**Poetry Speaking Test**

**Foundation**

What is a poem? A short text which has a meaning and rhythm

How should you approach the exam? Highlight the key concept in the question, read once for overall meaning, read a second time to highlight interesting words and effects; annotate how these effect the reader

What is structure? The order of ideas in the poem.

What is graphology? How the poem is laid out

What paragraph structure should you use? Point- evidence-explain

What should you write about? How the key concept in the question is shown in the poems and how the poems make you think as the reader.

What verbs can you use to analyse poetry? Connotes, implies, infers, suggests, creates (an image of)

What connectives can you use to show that the poems are similar in devices/effects/meanings?Both, equally, likewise, as with, like, in the same way, also

What connectives can you use to show that poems are different in their devices/effects/meanings? Whereas, On the other hand, instead of, unlike, otherwise, alternatively, but, although.

**Intermediate – read the definition and ask for the device**

**Alliteration**  
The repetition of consonant sounds, especially at the beginning of words. Example: "Fetched fresh, as I suppose, off some sweet wood." Hopkins, "In the Valley of the Elwy."

**Assonance**  
The repetition of similar vowel sounds in a sentence or a line of poetry or prose, as in "I rose and told him of my woe." Whitman's "When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer" contains assonantal "I's" in the following lines: "How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick, / Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself."

**Ballad**  
A [narrative poem](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#narrative_poem) written in four-line [stanzas](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#stanza), characterized by swift action and narrated in a direct style. The Anonymous medieval ballad, "Barbara Allan," exemplifies the genre.

**Blank verse**  
A line of poetry or prose in unrhymed [iambic pentameter](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#iamb). Shakespeare's sonnets, Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost*, and Robert Frost's meditative poems such as "Birches" include many lines of blank verse. Here are the opening blank verse lines of "Birches": When I see birches bend to left and right / Across the lines of straighter darker trees, / I like to think some boy's been swinging them.

**Caesura**  
A strong pause within a line of verse. The following stanza from Hardy's "The Man He Killed" contains caesuras in the middle two lines:

He thought he'd 'list, perhaps,  
Off-hand-like--just as I--  
Was out of work-had sold his traps--  
No other reason why.

**Couplet**  
A pair of rhymed lines that may or may not constitute a separate [stanza](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#stanza) in a poem. Shakespeare's sonnets end in rhymed couplets, as in "For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings / That then I scorn to change my state with kings."

**Elegy**  
A [lyric poem](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#lyric_poem) that laments the dead. Robert Hayden's "Those Winter Sundays" is elegiac in tone. A more explicitly identified elegy is W.H. Auden's "In Memory of William Butler Yeats" and his "Funeral Blues."

**Elision**  
The omission of an unstressed vowel or syllable to preserve the [meter](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#meter) of a line of poetry. Alexander uses elision in "Sound and Sense": "Flies o'er th' unbending corn...."

**Enjambment**  
A run-on line of poetry in which logical and grammatical sense carries over from one line into the next. An enjambed line differs from an end-stopped line in which the grammatical and logical sense is completed within the line. In the opening lines of Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess," for example, the first line is end-stopped and the second enjambed:

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,  
Looking as if she were alive. I call  
That piece a wonder, now....

**Falling meter**  
Poetic [meters](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#meter) such as trochaic and dactylic that move or fall from a stressed to an unstressed syllable. The nonsense line, "Higgledy, piggledy," is dactylic, with the accent on the first syllable and the two syllables following falling off from that accent in each word. Trochaic meter is represented by this line: "Hip-hop, be-bop, treetop--freedom."

**Figurative language**  
A form of language use in which writers and speakers convey something other than the literal meaning of their words. Examples include hyperbole or exaggeration, litotes or understatement, simile and metaphor, which employ comparison, and synecdoche and metonymy, in which a part of a thing stands for the whole.

**Foot**  
A [metrical](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#meter) unit composed of stressed and unstressed syllables. For example, an iamb or iambic foot is represented by ˘*'*, that is, an unaccented syllable followed by an accented one. Frost's line "Whose woods these are I think I know" contains four iambs, and is thus an iambic foot.

**Free verse**  
Poetry without a regular pattern of [meter](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#meter) or rhyme. The verse is "free" in not being bound by earlier poetic conventions requiring poems to adhere to an explicit and identifiable meter and rhyme scheme in a form such as the sonnet or ballad. Modern and contemporary poets of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries often employ free verse. Williams's "This Is Just to Say" is one of many examples.

**Hyperbole**  
A figure of speech involving exaggeration. John Donne uses hyperbole in his poem: "Song: Go and Catch a Falling Star."

**Iamb**  
An unstressed syllable followed by a stressed one, as in *to-DAY*. See [*Foot*](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#foot).

**Image**  
A concrete representation of a sense impression, a feeling, or an idea. Imagery refers to the pattern of related details in a work. In some works one image predominates either by recurring throughout the work or by appearing at a critical point in the plot. Often writers use multiple images throughout a work to suggest states of feeling and to convey implications of thought and action. Some modern poets, such as Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams, write poems that lack discursive explanation entirely and include only images. Among the most famous examples is Pound's poem "In a Station of the Metro":

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;  
Petals on a wet, black bough.

**Imagery**  
The pattern of related comparative aspects of language, particularly of images, in a literary work. Imagery of light and darkness pervade James Joyce's stories "Araby," "The Boarding House," and "The Dead." So, too, does religious imagery.

**Lyric poem**  
A type of poem characterized by brevity, compression, and the expression of feeling. Most of the poems in this book are lyrics. The anonymous "Western Wind" epitomizes the genre:

Western wind, when will thou blow,  
The small rain down can rain?  
Christ, if my love were in my arms  
And I in my bed again!

**Metaphor**  
A comparison between essentially unlike things without an explicitly comparative word such as *like* or *as*. An example is "My love is a red, red rose,"

From Burns's "A Red, Red Rose." Langston Hughes's "Dream Deferred" is built entirely of metaphors. Metaphor is one of the most important of literary uses of language. Shakespeare employs a wide range of metaphor in his sonnets and his plays, often in such density and profusion that readers are kept busy analyzing and interpreting and unraveling them. Compare [*Simile*](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#simile).

**Meter**  
The measured pattern of rhythmic accents in poems. See [*Foot*](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#foot) and [*Iamb*](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#iamb).

**Narrative poem**  
A poem that tells a story. See [*Ballad*](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#ballad).

**Narrator**  
The voice and implied speaker of a fictional work, to be distinguished from the actual living author. For example, the narrator of Joyce's "Araby" is not James Joyce himself, but a literary fictional character created expressly to tell the story. Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" contains a communal narrator, identified only as "we." See [*Point of view*](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#point_of_view).

**Octave**  
An eight-line unit, which may constitute a [stanza](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#stanza); or a section of a poem, as in the octave of a [sonnet](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#sonnet).

**Ode**   
A long, stately poem in [stanzas](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#stanza) of varied length, [meter](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#meter), and form. Usually a serious poem on an exalted subject, such as Horace's "Eheu fugaces," but sometimes a more lighthearted work, such as Neruda's "Ode to My Socks."

**Onomatopoeia**  
The use of words to imitate the sounds they describe. Words such as *buzz* and *crack* are onomatopoetic. The following line from Pope's "Sound and Sense" onomatopoetically imitates in sound what it describes:

When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,  
The line too labors, and the words move slow.

Most often, however, onomatopoeia refers to words and groups of words, such as Tennyson's description of the "murmur of innumerable bees," which attempts to capture the sound of a swarm of bees buzzing.

**Open form**  
A type of structure or form in poetry characterized by freedom from regularity and consistency in such elements as rhyme, line length, [metrical pattern](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#meter), and overall poetic structure. E.E. Cummings's "[Buffalo Bill's]" is one example. See also [*Free verse*](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#free_verse).

**Parody**  
A humorous, mocking imitation of a literary work, sometimes sarcastic, but often playful and even respectful in its playful imitation. Examples include Bob McKenty's parody of Frost's "Dust of Snow" and Kenneth Koch's parody of Williams's "This is Just to Say."

**Personification**  
The endowment of inanimate objects or abstract concepts with animate or living qualities. An example: "The yellow leaves flaunted their color gaily in the breeze." Wordsworth's "I wandered lonely as a cloud" includes personification.

**Quatrain**  
A four-line [stanza](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#stanza) in a poem, the first four lines and the second four lines in a Petrachan sonnet. A Shakespearean sonnet contains three quatrains followed by a couplet.

**Rhyme**  
The matching of final vowel or consonant sounds in two or more words. The following stanza of "Richard Cory" employs alternate rhyme, with the third line rhyming with the first and the fourth with the second:

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,  
We people on the pavement looked at him;  
He was a gentleman from sole to crown  
Clean favored and imperially slim.

**Rhythm**  
The recurrence of accent or stress in lines of verse. In the following lines from "Same in Blues" by Langston Hughes, the accented words and syllables are underlined:

I said to my baby,  
Baby take it slow....  
Lulu said to Leonard  
I want a diamond ring

**Satire**  
A literary work that criticizes human misconduct and ridicules vices, stupidities, and follies. Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is a famous example. Chekhov's *Marriage Proposal* and O'Connor's "Everything That Rises Must Converge," have strong satirical elements.

**Sestet**  
A six-line unit of verse constituting a [stanza](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#stanza) or section of a poem; the last six lines of an Italian [sonnet](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#sonnet). Examples: Petrarch's "If it is not love, then what is it that I feel," and Frost's "Design."

**Sestina**  
A poem of thirty-nine lines and written in iambic pentameter. Its six-line [stanza](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#stanza) repeat in an intricate and prescribed order the final word in each of the first six lines. After the sixth [stanza](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#stanza), there is a three-line envoi, which uses the six repeating words, two per line.

**Setting**  
The time and place of a literary work that establish its context. The stories of Sandra Cisneros are set in the American southwest in the mid to late 20th century, those of James Joyce in Dublin, Ireland in the early 20th century.

**Simile**  
A figure of speech involving a comparison between unlike things using *like*, *as*, or *as though*. An example: "My love is like a red, red rose."

**Sibilance**

Repetition of the ‘s’ sounds. For example, the word sibilance itself is sibilant.

**Sonnet**  
A fourteen-line poem in [iambic pentameter](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#iamb). The Shakespearean or English sonnet is arranged as three [quatrains](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#quatrain) and a final [couplet](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#couplet), rhyming abab cdcd efef gg. The Petrarchan or Italian sonnet divides into two parts: an eight-line octave and a six-line sestet, rhyming abba abba cde cde or abba abba cd cd cd.

**Stanza**  
A division or unit of a poem that is repeated in the same form--either with similar or identical patterns or rhyme and [meter](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#meter), or with variations from one stanza to another. The stanzas of Gertrude Schnackenberg's "Signs" are regular; those of Rita Dove's "Canary" are irregular.

**Symbol**  
An object or action in a literary work that means more than itself, that stands for something beyond itself. The glass unicorn in *The Glass Menagerie*, the rocking horse in "The Rocking-Horse Winner," the road in Frost's "The Road Not Taken"--all are symbols in this sense.

**Syntax**  
The grammatical order of words in a sentence or line of verse or dialogue. The organization of words and phrases and clauses in sentences of prose, verse, and dialogue. In the following example, normal syntax (subject, verb, object order) is inverted:

"Whose woods these are I think I know."

**Theme**  
The idea of a literary work abstracted from its details of language, character, and action, and cast in the form of a generalization. See discussion of Dickinson's "Crumbling is not an instant's Act."

**Tone**  
The implied attitude of a writer toward the subject and characters of a work, as, for example, Flannery O'Connor's ironic tone in her "Good Country People." See [*Irony*](http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html#irony).

**Advanced**

Answer a GCSE poetry question.





 