**ELA I Poetry Terms**

Instructions: Use your textbook to define the terms listed below. Feel free to use notebook paper if you need additional space to write down your information.

**Alliteration:**

**Allusion:**

**Assonance:**

**Cliché:**

**Consonance:**

**Epic:**

**Figurative language:**

**Free verse:**

**Hyperbole:**

**Imagery:**

**Metaphor:**

**Onomatopoeia:**

**Personification:**

**Repetition:**

**Rhyme:**

**Simile:**

**Speaker:**

**Stanza:**

**Introduction to Poetry** by Billy Collins

I ask them to take a poem  
and hold it up to the light  
like a color slide

or press an ear against its hive.

I say drop a mouse into a poem  
and watch him probe his way out,

or walk inside the poem's room  
and feel the walls for a light switch.

I want them to waterski  
across the surface of a poem  
waving at the author's name on the shore.

But all they want to do  
is tie the poem to a chair with rope  
and torture a confession out of it.

They begin beating it with a hose  
to find out what it really means.

**Discussion Questions**

1. What words and images stand out to you?
2. What is your emotional reaction to the poem (e.g., surprise, dismay, anger)?
3. Read the poem a second time and identify any figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor, hyperbole) you encounter.
4. What do they think Collins is saying about the study of poetry?
5. According to Collins, what is the real goal of reading poetry?

**Faces** by Sara Teasdale

*Read the poem below and “see and hear” the images the author writes about in a simple fashion. As you read, think about your own paradigms (how you view things).*

People that I meet and pass

In the city’s broken roar,

Faces that I lose so soon

And never found before,

Do you know how much you tell

In the meeting of our eyes,

How ashamed I am, and sad

To have pierced your poor disguise?

Secrets rushing without sound

Crying from your hiding places—

Let me go, I cannot bear

The sorrow of the passing faces.

--People in the restless street,

Can it be, oh, can it be

In the meeting of our eyes

That you know as much of me?

**Discussion Questions**

1. What is meant by “the city’s broken roar”?
2. What imagery do you have after reading this poem?
3. Why does the speaker say that strangers are wearing disguises?
4. What could the theme of this poem be?

**Quick write on “Faces” by Sara Teasdale**

After reading this poem, what does it make you think of? Do you take notice of how others might be feeling when walking through the hallways or eating lunch in the cafeteria? Why are some people quick to judge others? How do you think you are viewed from a distance?

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**Alliteration and Onomatopoeia**

Alliteration and onomatopoeia are poetic devices. Both are methods of using words and sounds for effect in a poem.

Alliteration is the repetition of a beginning sound for effect. These may be vowel or consonant sounds. The alliterative sounds have been underlined in the following examples:

The alligator ate apples and avocados.

Walkin’ in a winter wonderland.

Underline the alliteration in these sentences:

1. The warm wind wafted across the window.
2. I accidentally ate an awful apple.
3. Slipping and sliding, I stumbled in the snow and slush.

Finish these sentences with alliterations of your own:

1. Swiftly swimming \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. The tired traveler \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
3. While wandering \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Onomatopoeia is the imitation of natural sounds. For example: The steam hissed from the open valve. Onomatopoeia is a poetic device that produces an auditory image to the reader.

Underline the words you “hear” in these sentences:

1. The train rumbled down the track.
2. The truck’s brakes screeched in the distance.
3. The old floor creaked as we walked across the room.

Complete the following sentences using onomatopoeia of your own:

1. The rusty gate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. The branches \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
3. The motorcycle \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Similes and Metaphors**

A simile is a phrase or word that describes one thing as *similar* to another, often unrelated thing. An example is "Jane went up the stairs as quiet as a mouse." Similes use the words "like" and/ or "as".

A metaphor is a phrase or word that states that one thing *is* another, often unrelated thing. An example is “Harold is a snake."

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| |  | | --- | | Read the following sentences. At the end of the sentence, write in brackets whether the sentence is an example of a metaphor (M) or simile (S).  Example: The clouds were fluffy like cotton wool. (S)   1. As slippery as an eel. 2. He was a lion in battle. 3. She is as pretty as a picture. 4. The striker was a goal machine. 5. The moon was a misty shadow. 6. His eyes sparkled like a diamond.   Now you are going to make up similes and metaphors of your own by finishing these sentences.   1. As heavy as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. He was a cold \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3. She had skin like a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 4. As cool as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 5. The mountain was a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 6. Slippery like a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |

**Thumbprint** by Eve Merriam

In the heel of my thumb

are whorls, whirls, wheels

in a unique design:

mine alone.

What a treasure to own!

My own flesh, my own feelings.

No other, however grand or base,

can ever contain the same.

My signature,

thumbing the pages of my time.

My universe key,

my singularity.

Impress, implant,

I am myself,

Of all my atom parts I am the sum.

And out of my blood and my brain

I make my own interior weather,

My own sun and rain.

Imprint my mark upon the world,

whatever I shall become.

**Discussion Questions**

1. What is the “treasure” of which the speaker is proud?
2. To the speaker, what does her thumbprint represent?
3. Identify two examples of alliteration in this poem.
4. Give an example of a metaphor the poet uses to describe her thumbprint?

**Personification and Hyperboles**

Personification is when you give a human quality to an inanimate object.

Personification is a comparison that treats things as if they were capable of the actions and feelings of people.

Personifications are things we feel but don’t literally see.

Examples of personification:

MC900023317[1] The moon slept in the night sky.

The star is winking at me.

A hyperbole is any extravagant statement or exaggeration for effect.

Hyperbole is used as a figure of speech. For example: I could sleep for a year!

Examples of hyperboles:

He’s so mean he eats snakes for breakfast. MC900203144[1]

I’m so hungry I could eat a horse.

Identify whether the following sentences use a hyperbole (H) or personification (P):

1. The flames called out their names.
2. After shoveling snow I was so tired I couldn’t move.
3. The clock told us it was time to go.
4. She hit the ball hard enough to fly all the way to Pittsburgh.
5. The wind whispered to the trees.
6. It was so cold her car laughed at her when she tried to start it.
7. After the dance my feet were killing me.
8. All day long I worked my fingers to the bone.

**Allusions**

An allusion is a reference to well-known characters or events from literature, history, or another field of knowledge. Writers use allusions to add imagery and emotion into their writing. For example, a writer could say, “He has the Midas touch when picking stocks.” King Midas was a famous character from Greek Mythology whose touch turned items into gold.

Read the sentences below and explain their meaning based on the allusion in each sentence. Research the meaning of any allusions that are unfamiliar to you.

1. Because of the determination of its people, the country rose like a phoenix from the ashes of revolution.

a. What is a phoenix? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

b. What does this allusion tell us about the country? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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2. His rise to become head of an international corporation is a real Horatio Alger story.

a. Who was Horatio Alger? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

b. What does this allusion tell us about the man’s success?

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3. After working out at the gym, I felt like I could battle Hercules.

a. Who was Hercules? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

b. What does this allusion tell us about the speaker’s work out?

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4. Write your own sentence using an allusion:

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**Caged Bird** by Maya Angelou

The free bird leaps  
on the back of the wind  
and floats downstream  
till the current ends  
and dips his wings  
in the orange sun rays  
and dares to claim the sky.  
  
But a bird that stalks  
down his narrow cage  
can seldom see through  
his bars of rage  
his wings are clipped and  
his feet are tied  
so he opens his throat to sing.  
  
The caged bird sings  
with fearful trill  
of the things unknown  
but longed for still  
and is tune is heard  
on the distant hillfor the caged bird  
sings of freedom  
  
The free bird thinks of another breeze  
an the trade winds soft through the sighing trees  
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn-bright lawn  
and he names the sky his own.  
  
But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams  
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream  
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied  
so he opens his throat to sing  
  
The caged bird sings  
with a fearful trill  
of things unknown  
but longed for still  
and his tune is heard  
on the distant hill  
for the caged bird  
sings of freedom.

**Discussion Questions for Caged Bird**

1. Paraphrase the poem.
2. What do you think the poem is attempting to do? Educate the reader, create nostalgia , or fear, evoke a mood, etc? Is the poet effective?
3. Who is the speaker? What kind of person is the speaker?
4. Can you identify the author’s intent/purpose? You may also describe this as the theme or “message” of the poem.
5. Discuss the imagery of the poem. What kinds of imagery are used?
6. Point out examples of metaphor, simile, personification, or any other literary device and explain their significance and/ or appropriateness. Also point out significant examples of sound repetition and explain their function.

**The Courage That My Mother Had** by Edna St. Vincent Millay

The courage that my mother had  
Went with her, and is with her still:  
Rock from New England quarried;  
Now granite in a granite hill.

The golden brooch my mother wore  
She left behind for me to wear;  
I have no thing I treasure more:  
Yet, it is something I could spare.

Oh, if instead she'd left to me  
The thing she took into the grave!-  
That courage like a rock, which she  
Has no more need of, and I have.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Define courage in your own words. Provide an example of courage from your own life and/or an example of courage that you witnessed.

2. Reflecting on your own life, what personality trait do you feel people admire about you?

3. Thinking about the people close to you (friends, family, etc), who is someone that you admire? What qualities do you admire about them?

**The Lanyard** by Billy Collins

The other day I was ricocheting slowly  
off the blue walls of this room,  
moving as if underwater from typewriter to piano,  
from bookshelf to an envelope lying on the floor,  
when I found myself in the L section of the dictionary  
where my eyes fell upon the word lanyard.

No cookie nibbled by a French novelist  
could send one into the past more suddenly—  
a past where I sat at a workbench at a camp  
by a deep Adirondack lake  
learning how to braid long thin plastic strips  
into a lanyard, a gift for my mother.

I had never seen anyone use a lanyard  
or wear one, if that’s what you did with them,  
but that did not keep me from crossing  
strand over strand again and again  
until I had made a boxy  
red and white lanyard for my mother.

She gave me life and milk from her breasts,  
and I gave her a lanyard.  
She nursed me in many a sick room,  
lifted spoons of medicine to my lips,  
laid cold face-cloths on my forehead,  
and then led me out into the airy light

and taught me to walk and swim,  
and I, in turn, presented her with a lanyard.  
Here are thousands of meals, she said,  
and here is clothing and a good education.  
And here is your lanyard, I replied,  
which I made with a little help from a counselor.

Here is a breathing body and a beating heart,  
strong legs, bones and teeth,  
and two clear eyes to read the world, she whispered,  
and here, I said, is the lanyard I made at camp.  
And here, I wish to say to her now,  
is a smaller gift—not the worn truth

that you can never repay your mother,  
but the rueful admission that when she took  
the two-tone lanyard from my hand,  
I was as sure as a boy could be

that this useless, worthless thing I wove  
out of boredom would be enough to make us even.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Provide an example of a simile.

2 What is the mood of the poem?

3. What is the story of the poem?

4. Using your inference skills, what type of relationship do you believe the mother and son have? Explain with specific lines for support.

**The Revenant** by Billy Collins

I am the dog you put to sleep,  
as you like to call the needle of oblivion,  
come back to tell you this simple thing:  
I never liked you--not one bit.

When I licked your face,  
I thought of biting off your nose.  
When I watched you toweling yourself dry,  
I wanted to leap and unman you with a snap.

I resented the way you moved,  
your lack of animal grace,  
the way you would sit in a chair to eat,  
a napkin on your lap, knife in your hand.

I would have run away,   
but I was too weak, a trick you taught me  
while I was learning to sit and heel,  
and--greatest of insults--shake hands without a hand.

I admit the sight of the leash  
would excite me  
but only because it meant I was about   
to smell things you had never touched.

You do not want to believe this,  
but I have no reason to lie.  
I hated the car, the rubber toys,  
disliked your friends and, worse, your relatives.

The jingling of my tags drove me mad.  
You always scratched me in the wrong place.  
All I ever wanted from you  
was food and fresh water in my metal bowls.

While you slept, I watched you breathe  
as the moon rose in the sky.  
It took all of my strength  
not to raise my head and howl.

Now I am free of the collar,  
the yellow raincoat, monogrammed sweater,  
the absurdity of your lawn,  
and that is all you need to know about this place

except what you already supposed  
and are glad it did not happen sooner--

that everyone here can read and write,  
the dogs in poetry, the cats and the others in prose.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Paraphrase the poem.

2. What do you think the poem is attempting to do? Educate the reader, create nostalgia , or fear, evoke a mood, etc? Is the poet effective?

3. Who is the speaker? What kind of person is the speaker? Is this clear?

4. Can you identify the author’s intent/purpose? You may also describe this as the theme or “message” of the poem.

5. Discuss the imagery of the poem. What kinds of imagery are used?

6. Point out examples of metaphor, simile, personification, or any other literary device and explain their significance and/ or appropriateness. Also point out significant examples of sound repetition and explain their function.