2.1. Poetry: why?
Even though a poem may be short, most of the time you can’t read it fast.

It’s like molasses. Or ketchup.

With poetry, there are so many things to take into consideration. There is the aspect of how it sounds, of what it means, and often of how it looks.
In some circles, there is a certain aversion to poetry. Some consider it outdated, too difficult, or not worth the time. They ask: Why does it take so long to read something so short? Well, yes, it is if you are used to Twitter, or not used to poetry.
Think about the connections poetry has to music. Couldn’t you consider some of your favorite lyrics poetry?

2Pac, for example, wrote a book of poetry called The Rose that Grew from Concrete.

At many points in history across many cultures, poetry was considered the highest form of expression.
Why do people write poetry?
Because they want to and because they can...
(taking the idea from Federico García Lorca en his poem “Lucía Martínez”: “porque quiero, y porque puedo”)

You ask yourself: Why do I need to read poetry?
Because you are going to take the CLEP exam.

Once you move beyond that, it will be easier.
Some reasons why we write/read poetry:

• To become aware
• To see things in a different way
• To put together a mental jigsaw puzzle
• To move the senses
• To provoke emotions
• To find order
2.2. Poetry: how?
If you are not familiar with poetry, you should definitely practice reading some before you take the exam. Here are some ideas of what you can do:
• Make a list of poems you know. This can be from anything from nursery rhymes to song lyrics to classic poems. Think about what might link them to poetry and what separates them from other types of writing.
• Find a classic poem unknown to you. You can select one of the ones mentioned in this class or one from an anthology of poetry. The reason why it is recommended that you take one from an anthology is because its selection of poems is more likely to have more things to look at.
• What you should look for in the poem: rhyme, punctuation, grammar, word selection, rhetorical techniques, multiple meanings.

• Write your own poem. Think about what makes it easy or hard for you to write it.
Even if you have had little exposure to poetry in the past, my aim is that as you review this material multiple times, you will understand more about poetry and recognize poets and poems in the process.
2.3. Poetry: tone
The **tone** of the poem can be like the tone of anything else, and only a few words can sway the feeling:

Robert Frost, “The Road Not Taken”

*I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:*

Henry David Thoreau, “Inspiration”

*A clear and ancient harmony
Pierces my soul through all its din*
Dylan Thomas, “Not From This Anger”

Not from this anger, anticlimax after
Refusal struck her loin and the lame flower
Bent like a beast to lap the singular floods
In a land strapped by hunger
Shall she receive a bellyful of weeds
Hafiz, “All the Hemispheres”

Open up to the Roof.
Make a new water-mark on your excitement
And love.

Like a blooming night flower,
Bestow your vital fragrance of Happiness and giving
Upon our intimate assembly.
The **tone** of the poem can vary greatly.

Check out the amount of different tones the poem can take on in the Canadian Poetry in Voice website!

http://www.poetryinvoice.com/teachers/lesson-plans/tone-map/tone-list
2.4. Poetry: verse and rhyme
Let’s take a look at all these components of verse and rhyme:

– verse
– stanza
– rhyme scheme
– end rhyme/ internal rhyme
– slant rhyme
– masculine rhyme/ feminine rhyme
– free verse
– blank verse
Verse and stanza:

- **Verse**: a verse is a line in a poem
- **Stanza**: a stanza is a group of verses, like a “paragraph” within a poem, many times with some sort of meter and order.
Verse and stanza

Emily Dickinson, “A Bird, came down the Walk”

A Bird, came down the Walk -
He did not know I saw -
He bit an Angle Worm in halves
And ate the fellow, raw,

And then, he drank a Dew
From a convenient Grass -
And then hopped sidewise to the Wall
To let a Beetle pass -
Rhyme scheme – a rhyme scheme is a pattern that the rhymes in a poem follow. Here are a few examples:

**ABAB rhyme**

Robert Frost, “Neither Out Far Nor Deep”

*The people along the sand*
*All turn and look one way.*
*They turn their back on the land.*
*They look at the sea all day.*
Another example:

**ABBA rhyme**

John Milton, “On His Being Arrived to the Age of Twenty-Three”

Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth,
That I to manhood am arrived so near,
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits indu’th.
Internal rhyme and End rhyme

**Internal rhyme:**

Edgar Allen Poe, *The Raven*

*Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,*
Internal rhyme and End rhyme

**End rhyme:**

William Blake, “The Angel”

*I dreamt a dream! What can it mean?*

*And that I was a maiden Queen*

*Guarded by an Angel mild:*

*Witless woe was ne'er beguiled!*
A slant rhyme (also called half rhyme, near rhyme, imperfect rhyme, oblique rhyme) is when the stressed syllables of the consonants match but the preceding vowels don’t:
Slant rhyme:
Emily Dickinson, “Hope Is the Thing with Feathers”

"Hope" is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul
And sings the tune without the words
And never stops at all,

This is not only found in poetry, but also in hip-hop. Artists like Notorious B.I.G. and Nas have used it.
Masculine and Feminine rhyme. These are not modern terms, but you may run into them in your studies.
Feminine rhyme (double rhyme): a rhyme that matches two or more syllables. The final syllable(s) is/are unstressed, and it is usually at the end of the line.


Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
**Masculine rhyme:** a rhyme that matches only one syllable. Usually, the final syllable is stressed, and it is usually at the end of the line. These are the majority of all rhymes in English-language poetry.

John Donne, “Death be not proud”

*Death, be not proud, though some have called thee*

*Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;*

*For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow*

*Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.*

*From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,*
Free verse (from vers libre in French)
It doesn’t follow a regular meter or rhythm. It’s the closest form to imitating conversation.

Walt Whitman, “A Noiseless, Patient Spider”

A noiseless, patient spider,
I mark’d, where, on a little promontory, it stood, isolated;
Mark’d how, to explore the vacant, vast surrounding,
It launch’d forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself;
Ever unreeling them—ever tirelessly speeding them.
Blank verse
This is a verse that does not rhyme, written in iambic pentameter (10 syllables). It is used in poems and dramas. It is often used in character monologues.

William Shakespeare, “Macbeth”
Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
2.5. Poetry: meter
Meter:
- meter
- iambic pentameter
- iambic meter
- iambic foot
- anapest
- trochee
The **meter** is the pattern of stressed words in a verse. Reading aloud if possible is better than in your head because the stress falls on syllables. Natural speech usually falls on the stress points.

Shakespeare, “Sonnet 18”

*Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?*
If the pattern is stressed then unstressed in sequence, then that is called iambic rhythm. If the whole verse follows this structure, then that’s referred to as the iambic meter. The most common of these is the iambic pentameter (five stresses, ten syllables in all).

John Milton, *Paradise Lost*

*Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,*  
*That with no middle flight intends to soar.*
If an iambic pentameter has 5 stressed syllables, how may stresses do these have?:

- Hexameter
- Diameter
- Heptameter
- Octameter
- Tetrameter
- Monometer
- Trimeter
If an iambic pentameter has 5 stressed syllables, how may stresses do these have?:

- Hexameter - 6
- Diameter - 2
- Heptameter - 7
- Octameter - 8
- Tetrameter - 4
- Monometer - 1
- Trimeter - 3
Other types of meter are:

**Anapest** – unstressed, unstressed, stressed:
*Twas the night before Christmas when all through the house.*

**Trochee** – stressed, unstressed:
*Double, double, toil and trouble; Fire burn and cauldron bubble.*
2.6.1 Poetry: form
**Form** is the design of a poem.
Closed form (fixed form) follows a set design in meter and verse. Poets must follow the patterns and structure with this form. An example of this is the sonnet (explained in future slides):
Open form poetry, as the name holds, does not follow the rules of established poetic structures of meter and verse. There are no regular stanza structures. Sometimes they can be tricky because they may have some elements of pattern in sound or words. Open form is sometimes considered free verse, but others disagree and state that there are some differences.
Concrete poetry, also called shape poetry, is when the poem itself takes on a physical form. This can help the reader understand more of the poet’s thinking.
Concrete poetry: Here is an example of Guillaume de Apollinaire’s *Calligrammes* from 1918.
2.6.2 Poetry: types of poetry
Different types of poems

- sonnet
- octave/ sestet/ quatrains/ couplets
- heroic couplet
- alexandrine
- mock-heroic
- epic
- ballads – ballad stanza, literary ballads
- elegy
- ode
- villanelle
- epigram
- doggerel
- limerick
- Aubade
2.6.2.1 Poetry: types of poetry - Sonnet
The **sonnet** is perhaps the most famous of poetry forms. They are 14 lines, usually in iambic pentameter. There are two types of main sonnets, the Petrarchan sonnet and the Shakespearean sonnet.
The Petrarchan sonnet is a poem made up two major sections, a major group of 8 lines (the octave) and a minor group of six lines (the sestet). The rhyme scheme is usually abba abba cde cde.
**Petrarchan sonnet**

Milton, “On His Blindness”

*When I consider how my light is spent (a)*

*Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide, (b)*

*And that one talent which is death to hide, (b)*

*Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent (a)*

*To serve therewith my Maker, and present (a)*

*My true account, lest he returning chide; (b)*

*"Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?" (b)*

*I fondly ask; but Patience to prevent (a)*

*That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need (c)*

*Either man's work or his own gifts; who best (d)*

*Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state (e)*

*Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed (c)*

*And post o'er land and ocean without rest; (d)*

*They also serve who only stand and wait." (e)
The **Shakespearean sonnet** is a poem made up three quatrains (a verse of four lines) and a couplet (a verse of two lines). The rhyme scheme usually is *abab cdcdeefgg*. 
Shakespearean sonnet
Shakespeare, “Sonnet IX”
Is it for fear to wet a widow's eye
That thou consumest thyself in single life?
Ah! if thou issueless shalt hap to die.
The world will wail thee, like a makeless wife;
The world will be thy widow and still weep
That thou no form of thee hast left behind,
When every private widow well may keep
By children's eyes her husband's shape in mind.
Look, what an unthrift in the world doth spend
Shifts but his place, for still the world enjoys it;
But beauty's waste hath in the world an end,
And kept unused, the user so destroys it.
No love toward others in that bosom sits
That on himself such murderous shame commits.
Octave – eight lines of iambic pentameter (or of hendecasyllables – 11 syllables - in the Italian style). The most common rhyme scheme is abba abba. It’s the first part of a Shakespearean sonnet.

Sestet – generally the second division of a Shakespearean sonnet, which consists of 6 lines.
2.6.2.2. Poetry: types of poetry – some more stanzas
**Quatrain** – this can be a stanza or a type of poem that consists of 4 lines.

**Couplet** – two lines usually with the same rhyme and meter
From the couplet the **heroic couplet** emerged. This is a traditional form for English poetry which was used in narrative and **epic poetry**. You can see this example in Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*:

*Whan that aprill with his shoures soote*  
*The droghte of march hath perced to the roote,*
2.6.2.3. Poetry: types of poetry - Epic poetry
The **epic poem** is a long narrative poem usually about the heroic deeds of a person or nation, like Homer’s *The Odyssey* or *The Iliad*. These are super long, so I would imagine you would only be given an excerpt to analyze.
The **epic poem** is usually in the form of a couplet with the same rhyme structure, as that was the easiest way for the travelling bards to sing them as they went from town to town in medieval times.
The **mock epic** (mock heroic) is written in heroic couplets, as we see here with Alexander Pope’s, “the Rape of the Lock”

*This lock, the Muse shall consecrate to fame,*

*And mid’st the stars inscribe Belinda’s name!*
2.6.2.4. Poetry: types of poetry - Ballads
Another old type of poetry is the **ballad**. These were sung in medieval times and have been popular ever since. They are usually anonymous and not complicated. The verses are generally short and narrate a personal story about love, hate, knights, fantasy, etc. Like the epic, they generally hold simple form and repetition.
Here we see an old English **ballad** entitled “The Douglas Tragedy”

"RISE up, rise up, now, Lord Douglas," she says,
   "And put on your armour so bright;
Sweet William will hae Lady Margaret awi'
   Before that it be light.

"Rise up, rise up, my seven bold sons,
   And put on your armour so bright,
And take better care of your youngest sistèr,
   For your eldest's awa' the last night."
From the ballad there developed the **ballad stanza**, which is *acbc* rhyme of four lines. I and 3 have eight syllables and 2 and 4 have 6. Here we have Samuel Taylor Cooleridge in “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”:

*All in a hot and copper sky!*
*The bloody Sun, at noon,*
*Right up above the mast did stand,*
*No bigger than the Moon.*
2.6.2.5. Poetry: types of poetry - Lyrical poetry
Aristotle pointed out three broad categories of poetry: dramatic, narrative and lyrical. We have discussed narrative poetry to a certain extent, as seen in epic poetry. Let's take a look now at **lyrical poetry**.
From Greek times to modern times, **lyrical poetry** has been popular with many poets because it involves emotions and feelings. It is more personal than other types of poetry and is mostly in first person.
One type of lyrical poem is the **elegy**. It is a sad poem usually written to praise or weep for someone who has passed. It is similar to the **eulogy**, which is a speech for someone at a funeral. Elegies can also be about a lost love or a lost time.
Another type of lyrical poem is the **ode**, similar to the elegy, but usually to praise someone or something. It is not limited to the theme of death or loss. It can have complex stanza forms and there are many types of odes.
Here we have part of John Keat's, “Ode to a Nightingale”:

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
    My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
    One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
Another poetic form is the **villanelle**. It has nineteen lines of five *tercets* (a stanza of three lines) followed by a *quatrain* (a stanza of four lines). There are two *refrains* (a line repeated in verse) and two repeating lines. This is a *fixed verse* form.
Here is an example of the **villanelle**. This is Sylvia Plath’s “Mad Girl’s Love Song”

I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead,  
I lift my lids and all is born again.  
(I think I made you up inside my head)

The stars go waltzing out in blue and red,  
And arbitrary darkness gallops in.  
I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead.
2.6.2.6. Poetry: types of poetry - Sestina
Even more confining in its form than the villanelle is the sestina. It is a closed form of six stanzas of six lines each, followed by three lines. The end words of each verse of the first stanza are then used to end subsequent stanzas, rotated in a pattern
Here is the pattern of the sestina:

- 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 6 1 5 2 4 3
- 3 6 4 1 2 5
- 5 3 2 6 1 4
- 4 5 1 3 6 2
- 2 4 6 5 3 1
- (6 2) (1 4) (5 3)
Here is an example of the *sestina* in W.H. Auden’s “Paysage Moralisé” (first two stanzas only):

*Hearing of harvests rotting in the valleys,*
*Seeing at end of street the barren mountains,*
*Round corners coming suddenly on water,*
*Knowing them shipwrecked who were launched for islands,*
*We honour founders of these starving cities*
*Whose honour is the image of our sorrow,*

*Which cannot see its likeness in their sorrow*
*That brought them desperate to the brink of valleys;*
*Dreaming of evening walks through learned cities*
*They reined their violent horses on the mountains,*
*Those fields like ships to castaways on islands,*
*Visions of green to them who craved for water.*
2.6.2.7. Poetry: types of poetry – others
The *Alexandrine* verse is a classic French verse from the 12th century that has been used over time by other poets. Most alexandrines are made up of two *hemistich* sections (these are half lines) of six syllables each.
These two sections are broken up by a **caesura** (a word break or a syntactic break). They are rare in English, but they do exist. Here is one in French by Nicolas Boileau, in *L’Art poétique*:

*Que toujours, dans vos vers le sens coupant les mots,*  
*Suspende l’hémistiche, en marque le repos.*
An **epigram** is a short, witty saying in verse with a satirical twist at the end. Famous poets such as John Donne, Alexander Pope, Lord Byron, Ezra Pound, Voltaire, William Butler Yeats, among others, wrote them. Here is one by Taylor Coleridge:
Sir, I admit your general rule,

That every poet is a fool,

But you yourself may serve to show it,

That every fool is not a poet.
A **doggerel** is a poem that has an irregular rhythm and rhyme, sometimes on purpose, sometimes not.
A doggerel example. By William McGonagall’s “The Tay Bridge Disaster”:

   It must have been an awful sight,
To witness in the dusky moonlight,
While the Storm Fiend did laugh, and angry did bray,
Along the Railway Bridge of the Silv'ry Tay,
Oh! ill-fated Bridge of the Silv'ry Tay,
I must now conclude my lay
By telling the world fearlessly without the least dismay,
That your central girders would not have given way,
At least many sensible men do say,
Had they been supported on each side with buttresses,
At least many sensible men confesses,
For the stronger we our houses do build,
The less chance we have of being killed.
A doggerel written on purpose is the **limerick**. This is a stanza of five lines. The first, second and fifth lines rhyme. Here is an anonymous one:

*There once was a young lady named bright*
*Whose speed was much faster than light*
*She set out one day*
*In a relative way*
*And returned on the previous night.*
Some poetry styles connected with the time of day are the *aubade* and the *serenade*. The *aubade* is a morning love song/poem, or one about lovers in separation at that hour. The *serenade* is the evening love song/poem. Here is an excerpt of John Donne’s aubade “The Rising Sun”: 
Aubade

Busy old fool, unruly sun,
    Why dost thou thus,
Through windows, and through curtains call on us?
Must to thy motions lovers' seasons run?
2.7 Poetry: meaning
Denotation – the direct meaning of a word or expression. It is the explicit and literal meaning of that word.

Connotation – the indirect meaning of the word, what is implied.
Denotation and connotation
Think about the difference between these words:
House/home
Expensive/pricey
Slender/thin/skinny
In the dark corner of the room,  
perhaps forgotten by its owner,  
silent and covered with dust,  
one can see a harp.  
How many notes sleep in its cords,  
like the bird that sleeps in the  
branches,  
waiting for a snowy white hand  
that can awaken them!
Symbol – when the words represent a concept, relationship or object.

Some stock symbols are easily recognizable: the rose, a flag, a skull, white, etc.
The next level is observing symbols in poetry. Check out this poem “Poetic Art” by Vicente Huidobro:
Verse is like a key
That opens a thousand doors
A page turns, something takes flight
How many believing eyes look
And the hearing soul remains trembling

Invent new worlds and care for their word
The adjective, when it does not give life, kills
We are in a cycle of nerves
The muscle cluster,
Like I remember, in the museums;
No more do but we have less force;
The true vigor
Resides in the mind

Why do you the rose, oh poets!
It will flourish in the poem

Only for us
Live all things under the sun

The poet is a small god.
Think, for example, about:

- Denotation
- Connotation
- Symbol

For the word “Table”
2.8 Poetry: more on construction
What makes a poem a poem? Most of all language and how it is used. At the beginning of all this, I said that poetry was like molasses, or ketchup. That would be an example of figurative language.
We always have to think about **diction** (word choice) and **syntax** (grammar). Diction is always important. Modern poets, however, have had more flexibility in manipulating syntax because they are not restricted by closed form. Check out this poem “To Roosevelt” by Rubén Darío
It is with the voice of the Bible, or the verse of Walt Whitman, that I should come to you, Hunter, primitive and modern, simple and complicated, with something of Washington and more of Nimrod.

You are the United States, you are the future invader of the naive America that has Indian blood, that still prays to Jesus Christ and still speaks Spanish.

You are the proud and strong exemplar of your race; you are cultured, you are skillful; you oppose Tolstoy. And breaking horses, or murdering tigers, you are an Alexander-Nebuchadnezzar. (You are a professor of Energy as today's madmen say.)

You think that life is fire, that progress is eruption, that wherever you shoot you hit the future.

No.

The United States is potent and great. When you shake there is a deep tremblor
Getting back to talking about rhymes, these are two words you should learn:

Assonance and Consonance
**Assonance** is the repetition of vowel sounds so that there is internal rhyming in verses. Here is an example by E.E. Cummings:

*On a proud round cloud in white high night*
**Consonance** is the repetition of identical or similar consonants. This is the counterpart of assonance. Here is an example from William Blake’s “The Chimney Sweeper”
When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry "'weep! 'weep! 'weep! 'weep!"
So your chimneys I sweep & in soot I sleep.
2.9 Poetry: Rhetorical techniques
**Metaphor** – a figure of speech that refers to one thing by mentioning another.

“All the world’s a stage”

“Pig” (dead metaphor)
Simile – a comparison using “like” or “as”.

“Your teeth are like pearls”
**Allusion** – a figure of speech that makes reference to an event, a place or a person.

“That is her Achilles’ heel.”

“What an Eden that place was.”
Personification – giving human characteristics to a thing or an abstraction.

“The wind carried me home”

“The sun crept through the shades.”
Alliteration is the repetition of similar sounds (like we saw in consonance and assonance)

“She sells sea shells by the seashore”
**Apostrophe** is when a writer detaches herself from reality and talks to an imaginary character, like with this example from *Macbeth*:

*Is this a dagger which I see before me,*
*The handle toward my hand?*
*Come, let me clutch thee!*
*I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.*
Hyperbole – an exaggeration (overstatement).

“I’m starving”

“I was going 1000 miles an hour to get here on time”
Irony – when intended meaning is different form actual meaning.

When someone puts their high beams in your face, you say, “Great, now I can see better”
Metonymy – when a thing or concept is not called by its name but rather by a metonym.

“Dish”

“Ivy League”
Onomatopoeia – the formation of words that sound like the object to which they refer.

“Chickadee”
“Bobwhite”
“Buzz”
“Cuckoo”
Oxymoron – when a seemingly self-contradictory effect is produced.

“Pretty ugly”
“Jumbo shrimp”
“Dark light”
Paradox – another self-contradictory statement, but one that might express a truth. For example, from George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*”

"All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others"
Sarcasm - the use of words that mean the opposite of what you want to say, usually to show irritation or be funny.

“I work around the clock so I can be poor”

“Not the sharpest tool in the shed”
Synecdoche – when the part is taken for the whole, or vice versa.

“Nice wheels”

“Ask for her hand in marriage”
Answer these general questions on poetry (from the same text)

- [https://clep.collegeboard.org/exam/literature/questions/6](https://clep.collegeboard.org/exam/literature/questions/6)
- [https://clep.collegeboard.org/exam/literature/questions/7](https://clep.collegeboard.org/exam/literature/questions/7)
- [https://clep.collegeboard.org/exam/literature/questions/8](https://clep.collegeboard.org/exam/literature/questions/8)
- [https://clep.collegeboard.org/exam/literature/questions/9](https://clep.collegeboard.org/exam/literature/questions/9)
Answer questions 6-10 (which are all from the same text) on poetry from the CLEP 2016 Examination Guide on Analyzing and Interpreting Literature.
Answer questions 1-10 of the “20 supplemental questions”