Poetry Literary Elements Definitions

**Alliteration:** Repetition of initial consonant sounds. (suzy sells seashells slowly)

**Allusion:** Brief and indirect reference to a person, place, or thing in history or another work of literature.

**Apostrophe:** A figure of speech in which someone absent or dead or something nonhuman is addressed as if it were alive and present and was able to reply.

**Metaphor:** A comparison or analogy stated in a way to imply that one object is another one.

**Imagery:** Common term of variable meaning. It signifies all the sensory perceptions referred to in a poem, whether by literal description, allusion, simile, or metaphor.

**Hyperbole:** The trope of exaggeration or overstatement.

**Personification:** A trope in which abstractions, animals, ideas, and inanimate objects are given human character, traits, abilities, or reactions.

**Tone:** The means of creating a relationship or conveying an attitude or mood.

**Theme:** A central idea or statement that unifies and controls an entire literary work.

**Understatement:** A figure of speech employed by writers or speakers to intentionally make a situation seem less important than it really is.

**Assonance:** Repeating identical or similar vowels in nearby words.

**Consonance:** Special type of alliteration in which the repeated pattern of consonants is marked by changes in the intervening vowels.

**Metonymy:** Using vaguely suggestive, physical object to embody a more general idea.

**Synecdoche:** A rhetorical trope involving a part of an object representing the whole, or the whole of an object representing a part.

**Litotes:** A figure of speech which employs an understatement by using double negatives or, in other words, positive statement is expressed by negating its opposite expressions.

**Masculine/Feminine Rhyme:** Masculine Rhymes are rhymes that are a single stressed syllable at the every END of a line in poetry. (Thee, spree or produced, reduced)

**Feminine Rhymes:** is a rhyme matching two or more syllables (Fainted, Acquainted or Measure, Leisure).
**Quatrain:** Sometimes used interchangeably with “stave,” a quatrain is a stanza of four lines, often rhyming in a ABAB pattern.

**Couplet:** Two lines—the second line immediately following the first—of the same metrical length that end in a rhyme to form complete unit.

**Repetition:** Repeats the same words or phrases a few times to make an idea clearer.

**Internal Rhyme:** A poetic device in which a word in a middle of a line rhymes with a word at the end of the same metric line.

**Slant/Near/Approximate Rhyme:** When the words share the same vowel sound or similar vowel sound and same end sound, they “sort of” rhyme, but not exactly.

**Anaphora:** The intentional repetition of beginning clauses in order to create an artistic effect.

**Iambic Pentameter:** Five pairs of a lightly stressed syllable followed by a heavily stressed syllable.