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## Poetry Toolbox

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## A Brief History of Poetry

Poetry means \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of language, combined to create \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. Poetry dates back to \_\_\_\_\_ times, and is one of the \_\_\_\_\_ forms of literature and \_\_\_\_\_.

One of the oldest forms of poetry is the \_\_\_\_\_. These narrative poems told the stories from many culture's \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. These poems were usually told orally and passed down from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. They were often set to \_\_\_\_\_ to help people remember them. Two famous epic poems are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

During Medieval times, epic poems and ballads usually told the stories of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ in distress. They shared the values of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. These ballads were important tools for storytelling, especially since most commoners couldn't \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_. Two famous medieval ballads are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

The \_\_\_\_\_ was a time of great change for poetry and the arts. In England, William \_\_\_\_\_ produced a great number of famous poems, while in Japan, \_\_\_\_\_ was a very popular form of poetry.

With the Industrial Revolution changing humanity's culture again, a new poetry movement in France grew in popularity. The \_\_\_\_\_ movement emphasized that what was in the \_\_\_\_\_ was more important than \_\_\_\_\_ appearance.

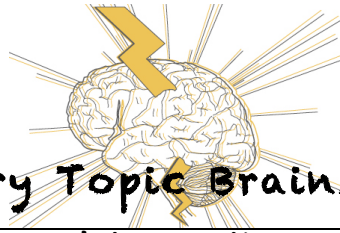
Today poetry is written mainly in \_\_\_\_\_.

## ***You Can't Write a Poem about McDonald's***

Noon. Hunger is the only thing  
singing in my belly.  
I walk through the blossoming cherry trees  
on the library mall,  
past the young couples coupling,  
by the crazy fanatic  
screaming doom and salvation  
at a sensation-hungry crowd,  
to the Lake Street McDonald's.  
It is crowded, the lines long and sluggish.  
I wait in the greasy air.  
All around me people are eating—  
the sizzle of conversation,  
the salty odor of sweat,  
the warm flesh pressing out of  
hip huggers and halter tops.  
When I finally reach the cash register,  
the counter girl is crisp as a pickle,  
her fingers thin as french fries,  
her face brown as a bun.  
Suddenly I understand cannibalism.  
As I reach for her,  
she breaks into pieces  
wrapped neat and packaged for take-out.  
I'm thinking, how amazing it is  
to live in this country, how easy  
it is to be filled.  
We leave together, her warm aroma  
close at my side.  
I walk back through the cherry trees  
blossoming up into pies,  
the young couple frying in  
the hot, oily sun,  
the crowd eating up the fanatic,  
singing, my ear, my eye, my tongue  
fat with the wonder  
of this hungry world.

- Ronald Wallace

***You can write a poem about anything that makes you: laugh, smile, cry, clench your fists, remember, explore, wonder, experiment, communicate, blab, explain, or describe. Write about things that you care about! About things you are an expert on! About things you are passionate about!***



## Poetry Topic Brainstorm

<b>An important place</b>	<b>An important object</b>	<b>An important person</b>
<b>An interesting historical event</b>	<b>Another important object</b>	<b>Something I used to believe (in)</b>
<b>An important Event</b>	<b>My least favorite place</b>	<b>A person I'm very angry with</b>
<b>A favorite childhood memory</b>	<b>An event that represents growing up</b>	<b>Something I can't live without</b>
<b>A time I learned something about myself</b>	<b>Something I wonder about</b>	<b>Something I wish I could change</b>
<b>My M.A.D. topic</b>	<b>Someone else's M.A.D. topic I care about</b>	

## Let's begin your poetry writing with a "Where I'm From" poem.

### "Where I Come From"

by Allen Jackson

Well I was rollin' wheels and shiftn' gears  
'Round that Jersey Turnpike  
Barney stopped me with his gun  
ten minutes after midnight  
Said sir you broke the limit in that rusty ol' truck  
I don't know about that accent son  
Just where did you come from

(Chorus)

I said where I come from  
It's cornbread and chicken  
Where I come from a lotta front porch sittin'  
Where I come from tryin' to make a livin'  
And workin' hard to get to heaven  
Where I come from

Well i was south of Detroit City  
I pulled in this country kitchen  
To try their brand of barbecue  
The sign said finger-lickin'  
Well I paid the tab and the lady asked me  
How'd you like my biscuit  
I'll be honest with you ma'am  
It ain't like mama fixed it

(Chorus)

I was chasin' sun on 101  
somewhere around Ventura  
I lost a universal joint and I had to use my finger  
This tall lady stopped and asked  
If I had plans for dinner  
Said no thanks ma'am, back home  
we like the girls that sing soprano

(Chorus)

Well I was headed home on 65  
somewhere around Kentucky  
The CB rang for the bobtail rig  
that's rollin' on like thunder  
Well I answered him and he asked me  
Aren't you from out in Tulsa  
No, but you might'a seen me there  
I just dropped a load of salsa

(Chorus repeated)

### Where I'm From

by George Ella Lyon

I am from clothespins,  
from Clorox and carbon tetrachloride.  
I am from the dirt under the back porch.  
(Black, glistening  
it tasted like beets.) I am from the forsythia bush,  
the Dutch elm  
whose long gone limbs I remember  
as if they were my own.

I'm from fudge and eyeglasses,  
from Imogene and Alafair.  
I'm from the know-it-alls and the pass-it-ons,  
from perk up and pipe down.  
I'm from He restoreth my soul with a cottonball lamb  
and ten verses I can say myself.

I'm from Artemus and Billie's Branch,  
fried corn and strong coffee.  
From the finger my grandfather lost to the auger  
the eye my father shut to keep his sight.  
Under my bed was a dress box  
spilling old pictures,  
a sift of lost faces  
to drift beneath my dreams.

I am from those moments—  
snapped before I budded—  
leaf-fall from the family tree



## **“Where I’m from” Poem Preparation Worksheet**

Step 1: Answering the following questions will prepare you to write your “Where I’m From” poem

1. Describe where you live. What does it look like? What does it smell like? What does it feel like? (This could be your actual house, or it could be another place that represents where you are from.)
2. What objects or belongings can be found in your home or room (list at least three)
3. What are the names of people in your “family” (they could be alive or deceased, they do not need to be blood-relations)
4. List two or three family traditions
5. What phrases, words or sayings are important to you or to members of your family?
6. What are some beliefs that represent where you are from?
7. What foods are important to you or your family?
8. List 2 or 3 important childhood memories.
9. Describe the weather where you are from?
10. What do people do where you are from?
11. What are your favorite things to do?

**Step 2:** Incorporate your answers to the questions above into your “Where I’m From” poem. Simply add “I’m from” or “From” to the beginning of each line, in the same style as the sample you have been shown. You do not have to use all of the words or categories you brainstormed under Step 1. As you compose your poem, you can add new words and phrases that describe where you are from.

## Prose vs. Poetry

**Efficiency-** poetry gets right to the point. You aren't always tied into the grammar/usage rules of prose (subject-predicate)

### Lines and Line Breaks

Poetry isn't written in sentences and paragraphs like prose. A poet decides where to end the line of poetry based on a number of things:

- to accomplish a determined rhyme scheme
- to have the correct amount of syllables or beats
- to emphasize an idea
- to form a shape
- to determine where a pause should be
- to follow a pattern

Write out the following as poems. Determine where you think the best place for new line to begin might be. Be ready to share what you did and why. (Some capitalization has been changed from the original poems)

#### Bubbles

Floating holes reflecting spheres little rainbow heads glued together like magnets  
liquid crystal balls silent popcorn bubbles

#### Daughter-Mother-Daughter

Why can't I? she pleaded it's not safe it's not fair! she cried I know you don't understand! she insisted I do you see, I was once the daughter, too.

#### We Real Cool by Gwendolyn Brooks

THE POOL PLAYERS SEVEN AT THE GOLDEN SHOVEL We real cool. We left school. We lurk late. We strike straight. We sing sin. We thin gin. We jazz June. We die soon

*\*Take a look at the way poets use the space on the page to create concrete poems. Try writing your own concrete poem.*

## List Poems

A list poem is exactly what the name implies...a list! Check out the following example.

I Can't Write a Poem

Forget it.

You must be kidding.

I'm still half asleep.

My eyes keep closing.

My brain isn't working.

I don't have a pencil.

I don't have any paper.

My desk is wobbly.

I don't know what to write about.

And besides, I don't even know how to write a poem.

I've got a headache. I need to see the nurse.

Time's up? Uh oh!

All I have is this dumb list of excuses.

You like it? Really? No kidding.

Thanks a lot. Would you like to see another one?

*-Bruce Lansky*

What could you write a list poem about? Try a few and be ready to share!

## Stanza

Poems are often divided into stanzas. Stanzas are to poems what paragraphs are to prose. Certain poems have rules about how to structure a stanza while free verse poems have no stanza rules. Some stanzas have names based on the number of lines it has:

Couplet = a two lined stanza

*I guess I'll have to use my pen  
My pencil lead just broke again!*

Tercet = 3 lined stanza

*Better to go down dignified  
With boughten friendship at your side  
Than none at all. Provide, provide! (from Provide, Provide by Robert Frost)*

Quatrain = 4 lined stanza

*Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow. (From Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening by Robert Frost)*

Quintet = 5 line stanza

*My Sorrow, when she's here with me,  
Thinks these dark days of autumn rain  
Are beautiful as days can be;  
She loves the bare, the withered tree;  
She walks the sodden pasture lane. (From My November Guest by Robert Frost)*

Sestet = 6 line stanza

Septet = 7 line stanza

Octave = 8 line stanza...

## Rhyme Schemes

Rhyme scheme is the pattern lines follow in their rhyme. Each ending sound is given a letter (like a variable in math). The lines from *My November Guest* would be labeled ABAAB. The As represent the long E sound at the end of lines 1, 3, and 4. The B represents the long A sound. *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* would be labeled AABA.

\*\*Rhyme is only one tool that poets can use. There are many other tools available to you to try!

## Metaphor vs. Simile

**Directions:** 1) Label the sentence as a metaphor or a simile. 2) Write down the two words being compared. 3) Write the meaning of the simile/metaphor in the context of the sentence.

1. The baby was like an octopus, grabbing at all the cans on the grocery store shelves.
2. As the teacher entered the room she muttered under her breath, "This class is like a three-ring circus!"
3. The giant's steps were thunder as he ran toward Jack.
4. The pillow was a cloud when I put my head upon it after a long day.
5. I feel like a limp dishrag.
6. Those girls are like two peas in a pod.
7. The fluorescent light was the sun during our test.
8. No one invites Harold to parties because he's a wet blanket.
9. The bar of soap was a slippery eel during the dog's bath.
10. Ted was as nervous as a cat with a long tail in a room full of rocking chairs.

## Personification

**Directions:** In each sentence, an object or idea is personified. Identify the object or idea that is being personified and explain which human trait or action is applied to the object or idea.

**Personification:** a figurative language technique where an object or idea is given human traits or characteristics.

1. As Vince attempted to park in the crowded lot, his truck kissed the bumper of an Impala.

What is being personified? \_\_\_\_\_

Which human trait or quality is given? \_\_\_\_\_

2. The crops begged for water but the drought continued long into the summer months.

What is being personified? \_\_\_\_\_

Which human trait or quality is given? \_\_\_\_\_

3. The moon shone on the still waters of the lake and the lonely peer rotted in the seaweed.

What is being personified? \_\_\_\_\_

Which human trait or quality is given? \_\_\_\_\_

4. When Michael made a shot without hitting the rim, the net shushed his rivals.

What is being personified? \_\_\_\_\_

Which human trait or quality is given? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Bobby couldn't take his mind off of chess; the game spoke to him night and day.

What is being personified? \_\_\_\_\_

Which human trait or quality is given? \_\_\_\_\_

6. He pounded his fist against the cruel bricks of the cell and hopelessly tugged on the cold steel bars until he exhausted himself.

What is being personified? \_\_\_\_\_

Which human trait or quality is given? \_\_\_\_\_

7. It seemed like Bob was married to his job and that dealing with his wife, Anne, was just a tiresome chore.

What is being personified? \_\_\_\_\_

Which human trait or quality is given? \_\_\_\_\_

8. All of her life, Margaret wanted to be rich. She longed to know the comfort of having others wait on her. When she grew up and got married, greed came knocking on the door of her new home. Margaret always wanted more, always looked elsewhere.

What is being personified? \_\_\_\_\_

Which human trait or quality is given? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Terry the bricklayer was as big as an ox. His arms were as large around as barrels of beer, and Terry was always in a good mood. Why wouldn't he be? Terry was a master of his craft and he lived in a time that needed bricklayers.

What is being personified? \_\_\_\_\_

Which human trait or quality is given? \_\_\_\_\_

10. The darkness of the night taunted Veronica as she walked home late from soccer practice. She heard a dog barking and a flock of crows flew from a bramble of bushes. A man coughed in the distance. Her heart beat faster as she saw headlights in the far distance.

What is being personified? \_\_\_\_\_

Which human trait or quality is given? \_\_\_\_\_

# Old Elm Speaks

by Kristine O'Connell George

A'S LAMENT

r. Nelson

It is as I told you, Young Sapling.

It will take

**Persona Poems**

before you snag

**Persona poems (also known as mask poems) are poems written from a perspective other than your own. You use your imagination to enter the world of another character. You can write a persona poem from the perspective of a friend, an enemy, a relative, a pet, a celebrity, a historical figure, a character from literature or you can make up a character of your own. The basis of a persona poem is a change in point-of-view. You aren't just writing about another character, you are writing as if you were that other character (1<sup>st</sup> person point of view). You try to think like that character. You imagine that character's thoughts, actions, skills and limitations. You try to capture the world in which that character lives and you portray it as if you were that character.**

**Examples:**

night think got it made I have.  
--the Jedi master  
chillin' in the Jedi temple  
ing young Jedi.  
ough is my life!

an not do the younglings  
y, thrust, jump, duck, I say  
, thrust, thrust, parry they do!

Anikin--such a nerf herder,  
ys interrupting me while I meditate  
ng about missing you, I think  
kid with such a high medichlorian count  
a big baby!

don't think I don't hear the  
ouncil laughing at me.  
c funny I speak do they.  
dy knows my sorrow  
ot maybe Kermit the frog.

etime, to jump on a star cruiser do I want  
etire to Degoba where never will I be found  
y Jedi  
3!



## Imagery

Imagery is the name given to the elements in a poem that spark off the senses. Despite "image" being a synonym for "picture", images need not be only visual; any of the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell) can respond to what a poet writes. An example of non-visual imagery can be found in James Berry's 'Seashell', which puts the "ocean sighs" right in a listener's ear.

A poet could simply state, say, "I see a tree", but it is possible to conjure up much more specific images using techniques such as simile ("a tree like a spiky rocket") or a metaphor ("a green cloud riding a pillar") - each of these suggests a different kind of tree.

One of the great pleasures of poetry is discovering a particularly powerful image; the Imagists of the early 20th century felt it was the most important aspect, so were devoted to finding strong images and presenting them in the clearest language possible. Of course, not every poem is an Imagist poem, but making images is something that nearly every poem does.

(Adapted from <http://www.poetryarchive.org/poetryarchive/glossaryItem.do?id=8098>)

### Example: (from "Preludes" by T.S. Eliot)

The winter evening settles down  
With smell of steaks in passageways.  
Six o'clock.  
The burnt-out ends of smoky days.  
And now a gusty shower wraps  
The grimy scraps  
Of withered leaves about your feet  
And newspapers from vacant lots;  
The showers beat  
On broken blinds and chimney-pots,  
And at the corner of the street  
A lonely cab-horse steams and stamps.  
And then the lighting of the lamps.



Now you try! First, we will look at a couple of pictures and just write. Next, think of a place, an event, a season, etc of your own. Try to paint a picture with words for your audience. Think about including a simile, metaphor.

## Other Examples of Figurative Language

**Onomatopoeia** – words that say the sound they make: Buzz, bang, meow, hiccup

**Hyperbole** – obvious and intentional exaggeration (a million times I have made this trip...)

**Idiom** – a figure of speech where, what you say is not what you mean. It is understood because of culture and repeated use. (He kicked the bucket; You hit the nail right on the head; Stop beating a dead horse; etc.)

**Cliché** – an expression, phrase, or idea that has been done repeatedly so it is no longer original or effective. (See the italicized phrases in the following poem.)

J.J. Cliché

by Mr. Nelson

If you see J.J. Cliche, run the other way,  
Try to *avoid him like the plague*  
He *eats like a pig* and *swears a blue streak*  
Then promises he'll *turn over a new leaf*.

He's *built like a truck*  
He's as *big as a house*  
But he can sneak up on you  
As *quiet as a mouse*.

He has no class,  
He's *a snake in the grass*  
His heart is *black as coal*  
His face is as *white as new-fallen snow*.

He's as *stiff as a boot*,  
His blood's as *thick as pea soup*  
And he's as jittery as *a cat*  
on a *hot tin roof*.

Heed this warning  
Don't let it go *in one ear and out the other*  
*Look him square in the eye* and tell him he's welcome  
when *hell freezes over*.

## Alliteration

Alliteration is the repetition of beginning consonant sounds in a group of words. (The dog's drool drenched the deck).

A blotz poem is designed to describe a creature that is either real or made up. It places an emphasis on alliteration. It follows the following pattern and doesn't rhyme.

- Line 1: Name your creature. (This is a \_\_\_\_\_)
- Line 2: Tell where your creature lives. Four words begin with the first letter of the creature's.
- Line 3: Tell what your creature eats. Use the same first letter and include at least four items.
- Line 4: Tell what your creature likes. Use the same first letter and include at least four items.
- Line 5: Tell something about your creature. Use the same first letter and include at least three items.
- Line 6: Tell about something your creature did to you. Use the same first letter and include at least three items.

Ex:

This is a doogle.

Doogles live in dank, dark, dorms down by the docks in Delaware.

Doogles like to drink Dr. Pepper, and eat dumb-dumbs and dark chocolate doughnuts.

Doogles like to dive down deep in the Danube river—but not drown.

Dorf the Doogle drove his Dodge Dart down a dead end.

Dorf drooled on my desk during a discussion in debate class.

Now, write your own:

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## Assonance:

You have learned that alliteration is the repetition of beginning sounds. Assonance is also a repetition of sound, but of the middle vowel sounds of words. Words like grown, mope, Joseph, and Grover all share the long 'O' sound in the middle of each word. They don't rhyme, but they have a similarity to each other because of the repeated vowel sound. Underline the middle "ow" sounds, circle the middle "a" sounds, and box the middle "o" sounds in Eminem's "Lose Yourself"

Yo

*His palms are sweaty, knees weak, arms are heavy*

*There's vomit on his sweater already, mom's spaghetti*

*He's nervous, but on the surface he looks calm and ready*

*To drop bombs, but he keeps on forgetting*

*What he wrote down, the whole crowd goes so loud*

*He opens his mouth, but the words won't come out*

*He's choking', how? Everybody's jokin' now*

*The clock's run out, time's up over, bloah!*

*Snap back to reality, Oh there goes gravity*

*Oh, there goes Rabbit, he choked, he's so mad,*

*But he won't give up that easy, no, he won't have it*

*He knows his whole back's to these ropes*

*It don't matter, he's dope*

*He knows that, but he's broke*

*He's so stacked that he knows*

*When he goes back to his mobile home, that's when it's*

*Back to the lab again yo*

*This whole rhapsody,*

*He better go capture this moment and hope it don't pass him*

## Clerihew

Clerihews have just a few simple rules:

1. They are four lines long.
2. The first and second lines rhyme with each other, and the third and fourth lines rhyme with each other. (AABB rhyme scheme)
3. The first line names a well-known person, and the second line ends with something that rhymes with the name of the person.
4. A clerihew should be funny.

Example:

There was a boy named Harry Potter,  
With the right spell he could breathe under water.  
Magic fixed a broken bone without an incision,  
But somehow he couldn't correct his vision!

## Epitaph

Epitaphs are poems written for and about a deceased person (or animal). They are often humorous poems that follow an ABCB rhyming pattern, but poets often break away from these rules when necessary. An epitaph could also be a serious reflection on someone close to or respected by the poet.

Death in the West

(On a dentist's tombstone)

Here lies Lester Moore  
Four slugs  
From a forty-four  
No Les  
No more.

Stranger tread  
This ground with gravity.  
Dentist Brown  
Is filling his last cavity.

(In Silver City Nevada)

In memory of Anna Hopewell

Here lies a man named Zeke.  
Second fastest draw  
in Cripple Creek.

Here lies the body of our Anna  
Done to death by a banana  
It wasn't the fruit that laid her low  
But the skin of the thing that made  
her go.

Now try a few of your own!

# Limerick

## How to Write a Limerick

by Bruce Lansky

To help you get started writing limericks, here's some helpful information about writing limericks.

To begin, a limerick is a funny little poem containing five lines. It has a very distinctive rhythm and rhyme pattern.

- **Rhyme Pattern:** The last words of the first, second, and fifth lines all rhyme with each other. We'll call those rhyming words "A," however the words could be "Peru," "shoe," and "true" as illustrated in the first poem below or "Tim," "swim," and "him" as illustrated in the second poem below. And the last words of the third and fourth lines rhyme with each other. We'll call those rhyming words "B," however the words could be "night" and "fright" in the first example or "dock" and "rock" in the second example.
- **Rhythm Pattern:** The first, second, and fifth lines all have this rhythm pattern: da DUM da da DUM da da DUM (notice there are 3 DUMS or beats). Say, "There once was a fellow named Tim" out loud. Now say, "da DUM da da DUM da da DUM" out loud. Notice that both have the same rhythm. The third and fourth lines have a different rhythm pattern: da DUM da da DUM (notice there are 2 DUMS or beats). Say, "He fell off the dock" out loud. Now say "da DUM da da DUM" out loud. Notice that both have the same rhythm.

Here is a very famous limerick. Notice both the rhyme and rhythm patterns.

There was an old man from Peru, (A)  
da DUM da da DUM da da DUM (3 DUMS)

who dreamed he was eating his shoe. (A)  
da DUM da da DUM da da DUM (3 DUMS)

He awoke in the night (B)  
da DUM da da DUM (2 DUMS)

with a terrible fright, (B)  
da da DUM da da DUM (2 DUMS)

and found out that it was quite true. (A)  
da DUM da da DUM da da DUM (3 DUMS)

When you write a limerick, make sure that it has the same AABBA rhyme pattern. Make sure it also has the same 3 DUMS, 3 DUMS, 2 DUMS, 2 DUMS, 3 DUMS rhythm pattern, too. To be sure, recite the poem, substituting "da" for all unaccented or unstressed syllables and "DUM" for all accented or stressed syllables, as I have done above. If your poem doesn't have a similar rhythm pattern, then you need to make some adjustments.

Ideas for new limericks can come from almost anywhere. For example, your city, state, country, or name.

## TRIOLET

The features of the Triolet are:

- 8 lines.
- Two rhymes.
- 5 of the 8 lines are repeated or refrain lines.
- First line repeats at the 4th and 7th lines.
- Second line repeats at the 8th line.
- Rhyme scheme (where an upper-case letter indicates the appearance of an identical line, while a lower-case letter indicates a rhyme with each line designated by the same lower-case or upper-case letter):
- The first line appearing 3 times gives the poem form its name. (Tri = 3)

A -  
B -  
A - Rhymes with 1st line.  
A - Identical to 1st line.  
A - Rhymes with 1st line.  
B - Rhymes with 2nd line.  
A - Identical to 1st line.  
B - Identical to 2nd line.

### The Cow's Complaint

by Alice Scheril

How unkind to keep me here  
When, over there, the grass is greener.  
Tender blades-so far, so near-  
How unkind to keep me here!  
Through this fence they make me peer  
At sweeter stems; what could be meaner?  
How unkind to keep me here  
When, over there, the grass is greener.



## PANTOUM – a challenge!

A Pantoum is written in quatrains (4-line stanzas) and can be any length. The rhyming pattern usually is ABAB though it doesn't have to rhyme at all. Lines 2 and 4 of each stanza are repeated as lines 1 and 3 of the next stanza for the entire length of the poem. Additionally, in the final stanza, lines 2 and 4 are lines 3 and 1 from the opening stanza so the opening line is the same as the closing line. Confused yet? See the example for help.

### Repeated

By Mr. Nelson

Are you listening to me?  
I seem to be repeating myself again.  
Am I a little wave in your giant sea?  
Am I less interesting than the click of your pen?

I seem to be repeating myself again.  
Why didn't you hear me before?  
Am I less interesting than the click of your pen?  
Do you find what I'm saying such a bore?

Why didn't you hear me before?  
I spend half my life repeating myself.  
Do you find what I'm saying such a bore?  
I spend half my life repeating myself.

I spend half my life repeating myself.  
You'll miss some important information!  
I spend half my life repeating myself.  
Has your brain gone on vacation?

If you miss this important information,  
If you don't put the effort in to learn,  
If you let your brain go on vacation,  
On your test you'll crash and burn.

So put the effort in to learn,  
Eyes and ears tuned to what I say,  
On your test don't crash and burn,  
Do your part to get an A

Eyes and ears tuned to what I say,  
Am I a little wave in your giant sea?  
Do your part to get an A.  
Are you listening to me?



## Free Verse

Most of the poetry we have read this year was \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. Free verse poetry is poetry without any \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. You decide \_\_\_\_\_ and even \_\_\_\_\_ words will  
\_\_\_\_\_. You decide where the line and stanza \_\_\_\_\_ occur. You  
still write free verse poetry in lines and stanzas so it doesn't become  
\_\_\_\_\_. You also don't put your breaks just anywhere—careful thought  
must go in to this decision. The most important thing about free verse is getting  
your thoughts, feelings, and/or message across to your \_\_\_\_\_. This  
freedom allows you to be VERY \_\_\_\_\_ in how you put words together. You  
are able to use all of the \_\_\_\_\_ you now have in your poetry  
\_\_\_\_\_ to share an idea in a way it has never been shared before!

Another very important thing to consider before writing a free verse poem is  
the \_\_\_\_\_. Look back at your "Poetry Topic Brainstorm" page and/or your  
writer's notebook to find those topics that affect \_\_\_\_\_. Really think about  
what you want to say about the topic(s) and what type of a \_\_\_\_\_ you  
want to set. Next, write a few free verse poems of your own and see what you can  
do!

## Final Poem

For our last poem, you will be taking all that you have learned about poems so far and create one poem with many poetic elements included. Each instance of a poetic element should be labeled. It is up to you whether the poem rhymes or not. The elements to include in your poem are:

- ✓ Alliteration (repetition of beginning sound)
- ✓ Imagery (appeal to the 5 senses to paint a picture)
- ✓ Figurative language (metaphor, simile, etc.)
- ✓ Repetition of words, phrases, lines, etc.
- ✓ Assonance (repetition of middle vowel sound)



For your writing process you will need:

- A least one rough draft
- 3 revisions (Does it make sense? Does it paint a picture? Are the line breaks where they should be?)
- 3 edits
- A final draft with the 6 elements from above labeled
- A reflection on you poem (Why did you choose your topic? Is there background information we might want to know? What was easy/hard to do while writing this piece? What does the poem mean to you? Any other important info.)

Now it is time for the topic search. In your writer's notebook, record some (or all) of the topics we brainstorm that would be a good match for you and your poem. For your assignment tonight, fill out the following questions:

1. My topic is:
  
2. What I want to say about my topic is:
  
3. How I will get my message across clearly is:

## Presentation Poetry

Q: What am I going to do with this final poem?

A: Slam it!

Poems are often shared in poetry “slams”. A slam is a poetry competition where the audience judges which poem is the best. You will share your final poem with your Language Arts class, and they will decide whose poem deserves to go on to the next round. Our second round will be held in the pod with the other two Language Arts classes helping decide the best poem. The final round will be held at a pod meeting with the 3 morning and 3 afternoon winners presenting for the team. Your team of teachers will judge the last round.

You can't simply read your poem and hope to get a good response from the audience, you have to PERFORM it! Grading and judging will be based on the LPS presentation rubric. We will be looking for:

- ✓ Pace (not too slow, not too fast; speed up and slow down for effect)
- ✓ Volume (not too loud, not too soft; volume up and down for effect)
- ✓ Enunciation (speak clearly so we can understand your words)
- ✓ Expression (speak so we know you are passionate about your poem and topic)
- ✓ Body Language (what will you do with your hands? Facial expressions?)
- ✓ Eye Contact (be sure to draw your listeners in by looking at them)

Take the time to get your poem just right; be proud of the work you have put into it. Then, practice, practice, practice! The more you practice, the more comfortable you will be!

