

# WHAT IS POETRY?

Poetry is hard to define. Nearly every poet you ask will give you a different definition. The best way to learn about poetry is to read lots of poetry. But how can you distinguish poetry from other forms of writing?

You can see the ways in which poetry is different by looking at the specific characteristics of poetry. One thing that makes poetry different from all other forms of writing is that in poetry, the length of the line is part of the art form. When you look at a poem on the page, you will notice that there are *lines*, not *paragraphs* as there are in a story. The length of a line in a poem can influence the poem's meaning, tone, and rhythmical pattern.

Poetry also uses many of the following devices more than other kinds of writing:

## SOUND DEVICES

1. **Rhyme** - Matching final sounds.

The brown, shaggy **dog**  
jumped over the **log**

2. **Alliteration** - Matching beginning consonants.

**S**ally, the **s**nake **s**lithers  
at the **s**esquicentennial

3. **Assonance** - Matching vowel sounds within words.

He feels **oo**d  
when he carves **oo**d

4. **Consonance** - Matching consonantal sounds within words.

The seal swallowed shellfish  
with relish

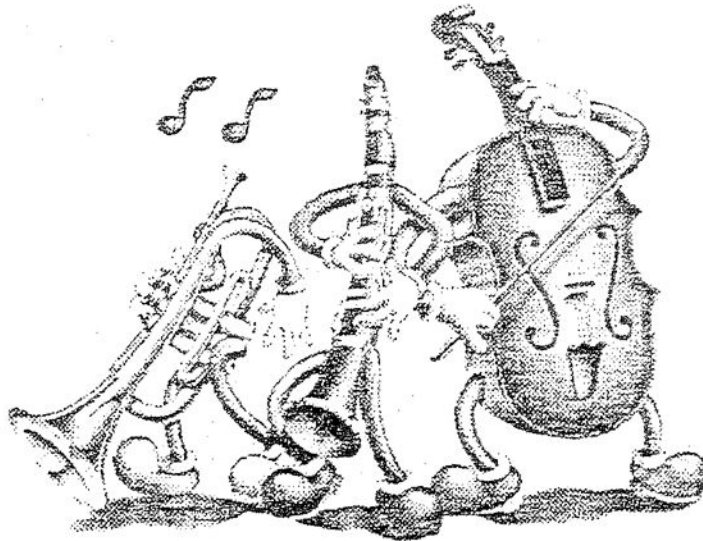
5. **Onomatopoeia** - The word sounds like what it is describing.

The bee **buzzes** in the roses

# FINDING SOUND DEVICES



How many sound devices can you find in this poem



Play a lick on a candy cane clarinet,  
Beat on a gum drop drum,  
Toot a loot on a lemonade flute,  
Make that fudgey french horn hum,  
Sing a note low on an orange oboe,  
Synchronize with a spun sugar saxophone,  
Bellow a butterscotch base tone,  
And when you're done,  
Just for fun,  
We'll eat the candy land band.

— Pamela Ditchoff

