What makes a POEM a poem?

Prime Number Poem
http://www.ted.com/talks/harry_baker_a_love_poem_for_lonely_prime_numbers

Is a jump-rope rhyme a poem?
What about the lyrics of your favorite song, or even a song that parents sign to children?

Once you start looking for poems, you'll find that they are _all_ around you. You may even have written some yourself!

What makes a POEM a poem?
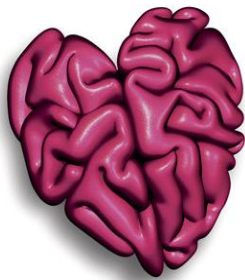
Poetry is everywhere...

Song lyrics

Greeting-card messages

Commercial jingles...

What makes a POEM a poem?

You might describe some poems as
clever, others as inspiring,
And still others as sappy.

Every so often, though, you
MIGHT encounter a poem
that gets inside your
heart and mind.

How
does
a
poem
do
that?

Let's continue on to find out...

Part 1: What Makes Poetry Different?

- One difference between poetry and prose has to do with **structure**, or the way a poem looks on the page.

  - While short stories and news articles consist of sentences and paragraphs, poems are made up of lines.

  - A **line** can be a single word, a sentence, or part of a sentence.

  - In many poems, lines are arranged into groups called **stanzas**.

Part 1: What Makes Poetry Different?

- Poetry is different from prose in another way.

  - Poetry sounds different from prose, as you'll see when you read the poem, *A Find Head of Lettuce*, with all its **rhymes** and bouncy **rhythms**.

  - As you will **also** see, poems have speakers and the speaker may not be the poet.

A Fine Head of Lettuce

Poem by **Jack Prelutsky**

I'm a fine head of lettuce,
a handsome romaine.
I haven't a cranium
made for a brain.

I'm simple and shy.
I remain on my own.
I'm known in the garden
as lettuce alone.

STUDY THE POEM

1. Who is the speaker?
2. How many stanzas does the poem have?
3. How many lines are in each stanza?
4. What words rhyme in this poem? Is there a pattern to the rhymes?
5. Poets like playing with words. What verbal joke do you find in the last line?

MODEL: STRUCTURE, SPEAKER, AND SOUNDS

The poem "Losing Face" is more serious than "A Find Head of Lettuce." The poem sounds different too – more like conversation. It doesn't have the bouncy rhythm and comic rhymes of the lettuce poem. Read Wong's poem aloud.

Losing Face

Poem by Janet S. Wong

Finally Mother is proud
of something
I have done.
"My girl won
the art contest,"
she tells the world,
smiling so big and
laughing so loud
her gold tooth
shows.

I'm the only one
who knows
how I drew so well,
erasing the perfect lines
I traced,
drawing worse ones
on purpose
in their place.
I feel awful.
I want to tell.

But I don't want to lose
Mother's glowing
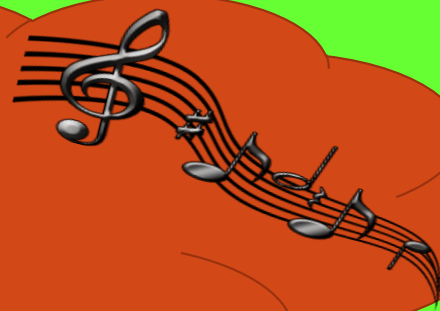proud face.

Part 2:
What Are the Elements of Poetry?

Think about the comforting melody of a lullaby, the contagious beat of a certain song, or those few words in a poem that perfectly capture how you're feeling.

The power of a poem comes from more than its structure and its speaker.

Sound devices, imagery, and figurative language are the elements that can make a poem unforgettable.

SOUND DEVICES
Poets use sound devices
to make music and
to emphasize ideas.

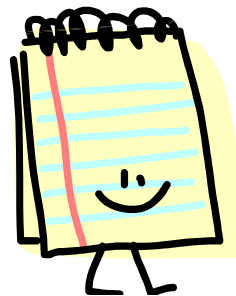| SOUND DEVICES	EXAMPLES
RHYME Rhyme is the repetition of accented vowel sounds, as in *thing* and *sing*, *cry* and *sky*. **METER AND RHYTHM** Meter is a more or less regular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables. Rhythm is a musical quality created by the alternation of accented and unaccented syllables.	The rhyme and meter in this poem help to create a singsong sound. Some people talk and talk and never say a thing Some people look at you and birds begin to sing. Some people laugh and laugh and yet you want to cry. Some people touch your hand and music fills the sky. —"People" by Charlotte Zolotow

ALLITERATION
 	
Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds in words that are close together, such as the *s* in makes still pools, and sleep-song.
 	
REFRAIN
 	
Refrain is a word or line that is repeated in a poem to create a certain effect, such as the phrase *the rain*.
	The refrain in these lines suggests the steady downpour. The alliteration mimics the rain's soothing sounds.
	
	The rain makes still pools on
	  the sidewalk.
	The rain makes running pools
	  in the gutter.
	The rain plays a little sleep-song on our
	  roof at night—
	
	And I love the rain.
	
	—from "April Rain Song" by
	  Langston Hughes

MODEL 1: RHYME, RHYTHM, & REFRAIN

In "Pete at the Zoo," a young speaker considers an important question: Do zoo animals ever get lonely? Read the poem aloud, playing particular attention to the use of **rhymes** and **rhythms**.

PETE AT THE ZOO

Poem by **Gwendolyn Brooks**

I wonder if the elephant
Is lonely in his stall
When all the boys and girls are gone
And there's no shout at all,
5 And there's no one to stamp before,
No one to note his might.
Does he hunch up, as I do,
Against the dark of night?

Close Read

1. Which words rhyme at the ends of the lines?

2. Stressed and unstressed syllables are marked in lines 1-2. Read these lines aloud, emphasizing the stressed words.

3. What does repetition of words and phrases in the boxed lines help to emphasize about nighttime at the zoo?

MODEL 2: METER & ALLITERATION

What kinds of sounds do you associate with fireworks? In this poem, **meter** and **alliteration** help you to hear some of these sounds.

Fireworks

Poem by **Valerie Worth**

First
A far thud,
Then the rocket
Climbs the air,
5   A dull red flare,
To hang, a moment,
Invisible, before
Its shut black shell cracks
And claps against the ears,
10 Breaks and billows into bloom,
Spilling down clear green sparks, gold spears,
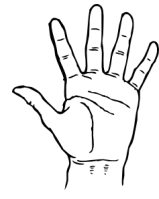Silent sliding silver waterfalls and stars.

Close Read

1. Does this poem sound like conversation, or is it written in meter – a regular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables?

2. What sounds are repeated in the boxed line to create alliteration? Where does the poet use onomatopoeia – words that sound like what they mean – to help you hear the fireworks?

Read the poem aloud to get the full effect.

Figurative Language and Imagery

Figurative Language & Imagery

- Figurative language is the use of imaginative comparisons to help you see the world in new ways.
- Figurative language is NOT literally true.
- Four common "figures of speech" are:
  - Simile
  - Metaphor
  - Personification
  - Hyperbole
- Images use sensory language to appeal to your senses
  - sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch
- Figures of speech often create images

Figurative Language & Imagery

SIMILE

Simile is a comparison between two unlike things that includes the word *like* or *as*.

> In a high wind the
> leaves don't
> fall but fly
> straight out of the
> tree like birds
>
> —"Poem" by A. R. Ammons

METAPHOR

Metaphor is a comparison between two unlike things that does not include the word *like* or *as*.

> The fallen leaves are cornflakes
> That fill the lawn's wide dish,
>
> —from "December Leaves" by
> Kaye Starbird

PERSONIFICATION

Personification is a description of an object, an animal, or an idea as if it were human or had human qualities.

> New sounds to
> walk on
> today,
>
> dry
> leaves
> talking
> in hoarse
> whispers
> under bare trees.
>
> —"New Sounds" by Lilian Moore

HYPERBOLE

Hyperbole is a figure of speech that uses exaggeration to create a special effect.

> He turns and drags half the lake out
> after him
>
> —"Mooses" by Ted Hughes

Part 3: Analyze the Literature

Eve Merriam will transport you to a familiar scene – a dinner table.

Merriam uses many of the techniques you just learned about to help you visualize the scene and understand the speaker's relationship with his or her parents.

LIKE BOOKENDS

Like bookends
my father at one side
my mother at the other

propping me up
but unable to read
What I feel.

Were they born with clothes on?
Born with rules on?

When we sit at the dinner table
we smooth our napkins into polite folds.
How was your day dear
                    Fine
And how was your dear
                    Fine
And how was school
                    The same

Only once in a while
when we're not trying so hard
when we're not trying at all
our napkins suddenly whirl away
and we float up to the ceiling
where we sing and dance until it hurts from laughing

and then we float down
with our napkin parachutes
and once again spoon our soup
and pass the bread please.

Quick Review….
Structure – way a poem looks
Line – can be a single word, sentence or part of a sentence
Stanzas – how some poems are arranged
Rhyme – repetition of sounds
Rhythm – musical quality
Meter – pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables
Alliteration – repetition of consonant sounds
Refrain – word or line that is repeated in a poem
Simile – comparison between two unlike things using like or as
Metaphor – comparison between two unlike things
Personification – giving human like qualities to a non human object
Hyperbole – exaggeration