

# Literary Devices

Everything you need to know to analyze figurative language in poetry, drama, literature, speeches, etc., etc., etc.



# Essential Question

**What are the literary devices I need to understand to analyze poetry, drama, and other literature?**

# TEK

Students **understand, make inferences** and **draw conclusions** about how an author's sensory language creates imagery in literary text and **provide evidence** from text to support their understanding

# Figurative Language

language that is not meant to be taken  
literally, or word for word



# Imagery/Sensory Language

- the use of language to create **mental images** and **sensory impressions** for **emotional effect** and intensity
- **Example—**
  - He could hear his world crashing down when he heard the news about her.
  - A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.  
Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the *Milky Way*



from *Daffodils* by William Wordsworth



# Simile

- a comparison of two things that are essentially different, using the words *like* or *as*
- **Example**
  - *O my love is like a red, red rose*  
from Robert Burn's "A Red, Red Rose"

# Metaphor

**METAPHORS  
BE WITH YOU**

- a subtle comparison in which an author describes a person or thing using words that are not meant to be taken literally

- Examples—

All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely  
players:

They have their exits and their  
entrances

from *As You Like It* by William Shakespeare

## *Sisters*

She calls me tofu  
because I am so soft,  
easily falling apart.

I wish I were tough  
and full of fire, like ginger—  
like her.

*A Suitcase of Seaweed and other poems*  
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# Extended Metaphor

- a metaphor introduced and then further developed throughout all or part of a literary work, especially a poem—comparison can be made to something else not mentioned in the poem
- **Example—**
  - *Nothing Gold Can Stay* by Robert Frost





# Extended Metaphor

## *Nothing Gold Can Stay* by Robert Frost

Nature's first green is gold  
Her hardest hue to hold.  
Her early leaf's a flower;  
But only so an hour.  
Then leaf subsides to leaf.  
So Eden sank to grief,  
So dawn goes down to day.  
Nothing gold can stay.



**Comparison= life to a sunrise**

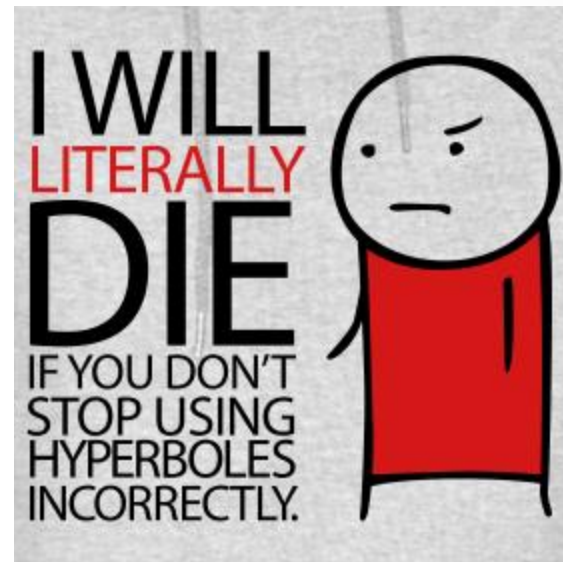
# Personification

- figurative language in which nonhuman things or abstractions are represented as having human qualities
- **Example—**
  - Necessity is the mother of all invention.



# Hyperbole

- an intentional and extreme exaggeration for emphasis or effect
- **Example—**
  - This book weighs a ton.



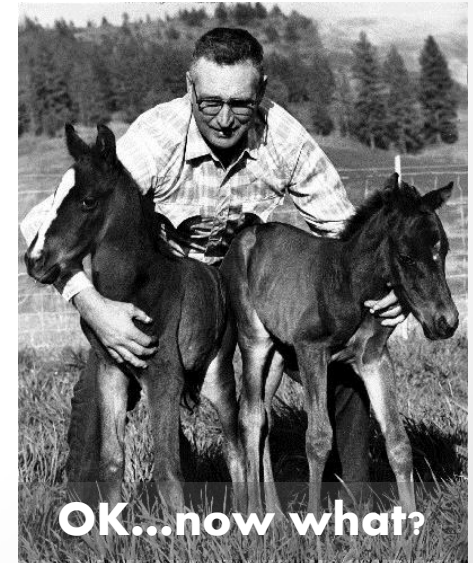
# Idiom

Phrases people use in everyday language which do not make sense literally, but the meaning is understood



## Examples—

*Just hold your horses if you think idioms are hard! I'm here to let the cat out of the bag. Idioms are a dime a dozen, and learning them is a piece of cake.*



# Sound Devices

Focus on the sound of words, rather than their meaning

# Repetition

- Repetition is when an author repeats a word, phrase, sentence, or stanza for **effect or emphasis**.
- Examples:
  - The chorus or refrain of almost any song
  - This poem, by Shel Silverstein:



## HOW NOT TO HAVE TO DRY THE DISHES

If you have to dry the dishes  
(Such an awful, boring chore)  
If you have to dry the dishes  
(“Stead of going to the store)  
If you have to dry the dishes  
And you drop one on the floor—  
Maybe they won’t let you  
Dry the dishes anymore.

# Rhyme

## INVICTUS

Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.

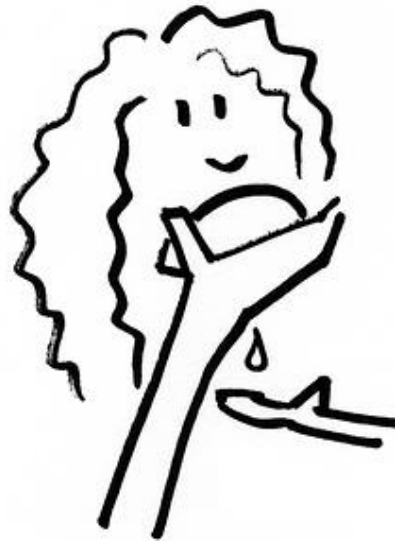
In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud,  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate;  
I am the captain of my soul.

-William Ernest Henley

**Rhyme** is the repetition of end sounds in two or more words or phrases that appear close to each other in a poem.

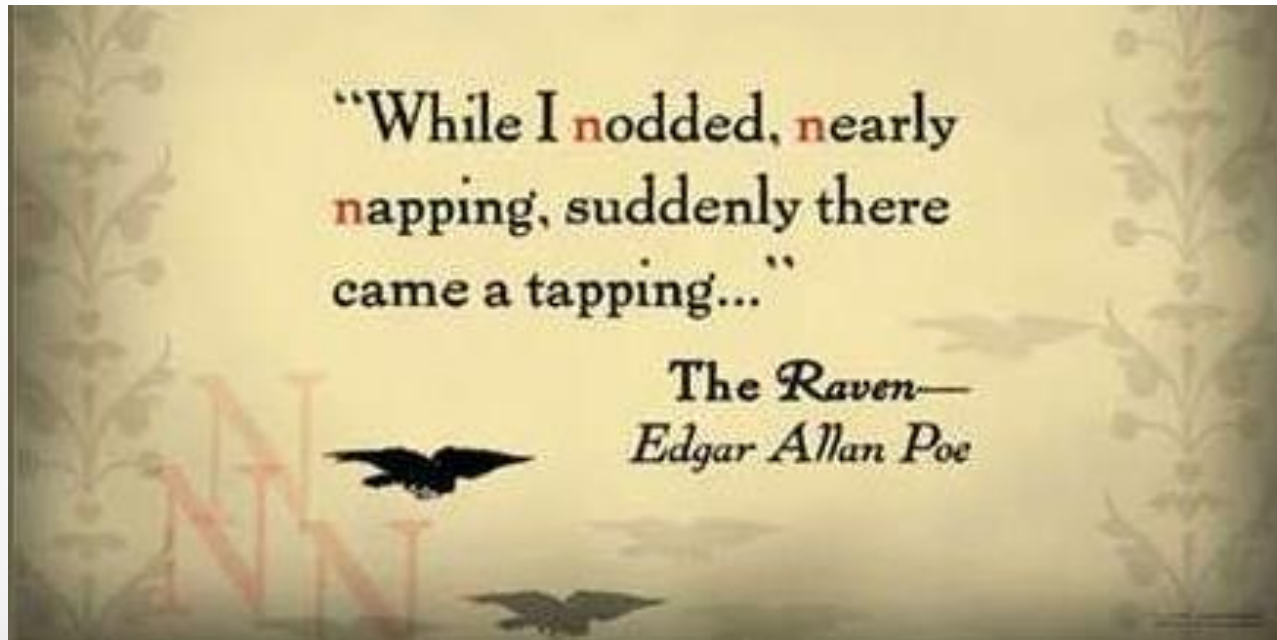


Oh lovely orange<sup>A</sup>  
You golden treat,<sup>B</sup>  
Oh tell me why aren't<sup>C</sup>  
You easy to eat?<sup>B</sup>



# Alliteration

- Alliteration is the repetition of a sound at the beginning of words.
- Common examples:  
Coca-cola, Tiny Tim, Mickey Mouse





# Assonance

- Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds
- Often creates near-rhyme

## “The Bells” by Edgar Allen Poe

Hear the mellow wedding bells,  
Golden bells!

What a world of happiness their harmony foretells!

Through the balmy air of night

How they ring out their delight!

From the molten-golden notes,

And an in tune,

What a liquid ditty floats

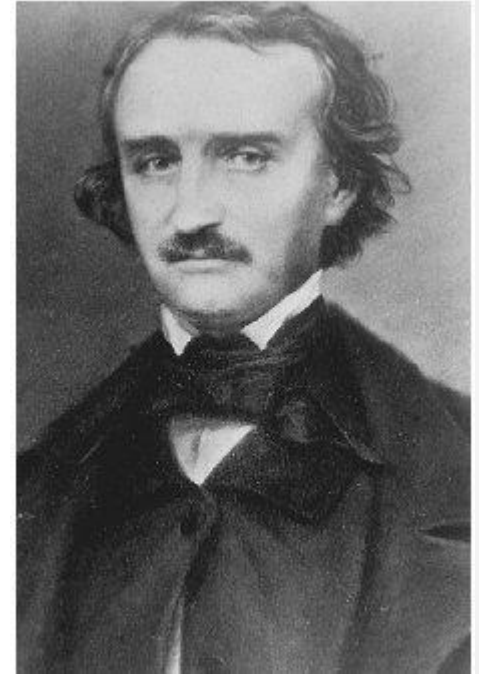
To the turtle-dove that listens, while she gloats

On the moon!

“mellow  
wedding  
bells” –  
short e sound

“molten-  
golden  
notes” –  
long o sound

“liquid  
ditty” –  
short i sound



# Consonance

- Consonance is the repetition of consonant sounds at the end or middle of words (**not** rhyme).

Do not go gentle into that good night,  
Old age should burn and rage at close of day,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,  
Because their words had forked no lightning they  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright  
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green  
bay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,  
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding  
sight  
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,  
Curse, bless me now with your fierce tears, I  
pray.

Do not go gentle into that good night.

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

“Do Not Go  
Gentle into that  
Good Night”  
by Dylan Thomas

“blind eyes could  
blaze” – z sound

“curse, bless me  
now with your  
fierce tears” –  
s sound

# Onomatopoeia

- Onomatopoeia- a word that sounds like the sound it makes
- For example: pop, crackle, screech, zip, fizz
- Not just sound effects!

“And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,  
You heard as if an army muttered;  
And the muttering grew to a grumbling;  
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;  
And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.”

*The Pied Piper of Hamelin—  
Robert Browning*



# Other Literary Devices

Even more...



# Symbol

- A symbol is an object, person, place, or action that has a meaning in itself, and that also stands for something larger than itself.

For example:

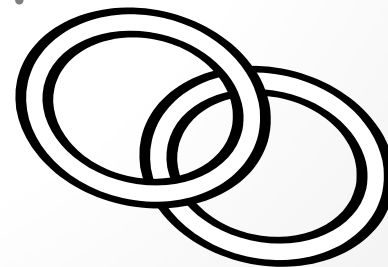
A dove symbolizes peace.



A black crow or raven symbolizes death.



A wedding ring symbolizes...???





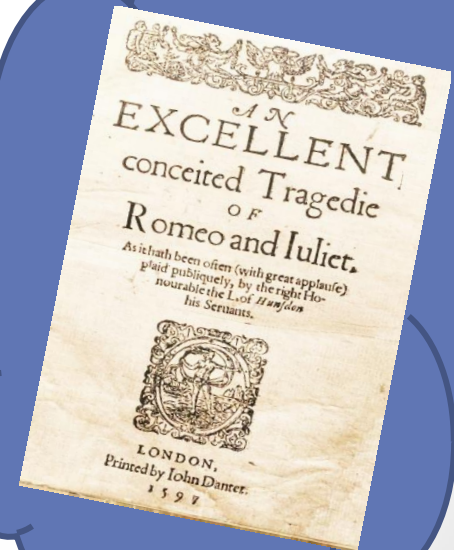
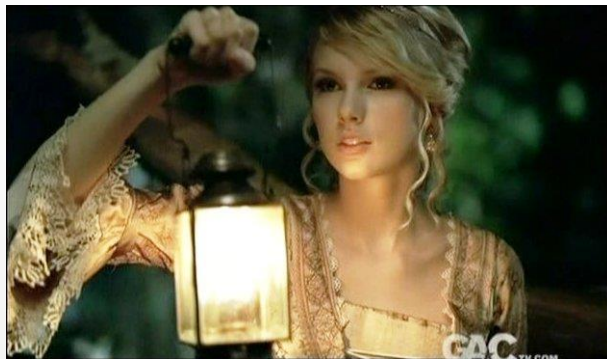
# Allusion

- An **allusion** is a reference to a person, place, event, or literary work that a writer expects the reader to recognize and understand. It may come from history, geography, literature, art, music, or religion.

For example:

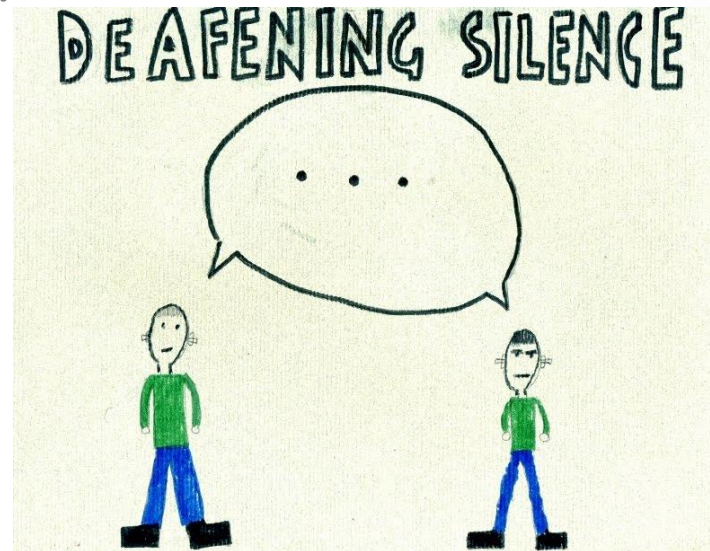
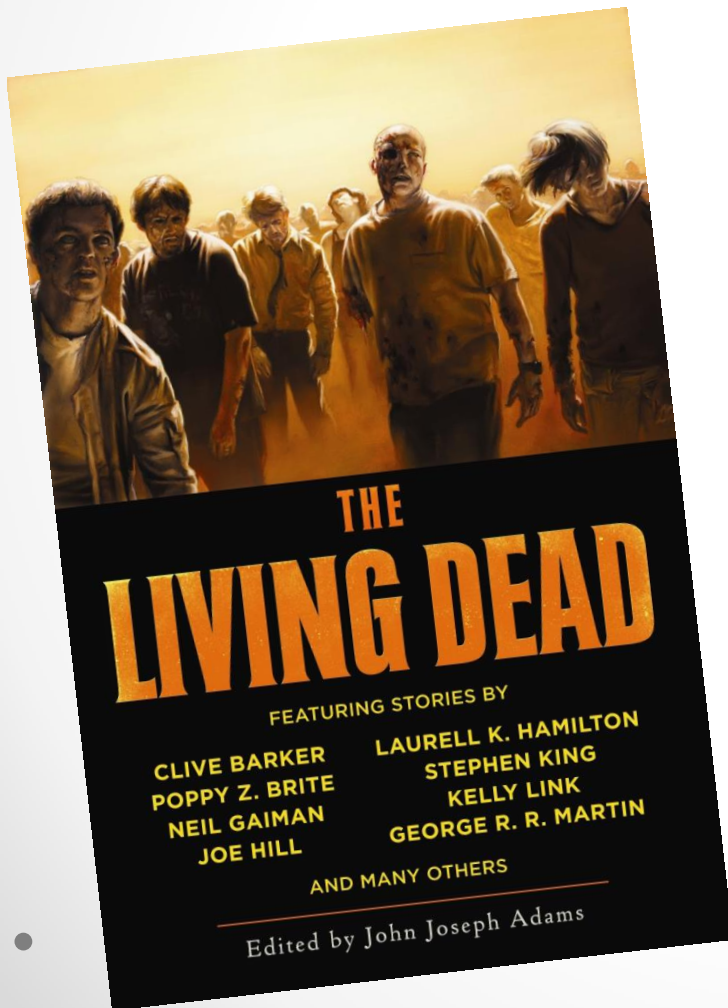
You were Romeo, you were throwing pebbles  
And my daddy said, "Stay away from Juliet"

"Love Song", by Taylor Swift



# Oxymoron

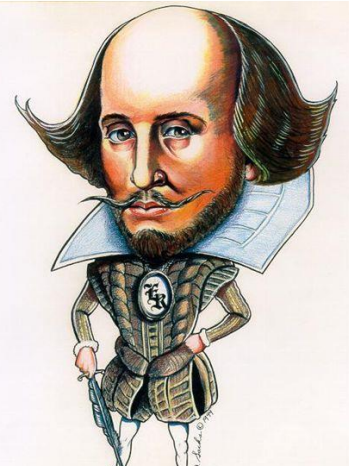
- An Oxymoron is a figure of speech in which opposites are paired for effect.



## Further Examples

❑ "Parting is such sweet sorrow."  
~ Romeo and Juliet

❑ "So foul and fair a day I have not seen!"  
~ Macbeth





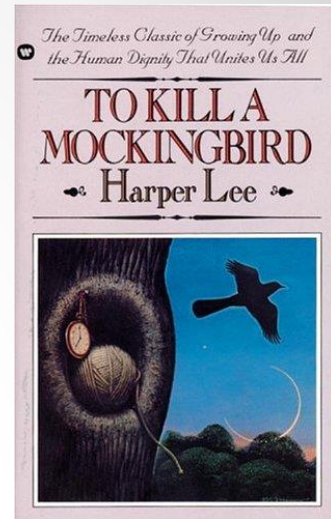
# Aphorism

- a concise statement of a general truth or principle; like a truism

- Example—

- A penny saved is a penny earned. - Ben Franklin
- The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who cannot read them. - Mark Twain
- “You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view – until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.”

from *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee







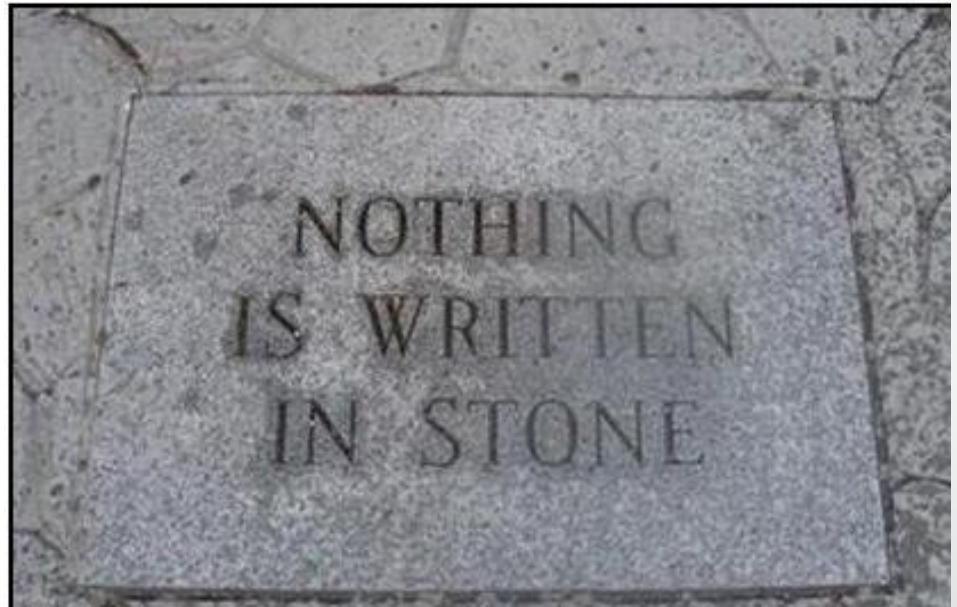
# Epigraph



- a quotation at the beginning of a literary work to introduce its theme
- Example—
  - *But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,  
thou shalt not eat of it:  
for in the day that thou eatest thereof  
thou shalt surely die.*  
(Genesis 2:17)  
--from *Twilight* by Stephanie Meyer
  - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LnBr-7QzBBg>

# Irony

- a literary technique used to create meaning that seems to contradict the literal meaning or events
  - Verbal
  - Situational
  - Dramatic



# Verbal Irony

- use of words in which the intended meaning is contrary to the literal meaning
- Example –
  - “Are we gonna do anything today?” or “Is class gonna be fun today?”
  - In SHREK , when Fiona Says “Where are you going?” and Shrek replies “I’ve got to save my ass.” (Speaking of Donkey, of course.)





# Situational Irony

- implying through plot or character that a situation is quite different from the way it is presented.
- Example—
  - 'The Wonderful Wizard of Oz', Scarecrow always had a brain; Tin Man always had a heart; Dorothy could have always gone home; the Cowardly Lion wasn't a coward after all.

# Dramatic Irony



- dramatic device in which a character says or does something that he or she does not fully grasp but which is understood by the audience
- Example—
  - Lois Lane is constantly trying to get an interview with Superman, but she actually sees him every day and doesn't know it (Clark Kent).



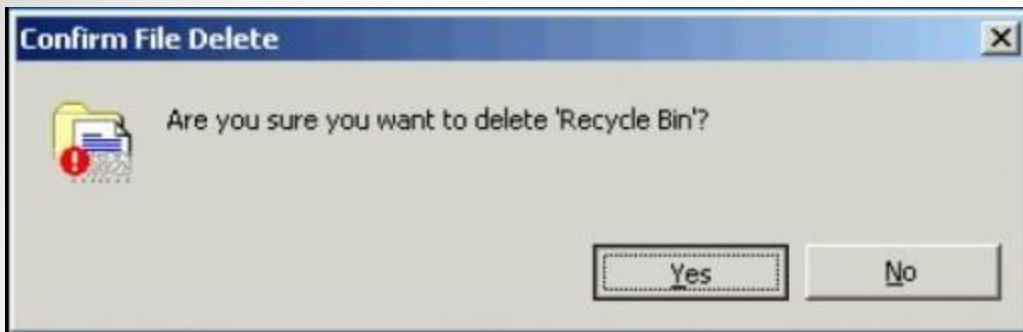
# Sarcasm

a bitter form of irony, can be intended to tease or hurt; often insinuated by the tone; late Greek *sarkasmós*, f. *sarkázein* tear flesh, gnash the teeth, speak bitterly, f. *sárx*, *sark*- flesh.



## Example—

- “I’m proud of you, Mom. You’re like Christopher Columbus. You discovered something millions of people knew about before you.” –Lisa Simpson



# Paradox

- a seemingly contradictory statement that on closer analysis reveals a deeper truth
- Example—
  - “I’m nobody.” --anonymous
  - “I can resist anything but temptation.” --Oscar Wilde
  - “Nobody goes to that restaurant; it’s too crowded.”

# For Analyzing Poetry

Review





# Refrain

- a phrase or verse recurring at intervals in a song or poem, especially at the end of each stanza; chorus.
- Example—
  - “All you need is love  
Love is all you need”  
--The Beatles
  - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-pFAFsTFTI>

# Rhythm

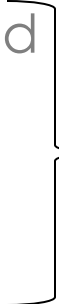
- the **BEAT** created by the sounds off the words in a poem
- Rhythm can be created by meter, rhyme scheme, alliteration, assonance, and refrain.

# Stanza

- A stanza is a group of related words in a poem, similar to a paragraph of prose but does not have to have complete sentences.
- *It's like a poetry paragraph!*

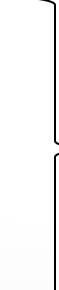
“When the Teacher’s Back is Turned” by Ken Nesbitt

When the teacher’s back is turned  
We never scream and shout  
Never do we drop our books  
and try to freak her out.



Stanza 1

No one throws a pencil  
At the ceiling of the class.  
No one tries to hit the fire alarm  
And break the glass.



Stanza 2

# Style

- Style is a manner or “way” of writing.
- It involves HOW something is said rather than what is actually said.
- A writer’s style is determined by the way he/she uses words.
  - Ex: vivid verbs, imagery, sentence structure

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,  
In the forests of the night;  
What immortal hand or eye,  
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?



In what distant deeps or skies,  
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?  
On what wings dare he aspire?  
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

“

life's not  
a paragraph

and death i think  
is no parenthesis

”



maggie and milly and molly and may  
went down to the beach (to play one day)

and maggie discovered a shell that sang  
so sweetly she couldn't remember her troubles,  
and

milly befriended a stranded star  
whose rays five languid fingers were;

and molly was chased by a horrible thing  
which raced sideways while blowing bubbles: and

may came home with a smooth round stone  
as small as a world and as large as alone.

For whatever we lose (like a you or a me)  
it's always ourselves we find in the sea

- **No capital letters**

- **Personification**

- **Ends lines in the middle of a "sentence"**

- **Imagery**

E. E. Cummings writes all his poems like this—no capital letters, simple language, unusual line breaks. Why do you think he does this?



# Tone

- Tone is the **writer's attitude** toward a subject, character, or audience and is conveyed through the author's choice of diction, imagery, figurative language, details, and syntax.
- *(In other words, tone is **how the author feels about his subject, character, or audience, and he shows it through the words he chooses, and how he puts them together.**)*

# Tone

**Some words that can describe tone are:**



Nervous



Sad

happy	excited	angry
sad	fearful	threatening
thoughtful	nervous	agitated
ecstatic	worried	depressed



Belligerent



Ecstatic

# Mood

- The feeling that the writer creates for the reader.
- This is how the **reader** is supposed to feel about the subject.
- Descriptive words, imagery, and figurative language all influence the mood of a literary work.



# Theme

- Theme is the central message of a literary work, or the idea the author wishes to convey about that subject. It is **not** the same as the subject, which can be expressed in one or two words. (This is a lot like a **truism**.)
- Possible themes for The Outsiders:
  - Not all kids who are in gangs are bad.
  - People may come from different backgrounds, but we're all the same people.
  - If something bad happens to someone, don't blame it on yourself if it's not really your fault.

# POINT OF VIEW FLOW CHART

Decide whether narrative is written in 1st or 3rd person

