyger, tyger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?”
(W. Blake, from The Tyger.)

“The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o’er the lea,
The ploughman homeward lods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.”
(Th. Gray, from Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard.)

7. “Old age should burn and rage at close of day;
(Th. Thomas, from Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night.)

“She walks in Beauty, like the night”
(G. Byron, from She walks in Beauty.)

“A unifying device between sound and meaning is repetition. It may involve sounds, syllables, words, phrases, stanzas, or any feature of language. Basically, it is used to emphasize ideas. But it also contributes to the patterning of a literary work and to its musical effects.

Ex.: “O horrible! O horrible! Most horrible!”
(W. Shakespeare, from Hamlet, Act I, Scene V.)

“Alone, alone, all all alone,
Alone on the wide wide Sea;”
(S.T. Coleridge, from The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.)

Enjambment is another important device, which involves rhythm, meaning and syntax. It consists in the grammatical continuation from one line to the next. It affects rhythm because it can create an idea of tension, speed, going on. But it can also serve to put into evidence, or link, certain words, thus emphasizing ideas or creating association of concepts.

Ex.: “...O thou
Who charioted to their dark wintry bed
The winged seed, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow
Her clarion o’er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill:”
(P.B. Shelley, from Ode to the West Wind.)

“I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.”
(R. Frost, from Fire and Ice)
MEANING DEVICES

To appreciate a poem a vital contribution is given by the so-called meaning devices. The most important of them are simile, metaphor, personification.

Simile is a figure of speech in which one thing is said to be like another. In a simile the words like or as are always used.

Ex.: “You are my true and honorable wife, As dear to me as are the ruddy drops That visit my sad heart.”
(W. Shakespeare, from Julius Caesar, Act II, Scene I)

“Like the bright hair uplifted from the head Of some fierce Maenad, ...”
(P.B. Shelley, from Ode to the West Wind.)

Metaphor is an implied comparison describing one thing as being another, thus carrying over from one object to another certain particular aspects relevant to emphasize meaning.

Ex.: “But that dread of something after death, The undiscover’d country, from whose bourn No traveller returns, ...”
(W. Shakespeare, from Hamlet, Act III, Scene I)

“My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar, And I must pause till it come back to me.”
(W. Shakespeare, from Julius Caesar, Act III, Scene II)

Personification endows animals, objects, or inanimate entities with human characteristics. It can be linguistic, when personal pronouns or possessives are used, like ‘he’, ‘his’, etc., semantic when human thoughts and feelings are attributed to objects or animals or other.

Ex. “And ‘tis my faith that every flower Enjoys the air it breathes.”
(W. Wordsworth, from Lines Written in Early Spring)

“The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear The saples foliage of the ocean, know
Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear, And tremble and despoil themselves: Oh, hear!”
(P.B. Shelley, from Ode to the West Wind)

Enjambment is another important device, which involves rhythm, meaning and syntax. It consists in the grammatical continuation from one line to the next. It affects rhythm because it can create an idea of tension, speed, going on. But it can also serve to put into evidence, or link, certain words, thus emphasizing ideas or creating association of concepts.

Ex.: “ ... O thou Who chariostest to their dark wintry bed The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low, Each like a corpse within its grave, until Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow Her clarion o’er the dreaming earth, and fill (Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air) With living hues and odours plain and hill:”
(P.B. Shelley, from Ode to the West Wind)
KINDS OF POETRY

There are three main kinds of poetry: narrative, dramatic and lyrical. It is not always possible to make a neat distinction between them. For example, an epic poem can contain lyrical passages, or a lyrical poem can present narrative parts.

- **Narrative poetry** is poetry which tells a story. Typical examples are the epic, the tale in verse, the romance. The ballad can also be included into narrative poetry because it contains a story.

The epic. The hero of an epic poem is a special man endowed with physical strength, courage, leadership, who represents a nation or race, and performs superhuman deeds. The dominant tone is heroic. The poem starts with the poet announcing the subject and then invoking the muse. The style is elevated, stylized, formal.

The ‘primary’ epic was based on the oral traditions of a country -see the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The major Anglo-Saxon example is *Beowulf*. Ours is *El Cantar del Mio Cid*. The ‘literary’ or ‘secondary’ epic was modelled on the primary epic, and was the work of a learned refined writer. Examples are Virgil’s *Aeneid* in Italy and, in English literature, John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. The commonest metre of the epic is **blank verse** (unrhymed iambic pentametre).

The solemnity and seriousness of the epic led, almost inevitably, to parody and burlesque. This is how *mock-heroic* or *mock-epic poetry* was born. One of the best examples in English is Alexander Pope’s *The Rape of the Lock* (about an aristocrat cutting off a lock of a girl’s hair to the great indignation of her family).

The tale in verse. Narrative in verse was very popular during the Renaissance, and met great favour again in the Romantic period thanks to Walter Scott, who started his career as a poet, and Lord Byron.

The Romance. The mediaeval romance was a tale in verse dealing with chivalry and love. An example is Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. Edmund Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* and Alfred Tennyson’s *Idylls of the King* are modelled on the mediaeval chivalric romance.

- **Dramatic poetry**. The word ‘drama’ implies one or more characters and action. Dramatic poetry aims at involving the reader in an experience or situation, and creates tension, immediacy, expectation, conflict. The speakers act out roles and therefore must not be identified with the poet.

When one speaker only is involved and the poem is his/her speech, we have the **dramatic monologue**. Its aim is to get the reader to understand the personality and state of mind of the speaker, and thus sympathize with him/her. This form of composition was made famous by poets like Alfred Tennyson, Robert Browning, T.S. Eliot.

- **Lyrical poetry** has, and has always had, the most appeal. As the name suggests, lyrical poetry was originally associated with music, and the term ‘lyrical’ is still used to indicate a song accompanied by a musical instrument.

As Patrick Murray writes in *Literary Criticism*:

“In general terms, it is its personal quality, its expression of individual thought and feeling, that gives lyrical poetry its character. Ruskin defined it as ‘the expression by the poet of his own feelings.’ A lyric is a non-narrative poem, featuring a single speaker, whose purpose is to share a state of mind, a mood or attitude with his reader.”

It is easy to identify this speaker with the poet, especially when the poem reflects feelings and events that characterized that poet’s life. However, what makes a poem significant as a work of art is the universal value of the emotions and concepts it expresses.
The more common lyric poems are:

**The ode.** A rather long poem, elevated in tone and elaborate in style. It usually begins with an invocation and contains archaisms. The subject is usually serious, and the concept conveyed is abstract.

**The sonnet.** A poem of fixed form, in fourteen line. It can be divided into an octave and a sestet (Petrarchan form) or three quatrains and a couplet (Elizabethan form). It appeals to feelings directly and intensely. D.G. Rossetti, defined it a moment’s monument”.

5. Consider the various features of poetry and the literary forms that have been examined and go back to the poem Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening. Which features can you find in this poem? What is their contribution to the interpretation of its message?

When you have answered these questions write a short appreciation. You must deal with the following points:

- form
- stanza division
- contents
- sound devices
- meaning devices
- message
- your own personal response
POETS ON POETRY

Enjoy what some major poets thought about poetry:

“Poetry is emotion put into measure.”
Thomas Hardy.

“Poetry may be defined as a way of remembering what it would impoverish us to forget.”
Robert Frost.

“Poetry is a composition of words set to music.”
Ezra Pound.

“Poetry is a precision instrument for recording a man’s reaction to life.”
Louis MacNeice

“...perfection of form united with significance of feeling. All poetry is difficult, almost impossible, to write; and and one of the great permanent causes of error in writing poetry is the difficulty of distinguishing between what one really feels and what one would like to feel, and between the moments of genuine feeling and the moments of falsity.”
T.S. Eliot

“Si se me pregunta en qué consiste la poesía, diré, sin pretender agotar la definición, que en ir cargando a las cosas de significados de los que aparentemente carecen y que, no obstante, se encuentran desde siempre en ellas, en espera de que alguien los descubra y nos ayude, al hacerlo, a comprender al mundo y a comprendernos a nosotros mismos. Estos significados pueden ser puramente estéticos –lo que nos justifica enteramente– o pueden tener un carácter más profundamente poético y revelador.”
Angel Crespo.