

POETIC RHETORICAL TECHNIQUES-II  
B.A HONS. 1st

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Dr. Vandana Singh

# THE SOUNDS OF WORDS

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- **Consonance:** Repeated consonant sounds at the ending of words placed near each other, usually on the same or adjacent lines. These should be in sounds that are accented, or stressed, rather than in vowel sounds that are unaccented. This produces a pleasing kind of near-rhyme.
  - *Example:* boats into the past
  - *Example:* cool soul
- **Cacophony** A discordant series of harsh, unpleasant sounds helps to convey disorder. This is often furthered by the combined effect of the meaning and the difficulty of pronunciation.
  - *Example:* My stick fingers click with a snicker And, chuckling, they knuckle the keys; Light-footed, my steel feelers flicker And pluck from these keys melodies.
  - —“Player Piano,” *John Updike*

# Euphony

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- : A series of musically pleasant sounds, conveying a sense of harmony and beauty to the language.

*Example:* Than Oars divide the Ocean, Too silver for  
a seam—

- Or Butterflies, off Banks of Noon Leap, plashless  
as they swim.
- — “A Bird Came Down the Walk,” *Emily Dickenson* (last stanza)

# Repetition

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- The purposeful re-use of words and phrases for an effect. Sometimes, especially with longer phrases that contain a different key word each time, this is called *parallelism*. It has been a central part of poetry in many cultures. Many of the Psalms use this device as one of their unifying elements.
- *Example*: I was glad; so very, very glad.
  - *Example*: Half a league, half a league, Half a league onward...
  - ...
  - Cannon to right of them, Cannon to left of them, Cannon in front of them
    - Volley'd and thunder'd...

# Rhyme-I

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- This is the one device most commonly associated with poetry by the general public. Words that have different beginning sounds but whose endings sound alike, including the final vowel sound and everything following it, are said to *rhyme*.  
*Example:* time, slime, mime
- **Double rhymes** include the final two syllables.  
*Example:* revival, arrival, survival
- **Triple rhymes** include the final three syllables.  
*Example:* greenery, machinery, scenery
- A variation which has been used effectively is called **slant rhyme**, or **half rhyme**. If only the final consonant sounds of the words are the same, but the initial consonants and the vowel sounds are different, then the rhyme is called a *slant rhyme* or *half rhyme*. **When this appears in the middle of lines rather than at the end, it is called *consonance*.**
  - *Example:* soul, oil, foul; taut, sat, knit

# Rhyme-II

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- Another variation which is occasionally used is called near rhyme. If the final vowel sounds are the same, but the final consonant sounds are slightly different, then the rhyme is called a *near rhyme*.

*Example:* fine, rhyme; poem, goin’

- Less effective but sometimes used are sight rhymes. Words which are spelled the same (as if they rhymed), but are pronounced differently are called *sight rhymes or eye rhymes*.
- *Example:* enough, cough, through, bough

# Rhythm-Stress and Meter I

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- **Rhythm:** Although the general public is seldom directly conscious of it, nearly everyone responds on some level to the organization of speech rhythms (*verbal stresses*) into a regular pattern of accented syllables separated by unaccented syllables. *Rhythm* helps to distinguish poetry from prose.
- *Example:* i THOUGHT i SAW a PUSsyCAT.

Such patterns are sometimes referred to as *meter*. Meter is the organization of voice patterns, in terms of both the arrangement of stresses and their frequency of repetition per line of verse.

- Poetry is organized by the division of each line into “feet,” metric units which each consist of a particular arrangement of strong and weak stresses. The most common metric unit is the iambic, in which an unstressed syllable is followed by a stressed one (as in the words *reverse* and *compose*).

# *Scansion*

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- *Scansion* is the conscious measure of the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry.
- Stressed syllables are labeled with an accent mark: /
- Unstressed syllables are labeled with a dash: –
- Metrical feet may be two or three syllables in length, and are divided by slashes.



# 5 Basic Rhythm

Pattern	Name	Example
- /	Iamb/Iambic	invite
/ -	Trochee/Trochaic	deadline
-- /	Anapest/Anapestic	to the beach
/ --	Dactyl/Dactylic	frequently
/ /	Spondee/Spondaic	true blue

# MEASURING THE METER

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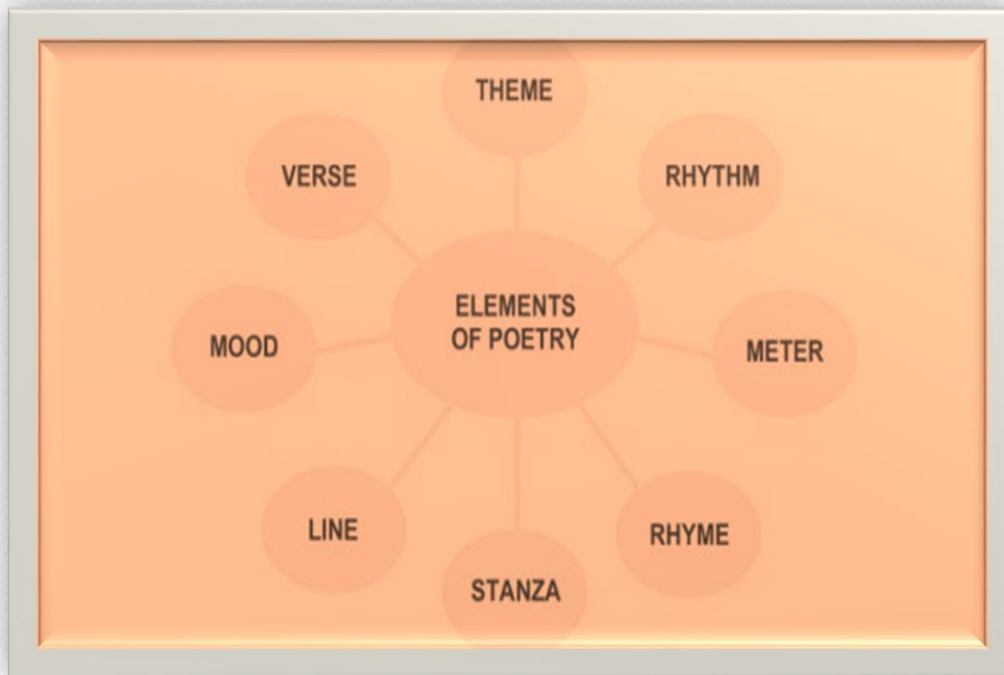
- Meter is measured by the number of feet in a line. Feet are named by Greek prefix number words attached to “meter.” A line with five feet is called pentameter; thus, a line of five iambs is known as “iambic pentameter” (the most common metrical form in English poetry, and the one favored by Shakespeare).
- Naturally, there is a degree of variation from line to line, as a rigid adherence to the meter results in unnatural or monotonous language. A skillful poet manipulates breaks in the prevailing rhythm of a poem for particular effects.

# Poetic Meter

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- These terms show number of stresses or feet to a line:
- One stress (foot) per line = mono + meter = monometer
- Two =di + meter = dimeter
- Three = tri + meter = trimeter
- . Four =tetra + meter = tetrameter
- Five =penta + meter = pentameter
- Six = hex + a + meter = hexameter
- Seven = hep + a + meter = heptameter
- Eight = oct + a + meter = octameter

# Poetry



## Units of Meter

- Meter is measured in units called feet.
- A **foot** usually consists of one stressed syllable and one or more unstressed syllables.
- The feet in a poem are divided by vertical lines.

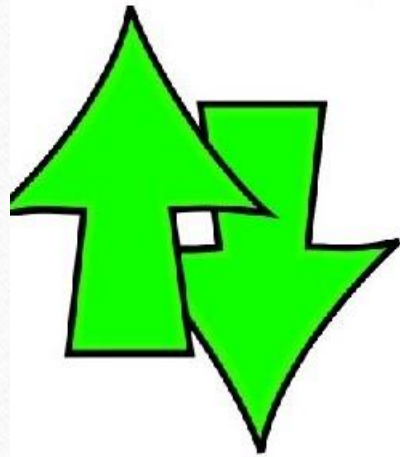
“The vil|lage smith|y stands;  
The smith,|a might|y man|is he,  
With large|and sin|ewy hands;”

from "The Village Blacksmith" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

# Poetic Meter

## Poetic Meter

Meter is a word which describes the patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables in lines of poetic verse.



You can hear meter if you listen to how your voice moves up and down when you read certain poems.

### A Downward Look

Seen from above, the sky  
Is deep. Clouds float down there,

Foam on a long, luxurious bath.  
Their shadows over limbs submerged in "air,"

Over protuberances, faults,  
A delta thicket, glide. On high, the love

That drew the bath and scattered it with salts

Still radiates new projects old as day,  
And hardly registers the tug

When, far beneath, a wrinkled, baby hand  
Happens upon the plug.

# Scansion

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- To “scan” a poem, we mark each stressed and each unstressed syllable with a mark. Here, we’ll use / for stressed and ~ for unstressed. ~ / ~ ~ / ~ / ~ / ~ /
- Aunt Jennifer’s tigers prance across the screen ~ / ~ / ~ ~ / ~ / ~ /
- Bright topaz denizens of a world of green.
- Then we count the stressed syllables in a single line. Here there are 5 stressed syllables in each line.
- Counting Stressed Syllables
- Once we have taken a count of the stressed syllables in each line, we have a good idea of what the dominant meter of the poem is. Every line may not be the same, but usually there will be one dominant pattern.
- Since Rich’s poem has 5 stresses per line, or five poetic feet per line, we can say that its meter is **pentameter**

# Caesuras

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- If the word has only one syllable and it is of great importance to the meaning of the sentence, the word is probably stressed. If the word is not of great importance to the meaning of the sentence, then that single syllable word is probably not stressed. In addition, rhythm is based on pauses. **Pauses** within a line of poetry are called **caesuras**.
- Know an end-stopped line is one in which the end of the line corresponds with a natural speech pause versus a run-on line where the sense of the line moves on without pause into the next line.
- Other key terms to know are **free verse**, poetry that except for its line arrangement has no regular meter, and **blank verse**, which is iambic pentameter that is unrhymed

# REFERENCES

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## **A Glossary of Literary Terms**

By M.H Abrams, Geoffrey Galt Harpham

**Images**

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