



Introduction to Poetry: Forms and Elements Study Guide by Judy Cook



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List of Poems Studied

In Alphabetical Order by Title:

<i>Annabel Lee</i>	Edgar Allen Poe
<i>A Red, Red Rose</i>	Robert Burns
<i>About Ben Adhem</i>	Leigh Hunt
<i>Acquainted with the Night</i>	Robert Frost
<i>Because I Could Not Stop for Death</i>	Emily Dickinson
<i>Builders, The</i>	Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
<i>Charge of the Light Brigade, The</i>	Alfred, Lord Tennyson
<i>Cinq Ans Après</i>	Gelett Burgess
<i>Destruction of Sennacherib, The</i>	Lord Byron
<i>Do Not Go Gentle Into that Good Night</i>	Dylan Thomas
<i>Dream Deferred</i>	Langston Hughes
<i>Holy Sonnet XIV</i>	John Donne
<i>I Died for Beauty</i>	Emily Dickinson
<i>I Hear America Singing</i>	Walt Whitman
<i>I'm Nobody! Who are You?</i>	Emily Dickinson
<i>In a Station of the Metro</i>	Ezra Pound
<i>I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud</i>	William Wordsworth
<i>L'art, 1910</i>	Ezra Pound
<i>Mending Wall</i>	Robert Frost
<i>New Colossus, The</i>	Emma Lazarus
<i>Noiseless Patient Spider, A</i>	Walt Whitman
<i>On His Blindness</i>	John Milton
<i>Passionate Shepherd to His Love, The</i>	Christopher Marlowe
<i>Purple Cow, The</i>	Gelett Burgess
<i>Red Wheelbarrow, The</i>	William Carlos Williams
<i>Requiem</i>	Robert Louis Stevenson
<i>Richard Cory</i>	Edward Arlington Robinson

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<i>Road Not Taken, The</i>	Robert Frost
<i>She Walks in Beauty</i>	Lord Byron
<i>Sir Patrick Spens</i>	Anonymous
<i>Sonnet XVIII (Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?)</i>	William Shakespeare
<i>Sonnet CXVI (Let me not to the marriage of true minds)</i>	William Shakespeare
<i>Sonnet CXXX (My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun)</i>	William Shakespeare
<i>Still Here</i>	Langston Hughes
<i>Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening</i>	Robert Frost
<i>Sympathy</i>	Paul Laurence Dunbar
<i>This is Just to Say</i>	William Carlos Williams
<i>Tyger, The</i>	William Blake
<i>To Celia</i>	Ben Jonson
<i>To Lucasta, Going to the Wars</i>	Richard Lovelace
<i>To My Dear and Loving Husband</i>	Anne Bradstreet
<i>To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time</i>	Robert Herrick
<i>Trees</i>	Joyce Kilmer
<i>Upon Julia's Clothes</i>	Robert Herrick
<i>Village Blacksmith, The</i>	Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
<i>We Wear the Mask</i>	Paul Laurence Dunbar
<i>When I Was One-and-Twenty</i>	A. E. Housman

Sounds

Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds. Alliteration may be initial (at the beginning of words) or internal (in the middle of words). This device directs our attention to the alliterated words and the ideas or feelings that the poet is trying to convey. *Assonance* is the repetition of vowel sounds within words. Like alliteration, it may be internal or initial. A third type of sound device is *onomatopoeia* (ON uh MAT uh PEE uh), in which words resemble the sounds they are portraying. The words *crash*, *boom*, *smash*, or *clip-clop* are examples of onomatopoeia. Onomatopoeiac words are also common in comic strips.

Exercise V:

Underline the *alliterated* sounds in the following lines of poetry:

1. The sun was warm, but the wind was chill.
2. Grieve and they turn and go.
3. I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable.
4. The watchful night-wind as it went
5. Between the dark and the daylight
6. What I was walling in or walling out
7. Her hardest hue to hold.
8. Miniver mourned the ripe renown
9. Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
10. But ah, my foes and oh, my friends

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Exercise VI:

Read “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud,” by William Wordsworth (BLP, 29). Place a check mark beside any words you do not understand. Circle instances of *alliteration*; underline any instances of *assonance*.

Match the words with their definitions

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1. ____ vales | a. high spirited |
| 2. ____ host | b. musing or thoughtful |
| 3. ____ jocund | c. multitude |
| 4. ____ pensive | d. valley, dale |

5. How many *stanzas* are in this poem? How many lines per stanza?

6. What, in your opinion, is the most powerful or most memorable instance of alliteration?

7. Give three examples of assonance.

8. What is the subject of this poem? How is it typical of Romantic poetry?

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Exercise XVI:

Read “On His Blindness,” by John Milton (BLP, 14). Scan the poem, marking the meter and rhyme scheme. Draw a line between the octave and the sestet.

1. What is the “problem” identified in the octave? What is the “solution” given in the sestet?
2. Rewrite this poem as a prose paragraph using modern language. Rewriting or *paraphrasing* a poem in this way can help you understand the poem’s meaning.
3. An *allusion* is a reference to an historical or literary person, place, or event with which the reader is assumed to be familiar. The third line of “On His Blindness” contains an allusion to a Biblical parable. Identify the allusion and the parable to which it refers. How does the use of the allusion shed light on Milton’s problem?
4. What line do you find to be the most memorable in the entire poem?

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5. Read 2 Corinthians 12:7–10. When the apostle Paul pleads for his weakness to be taken away, how does God respond? How is the lesson of this passage of scripture similar to the lesson of Milton's poem?
6. Using an encyclopedia or the internet, read about John Milton and write a one-paragraph summary of his religious views.

The English Sonnet:

The English sonnet has 14 lines and is written in iambic pentameter. The rhyme scheme is different, however, and that difference alters the content. Its rhyme pattern is **abab cdcd efef gg**. Instead of a clear division of thought as in the octave and sestet of the Italian sonnet, the English sonnet takes a looser approach to its presentation. It may contain three or four changes in thought. The final two lines, which rhyme with each other, are the *couplet*. These two lines are usually the strongest of the English sonnet.

Exercise XVII:

Read "Sonnet XVIII" and "Sonnet CXVI" (BLP, 6 and 7), by William Shakespeare. Scan the sonnets to find the meter and rhyme scheme.

1. Define these terms as they are used in the context of the poems. Write the definitions in your books somewhere on the same page as the poems.
 - a. bark—
 - b. tempest—
 - c. impediment—
 - d. temperate—

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An *explication* goes beyond a paraphrase. An explication attempts to understand the theme of a poem and then to explain how all the elements of a poem contribute to the whole. When you write an explication, you discuss all the elements of poetry we have studied: imagery, analogy, tone, and any other pertinent techniques. The explication identifies the form used as well as the rhyme scheme and meter, if any. Then it discusses the other elements used and explains how they contribute to the meaning of the poem.

3. Read “The New Colossus,” by Emma Lazarus (GAP, 33). Write an explication of the poem using the following format (use one to three sentences for each part):
 - a. Part 1: identify and explain briefly the form of the poem and how the poem may vary from form.
 - b. Part 2: explain the content in terms of the form.
 - c. Part 3: note any literary devices or poetic techniques. Indicate whether they seem to underscore the theme.
 - d. Part 4: note any historical allusions and explain their significance
 - e. Part 5: discuss the tone of the poem and the feeling with which the reader is left after reading it.

Answer Key

Note: Most of the questions in Progeny Press study guides deal with students' understanding and interpretation of issues in the novel; therefore, most answers will be individual to the student. Progeny Press answer keys are designed to be as inclusive as possible for the teacher and/or parent, giving enough background and information to judge whether the student has grasped the essence of the issue and the question. We try to point out some directions students' answers might take, which directions might be best, and some errors that may appear. Students are not expected to answer as completely as the answers provided in the Answer Key.

Part One: Types of Poetry

Exercise I:

1. "Abou Ben Adhem" is narrative; "The Road Not Taken" is lyrical.
2. Answers may vary. The road is most obviously a symbol for the choices we must make in life.
3. Answers may vary. If the choice is meant to praise individualism, students may point out that the poet calls one road "less traveled by," and says it was "grassy and wanted wear." Hence, he is taking a road that others had not taken. On the other hand, the poet also states that the roads really look about the same—they are worn equally, they are equally covered with leaves, they are equally fair. The poet is very torn about which to take and hopes to keep one for another day.
4. With a sigh. He will remember that he made a choice in his life between two equally attractive options and he will wonder about the one he didn't choose.
5. Answers will vary.
6. In the passage from Luke, Jesus spends a night in prayer before choosing his twelve disciples. In the passage from Acts, Peter and the other disciples pray and believe that God will direct the lot to fall to the person who should be chosen as Judas' replacement. Through both scenes it is strongly suggested that prayer should be a part of decision-making.
7. Answers may vary. The poem suggests that by loving his fellow man, Abou Ben Adhem proves that he loves God. All these passages support the sentiment that loving God is connected to loving one's neighbors. In the passage from Matthew, Jesus states that the first and greatest commandment is to love God, and "the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" He goes on to say that "all the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." In the passage from John, Jesus states that if the disciples show love for each other, the world will know that they are his disciples. In the passage from Romans, Paul writes that loving one another "is the fulfillment of the law." Finally, in the passage from 1 John, John writes that if we love one another, "God lives in us and his love is made complete in us." Note that one cannot truly love God and not love his neighbor, but one can love his neighbor without loving God.

Part Two: Elements of Poetry

Lines

Exercise II:

1. a. facial expression; b. tastelessly brilliant or showy; c. a country, region, or climate