

Unseen Poetry Knowledge Organiser – Glossary of Literary Terms

Poetic language	Meaning	Poetic structures and forms	Meaning
Simile	A comparison made using the words “like” or “as.”	Rhyme	The repetition of syllable sounds – usually at the ends of lines, but sometimes in the middle of a line (called internal rhyme).
Metaphor	A comparison – made directly or indirectly – without using “like” or “as.”	Couplet	A pair of rhyming lines which follow on from one another.
Personification	Giving human characteristics to something which is not human.	Stanza	A group of lines separated from others in a poem.
Onomatopoeia	Words which attempt to imitate sounds.	Enjambment	The running over of a sentence from one line to the next without a piece of punctuation at the end of the line.
Alliteration	A repetition of consonant sounds.	Caesura	A stop or a pause in a line of poetry – usually caused by punctuation.
Plosive	“b,” “p,” “t” and “d” sounds – which can be harsh, aggressive or shocking.		
Sibilance	Repeated “S” sounds – most often caused by “s” “ss” and “c.” These can be harsh, smooth or sickly.	Blank verse	Poetry written in non-rhyming, ten syllable lines.
Assonance	A repetition of vowel sounds.	Dramatic monologue	A poem in which an imagined speaker address the reader.
Anaphora	A repetition of words, phrases or clauses.	Elegy	A form of poetry which is about the death of its subject.
Juxtaposition	Two things being placed close together for contrasting effect.	End stopped	A line of poetry ending in a piece of punctuation which results in a pause.
Oxymoron	A figure of speech in which two contradictory things are placed together in a way which makes peculiar sense. For example, “friendly fire.”	Epigraph	A quotation from another text, included in a poem.
Semantic field	A set of words relating to the same topic. “Foul” and “Shot” would appear in the semantic field of sports.	Lyric	An emotional, rhyming poem, most often describing the emotions caused by a specific event.
Antithesis	Placing contrasting ideas together.	Ode	A formal poem which is written to celebrate a person, place, object or idea.
Ambiguity	A word, phrase or situation where there are two or more possible meanings and it is unclear which is the correct one.	Parody	A comic imitation of another writer’s work.
Anachronism	A person or object placed in an inappropriate time.	Quatrain	A four line stanza.
Cliché	An overused phrase or saying	Sestet	A six line stanza.
Hyperbole	Exaggeration.	Sonnet	A fourteen line poem, with variable rhyme scheme, usually on the topic of love for a person, object or situation.
Irony	A use of words to mean something very different from what they appear to mean.	Free verse	Non-rhyming, non-rhythmical poetry which follows the rhythms of natural speech.
Litotes	Deliberate understatement for effect – the opposite of hyperbole.	Volta	A turning point in the line of thought or argument in poem.
Metonymy	A related item or attribute is use to replace the word normally used. For example, “suit” used to replace businessman.		
Pathetic fallacy	When a character’s feelings, thoughts or emotions are displayed through the environment around them. For example, when a character is depressed and it is raining.		
Persona/Narrative voice	The voice/speaker of the poem who is different from the writer.		
Protagonist	The main character in a poem.		

Thoughts/feelings which could be conveyed	Meaning	Thoughts/feelings which could be conveyed	Meaning
Aggravation	Irritation	Loathing	Extreme hatred
Agitation	Annoyance	Melancholy	Being exceedingly sad, upset or depressed
Alienation	Isolation or being kept apart	Mortification	Embarrassment or shame
Anguish	Anger	Neglect	Being ignored
Apprehension	Nervousness	Optimism	Hope or confidence about the future
Bashfulness	Embarrassment	Outrage	Anger
Bewilderment	Confusion	Being overwhelmed	Feeling like everything has become too much.
Compassion	Love/Caring	Pessimism	Lacking hope or confidence about the future.
Contemptuousness	Deep hatred	Queasiness	Sickened
Discouragement	Being put off	Rapture	Intense pleasure or joy
Dismay	Concern or distress	Regret	A wish or desire that you hadn't done something
Eagerness	Keeness to take part	Reluctance	Not wanting or being unwilling to do something
Ecstasy	Real excitement or happiness	Remorse	A feeling of guilt
Elation	Exceptional happiness	Resentfulness	Annoyance at someone or something
Enragement	Anger	Repulsion	Being sickened by something or someone
Euphoria	Extreme happiness	Being riled	Irritation
Envy	Jealousy	Scorn	Looking down on something or someone
Exasperation	Exhaustion with frustration	Spite	Being filled with hatred
Exhilaration	Being filled with excitement after having done something	Torment	Being continually irritated by
Fatigue	Exhaustion/Tiredness after having done something	Triumph	Intense happiness at having won something
Glee	Being filled with happiness after having done something you're proud of.	Vengeance	Looking to harm someone to get them back
Grouchiness	Moodiness and irritation	Viciousness	Nastiness – possible with violence and aggression
Hassle	Annoyance at the hands of someone nagging you	Woe	Sadness
Hesitation	Caution	Weariness	Tiredness or exhaustion
Hostility	Aggressiveness	Wrath	Looking to carry out an act of revenge
Humiliated	Made to feel foolish	Zaniness	Craziness or wackiness
Hysterical	Crazy	Zest	Liveliness
Indifferent	Not caring		
Infatuated	Passionate about		
Insecure	Uncertain or anxious		
Irate	Furious		
Irked	Annoyed		
Isolated	Kept apart or alone		
Jittery	Nervous		
Leery	Cautious, wary or suspicious		

