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Poetry

Focus Lesson

Poetry uses musical language to create pictures and words in your mind. Poems are made up of one or more **stanzas**, or **verses**.

Many poets use **figurative language** to help you see or feel language. Similes, metaphors, and personification are examples of figurative language. **Similes** and **metaphors** compare unlike things. Unlike a metaphor, a simile uses *like* or *as* to compare them. Sometimes a poem will repeat the same or similar beginning consonant sound in a line. This is called **alliteration**. Poets can also add sound words to their writing. Words that imitate sounds, such as *boom* and *crash*, are examples of **onomatopoeia**.

A **narrative poem**, like a story, has characters and a plot. It has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. Another kind is a **lyric poem**, which captures a moment or a feeling. A **limerick** is a short, silly poem usually made for fun. Limericks are filled with rhymes. **Rhymes** are repeated sounds at the ends of words.

There was a Young Lady whose **bonnet**,
Came untied when the birds sat **on it**.
But she said, "I don't **care**!
All the birds in the **air**
Are welcome to sit on my **bonnet**!"

Limericks also have a bouncy rhythm. **Rhythm** is a pattern of stressed and unstressed beats in a line.

Up into the **cherry tree**
Who should **climb** but **little me**?

Free verse is a kind of poetry with no rhythm or rhyme. You can put words together in any way to create a free verse poem.



Read this poem and answer the questions that follow.

A Slash of Blue

by Emily Dickinson

Emily Dickinson wrote many poems during her lifetime, but most were published after her death in 1886. Today, she is considered one of the most important American poets.

Imagery is the word-pictures that a poet creates.

How is imagery used in this poem?

- 1 A slash of blue—
A sweep of gray—
Some scarlet patches on the way,
Compose an Evening Sky—
A little purple—slipped between—
Some Ruby Trousers hurried on—
A Wave of Gold—
A Bank of Day—
That just makes out the morning sky

Personification makes something that is not human seem like a person in some way.

What is an example of personification in this poem?



Focus Lesson: **POETRY**

1 **Part A**

What is the speaker comparing in this poem?

Read the poem again. The poet uses words to describe patterns of color. When do you see these different colors in nature? The poet is comparing the sky in the evening and the sky in the morning.

Part B

In the poem, what are examples of the answer to Part A?

Use the sections you reread to help you study the poem. Lines 1–4 describe the colors of the evening sky. Lines 5–9 describe the colors of a sunrise.



Guided Practice

Read the poem and answer the questions that follow.

My Shadow

by Robert Louis Stevenson

- 1 I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.
- 2 The funniest part about him is the way he likes to grow—
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow.
For he sometimes shoots up taller like a bouncing rubber ball,
And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.
- 3 He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.
He stays so close beside me, he's a coward you can see;
I'd be ashamed to stick to mother as my shadow sticks to me!
- 4 One morning, very early, before the sun was up,
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;
But my lazy little shadow, like a naughty sleepy-head,
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.

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Focus Lesson:
Poetry





1 Part A

Whose point of view is expressed in the poem?

Read the poem again. The speaker is also the narrator. Who is the narrator of the poem?

Part B

Which two lines support your answer to Part A?

Reread the first two stanzas. The speaker uses *I*. The title of the poem is also a clue.



Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

In the Castle

from King Alfred
by Florence Holbrook

Cast of Characters

Queen

John

Henry

Reed

Alfred

Scene 1

A large, airy room in the castle. The room includes several comfortable couches and a single, locked cabinet. The queen and her four boys are seated. A fire roars merrily in the fireplace. Outside the wind howls and the snow blows.

John: Tell us a story, lady mother.

Henry: Yes, tell us a story.

Reed: I wish it would stop raining, so that we might take our hawks for a hunt!

Queen: *(unlocks the cabinet and removes a large, velvet-covered volume)* I have something to show you, my princes. Is this not beautiful?

Alfred: *(fingers the book lovingly)* How lovely the red velvet, and see, the clasp is of gold!

Reed: And there are jewels in the clasp! What is it, mother?

Queen: It is a book, darlings, a very precious volume. The jewels, however, are the least valuable part of it. Shall we look within?

John: *(looking over his mother's shoulder)* Pray show us, lady mother!

Queen: Observe the forms! Mighty warriors, fair ladies, and royal chiefs of the olden times, all in bright and glowing colors.

Henry: *(yawns and looks bored)* I guess they seem to be brave. Who are they?

Queen: *(slowly opens the book)* These pictures are beautiful and appeal to the eye, but neither they nor the velvet and gold of the binding give the joy which is greatest.

Alfred: *(looks confused)* What do you mean, dear lady mother?



Part B

Which sentence best supports the answer to Part A?

- A Henry:** (*yawns and looks bored*) I guess they seem to be brave. Who are they?
- B Alfred:** (*looks confused*) What do you mean, dear lady mother?
- C Alfred:** (*thinks for a minute*) Our father does not think much of books and music.
- D Henry:** (*looks over at Queen*) To which of us will you give the book, lady mother?

2 Part A

Read this line.

Queen: Observe the forms!

What does the queen mean by the word *forms*?

- A** stories of deeds
- B** images of people
- C** poems of battles
- D** movies of royalty

Part B

Why does the queen point out the forms to the boys in Part A?

- A** so they will know what to say to the king
- B** so they will find the book more interesting
- C** so they will recognize the things warriors do
- D** so they will understand how a book is made