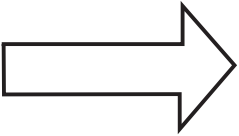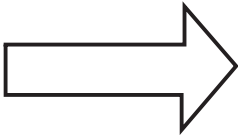# 8 Poetry

8.1 Definition and status

Can you understand why pupils – and teachers – do not like poetry in the classroom?

Children have a natural affinity for poetry beginning with their first exposure to nursery rhymes and stories with repetitive lines. In preschool and kindergarten the children often sit down in a circle and recite finger plays and seasonal chants. It is no wonder then that most of us intuitively recognize a poem. Yet it is hard for us to give an exact definition of poetry. Normative definitions of what a poem is often refer to a single characteristic, with the risk of ignoring the multitude of different forms of poetry. Descriptive definitions, which list several criteria, follow a more pragmatic approach. The following grid combines a descriptive definition based on Müller-Zettelmann's multi-component model (2000) with the resulting implications and benefits for teaching poetry in the English language classroom.

Characteristics and benefits

Features of poetry		Benefits for teaching
Brevity		• Flexible use (various goals, all levels) • Use in one lesson • Use in lower grades
Density of subject matter (reduction, compression)		• Close reading required • Focus on essentials • Intensive reception
Increased subjectivity (individual experience)	⇒	• Emotional loading • Personal reader's response • Intercultural learning
Musicality (proximity to songs)		• Nice listening experience • Activation of different senses • Easy to remember • Recitation • Songs as material
Aesthetic self-referentiality (self-reflexivity, artificiality)		• Personal appeal • extraordinariness

Structural complexity (lines, metre, stanza) Phonological complexity (sounds, rhyme) Morphological complexity (words, word formation) Syntactic complexity (arrangement of sentences) Semantic complexity (figurative language)	⟹	• Language awareness • Linguistic exploitability • Ambiguity • Interpretational openness • Stylistic analysis • Model for creative activities

Poetry boom

As one can see from the grid, making use of poetry in the language classroom can be beneficial in many ways. In addition, poetry as a literary form has experienced a renaissance in the last decades, at least in Great Britain and the USA. The famous project *Poetry on the Underground* on the London Tube, poetry slams in pubs, numerous forms of nonsense poetry in advertising as well as the book offers and sales figures of publishing companies testify to a new boom in the popularity of poetry – one of the reasons may be "dass nach Jahren seelenloser Profitgier der 8oer Jahre nun eine neue Kultur des (Mit-) Fühlens angesagt sei" (Volkmann 1998: 5).

Cinderella existence in classrooms

In classrooms, however, poetry still seems to lead a Cinderella existence. Due to its complexity on different levels, poems in general are regarded by pupils as very hard to understand. If this is true for poems in the mother tongue, how much more difficult must poems written in a foreign language seem to be? Furthermore the increased self-referentiality of poems may mean that they are too far away from reality and students' immediate and personal experiences. Thus a lot of teachers avoid integrating lyric texts into their lessons as they fear a loss of motivation on the students' side. Unfortunately a one-sided teaching approach focusing on formalistic and analytic interpretation has widened the gap between poem and pupil. Poetry has often been maligned by excessive analysis of the poem and too much emphasis on "finding the meaning". Pupils have been made to memorize poems as part of class activities, and single poems too abstract or not of interest to the child have been used in isolation.

Opening canon and methodology

To overcome these barriers at least two developments have to be intensified. First the canon of poetry should be opened up, i.e.

beside Shakespeare sonnets other types of poetry which are short, easy and appealing should be included (8.3). "Mit diesem zu "*poetries*" hin erweiterten Lyrikbegriff müsste es gelingen, die für SchülerInnen meist abschreckende Vorstellung von einem Gedicht als ehrfurchtsvoll zu bewunderndem hermeneutischen Mysterium abzubauen" (Taubenböck 2004: 5). Second teaching methodology must be opened up, i.e. personal, creative, experimental and fun responses to poems should complement the more cognitive approaches (8.2) – because, as Wallace Stevens put it, "the purpose of poetry is to contribute to man's happiness."

8.2 Teaching options

How would you structure a poetry lesson?

The simplest and most common way to structure a poetry lesson is to resort to the process model and divide the unit into a pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading stage. The following table summarizes some suggestions for each of the three stages.

PWP approach

Structuring a poetry lesson	
Process stage	*Activities*
P R E	• Introduction to author • Explanation of communicative situation • Discussion of title • Creative writing • Using media
W H I L E	• Reading whole text • Reading incomplete text • Reading changed text
P O S T	• First response • General understanding • Detailed analysis • Integrating background information • Evaluation • Recitation • Creating

Pre-reading stage

In the *pre-reading stage*, the teacher may give some information about the author of the poem and introduce the communicative situation (Who is speaking to whom about what?). Looking at the title, the students may speculate about the contents, thus activating their world knowledge; such a brainstorming or rather heart-storming activity may be done with the help of an association star on the board, i.e. a circle with a lot of rays on which the learners' ideas are written down. They may even write their own poem or parts of it on the title given. Different auditory or visual media (noises, pictures, photos, drawings etc.) can also introduce the topic of the poem and raise the students' curiosity.

While-reading stage

The *while-reading stage* mainly consists of the reading of the poem. The full text can be read – a few times – by the teacher, a (good) student (if the text is not too difficult) or presented via modern media if available, e.g. a recorded audio reading on CD, the Internet or an old record. For example, The Poetry Archive (www.poetryarchive.org) is an online collection of recordings of poets reading their work, and you can enjoy listening, free of charge, to the voices of contemporary English-language poets and poets from the past. The teacher can also hand out an incomplete or changed text. Various techniques may be employed here:

- *jumbled lines*: The poem is cut into separate lines, and the students have to put the lines into what they think is the correct order.
- *alternatives*: Some words of the poem are given two or three alternatives, and the students have to choose the one they think fits best.
- *two in one*: Two different poems are mixed into one, and the students have to sort them out.
- *prose and poem*: A poem is set like a prose text, and the students have to put it back into its lyrical form.
- *gapped poem*: Some words are deleted (rhyming words, first or last words of the lines, a few verses, a whole stanza), and the students have to complete the poem with suitable words. With younger or weaker students, a list with the original words can be added.
- *nonsense version*: Some words of the poem are replaced by other words, and the students have to underline and correct them. This technique is very suitable for listening to pop song lyrics, e.g. the classical song *Imagine* by John Lennon.

John Lennon: **Imagine** (nonsense version + proper version)

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1. Imagine there's a heaven	Imagine there's no heaven
Seize it if you cry	It's easy if you try
No help below us	No hell below us
A brother's only sky	Above us only sky
Imagine all the people	Imagine all the people
Leaving for today	Living for today
2. Imagine there's no counties	Imagine there's no country
It isn't a heart to woo	It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill a fly for	Nothing to kill or die for
And a religion too	And no religion, too
Imagine all the people	Imagine all the people
Living like a beast	Living life in peace
You may say I'm a dreamboat	You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the lonely one	But I'm not the only one
I hope Sunday you'll enjoy us	I hope some day you'll join us
And the world will be this one	And the world will be as one
3. Imagine oh processions	Imagine no possession
A wonder if you can	I wonder if you can
No need for creed or anger	No need for greed or hunger
A motherhood of man	A brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people	Imagine all the people
Cheering all the word	Sharing all the world
You may say ...	

The benefits of working with all these distorted text versions result from the way it is like a puzzle. It is motivating to play the detective, find missing things, and reconstruct the order. During this process the learners get a feeling for formal and thematic features of poetry, and dig below the surface of the written words. The aim, however, is not for the students to find the exact wording of the original. There is no right or wrong, various linguistic alternatives are possible, sensible guesses are asked for, choices should be justified, so that the learners learn to really concentrate on a text und grasp its basic meaning. This may lead to a deeper analysis later on if necessary.

> **Working with nonsense versions**

    In the *post-reading stage* students should get the chance to express their personal reactions to what they have heard or read. Such an exchange and discussion of first impressions may be followed by a general comprehension stage. The type of poem is decided upon (narrative, descriptive, reflective?), the situation is explained if this has not been done before (Who is speaking? Whom is he address-

> **Post-reading stage**

ing?), the subject matter is clarified (What is the main theme? What does the title have to do with the theme?), the main intention is discussed (What is the message? What response is he trying to evoke?), the tone is described (What is the prevailing mood?). A general understanding of the poem could lead on to a detailed analysis, in which the various poetic devices in the fields of structure, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics are studied (8.4). Analysis in itself is not bad if it is done in moderation and the right spirit. It should be pursued insofar as it illuminates the poem for the readers on their appropriate level. Poetry should be offered up for students to find their own connection to it, if any.

Evaluation   For a satisfactory interpretation one should also study the background of the poem as regards its literary history and biographical context. Based on all those findings, a balanced personal evaluation of the poem may modify the first impressions expressed immediately after the reading phase.

Reciting a poem   As poems are made up of sounds and rhythm, they should also be read aloud and recited. This can be turned into a fun experience, deepen the understanding of the poem and make students aware that active readers impart their own meaning to a passage and this determines the effect on the listener. Recitation has to be prepared, of course; in small groups, and supported by the teacher, students have to reflect on metre, rhythm, pauses, stress, volume, mood, body language and other poetic constituents. Various forms of reciting can be made use of:

- *choral reading*: The whole class – or smaller groups – recite the poem.
- *role reading*: The poem is read with different roles (e.g. boys and girls take turns)
- *mood reading*: The tone or volume may be changed (e.g. happy vs angry, loud vs whispering)
- *chain reading*: Each student of the class reads one line only until the whole class has participated.
- *stop and go*: One student starts and stops whenever he/she likes. His/her neighbour has to go on.
- *commented reading*: A student reads out and from time to time inserts *asides*, i.e. says what he/she likes or does not understand.

Poe-try   The post-reading stage, however, should not solely consist of recitation and cognitive tasks. As follow-up or transfer, numer-

ous creative activities can be employed. There are written forms (e.g. adding another stanza), visual forms (e.g. putting the poem into a collage), musical forms (e.g. combining the text with a suitable melody), audiovisual forms (e.g. producing a short video clip – and uploading it onto You Tube), interactive forms (making a contribution to one of the various poetry websites). Poetry also exists to play about with, to experiment with, to try out alternative ideas – because poetry may also be written *poe-try*.

The following teaching idea follows the pre – while – post approach, is aimed at younger pupils and may be of use in the primary classroom.
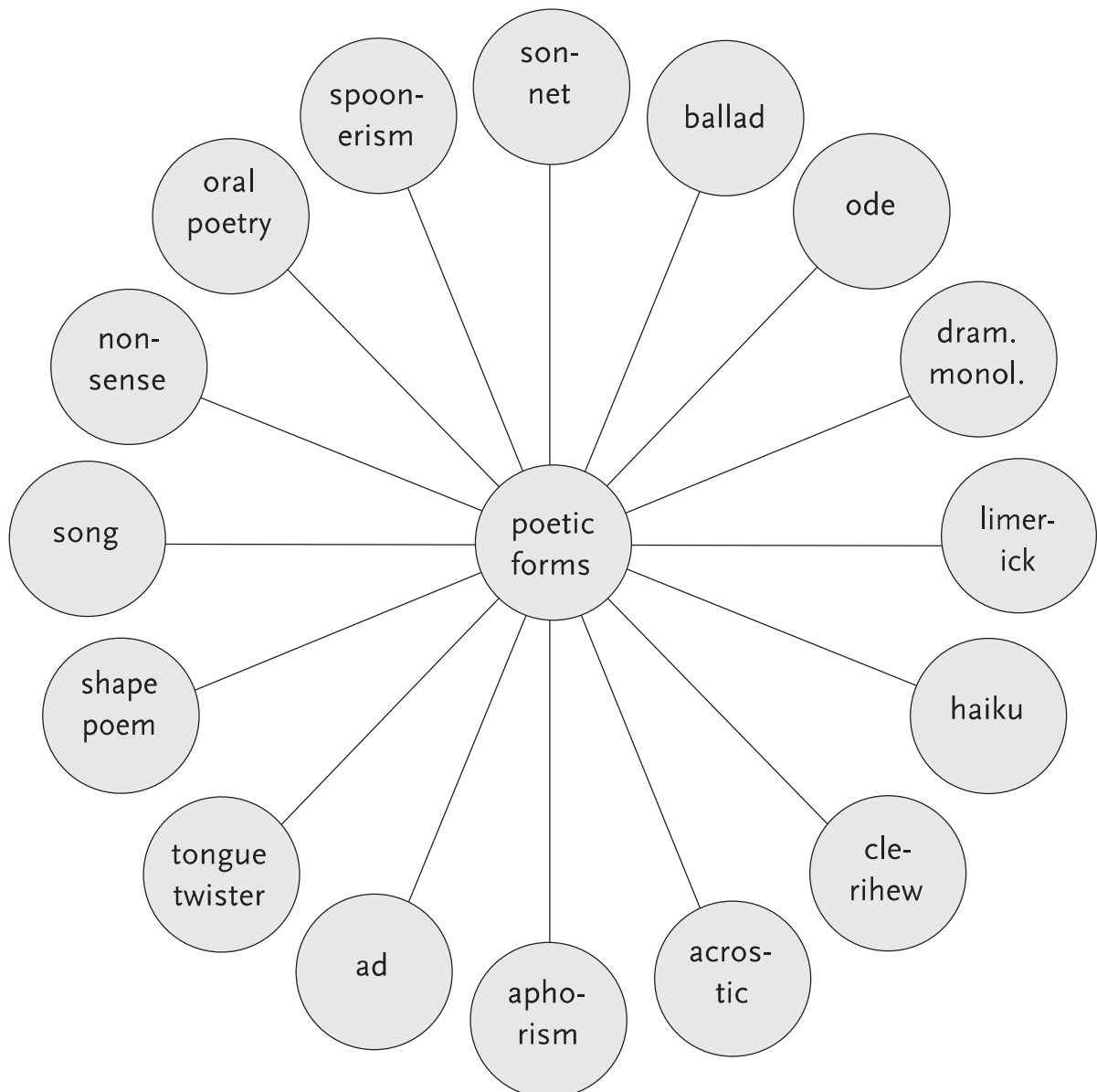
Teaching Unit for younger pupils

Teaching Unit	
Topic:	*I'm a Friendly Snowman*
Aims:	reading, listening, speaking, writing (integrated skills)
Level:	from grade 4
Time:	one 45-minute lesson
Procedure:	- pre-reading phase: 　　- *snowman* transparency (OHP) – successive 　　　uncovering as guessing game OR 　　- feeling box: snowman objects in a box (hat ...) – 　　　pupils feel – guess the topic - while-reading phase: 　　riddle: the word *snowman* is changed to *who* – 　　teacher reads out – pupils guess who *who* is - post-reading phase: 　　- matching picture cards and poem lines 　　- class chain: reading aloud one line – learning by 　　　heart 　　- creative writing: I'm a Friendly Easter Bunny
Materials:	text of *I'm a Friendly Snowman* I'm a friendly snowman big and fat, Here is my tummy and here is my hat. I'm a happy fellow, here is my nose, I'm all snow from my head to my toes. I have two bright eyes so I can see, All the snow falling down on me. When the weather's bad, I'm strong and tall, But when it's warm, I get very small.

8.3 Types of poetry

Do you know what a haiku is? And a clerihew? What about spoonerisms?

Poetries "If it ain't fun, it ain't poetry" (Taubenböck 2004): If one takes this motto seriously, traditional forms of poetry like sonnets, ballads, odes or dramatic monologues have to be complemented by alternative types. The following diagram displays the wealth of poetic forms including some of the more innovative, unconventional forms – the singular form *poetry* could really be replaced by the plural *poetries*.

In the following, some of the less traditional, shorter and more humorous types will be briefly described, together with some methodological ideas and an example to illustrate the genre.

Short and sweet

A *limerick* is a five-liner popularized by Edward Lear with a strict metre (the first, second, and fifth lines are three feet, the third and fourth are two feet). The rhyme scheme is usually aabba. The first line usually introduces a person and a location (at the end). A true limerick is supposed to have a kind of twist to it, which often lies in the final line. To introduce students to limericks, the teacher could first show them a few examples of this popular genre, followed by a short analysis of structure and form. Then one of the limericks may be presented in cloze form, with the students trying to fill in the gaps. After that just the structural form of another limerick is given, and the whole class create their poem. In a final step students in pairs or individually write their own limerick.

Limericks

A limerick

A young man from the city of Poona,
Decided to fish from a schooner.
But he drank so much rum,
That it upset his tum,
So he didn't catch very much tuna.

Nonsense verse refers to poetry which is normally composed for humorous effect. The paradoxical, silly, witty, or just strange effect may result from nonsense words, i.e. words without a clear meaning or any meaning at all (Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear), incompatible word pairs that make grammatical sense but not a semantic one, ambiguous grammar, or nonsensical situations. Nonsense poetry has a long tradition, particularly in English, as it reflects the absurdist tendency in British humour. Such poems lend themselves to linguistic analysis, which aims at finding the source of the nonsense, or may simply be enjoyed for its whimsical appeal.

Nonsense verse

Two nonsense poems	

1. 'I see' said the blind man
   to the deaf woman
   as he picked up his hammer
   and saw.
	2. Pussy cat, pussy cat,
	   Where have you been?
	   I've been to Britain
	   To meet Mr Bean.

Acrostics

An *acrostic* (from Greek *akróstichon*, *ákros*: "extreme", and *stíchos*: "verse") is a poem in an alphabetic script, in which the first letter or word of each verse in the text spells out another message. An acrostic may serve as an introduction to a new topic (instead of a mind map), with the teacher writing the letters of the headword below each other, and the students completing the lines with their background knowledge. It may also be employed as a frame for personal associations.

Acrostic on LOVE

L *et us never part*
O *r at least not so soon*
V *agabonds who do not care about*
E *ternity but live here and now.*

Clerihews

A *clerihew* is a short biographical humorous verse invented by Edmund Clerihew Bentley in the first half of the 19th century. It consists of four lines of irregular length, the third and fourth lines usually being longer than the first two (comic effect). The rhyme scheme is aabb. The first line introduces the subject's name, the following three lines show him/her from an unusual and humorous point of view. After the students have become acquainted with this form, the teacher could give them the first and last line of a clerihew; when the students have filled in the middle, it may be interesting to see who is closest to the original.

Two clerihews	

1. Professor Albert Einstein
   Always drew a fine line
   Between positive and negative
   And what was purely relative.
	2. What I like about Clive
	   Is that he is no longer alive.
	   There is a great deal to be said
	   For being dead.

A *spoonerism* is a play on words in which corresponding consonants, vowels, or morphemes are switched. The name is derived from Reverend William Archibald Spooner (1844 – 1930), who became notoriously famous for his liking of it. When not used on purpose, spoonerisms are slips of the tongue, if used intentionally they are considered a form of pun. They are not to be confused with *malapropisms*, i.e. incorrect usages of a word by substituting a similar-sounding word with different meaning. One task for the students could be to put the spoonerism right, and moreover to speculate about the situation in which the statement was used.

Three spoonerisms
"You have hissed all my mystery lectures, and were caught fighting a liar."
"Mardon me padam, this pie is occupewed."
"Let us raise our glasses to the queer old Dean."

A *haiku* is a Japanese form of poetry. The traditional 'hokku' consists of 5, 7, 5 on (the Japanese word *on* roughly corresponds to an English syllable), combines two different phrases, with a distinct grammatical break, and focuses on nature and the place of humans in nature. Modern haiku poets consider any subject matter suitable, often use three lines of no more than 17 syllables in total – three lines of 2, 3, and 2 metrical feet, with a pause after the second or fifth – and use caesura to contrast or compare two situations. It can be quite challenging for students to identify the different concepts or phrases, contrasts and caesura. Once a clever idea is found, writing one's own haiku can be done quite fast. Presentations in class can give rise to controversial interpretations.

Two haikus	

1. empty room:
    one swinging coat hanger
    measures the silence
	2. quietly dozing
	    under a clock without hands:
	    the museum keeper

Spoonerisms

Haikus

Shape poems   The terms *concrete poetry*, *shape poetry*, *pattern poetry* or *visual poetry* refer to poetry in which, beyond the conventional elements of meaning (words, rhyme, metre), the typographical arrangement of words conveys the intended effect, e.g. open space between words signifying a tennis net and a gap of communication in McGough's famous *40-love* poem. Given a few examples as models, students usually have no problems creating their own shape poems – a task which they do with enjoyment and often stunning results.

Roger McGough: **40-love**

---

middle	aged
couple	playing
ten	-nis
when	the
game	ends
and	they
go	home
the	net
will	still
be	be-
tween	them

Aphorisms   *Aphorisms* are short, witty statements or quotes. "Für ihre Verwendung im Englischunterricht sprechen folgende Konstituenten: Kürze, Prägnanz, Sentenzhaftigkeit, Überraschungseffekt, Aufforderungscharakter (Provokation), Rhetorik/Stilistik, Humor (Ironie, Satire)" (Thaler 2004: 36). A list of 25 different techniques which may be used in working with aphorisms on all topics can be found in Thaler (2004).

Aphorism: topic	*Aphorism: example*
Politics	In politics if you want anything said, ask a man. If you want anything done, ask a woman. (M. Thatcher)
Man & Woman	A man in love is incomplete until he is married. Then he is finished. (Z.Z. Gabor)
School & Education	He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches. (G.B. Shaw)
Language	Language is the dress of thought. (S. Johnson)

Life & Meaning	In this world there are only two tragedies. One is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it. (O. Wilde)

If you put spelling mistakes into a lyric text on purpose, the result is a *misspelt poem*. The obvious task here is to ask students to edit the text and write an orthographically correct version. Afterwards the discrepancy between English spelling and pronunciation as well as the issue of a spelling reform could be discussed.

Misspelt poems

Spelling chequer

Eye halve a spelling chequer It came with my pea sea It plainly marques four my revue Miss steaks eye kin knot sea.	As soon as a mist ache is maid It nose be fore two long And eye can put the error rite Its rare lea ever wrong.
Eye strike a key and type a word And weight four it two say Weather eye am wrong oar write It shows me strait a weigh.	Eye have run this poem threw it I am shore your pleased two no Its letter perfect all the weigh My chequer tolled me sew.

Pop songs including *raps* are a very popular medium with children and teenagers (see 11.2). If Shakespeare lived today he might write song lyrics – and if Bob Dylan or Sting had lived in the Elizabethan age, they might have written sonnets. There are some wonderful examples of pop lyrics around, which may be enjoyed and exploited for linguistic and intercultural purposes. Sting's *I'm an Englishman in New York* may, apart from being subjected to poetic and cultural analysis, be compared to the short story *Jolly Corner* by Henry James (Thaler 2005).

Pop song lyrics

Sting: I'm an Englishman in New York

I don't drink coffee I take tea my dear I like my toast done on one side And you can hear it in my accent when I talk I'm an Englishman in New York	I'm an alien I'm a legal alien I'm an Englishman in New York I'm an alien I'm a legal alien I'm an Englishman in New York
See me walking down Fifth Avenue A walking cane here at my side I take it everywhere I walk I'm an Englishman in New York	Modesty, propriety can lead to notoriety You could end up as the only one Gentleness, sobriety are rare in this society At night a candle's brighter than the sun

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I'm an alien I'm a legal alien I'm an Englishman in New York I'm an alien I'm a legal alien I'm an Englishman in New York If "Manners maketh man" as someone said Then he's the hero of the day It takes a man to suffer ignorance and smile Be yourself no matter what they say	Takes more than combat gear to make a man Takes more than a license for a gun Confront your enemies, avoid them when you can A gentleman will walk but never run If "Manners maketh man" as ... I'm an alien ...

Epitaphs   Even religious texts may find their way into the classroom, such as *prayers* or *epitaphs*. An epitaph is a text, traditionally in verse, which honours the deceased, and is inscribed on a tombstone or plaque. A lot of poets have composed their own epitaphs prior to their death. A good epitaph is regarded to be one that is memorable, or makes one think, often addressing the readers and warning them about their own mortality. Some of them are even humorous, resorting to puns and other stylistic devices. All these features may be exploited in a classroom discussion.

Four epitaphs

– *Excuse my dust. (Dorothy Parker's proposed epitaph)*
– *I told you I was sick.*
– *He died in peace – his wife died first.*
– *Here lies Johnny Yeast. Pardon me for not rising.*

Counting-out   A *counting-out rhyme* is used in real life, as the name suggests,
rhymes   to count out people and determine the members of a team in a game. In younger classes, such rhymes can be spoken in small groups and acted out accordingly. When the counting is done several times, each player pupil has to say a different line, and the words really get stuck in their heads.

A counting-out rhyme

A man walked into a beer bottle shop
And asked for a bottle of beer.
Where's your money?
In my pocket.

Where's your pocket?
I forgot it.
Please step out.

Such a counting-out rhyme is a special case of *performing poems*, in which the speakers perform an action. As they combine verbal skills with bodily movements, these poems are predestined for the TPR approach (Total Physical Response). Students have to carry out what is asked of them, which tends to intensify the learning process. Moreover they learn how to use their voices effectively.

Performing poems

This is the way ...: *performing poem*

This is the way you brush your teeth, brush your teeth, brush your teeth.
This is the way you wash your hands, wash your hands, wash your hands.
This is the way you comb your hair, comb your hair, comb your hair ...

Performing poems may be regarded as the stepping-stone to *performance poetry*, i.e. a form of oral poetry that is not written for print distribution, but specifically composed either for or even during performance before an audience (in pubs or at festivals). Whereas poetry readings feature poets reading their printed books for a live audience, performance poets use a different style suited for their oral presentations. Teachers may encourage their classes to prepare and organize their own poetry slams in class or public places.

Performance poetry

8.4 Poetic devices

Do you think it is necessary to teach stylistic devices in class?

Poetic devices can be found on the levels of structure, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. Such stylistic devices also

Various levels and text types

Structural level

turn up in narrative and dramatic texts, which underlines the necessity of making students familiar with them.

A structural analysis will look at the external structure of a poem, its internal structure, its metric pattern and its rhythm. The external structure is mainly based on its stanzaic form, i.e. how many lines of verse a stanza (*Strophe*) comprises (couplet: paired lines of verse, tercet: three lines, quatrain: four lines, pentameter: five lines, hexameter: six lines). Thematic and formal relations as well as breaks (thematic, spatial, temporal changes) within a poem determine its internal structure. An analysis of the metre, i.e. the regular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables within a line of a poem, is called *scansion* or *scanning*. To scan a line involves finding out the kind of foot (smallest unit of verse: *Versfuß*) and the number of feet (tetrameter: four beats, pentameter: five beats, etc.) – plus marking the pauses and missing syllables, and determining the rhyme-scheme and the stanza form. The rhythm of a poem results from its metre, the length of the syllables, repetitions and the meaning of words. The following table lists some of the most important structural devices.

Structural devices

Term	*Explanation*	*Example*
Anapest	Foot: – – '–	with the <u>grea</u>test of <u>ease</u>
Blank verse	Poetry with a regular metre, but no rhyme	You stars that reign'd at my nativity, Whose influence hath alloted death and hell (Christopher Marlowe, Doctor Faustus)
Dactyl	Foot: '– – –	<u>Just</u> for a <u>hand</u>ful of <u>sil</u>ver he <u>left</u> us
Enjambement	Run-on line (*Zeilensprung*)	(1st line) My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains (2nd line) My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk (Keats: *Ode to a Nightingale*)
Free verse	Poetry without regular metre or rhyme	All truths wait in all things They neither hasten their own delivery nor resist it, They do not need the obstetric forceps of the surgeon. (Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*)

Heroic couplet	A pair of two verses in pair rhyme and iambic pentameter	So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see, So long lives this, and this gives life to thee. (Shakespeare: Sonnet 18)
Iamb	Foot: – '–	the dust of snow
Trochee	Foot: '– –	tiger, tiger, burning bright

On the phonological level the most important feature is rhyme, which generally means that two or more words sound the same from the last stressed vowel. Identifying the rhyme scheme and other phonological characteristics can help to understand and interpret a poem better because rhymes can structure the text, emphasize relationships and contrasts, and support thematic aspects. The following table lists some of the most common phonological figures.

Phonological level

Phonological devices		
Term	*Explanation*	*Example*
Alliteration	Repetition of a sound at the beginning of neighbouring words	Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.
Alternate rhyme	*Kreuzreim (alternierender Reim)*	abab cdcd
Assonance	Repetition of internal vowel sounds in neighbouring words that do not end the same (vowel rhyme)	When I get shocked at the hospital by the doctor when I'm not cooperating (Eminem)
Consonance	Repetition of consonant sounds at the end of neighbouring words with different vowel sounds	'Out of this house' – said rider to reader (W.H. Auden)
Embracing rhyme	*Umarmender (umschlingender) Reim*	abba cddc
End rhyme	Rhyme at the end of lines	Tyger! Tyger burning bright In the forests of the night (William Blake: The Tyger)
Eye rhyme	Spelling suggests rhyme, but pronunciation is different	flow – how

Internal rhyme	*Binnenreim*	letters of joy from girl and boy
Onomatopoeia	Using words which imitate the sound they refer to (*Lautmalerei*)	The cuckoo whizzed past the buzzing bees.
Rhyming couplets	*Paarreim*	aa bb cc

Morpho-syntactical level

The form and effect of a poem is also determined by rhetorical figures on the morphological (words, word formation) and syntactic (sentence structure) level. Such figures, together with structural and phonological ones, contribute a lot to the coherence of a poem, which is all the more necessary as poems usually have little to offer in terms of plot and characters. Moreover they emphasize certain elements of the content and thus help "to establish relations of correspondence and opposition" (Ludwig 1994: 135). As it is not always easy to draw a line between morphological and syntactic features, the following table summarizes some important morpho-syntactic figures.

Morpho-syntactic figures		
Term	*Explanation*	*Example*
Accumulation	Enumeration; a row of similar expressions	I have dared to love you wildly, passionately, devotedly, hopelessly. (Oscar Wilde)
Anaphora	Successive clauses (sentences) starting with the same word	Mad world! Mad kings! Mad composition! (Shakespeare, King John)
Antithesis	Contrast; opposing words, phrases, structures, characters, views	It's easier for a father to have children than for children to have a real father. (Alexander Pope)
Chiasmus	Reversal in the order of words in the two halves of a sentence (*Kreuzstellung*)	Love's fire heats water, water cools not love. (Shakespeare)
Ellipsis	Leaving out essential grammatical items	And he to England shall along with you. (Shakespeare, Hamlet)
Parallelism	Repeating similar or identical words, phrases, constructions in neighbouring lines, sentences, paragraphs	If I am occasionally a little overdressed, I make up for it by being always immensely over-educated. (Oscar Wilde)

| Repetition | Deliberately using a word or phrase more than once | Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow, creeps in this petty pace from day to day (Shakespeare, Macbeth) |
| Rhetorical question | Question to which the answer is obvious | Don't we all love peace? |

Finally there are rhetorical figures on the semantic level (meaning of words). Whereas in films you see visual images, imagery in poetry must rely on words, which convey a figurative meaning. The following table describes the omni-present metaphor and a few other common semantic figures.

Semantic level

Semantic figures

Term	Explanation	Example
Allusion	Indirect reference to a famous event, person or piece of literature	To meet one's Waterloo, the Scrooge Syndrome, the old man and the computer
Anti-climax	Opposite of climax; string of statements ending with the weakest	For God, for country, and for football.
Climax	Row of statements from the weakest to the strongest	Friends, Romans, countrymen! (Shakespeare, Julius Caesar)
Euphemism	Using polite expressions for sth. unpleasant	To pass away (to die), friendly fire (own army)
Hyperbole	Exaggeration; overstatement; making sth./sb. greater than they are	A momentary separation from anyone to whom one has just been introduced is almost unbearable. (Oscar Wilde)
Irony	Meaning the opposite of what you say	What a wonderful day it is! (when there's a thunderstorm)
Litotes	Understatement; making sth./sb. less important than they are	The Queen was not amused.
Metaphor	Poetical comparison without *like* or *as*	Life's but a walking shadow. (Shakespeare, Macbeth)
Oxymoron	Combination of two seemingly contradictory terms (condensed paradox)	O hateful love! O loving hate!" (Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*)

Paradox	Seeming impossible at first glance, but being true at second thoughts	Fair is foul, and foul is fair. (Shakespeare, Macbeth)
Personification	Presenting ideas, objects, animals as persons	Death pays all debts. (proverb) a smiling moon, a jovial sun
Pun	Play on words (using homophones or homonyms)	Seven days without water makes one we<u>ak</u>.
Simile	Comparison using *like* or *as*	A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle. (Irina Dunn) Thick as a brick (Jethro Tull)
Symbol	Sth. concrete (object, character, event) standing for sth. abstract	dove (peace), Cupid (love), scales (justice), sceptre (royal power), horseshoe (luck)
Synecdoche	Using a part instead of the whole (pars pro toto)	Lend me your ears. (Shakespeare, Julius Caesar)
Tautology	Repetition of a single idea in different words, phrases, sentences	With malice toward none, with charity for all. (Abraham Lincoln)

Explaining the functions

When analysing a poem it is, however, not sufficient to just identify the type of rhetorical device used. To achieve a deeper understanding of the meaning of a text, one has to reflect on the function of a rhetorical figure, i.e. why it is used in this specific context. Form and function are inter-related. The most common functions or effects of rhetorical figures are:

- to emphasize a certain aspect (most common function!)
- to arouse the reader's interest / to catch the reader's attention
- to make the reader think (don't overuse this argument!)
- to criticize / satirize a situation / person / idea / event
- to produce a fine rhythm
- to create humour
- to amuse / entertain the reader
- to evoke funny / revealing associations
- to create a graphic mental image
- to make the passage vivid
- to surprise the reader

As functions also depend on the specific context in which a rhetorical device is placed, students must be warned against making

over-generalizations, stating functions without thinking. To understand poetic devices is an important goal in teaching literature, but poetry lessons must not be reduced to a formal analysis. Playful and creative activities should complement the more cognitive ones.

Tasks

1. Prepare and carry out a debate on the necessity of teaching poetry. The motion is: *Poems should be banned from TEFL classes*. There should be at least two proposers and two opposers. Before the vote is finally taken, the motion is put to the floor, i.e. all members of the debating club can state their opinions.

2. Choose one of the poems in 8.3 and design a 45-minute lesson around it. Divide your lesson plan into a pre-, while- and post-reading stage. Make use of the information given in this chapter.

3. Study the following examples of poetry (8.3) and do the tasks:
   a) spoonerisms: Put the three examples right by correcting the switched words.
   b) acrostics: Write an acrostic on HATE.
   c) misspelt poems: Find the spelling mistakes and write a correct version.

4. Look at the song lyrics *I'm an Englishman in New York* by Sting and find one example each of the following poetic devices:
   a) repetition
   b) anaphora
   c) parallelism
   d) allusion
   e) internal rhyme
   f) ellipsis
   g) antithesis

5. Draw a scansion chart of the following limerick:
   There was a young girl, a sweet lamb,
   Who smiled as she entered a tram.
   After she had embarked
   The conductor remarked,
   "Your fare!" and she said, "Yes, I am!"

6. Types of poetry: In the following table the names and definitions of ten common types of poetry are out of order. Match the numbers with the right letters.

(1) Ballad	(a) a short poem ending in a witty turn of thought
(2) Descriptive poem	(b) a short rhythmical poem, derived from folk song, expressing the the speaker's feelings or mood
(3) Elegy	(c) a simple poem in short stanzas, which tells a popular story in verse
(4) Epic	(d) a poem which describes people, objects, situations, or experiences
(5) Epigram	(e) a poem which tells a story and has external action
(6) Lyric poem	(f) a poem in an elevated style which is often sung in celebration of a special event
(7) Narrative poem	(g) a poem in which the speaker comments on a situation, ponders on a thought, draws conclusions from events
(8) Ode	(h) a poem of 14 lines consisting of iambic pentameters
(9) Reflective poem	(i) a poem which celebrates – in the form of a narration – the achievements of a heroic personality of the past
(10) Sonnet	(j) a solemn poem which deals with death and personal loss