

# Words for the little wordsworths

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'A thing of beauty is a joy forever' – so wrote the English Romantic poet John Keats almost two centuries ago. Time may have glided by, but the beauty of these words lingers. With World Poetry Day this month, we celebrate this literary genre in part 7 of our special series 'World of Words'.

## *Poetic Elements*

- 1 Caesura** brief pause in the middle of a line
- 2 Canto** sub-division of a long narrative poem
- 3 Chorus** part of a poem repeated after each stanza
- 4 Couplet** two consecutive lines in a poem which end in rhyming words and are usually of the same length
- 5 Foot** basic unit of metre, comprising a pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables (sound unit comprising one consonant and one or more vowels)
- 6 Metre** regular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line
- 7 Quatrain** a stanza of four lines
- 8 Refrain** phrase or line that recurs throughout the poem
- 9 Rhyme** common feature in poetry where the endings of words sound alike
- 10 Stanza** division of a poem comprising a set of lines, separated from other such sets by a blank

## *Poetic Devices*

- 11 Alliteration** repetition of initial, consonant sounds in words that are close together  
'While I nodded nearly napping' from *The Raven* by Edgar Allan Poe
- 12 Anaphora** repetition of words or phrases at the beginning of successive phrases or lines  
'Cannon to right of them, Cannon to left of them, Cannon in front of them' from *The Charge of the Light Brigade* by Alfred Lord Tennyson
- 13 Apostrophe** direct address to a person or thing not present at the moment  
'Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour' from *London, 1802* by William Wordsworth
- 14 Assonance** repetition of vowel sounds in words that are close together  
'...sorrow for the lost Lenore' from *The Raven* by Edgar Allan Poe
- 15 Hyperbole** exaggeration to bring out strong emotion  
'The sea lent him those bitter tears' from *The Unfortunate Lover* by Andrew Marvell

**16 Imagery** use of figurative language to arouse the senses and create mental images

'Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,

And slips into the bosom of the lake' from *Summer Night* by Alfred Lord Tennyson

**17 Irony** sarcasm wherein the literal meaning is the opposite of the implied meaning

'Water, water, everywhere,  
Nor any drop to drink' - from *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by S T Coleridge

**18 Metaphor** imaginative comparison between two things that are unlike

'Hope is the thing with feathers'  
from *'Hope' is the thing with feathers* by Emily Dickinson

**19 Metonymy** referring to something by a related term rather than the word itself

'Friends, Romans, Countrymen,  
lend me your ears' (ears for the act of listening) from *Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare

**20 Onomatopoeia** use of words whose sounds convey their meaning

'How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle' -  
from *The Bells* by Edgar Allan Poe

**21 Oxymoron** combination of two words with contradictory meanings

'With faces grimly gay' - from  
*The Send-Off* by Wilfred Owen

## **22 Personification**

attribution of human characteristics to inanimate objects and abstract concepts

'O Rose thou art sick' - from  
*The Sick Rose* by William Blake

**23 Simile** comparison using 'like' or 'as'

'My love is like a red, red, rose' from  
*The Red, Red Rose* by Robert Burns

**24 Synecdoche** reference of a part to represent a whole

'The Western wave was all a-flame' (wave referring to sea)  
from *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by S T Coleridge

## **25 Synaesthesia**

description involving the fusion of different senses

'Sweet and wandering sounds,  
slow-breathed melodies' from *The Hyperion* by John Keats

## *Poetic Forms*

**26 Allegory** symbolic representation where characters, objects or places stand for abstract ideas or qualities

**27 Ballad** narrative written in stanzas, which is usually sung

**28 Burlesque** caricature of some other literary work

**29 Carol** originally, a poem sung as a group where one person sang the stanzas and the group sang the refrain; now, a song of rejoicing during Christmas

**30 Cinquain** five-line poem of 22 syllables, based on haiku

**31 Dirge** short song of grief at a funeral

**32 Doggerel** poor quality poetry which uses clichés and irregular metre

**33 Elegy** elaborate, contemplative poem lamenting the dead

**34 Epic** long narrative poem celebrating the actions of a hero, usually written in a grand style

**35 Epigram** two or four-line witty poem

**36 Epitaph** verse inscribed on a tomb

**37 Free verse** poetry that has no rhyme, metre, pattern or structure

**38 Haiku** Japanese form of poetry, usually describing nature, which has 17 syllables arranged in three unrhymed lines of five, seven and five syllables

**39 Hymn** poem, which is usually sung, praising God

**40 Lament** poem mourning the loss of someone or something

**41 Lampoon** form of verse involving satire, ridicule and caricature

**42 Lay** short narrative poem that is sung

**43 Limerick** a humorous five-line verse following a specific rhyme scheme and metre

**44 Lyric** poem expressing strong emotions, usually sung to musical accompaniment

**45 Mock Epic** satirical poetry treating trivial matters in a heroic manner

**46 Narrative** poetry which tells a story

**47 Ode** poem addressing and praising a person, place or thing

**48 Pastoral** verse about rural life, usually featuring shepherds

**49 Romance** long narrative poetry featuring love and chivalry

**50 Sonnet** Fourteen-line poem with a specific rhyme scheme and metre

