

# **SIMPLIFIED POETRY STUDY GUIDE BOOK.**

## **FOR FORM 1-4**

---

**CONTAINS EXHAUSTIVELY DISCUSSED POETRY CONCEPTS,  
WITH ENOUGH EXPLANATIONS, EXEMPLIFICATIONS  
AND ILLUSTRATIONS.**

**B. ED (ARTS) – ENGLISH LITERATURE  
CHUKA UNIVERSITY.**

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.**

My first thanks giving goes to the almighty for the protection, mercy, sustenance he accorded us throughout my life. It was all with God's mercy that we live waking up to fresh opportunities and goodies each and every day. For me I admit that God controlled my life guiding me towards that which is good for me and most importantly his taqwa (fear of God) controlled and became my way of life for the far he has accorded me. It is because of this that all the happenings and coincidences of which most are like white spots in my life calendar happened. Some of this coincidences and remember able moments are the reasons behind me being a writer. I wasn't born one but the occasions in my life compelled me in to being a writer. Some of these occasions are sad and I would not have lived all this far were it not for the guidance and the mercy of the almighty. Finally, I thank God for the knowledge he has given me that made me able to be where I am and able to write something new, which is my hobby and happiness too each and every day.

Secondly I would like to deliver my heart-felt thanks giving to my mum and my lovely wife. It is a perfect correspondence of our local saying that says "if God wants to bless a man he puts a great woman in his life". One great woman makes a man successful but am extra blessed as I have two of such women. The fact that they share the same name indicates that they are a merge of two great souls into one woman as the saying puts it. You guys, I owe you a great deal which I am sure I won't live to pay back even if given a thousand years. Your advice and financial as well as emotional support and encouragement made me to this far. I pray that God would grant you long life full of happiness and to mum live long enough to see the maturity of your grand- children.

I would also like to specifically express my unending gratitude and thanks giving to Mr. Mustafa Diba, who is a brother, a good friend and a roomie all in one, in our campus life. He is a good hearted and caring friend I won't stand to lose. Mustafa, or I rather address him with my favourite name for him – Abeera, owes me a lot and I would wish to thank him for his company, care, support and encouragement he gave me all through the life we were together. Most importantly, I thank him again for the contributions and help he gave me in the authoring of this book and my other works.

I have not forgotten my great academic partner and a good friend, Miss Ofwela Metrine with whom I ingested all those theories and concepts of literary knowledge. She is such a great minded, intelligent and hardworking lady who can understand and explain those vast knowledge of literature which kept us at the same pace. She was always there to back me up when am weak, remind and help me when am careless and kept me up to date with classroom concepts and notes whenever I was busy elsewhere. Am grateful to her mostly for the concepts she handled with me perfectly some of which are reflected in this book.

I can't leave behind the staff and students of Kailutha mixed day secondary school who provided me with such a wonderful project environment. It was in this school that I drew my observations and undertook this invaluable poetry project. My students were great little minds who made gave me a clear statement of the problem and weakness which made me able to decide and draw the design of my project. They were also of a great help and importance in implementation of this project which led to authoring of this book. They therefore made the undertaking of

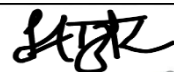
that project a smooth process providing me with a clear feedback which enabled me to draw a design in arranging these poetry concepts in the best order of its deliverance. I wish them a smooth inspired study and success in their k.c.s.e and life in future. For Kailutha staff, I express my gratitude to the welcoming, company and a happy stay they offered me. Specifically, I would like to heavily thank Mr. Muthomi Ezra, a great fellow, who made my life in that area a smooth undertaking. Being from far away and a stranger in the people with language and culture I don't understand, Mr. Muthomi was such a wonderful host who took care of me, helped me to interact with the local people until I can utter not only some words but well-constructed statements in Kimeru of Tigania. Most importantly he helped me a lot in undertaking and implementation of my project both in school and at the place of our stay.

I would also like to express my special gratitude to my university lecturer Professor Colomba who was a mentor and my role model in the field of writer. It is one of her statement that captured my attention and mentored me as well as giving a direction on how to go about my writings. Professor made a statement in our class lecture on 9th of October 2015. It goes, "a simplistic novel is better than a bombastic and sophisticated novel". Being a young, inexperienced literature student, this statement gave me a direction on how to go about my ambitions in writing.

The list is long and I express my gratitude to all who were of importance to the betterment of my ambitions in writing and the authoring of this book in one way or another. May God bless you all.

Love you all, receive my thanks

---



Mr Issack Adan.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

<b>TOPIC.</b>	<b>PAGE.</b>
Cover page .....	1
Acknowledgment.....	2
Table of contents .....	4

### **CHAPTER ONE.**

1. Definition and the nature of poetry. ....	6
1.0. characteristics and features of a poem. ....	6
1.1. Functions of poetry in the society .....	7
1.2. structure of a poem .....	7
1.3. classification of poems .....	9
1.3.0. types of poems according to structure .....	9
1.3.1. types of poems according to subject matter .....	15
1.4. the notion that poetry is hard .....	16

### **CHAPTER TWO.**

2.0. sound features in poetry .....	17
2.1. rhyme scheme .....	17
2.1.0. regular rhyme scheme .....	17
2.1.0.0. types of regular rhyme scheme pattern .....	19
2.1.1. irregular rhyme scheme .....	21
2.2. Alliteration .....	21
2.2.0. consonance .....	22
2.2.1. Assonance .....	23
2.3. Onomatopoeia and idiophones .....	23

### **CHAPTER THREE.**

3.0. Figures of speech in poetry .....	25
3.1. functions of the figures of speech .....	25

3.2. imagery .....	25
3.2.0. uses of imagery .....	25
3.2.1. metaphor .....	26
3.2.2. simile .....	27
3.3. personification .....	28
3.4. symbolism .....	29
3.5. hyperbole and overstatement .....	31
3.5.0. differences between hyperbole and overstatement .....	31
3.6. understatement and litotes. ....	33
3.7. irony. ....	33
3.8. euphemism .....	34
3.9. paradox and oxymoron .....	35
3.10. metonymy and synecdoche .....	36
3.11. antithesis. ....	36
3.12. Apostrophe .....	36
3.13. chiasmus .....	37
3.14. anaphora .....	37
3.15. ellipsis .....	37

#### **CHAPTER FOUR.**

4.0. Subject matter of a poem. ....	38
4.1. mood .....	38
4.2. tone .....	40
4.3. Attitude of the poet .....	42
4.3.0. vocabularies for describing attitude .....	43
4.4. Atmosphere of a poem .....	44
4.5. analysing a poem .....	45

## CHAPTER ONE.

### **DEFINATION AND THE NATURE OF POETRY.**

Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings of a poet expressed using expertly selected words in their best form and order. We defined poetry as “a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings”, because poetry, unlike other literary work, is brought about by feelings that compel the poet to compose a poem about a topic, a phenomenon or a situation. Therefore in analysing the meaning of a poem, the exact analysis is best known by the poet. It is the poet who knows best, the background knowledge of the situation which brought about the composing of the poem. Ours is to put ourselves in the shoes of the poet and try to decipher its meaning, basing it on our own experience about the topic. So, in analysing a poem we have to assume the feelings of the poet, the attitude of the poet the mood and see the topic of the poem from the same angle from which the poet sees.

We defined poetry as “words in their best order and form” because poetry is economical with words and a poet uses words in a way to bring about rhythm and to make the poem short and compact. Unlike other forms of literature, poetry is unique in the way it uses words and language. This uniqueness is because of;

- Bringing about rhythm.
- Maintaining the compactness or the size of the poem to keep it brief and short.

#### **Characteristics and features of a poem.**

**1) Rhyme:** Poems have rhyming words that create a certain effect. Rhythm can be brought about by;

- Rhyme scheme (words that have similar sounds coming at the end of each line).
- Assonance.
- Consonance.

**NB/:** Not all poems are rhyming. A poem that does not rhyme is called a free verse.

**2) Rhythm:** poets use repetition of sounds or patterns to create a musical effect. Rhythm can be created by using the same number of words or syllables in each line. Rhythm is described as the beat of the poem. There is a difference between rhyme and rhythm. When rhyme is the effect brought about by words with similar sounds at certain points in a line called rhyme scheme, rhythm is the effect of musicality brought about by rhyme, alliteration, assonance and consonance as well as all the other sound features. Therefore, rhythm is the effect created by sound features and it is the musicality of the poem.

**3) Use of figurative language:** poetry often uses figurative language to explain a situation using few words. These include the use of imagery and personification for comparison, symbolism, hyperbole also called exaggeration, oxymoron, sarcasm, etc.

**4) Shape:** poems are written in lines that make up stanzas. Often there is a break between the stanzas giving the poem a shape unlike other literary forms like novels

and short stories.

**5) Short and compact:** Most poems are short and compact compared to novels and short stories.

**6) Poems are economical with words.** They use few words to communicate.

### **FUNCTIONS OF POETRY IN THE SOCIETY**

- Poetry is used to communicate one's deep feelings which a prose cannot communicate in an emotional way. It expresses one's powerful feelings in a manner that fits its narration.
- Like songs it is used for entertainment to act as a form of amusement which are enjoyable.
- It can offer an unexpected insight or a sharp observation. Unlike prose it can easily give one an insight into a philosophical aspect making it understandable.
- Emotionally, a poem can move someone making a person to see deeply into his/her feelings hence helping one to understand his/her emotions better.
- At moments of crisis or loss, it is used to give consolation or comfort and helps one to regain peace of mind as it helps one understand and control his/her emotions hence, helping one to decide and put an end to their problems.
- At times of rejoicing, it can help one express his/her feelings in a joyful and deeply felt way making one's happy moments well spent and memorable.
- It can serve as a vehicle for meditation. Since poetry is the expression of powerful feelings, one composes it to get freed from his/her feelings which might bring about discomfort or in some individuals even suicide.
- With its power to stay in the mind, it can provide mental reference and emotional assurance over many years or decades.
- It is also a philosophical way of expressing one's ideas showing how wise or learned somebody is. So poetry is the way the learned and scholars address their ideas.
- Poetry is used to give moral lessons, as well as condemning the vices and social issues like corruption, racism, favourism, greediness, selfishness and all other social vices of the society through criticism and sarcasm.
- It is also used for upholding and praising the virtues in the society so that individuals can imitate and be better persons in a country.

### **STRUCTURE OF A POEM.**

In a poem, words follow each other in a sequence determined by the poet. In order to discuss the arrangements that result, certain terms have been applied to various aspects of that arrangement process. Although in some ways these sequences seem arbitrary and mechanical, in another sense they help to determine the nature

of the poem. These various ways of organizing words form the structure of a poem. The words are arranged to form the structure in the following ways:-

- a) **Line:** words are arranged to make up a line. A line of a poem consists of around six words which are selected carefully and organised in a way to make the poem able to be recited. The line is fundamental to the perception of poetry, marking an important visual distinction from prose. Poetry is arranged into a series of units that do not necessarily correspond to sentences, but rather to a series of metrical feet. Generally, but not always, the line is printed as one single line on the page. If it occupies more than one line, its remainder is usually indented to indicate that it is a continuation. There is a natural tendency when reading poetry to pause at the end of a line, but a careful reader will follow the punctuation to find where natural pauses should occur. Due to the careful arrangements of words in each line, a poem is recited rather than read. As we have sentences in prose, in poetry we have lines.
- b) **Length of lines:** In traditional verse forms, the length of each line is determined by the agreement between the words used or the message to be communicated in the line, but in modern poetry the poet has more freedom for choice. Lines of different poems differ. One single line of a poem arranged in a metrical pattern, that does not have relationship with other lines before and after it is called a verse. A piece of poetry or a particular form of poetry that has such lines is called free verse. The popular use of the word verse for a stanza or associated group of metrical lines is not in accordance with the best usage. A stanza is a group of verses.
- c) **Stanza:** The lines in a poem are then arranged in a stanza. A stanza is a division of a poem created by arranging the lines into a unit, often repeated in the same pattern of meter and rhyme throughout the poem; a unit of poetic lines. In prose, this group of line corresponds with a paragraph. Poems do not have paragraphs like passages but they have stanzas. The stanzas within a poem are separated by blank lines. Stanzas in modern poetry, such as free verse, often do not have lines that are all of the same length and meter, nor even the same number of lines in each stanza. Stanzas created by such irregular line groupings are often dictated by meaning, as in paragraphs of prose.
- d) **Stanza forms:** The forms of stanzas used in making up a poem also form the structure of a poem. They are also a factor in the categorization of whole poems described as following a fixed form. Some poem's stanza has three lines others four lines, five, six, seven and so on. This number of lines in a stanza makes some long and others short. The arrangement of stanzas or method used to convey the content, such as free verse, ballad, haiku, gives a poem a specific structure and this structure is used to classify poems. It sometimes applies to details within the composition of the poem, but is probably used most often in reference to the structural characteristics of a work as it compares to (or differs from) established modes of conventionalized arrangements. Some of this stanza forms arranges the words and lines in a manner to graphically represent what they are communicating. Poems with this structure are called concrete poems.



- e) **Point of View:** The point of view used in a poem also gives it a structure. The author's point of view concentrates on the point of the speaker, or "teller" or the person who is reciting the poem. This may be considered as the poem's "voice" which is called the tone. This voice or the person speaking through that voice is also, sometimes referred to as the persona. The point of view that structures a poem include;
- ❖ 1st Person: the speaker is a character in the story or poem and tells it from his/her perspective (these kinds of poems use "I").
  - ❖ 3rd Person limited: the speaker is not part of the story, but tells about the other characters through the limited perceptions of one other person. This speaker narrates what he is not sure of but might have heard.
  - ❖ 3rd Person omniscient: The speaker is not part of the story, but is able to "know" and describe what all characters are thinking. This speaker is described as all-knowing.
- f) **Repetition and use of rhetorical Question:** In some poems some lines or words are repeated at a specific point in the lines of a stanza. This creates an order in the arrangement of the lines in a stanza or words in a line. Some of this repeated lines are mostly rhetorical questions which are meant solely for effect, but do not require an answer. By the implication the answer is obvious; it is a means of achieving an emphasis stronger than a direct statement. This emphasis if repeated brings ideas delivered in a set structure.
- g) **Rhyme Scheme:** The pattern established by the arrangement of rhymes in a stanza or poem, generally described by using letters of the alphabet to denote the recurrence of rhyming lines, such as the ababbcc, gives a poem an organised pattern and a structure. Rhyme scheme patterns are of different structures determined by occurrence of the same sounds at the end of each line. However, some poems like free verse do not have regular rhyme scheme patterns and their structure is irregular. Poems' rhyme scheme patterns are given in different ways. The popular rhyme scheme of ababab, cdcdcd is called an alternate rhyme or cross rhyme. The abba, cddc scheme, is called envelope rhyme and the others are, regular ones assigned the same letter throughout the stanza and irregular ones whose pattern of assigning letters are not similar in any stanza and cannot be predicted. This rhyme scheme pattern gives a poem a regular or an irregular structure.
- h) **Grammatical arrangement:** The words in the lines of a poem are arranged in a way to create rhyme scheme, to bring about alliteration and to maintain the length of a line. This leads to mis-arrangement of words in a line as opposed to the norms of the language's grammar. The grammatical rules in English state that the words should be arranged in a subject-verb-object agreement order. i.e. every sentence should start with a subject which is the doer of the action, followed by a verb which is the action of the sentence and lastly the object which is the receiver of the action. Poetry, do not follow this grammatical structure but a poet can arrange the words in a planned way to express various sound features. This freedom of word choice and arrangements in poetry is called poetic licence. It gives a poem a different

word structure from that of the prose.

### CLASSIFICATION OF POEMS.

Poems are classified according to their structure, subject matter or even their rhythm. Therefore, poems have a lot of classifications as they are classified according to each of the above. We will look at each classification one by one;

#### Types of poems according to their structure.

• **Open poem:** These are poetic forms free from regularity and consistency in elements such as rhyme, line length, and metrical form. This type of poems does not follow any poetic features but express their message directly. Below is an example;

January Morning	Suite XV
I wanted to write you a poem, that you would understand, but for what good is it, if you can't understand it? I always longed to, But sadly you can't understand, And I, hopelessly, Don't have to write.	

• **Closed poems:** These are poetic forms which are subjected to a fixed structure and pattern. They are organised and contain all the poetic elements and features. Consider the one below;

#### MY LOVE by Aizakh kheir.

My love, it was long you stole my heart,  
I still remember, lying on my mat,  
Bereft I was, sleeping in my hut,  
I adore you, the child of a cat.

My love, I visualize that night,  
Deep in a dream, you appeared to my sight,  
Down the heart, you lit the chambers with light,  
And shook me with its might.

My love, that was when, I fall in love,  
Meandering, my life went into a curve,  
Over the night, you are stored in my nerve,  
I love you my demure dove,

My love, your antecedents are good,  
I wanted to tell you, but my mouth is glued,  
Like a kitten, when you mewed,  
Ecstatic, was my mood.

My love, your affection is in the nude,  
To lower it, I eat no food,

In my eyes, you see your love dewed,  
Cruel you re when you weren't moved.

- **Blank Verse:** Are poems which are arranged in lines which do not necessarily contain rhyming words and the stanzas are not consistent in the number of lines. They are sometimes words of a person in conversations. They are the forms used in some plays like Shakespearean plays and other plays written in verse form.
- **Free verse:** These are poems made up of lines with no prescribed pattern or structure. The poet determines all the variables as seems appropriate for each poem. They have irregular rhyme schemes. Below is an example of a free verse.

**SONG OF MYSELF.**

Unknown.

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journeywork of the stars,  
And the pismire is equally perfect, and a grain of sand, and the,  
egg of the wren,  
And the tree-toad is a chef-d'oeuvre for the highest,  
And the running blackberry would adorn the parlors of heaven,  
And the narrowest hinge in my hand puts to scorn all machinery,  
And the cow crunching with depressed head surpasses any statue,  
And a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of infidels,  
And I could come every afternoon of my life to look at the  
farmer's girl boiling her iron teakettle and baking shortcake.

- **Couplet:** A poem with lines which are in pairs. These poems can even be made up of a single pair of lines. The lines are usually rhymed and these poems have the shortest stanzas. They can be closed or open. When closed, the image or message of the poem is packed neatly in two lines as in the one below;

*Know, nature's children all divide her care;  
The fur that warms a monarch warmed a bear.* *Pope.*

In the open couplet, the second line of the couplet runs right into the next couplet. i.e, the message in the first line is completed by the second line. Consider the one below.

**ALLEGRO.**

John Milton's

And ever against eating cares,  
Lap me in soft Lydian airs.  
Married to immortal verse,  
Such as the meeting soul may pierce.  
In notes with many a winding bout,  
Of linked sweetness long drawn out.

Heroic Couplet is an example of couplet with a pair of rhymed lines in iambic pentameter used to praise the heroes. It is the traditional heroic epic form of poetry.

- **Quatrain:** a four-line stanza poem, or a grouping of four lines of verse. For an example refer to "my love" by Aizakh kheir in the previous page.
- **Ballad:** These are long narrative poems written as a series of unorganised stanzas

in which lines the lines have different rhyming pattern at different parts of the poem. These kinds of poems have frequent use of repetition and often including a refrain. The “story” of a ballad can be a wide range of subjects but frequently deals with folklore or popular legends. They are written in a straight-forward manner, seldom with detail, but always with graphic simplicity and force. Most ballads are suitable for singing. Some of this poems includes The Song of Lawino and the Song of Ocol. Many of the oldest ballads were first written and performed by minstrels as court entertainment. Folk ballads are of unknown origin and are usually lacking in artistic finish. Because they are handed down by oral tradition, folk ballads are subject to variations and continual change. Other types of ballads include literary ballads, combining the natures of epic and lyric poetry, which are written by known authors, often in the style and form of the folk ballad, such as Keats and ‘La Belle Dame sans Merci.” Consider the one bellow;

**THE UNQUIET GRAVE**

unknown.

The, wind doth blow today, my love,  
And a few small drops of rain,  
I never had but one true-love,  
In cold grave she was lain.

I'll do as much for my true-love  
As any young man may,  
I'll sit and mourn all at her grave  
For a twelvemonth and a day.

The twelvemonth and a day being up,  
The dead began to speak:  
Oh who sits weeping on my grave,  
And will not let me sleep?

'Tis I, my love, sit on your grave,  
And will not let you sleep,  
For I crave one kiss of your clay-cold lips,  
And that is all I seek.

You crave one kiss of my clay-cold lips,  
But my breath smells earthy strong.  
If you have one kiss of my clay-cold lips,  
Your time will not be long.

'Tis down in yonder garden green, Love,  
where we used to walk,  
The finest flower that were seen withered to a stalk.

The stalk is withered dry, my love,  
So will our hearts decay;  
So make yourself content, my love,  
Until you are called away.

• **Ballade:** A French form, it consists of three seven or eight-line stanzas using no more than three recurrent rhymes, with an identical refrain after each stanza and a closing line repeating the rhymes of the last four lines of the stanza. Its origin is in France and is not so common in English.

• **Concrete Poems:** These are also known as pattern poetry or shaped verse. They are poems that are printed on the page so that they form a recognizable outline related to the subject, thus conveying or extending the meaning of the words. Pattern poetry retains its meaning when read aloud, whereas the essence of concrete poetry lies in its appearance on the page rather than in the words; it is intended to be perceived as a visual whole and often cannot be effective when read aloud. This form has had brief popularity at several periods in history. Consider the example below;

Teardrop.	Samwiri Kisa mukuru
.	
.	
.	
I	
Feel,	
Like a	
Tear drop,	
Hanging off,	
Battered cheeks,	
Somehow it was not,	
Supposed to be like this,	
The dreams are filled with,	
Galloping mares and ambiguous,	
Faces giving murky stares, and I am,	
Ready to roll off and become a thousand,	
Particles of salt, I feel so much like a,	
drop of rain, hanging from a thorn on a,	
rose's stem, just magnifying all behind,	
with a light that will be the last thing,	
on my mind when I evaporate,	
and I feel like a dew drop,	
clinging to sweet green,	
grass just waiting for,	
the sun to come,	
up.	

The above poem is a concrete poem and it graphically shows the image of a tear drop.

• **Haiku:** A Japanese form of poetry consisting of three unrhymed lines which contains five, seven, and five syllables. The elusive flavour of the form, however, lies more in its touch and tone than in its syllabic structure. Deeply imbedded in Japanese culture and strongly influenced by Zen Buddhism, haiku are very brief descriptions of nature that convey some implicit insight or essence of a moment. Traditionally, they contain either a direct or oblique reference to a season. One expert on the Japanese haiku called it a "poem recording the essence of a moment keenly perceived in which nature is linked to human nature." Therefore, Haiku poets write about common, everyday experiences, usually involving natural objects. They avoid complicated words and grammar; many haiku don't have complete sentences. Usually haiku have no metaphors or similes. The most common form for haiku is three short lines, the first and third about the same length and the middle one a bit

longer, with no rhyme. But the history of haiku includes many variations. Consider the examples below;

old pond...  
a frog leaps in  
water's sound

well! let's go,  
snow-viewing,  
till we tumble!

*Matsuo basho (1644-  
1694)*

Bass,  
picking bugs,  
off the moon,

*Nicholas A. Virgilio*

the sun goes down,  
my shovel strikes a spark,  
from the dark earth

*Cor van den Heuvel*

Light,  
up under the gull's wing:  
sunrise

*Ruth M. Yarrow*

what was I thinking?  
toes suddenly cool,  
in river clay.

*Rod Willmo*

• **Limerick:** A light or humorous form of five metrical word (consisting of three syllables of which two are long and one short), verses of which lines one, two and five are of three feet and lines three and four are of two feet, with a rhyme scheme of aabba. Named for a town in Ireland of that name, the limerick was popularized by Edward Lear in his *Book of Nonsense* published in 1846, and is generally considered the only fixed form of English origin. While the final line of Lear's limericks usually was a repetition of the first line, modern limericks generally use the final line for clever use and word play. Their content also frequently tends toward the ribald and off-colour. Consider the examples below;

**Unknown.**

A man with a chest cold named Bill,  
Ingested a nuclear pill.  
The doctor said "cough,"  
The damn thing went off,  
And they picked up Bill's head in Brazil.

Whereon, by a thorn,  
Her dress being torn,  
She quickly became melancholy.

\*

There was a Young Lady of Poole,  
Whose soup was excessively cool;  
So she put it to boil  
By the aid of some oil,  
That ingenious Young Lady of Poole.

**Lear's limericks.**

There was an Old Lady whose folly,  
Induced her to sit on a holly,

• **Lyric:** derived from the Greek word for lyre, lyric poetry was originally designed to be sung. One of the three main groups of poetry (the others being narrative and dramatic), lyric verse is the most frequently used modern form, including all poems in which the speaker's ardent expression of an emotional element predominates. Ranging from complex thoughts to the simplicity of playful wit, the melodic imagery of skilfully written lyric poetry evokes in the reader's mind the recall of similar emotional experiences. Consider the example below;

**DEAR, IF YOU CHANGE**

John Dowland.

Dear, if you change, I'll never choose again,  
 Sweet, if you shrink, I'll never think of love,  
 Fair, if you fail, I'll judge all beauty vain,  
 Wise, if too weak, more wits I'll never prove,  
 Dear, Sweet, Fair, Wise, change, shrink, nor be not weak,  
 And, on my faith, my faith shall never break.

\*\*\*

Earth with her flow'rs shall sooner heav'n adorn,  
 Heav'n her bright stars through earth's dim globe shall move,  
 Fire heat shall lose, and frost of flames be born,  
 Air made to shine as black as hell shall prove:  
 Earth, Heaven, Fire, Air, the world transform'd shall view,  
 Ere I prove false to faith, or strange to you

- Ode: any poem with several stanza forms and more complex than the lyric, with intricate rhyme schemes and irregular number of lines, generally of considerable length, always written in a style marked by a rich, intense expression of an elevated thought praising a person or object. "Ode to a Nightingale" is an example. Refer to the one below too;

**ODE ON SOLITUDE****Alexander Pope**

Happy the man whose wish and care,  
 A few paternal acres bound,  
 Content to breathe his native air  
 In his own ground.

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,  
 Whose flocks supply him with attire;  
 Whose trees in summer yield him shade,  
 In winter fire.

Blessed, who can unconcern'dly find  
 Hours, days, and years slide soft away  
 In health of body, peace of mind,  
 Quiet by day,

Sound sleep by night; study and ease  
 Together mixed; sweet recreation,  
 And innocence, which most does please  
 With meditation.

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown;  
 Thus unlamented let me die;  
 Steal from the world, and not a stone  
 Tell where I lie.

**An epigram:** (from the Greek epigramma, to write upon) is a short, witty poem or saying that is easy to remember and it written to be remembered. A popular

example of an epigram is: "Experience is the name everyone gives to his or her mistakes." In the past, epigrams were often inscriptions carved on monuments, tombstones, and statues. Consider the examples below;

Love made it grow and sharpened it, Heliodora's fingernail,  
Now her scratching reaches to my lean heart.

*By Meleager*

We're right to call love a three-time loser,  
Love wakes us up, love is reckless, and then,  
love strips us bare.

*By Diophanes.*

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.

*Alexander Pope*

### **Types of poems according to subject matter.**

According to the subject matter, poems are classified into the following groups.

- ❖ Political poems: these are poems composed on matters concerning politics. It talks about the government, leadership, democracy, citizenship and patriotism and all other issues concerning a country or a society and its government.
- ❖ Social poems: these are poems about social issues like marriage, poverty, divorce, human qualities and any other issue concerning the social set up of a society.
- ❖ Love poem: these are poems on relationship, romance and other issues concerning deep affection towards somebody. Poems about love for other things like money and fame do not fall under this category. It falls under social poems. These are only poems concerning romantic feelings between two people; a man and a woman.
- ❖ Religious poem: these are poems concerning issues of belief in God, prayers and praising God. Beliefs in other traditional factors like myths fall under people's culture hence are not religious but social.



## THE NOTION THAT POETRY IS HARD

Poetry is the day to day ways of living. It is the songs we sing in different aspects of life. It is contained in our traditional songs, religious songs and all others. The rhythm in those songs is the same we see in poetry. Songs are arranged in lines and stanzas just like poetry. Therefore, a song is an oral poem sang instead of recited. Written poems are similar only that it is recited. This shows that poetry is NOT what Okot P'Bitek, Austin Bukenya, Taban Lo Liyong, Shakespeare, Henry Barlow or Aizakh kheir have written but the description of the normal spheres of our life using a language set to deliver a short, to the point, complete and compact information. Poetry is found more in villages than in schools. The schools only added language use but the content is what is evident in our societies.

A friend or any other person might have told you that poetry is hard. That applies only to those who fear to use their mind to analyse poetry. Do not crave for the exact meaning of a poem, leave that to the poet. Come up with your own meaning putting yourself in the shoes of the poet, taking note of the way the situation described in the poem is evident in the society. In case of historical poem, you can give the exact happenings from your history.

A poem always has the outer and the inner meaning. The outer meaning is the general meaning brought about by the words used. We use this outer meaning to come up with the inner meaning by;

- Comparing it to the real situation in the society
- Understanding and using the hidden meaning of the figures of speech used in the poem.

There is no magic of understanding poetry. It's true that some poems are a bit complicated and others are simple. Those complicated ones are the ones whose background you are not aware of. One can get a different meaning which is correct. Do not try to analyse a poem the way somebody else analysed it. No two people can think in exactly the same way. Defend your interpretation with illustrations to convince the examiner that your interpretation is correct. It is all about defending your answer with enough explanations and illustration.

## CHAPTER TWO.

### SOUND FEATURES IN POETRY

Sound features are devices used by poets to convey and reinforce the meaning of a poem. When poems are read aloud, they display many aspects of sounds used to create musicality and to show the mood, tone and attitude of the poets about the topics they are discussing. All sound features are figures of speech but not all figures of speech are sound features. The sound features include;

- |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| ❖ Rhyme scheme. | ❖ Onomatopoeia |
| ❖ Alliteration  | ❖ idiophones   |
| ❖ Assonance     | ❖ Cacophony    |
| ❖ Consonance    | ❖ Euphony      |

#### 1. RHYME SCHEME.

A rhyme scheme is a type of echoing which forms a correspondence of sounds in the final accented letters of words either in the middle or at the end of a line which is consistent throughout the lines of the poem. Rhyme scheme is determined by sounds and NOT letters.

##### **Types of rhyme.**

- End rhyme: is the rhyming of words at the end of the lines of a poem
- Internal rhyme: is the rhyming of words within the lines of a poem. it is also called middle rhyme.
- Near rhyme: also called slant rhyme, off rhyme, imperfect rhyme or half rhyme. This is a rhyme in which sounds are similar but not exact as in home and come, close and lose

##### **Types of rhyme scheme.**

**Regular rhyme scheme:** this is where words rhyme using a predictable pattern throughout the lines of the poem

**Irregular rhyme scheme:** this is when the pattern of the rhyming words cannot be predicted

Rhyme and rhyme scheme is not only brought about by similarity of sounds at specific points in lines but also elements like;

**Meter:** the organized succession of groups of syllables at basically regular intervals in a line of a poem. it is a measure of rhythmic quality.

**Modulation:** is the harmonious use of language, relative to the variations of stress and pitch of sounds in the poem.

Examples;

1. *He hardly had a penny, to offer his wife,  
Thoughts cut through him, like a knife,*

*Unable to bear, the atrocities of life,.....*the words wife, knife and life rhyme at the end of the lines. Therefore, this is an end rhyme.

2. *His childhood fraught with lessons,  
Taught by want and misery,.....*the words fraught and taught rhyme to form an internal or middle rhyme.

### **Regular rhyme scheme.**

A regular rhyme scheme is the one whose rhyming words are in a given set order such that the rhyming words are arranged and forms a set form which is consistent in all the stanzas. Regular rhyme schemes are manifested in different patterns. e.g.;

#### **LOVE IN THE SEA.**

By Aizakh Kheir.

Cold, is the heart again, ..... a  
Despised warm heart, 'cause no gain, ..... a  
He lost the first, who was the main, .....a  
To lower it, do you think he is sane?.....a

So many are fish, in the sea, ..... b  
Poignant wonderer, was me, ..... b  
Ignominiously, looking for another key, ..... b  
Probably as sweet as the ghee, ..... b

The sea was wide, .....c  
So many, I eyed, .....c  
Shamelessly, beauty became my guide, ..... c  
I love you, I lied, .....c

The pattern of the above poem is aaaa, bbbb,cccc. The first stanza takes aaaa, the second one takes bbbb, the third takes cccc. Therefore, the fourth stanza should take dddd. This pattern is called a regular pattern.

This pattern of a poem can also be aabbcc, ddeeff, gghhii- this means that each sound is repeated two times and no sound is repeated in another stanza. or, aaabbb cccddd eeefff-this means that each sound is repeated three times and no sound is repeated in another stanza.

#### **THE TEACHER**

by Aizakh kheir

In the first day I saw you, ..... a  
I became your friend, .....b  
I perceived it, but had a hue, .....a  
Of acquaintance we are, I prayed, ..... b  
That we stay long in what we do..... a

Slowly, the chambers are cooled, ..... b  
Your white eyes, glittering, .....c  
In their whites, beauty dewed, ..... b

The pupils, imploring, .....c  
 Within them, when you miewed, ..... b  
 Aware'd was my feeling..... c

Under the pretty curved nose, ..... d  
 Lies a tantalizing pool, ..... e  
 Cascading laughter, that arose, .....d  
 With waves of echoes, to further cool, ...e  
 The chambers as the time goes, .....d

In the first stanza the words you, hue, do rhyme n we assigned letter a. the words friend and prayed rhyme as they come in between you and hue and in between hue and do alternatively forming an alternating pattern. I.e ababa, bcbcbc, deded. This pattern is predictable in that the fought stanza should be efefef like the second stanza and the fifth stanza would be ghghg like the third stanza.

In assigning letters to the pattern of a poem we always start with "a" and if the same sound is repeated in the second line we again assign "a", but if there is a different sound we assign the next letter which is "b". This goes on until the end of the poem. This means that if the sound that we assigned letter "a" appears again in the second, third, fought or even fifth stanza, we should assign the same letter-a.

Alternating pattern can also be shown by, aabbaabb, ccddccdd, eeffeeff or abcabc, defdef, hijhij etc.

### Types of regular rhyme scheme patterns.

Rhyming lines are arranged according to different patterns. The same rhyming sounds are marked using small letters of the alphabet and forms different patterns. These include;

- **Continuous rhyme.**

This pattern is shown by, aaaa, bbbb .... This is a pattern where all the end lines of a stanza rhyme. For an example of this pattern refer to the poem below;

#### MY LOVE

by Aizakh kheir.

My love, it was long you stole my heart, ..... a  
 I still remember, lying on my mat, ..... a  
 Bereft I was, sleeping in my hut, ..... a  
 I adore you, the child of a cat. .... a

My love, I visualize that night, ..... a  
 Deep in a dream, you appeared to my sight, ..... a  
 Down the heart, you lit the chambers with light, ..... a  
 And shook me with its might. .... a

My love, that was when, I fall in love, .....b  
 Meandering, my life went into a curve, ..... b  
 Over the night, you are stored in my nerve, ..... b  
 I love you my demure dove, ..... b

My love, your antecedents are good, ..... c  
 I wanted to tell you, but my mouth is glued, ..... c  
 Like a kitten, when you miuwed, ..... c  
 Ecstatic, was my mood. .... c

My love, your affection is in the nude, ..... c  
 To dispenser it, I eat no food, ..... c  
 In my eyes, you see your love dewed, ..... c  
 Cruel you are, when you weren't moved. .... c

- **Rhyming couplets.** Shown by, aa bb cc ...
- **Alternate rhyme.**

This is a pattern where the two rhyming sounds alternate at the end of each line of a stanza. E.g, when sound /k/ comes in the end word of first line, sound /v/ comes in the end of second line. From there, /k/ is repeated after which comes /v/ again. The two sounds continue alternating until the end of the stanza. This kind of rhyming pattern is shown by, abab, cddc, ... For an example of this pattern consider the poem below;

**THE TEACHER**      by Aizakh kheir

In the first day I saw you, ..... a  
 I became your friend, .....b  
 I perceived it, but had a hue, ..... a  
 Of acquaintance we are, I prayed, ..... b  
 That we stay long in what we do..... a

Slowly, the chambers are cooled, ..... b  
 Your white eyes, glittering, .....c  
 In their whites, beauty dewed, ..... b  
 The pupils, imploring, .....c  
 Within them, when you miewed, ..... b  
 Aware'd was my feeling..... c

Under the pretty curved nose, ..... d  
 Lies a tantalizing pool, ..... e  
 Cascading laughter, that arose, .....d  
 With waves of echoes, to further cool, ...e  
 The chambers as the time goes, .....d

The rhyme scheme pattern of this poem would therefore be, ababa, bcbcbc, deded.

- **Embracing rhyme.**

This is a type of rhyme scheme pattern where a sound comes at the end word of the first line of a stanza, and in the next two lines comes another sound which is then enclosed by the sound in the end word of the first line. This is shown by, abba cddc effe...

- **Chain rhyme.** Shown by, aba bcb cdc ...

- **Tail rhyme.** Shown by, aab ccb ...

**Irregular rhyme scheme.**

Irregular rhyme scheme occurs when the pattern of the rhyme scheme of the first stanza is completely deferent from that of the second, third and all other stanzas, such that the pattern of the next stanza cannot be predicted. The rhyming sounds are not repeated or might be repeated irregularly making it difficult to predict for the next stanza. This is shown in the poem below.

e.g,

**FOR THAT WAS NOT WHAT WE KNEW.** By Aizakh kheir

See how somber, our people are, .....a  
 None loves the other, rivals they were, .....a  
 Fights for family leadership, .....b  
 And within the same tribe, .....c  
 Not leaving behind, inter-tribes, .....d  
 My better brothers, be far from fear, .....e  
 For that was not what we knew, .....f

Brothers oppose each other, .....e  
 Propagating, far reaching hatred, .....g  
 Finally fighting with each other, .....e  
 Allowing success and triumph, .....h  
 From their fore bonding foes, .....d  
 My better brothers, be far from fear, .....e  
 For that was not what we knew, .....f

The pattern of the above poem is aabcdef, egehdef. Since the pattern of the first stanza and the second stanza are not of the same pattern, we cannot judge and predict the pattern of the third stanza. Therefore, the poem has an irregular rhyme scheme

**2. ALLITERATION.**

This is the repetition of initial sounds in a series of words within a line of a poem. Like rhyme scheme, alliteration is determined by sounds and not the letters. When identifying an alliteration always pronounce the words you suspect have got alliterating sounds. Make sure the sounds are exactly the same. Consider the table below;

1. <u>p</u> icking <u>p</u> rickly <u>p</u> ears	This is an example of alliteration because there is a repetition of the <i>initial sound</i> , "puh", in two <i>closely following</i> words.
2. <u>p</u> lanning a <u>p</u> sychology practice	This is <b>not</b> an example of alliteration, even though the words begin with the same letter, because they do not have the same <i>initial sound</i> (psychology does not start with a "puh" sound).
3. <u>s</u> tealthily <u>s</u> talking	This is an example of alliteration because there is a

	repetition of the <i>initial sound</i> , "st", in two <i>closely following</i> words.
4. <u>d</u> rying the <u>b</u> lue <u>d</u> rapes	This is <b>not</b> an example of alliteration, even though there is the repetition of the <i>initial sound</i> , "druh", because it is not contained in <i>closely following</i> words.
5. <u>f</u> inding a <u>p</u> hony <u>f</u> actor	This is an example of alliteration, even though the initial letters are not alike, because the <i>initial sounds</i> are identical and they are repeated in one or more <i>closely following</i> words.
6. <u>c</u> old <u>c</u> ider <u>c</u> ups	This is <b>not</b> an example of alliteration, even though all the closely following words begin with the same letter, because they do not have the same <i>initial sound</i> .

Alliteration are of two types,

- **Consonance:** this is a type of alliteration in which same consonant sounds appear within the line of a poem.
- **Assonance:** this is where the same vowel sounds are repeated in a line of a poem. Assonance is not easily identifiable like consonance and therefore should be handled carefully. Always pronounce the words suspected to contain same vowel sounds clearly.

E.g,

**FOR THAT WAS NOT WHAT WE KNEW.**

By Aizakh Kheir.

See how sombre, our people are,  
None loves the other, rivals they are,  
Fights for family leadership,  
And within the same tribe,  
Not leaving behind, inter-tribes,  
My better brothers, be far from fear,  
For that was not what we knew,

Brothers oppose each other,  
Propagating, far reaching hatred,  
Finally fighting with each other,  
Allowing success and triumph,  
From there foreboding foes,  
My better brothers, be far from fear,  
For that was not what we knew,

In the above poem, the underlined sounds (sounds /f/, /b/, and /w/) alliterate.

**a) consonance.**

This is the repetition of consonant sounds within the words of a line. Consonance is a type of alliteration which appears within the words as well as within the initial (first) consonant sound of a word.

e.g, in, coming home, hot foot..... Or in

Very compelling, is your figure,  
Not a sculpture, but god made nature,  
Your small breasts, refurbishes,  
Gradually, dwindling my wis hes,  
Completing the awarded beautifulness .....Aizakh kheir.

## b) Assonance

This is the repetition of similar vowel sounds within the words of a line thus vowel rhyme. As in;

I wonder, about your make-up,  
Well shaped face, completely made-up,  
With those bright eyes, slowly finished,  
The level of beautifulness, already accomplished,  
Let me clarify, the nature of your make-up, .....(Aizakh  
**kheir**)

She's not aware, what's more,  
But he never lost hope though,  
Even she doesn't like him, reas on he does n't know,  
But still of intrinsic value, he swore,  
He isn't silly, and his thinking is n't low,  
But how is he to remove, thorns that you know .....(Aizakh  
**kheir**)

Vowels may produce different sounds according to the way they are used. Two different vowels may produce the same sound and the same vowel may produce a different sound in another similar word. When identifying assonance, we should be careful of the sounds and pronounce it properly before identifying it. e.g.;

In the above stanza, we have line, "but how is he to remove, thorns that you know" latter "i" in "is" and latter "e" in "he" rhyme yet they are different vowels. This is because they produce the same sound. i.e. /hi: / and /i: s/.

In the first line we have, "she's not aware, what's more". both latter a in what's and latter o in more produce sound o but the o in more is a long vowel sound. i.e /wots/ and /mo:/. hence there is no assonance there since the sound is not the same.

When illustrating assonance always pay attention to similarity of sounds and not that of the vowels.

## 5. ONOMATOPOEIA AND IDEOPHONES.

Onomatopoeia is the use of words used to name sounds. in another way it is the words used to describe sounds which are found in an English dictionary and not



the sounds itself. These words include; cackle, whispering, clang, bang, sizzle, screech, hiss, buzz, sigh etc. These are words which are formed from the sounds they describe.

Idiophone on the other hand is the use of 'words' that imitate sounds. They are words that are not found in the dictionary. Actually they are written sounds of things and people. They include, 'wow wow wow' of the dog, 'miaaaw' of the cat, 'moooooh' of the cow, 'hahahaha' that describes laughing, etc

Consider the poem below;

**TOOTING MY HORN ON DUTY**

unknown

Tooting my horn on duty in the  
Made my name mud P-U!

Not to mention this nose bleed.

In the army I had nose bleeds,  
The infantry was distracting,  
It kindled up in my nose,  
An invisible odor,  
That hindered my toots.  
One day while on duty,  
I rammed into a chestnut,  
And got blood all over my flute

I spat out so many teeth,  
I knew it was an omen,  
The vitamins I took made me ill,  
Ten blood transfusions! It was almost  
all over,  
When two big rocks stopped the  
bleeding,

This then was any unhappy childhood.

In the above poem, P-U! is an idiophone while toots (sounds made by a horn) is an onomatopoeia as it is an English word and not imitation of sounds.

## **CHAPTER THREE.**

### **FIGURES OF SPEECH USED IN POETRY**

Figures of speech is an expressive use of language where a word or a phrase have different meanings than its literal meanings. It conveys meaning by identifying or comparing one thing to another. The meaning of the figures of speech has connotation. This refers to the meaning assigned to a word or a phrase by the society besides its literary meaning.

Figures of speech is not only present in poetry but also in our day to day conversations and writings. Phrases like falling in love, racking our brains and climbing the ladder of success, are all metaphors which is a figure of speech. We rely on similes for explicit comparisons e.g. as light as a feather and on hyperbole to emphasize things e.g. am starving! When we want to show how hungry we are.

#### **Functions of figures of speech**

- Used to embellish (to make more beautiful and attractive) the language
- To bring about humour or a moment of excitement when reading
- To provide emphasis.
- To clarify a phrase
- It strengthens the creative expressions and descriptions making the language more graphic pointed and vivid.

The figures of speech are as discuss below;

#### **a). IMAGERY.**

Imagery, is a figure of speech used by poets for comparisons. They are used to compare two items or situations which are completely different but have some qualities in common. Imagery includes any words or phrases that appeal to a reader's five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. Poets use imagery to draw the reader into a scene, to create a picture in the reader's mind, or to remind the reader of something familiar. From its name, imagery is the creation of a mental picture or an image in the mind of a reader by the use of comparison so that the reader, sees an item or a situation in the image of the item or situation it is being compared to.

#### **Uses of imagery.**

- ✓ The poet uses imagery to create vibrant or vivid images in the mind of the reader.
- ✓ It is used to compose paints of situations which are not clear in real life situations.
- ✓ It is used to conjure up unusual images in a manner the reader can clearly visualize it.
- ✓ to convey feelings of loss and grief in a clear manner.

- ✓ Suggests the nature of an item or a situation to inspire the reader fully.
- ✓ Imagery are also used by poets to make their language explicit and appealing to the reader.
- ✓ They are also used in poetry to economise on the use of words to keep poems short.

Imagery, are of two types;

### **Metaphor**

An implied comparison between two unlike things that actually have something important in common. This comparison is done directly in a way that one item is compared directly to another. Actually, an item is referred to as another one which have same qualities. i.e. it compares X directly to Y in a way that X is Y. For example, if we say, "Samuel is a lion" we used a metaphor to compare Samuel directly to a lion. By doing so, we mean that Samuel is very brave (like a lion), so we simply say directly that he is a lion to mean brave. A metaphor does not use the words; as or like for comparison. Consider the poem below for metaphors;

#### **I LOVE YOU MY GENTLE ONE.**

By Ralph Bitamazire

I love you my gentle one,  
 My love is the fresh milk in the rubindi,  
 Which you drank on the wedding day,  
 My love is the butter we were smeared with,  
 To seal fidelity into our heart,  
 You are the cattle birds egg,  
 For those who saw you are wealthy,  
 You are the papyrus reeds of the lake,  
 Which they pull out with both hands,  
 And I sing for you with tears,  
 Because you possess my heart,  
 I love you my gentle one.

In the above poem, the poet has used metaphors to compares;

His love for his wife with the fresh milk in the rubindi – to show how fresh his love is and to create the image of the milk in the rubindi which is fresh and sweet. Rubindi is an item like a gourd which is used to store and preserve milk. The milk stored there is usually considered fresh and sweet hence couples were made to drink milk from rubindi on their wedding day for them to enjoy. The poet therefore compares his love to such milk to suggest his love is fresh and sweet and to create the image of freshness in our minds.

He compares his wife to the cattle bird's eggs, to show how precious she is to him. It is believed that whoever sees a cattle bird's egg becomes rich. The poet then suggests that his wife is a cattle birds egg and since he got her, he is wealthy. This creates the image of how precious his wife is.

He finally tells us that his wife is the papyrus reed of the lake, to mean she is very hard to get. The papyrus reed is hard to uproot as one has to pull it out with

both hands. This creates the image of how hard his wife is to get.

Therefore, the fresh milk in the rubindi, cattle bird's eggs and the papyrus reed of the lake are metaphors for the poet's love and his wife.

**THE TEACHER,** by Aizakh kheir.

.....  
Under the pretty curved nose,  
Lies a tantalizing pool,  
Cascading laughter, that arose,  
With waves of echoes, to further cool,  
The chambers as the time goes.....

In the above poem, we find the line; "lies a tantalizing pool". The pool is a metaphor for "mouth" as we are told it is under the pretty curved nose. Besides comparing the mouth with a beautiful attractive pool, it also draws in our mind the beauty of an attractive pool making us to see the mouth in the image of an attractive pool.

When identifying a metaphor, from a poem always consider the following features;

- A metaphor is used for comparison and not for representation. It compares one thing to another.
- A metaphor, creates a mental picture of what something is compared to.
- A metaphor compares an item directly to another item. It does not use the words as or like.

A metaphor makes comparison in two ways; it can compare X to Y in a way that X is Y. In this form, both compared items are mentioned. It can also compare one item to another without mentioning the item being compared to another. For example, in the poem "The Teacher" by Aizakh kheir, only "the pool" is mentioned where the poet compared the mouth of his wife to an attractive pool. However, this form of comparison closely looks like a symbol hence should not be confused. In a situation like this always consider that a metaphor is meant for comparison, while a symbol is meant for representation.

**Simile:**

Is a stated comparison which is usually formed with "like" or "as" between two fundamentally dissimilar things that have certain qualities in common. Unlike in metaphor, simile make comparisons by mentioning both items being compared. It says that X is like Y or X is as \_\_\_ as Y. It is a very clear comparison which compares the quality of one item to another. The identifying factor for simile is the use of the words as or like. Consider the poem below for similes;

**THE BELOVED.**

By A. R. Cliff – Lubwa.

Lapobo,  
Tall but not too tall,  
Short but not too short,  
She is of medium size,

Her teeth are not as ash,  
Nor the colour of maize flour,  
Her teeth are white as fresh milk,  
The whiteness of her teeth,  
When I think of her,

Makes food drop from my hand.

In the above poem, Lapobo is being described by comparing her teeth to fresh milk, maize flour and ash using simile. This is evident where the poet says, “her teeth are not as ash”, “are not as maize flour” and “her teeth are white as fresh milk”. These are comparison done using simile. Consider the poem below too;

**IMET A THIEF**

By Austin Bukonya.

.....  
I gazed: her hair was like the wool of a mountain sheep,  
Her eyes, a pair of brown-black beans floating in milk,  
Juicy and round as a plantain shoots,  
Her legs, arms and neck,  
And like wine-gourds, her pillowy breasts,  
Her throat uttered fresh banana juice,  
Marching her face, smooth and banana-ripe.....

Here a woman’s hair is compared to the wool of a mountain sheep where the poet said, “her hair was like the wool of a mountain sheep”. Her breasts are also compared to wine gourds. This is shown by “like wine gourds, her pillowy breasts”. However, in the second line where the poet says “her eyes, a pair of brown-black beans floating in milk” we find a metaphor and not a simile because in this line comparison is made directly and not by the words; as and like.

Similes being a form of imagery also shows a mental picture of the item being described. When we recite the poem, we find mental images where similes are used. In line one we find an image of long wavy beautiful hair where the poet said that her hair was like that of a mountain sheep. Also, where the poet said like wine gourds are her breasts, we find the image of succulent tender breasts with pointed tips, like that of a gourd.

The formation of mental image is not only evident in metaphors and similes but also in other figures of speech like personification, symbolism and hyperbole.

**b) PERSONIFICATION.**

This is a figure of speech in which human characteristics are attributed to an inanimate object, animal, or abstract idea. Personifications helps us to think of an item given the qualities of a human being as it is described. Therefore, it creates a mental image of the thing behaving as a human being. For example: The days crept by slowly, sorrowfully, the moon looked down on us or The branches of the old tree were long fingers scratching at the window. All this create mental images as it attributes human qualities non-human creatures. Personification is evident in poetry as shown in the poems below.

**POEM IN FOUR PARTS.**

By William kamera.

I  
The leaves are withered,  
Roses fold and shrink,  
Dog, the panting athlete, shows his

tongue,  
A dwarfed shadow flees –  
Hides under my leg,  
Nuts wrinkle and crack.

II  
 The sun is old,  
 The west glows like a worm,  
 Shadows are long,  
 There are cool whispers in the trees,  
 The weavers make for their homes,  
 Old Kibo in his “kanga” appears.

III  
 .....

IV.  
 Sun, from his eastern cradle,  
 Like a chameleon, measures his steps,  
 Stretches his tender arms,  
 Over the silent hills,  
 The trees exchange greetings,  
 In the gentle whispers of dawn,  
 The lazy night is over.....

The instances of personification in the above poem include,

- dog, the panting athlete,
- the sun is old,
- cool whispers in the trees,
- sun from his eastern cradle, measures his steps, stretches his tender arms.
- The lazy night.

All this are human qualities attributed to the dog, the sun, shattering of leaves and the night. When they are used in a poem, the person reciting the poem will think of these non-human creatures as a human being. For instance, one can see a mental image of an old sun, walking slowly and stretching his arms just like humans do.

**c). SYMBOLISM.**

This is the use of symbols to represent an item or a situation. It is where one item or a situation is used in place of another item which is not related but have the same qualities. Therefore, a symbol is a person, object, place, event, or action that suggests more than its literal meaning. These items used to represent another item are called symbols. The use of symbols in a poem is therefore called symbolism. In poetry, symbols can be categorized as,

- Conventional: These are the symbols used for something that is generally recognized to represent a certain idea. They are symbols widely used until they have become widely accepted and used. i.e., a “rose” conventionally symbolizes romance, love, or beauty and a flag represents a country. They are clear symbols.
- contextual or literary: these are symbols used for something that goes beyond a traditional, public meaning (i.e., “night” conventionally symbolizes darkness, death, or grief; contextually it symbolizes other possibilities such as loneliness, isolation, fear, or emptiness).

Whereas conventional symbols are used in poetry to convey tone and meaning, contextual or literary symbols reflect the internal state of mind of the speaker as revealed through the images. The use of symbolism is evident in the poems discussed below.

## LOVE IN THE SEA.

By Aizakh kheir

Cold, is the heart again,  
Despised warm heart, 'cause no gain,  
He lost the first, who was the main,  
To lower it, do you think he is sane?

So many are fish, in the sea,  
Poignant wonderer, was me,  
shamelessly, looking for another key,  
Probably as sweet as the ghee,

The sea was wide,  
So many, I eyed,  
Shamelessly, beauty became my  
guide,  
I love you, I lied.

Well dressed, I was a flirt,  
Soon, I corrupted her wits,  
Idyllic, with smile it was lit,  
Gaily, I managed to play my bit,  
Wrestling, with the might of guilt,

Soon, it defeated my wish,  
And induced a form of hatred  
Which made bitter my dish,  
And made her the only, among a  
hundred,

Vague, my smiles turned wan,  
Grieving, over what I have done,  
When I perceived, she was the only  
sun,  
Among the fish, she is the only one.

Ooh, the infatuation, growing high,  
But she refused me, I don't know why,  
I still love her, I cannot lie,  
And would ever, until I die.  
But now, I cannot bear the woes  
Down trickled tears, over my nose,  
Crying, over the lost cause,  
Honestly, she is my greatest loss.

The above poem is symbolic and contains symbols. It is about a man who is desperately in love and from the way he expressed it in the poem, he gave up in his love because the one he loved refused to accept him. Starting with the title, we find a symbolic representation of today's wide world where the poet said "love in the sea". The sea is used in the title as a symbol or representation of the world. In the first paragraph the poet talks of cold heart and warm heart. Cold heart representing a heart not in love and a warm heart for a heart in love. These too are symbols. In the second paragraph we come across the line, "so many are fish in the sea". We have already identified that a sea here is a representation of the world and the poet is now talking about fish in a sea. So, most probably he is referring to women as fish. Then fish in the second paragraph is also a symbol for women. In the last line of this stanza we also find "probably, as sweet as the ghee". Since ghee in this line is preceded by article the, it refers back to someone or something mentioned earlier in the poem and this is in line three which talks about the woman he lost. So, the ghee there is a symbol for that particular woman. Later in the poem this woman is represented by "the sun" in line three of the six stanzas. And the line that follows, we are told she is the only fish. The symbols in this poem are therefore, cold heart, warm heart, sea, ghee, fish and sun.

The poet used these symbols to make his language explicit and to maintain the length of the poem as without these symbols he would be forced to use more words.

Consider the poem below too,

**IMET A THIEF.** By A. S. Bukonya.

On the beach, on the coast,  
Under the idle, whispering coconut towers,  
Before the growling, foaming, waves,  
I met a thief, who guessed I had,  
An innocent heart for her to steal,

She took my hand and led me under,  
The intimate cashew boughs which shaded,  
The downy grass and peeping weeds,  
She jumped and plucked for me the nuts to suck,  
She sang and laughed and pressed close.

I gazed: her hair was like the wool of a mountain sheep,  
Her eyes, a pair of brown-black beans floating in milk,  
Juicy and round as a plantain shoots,  
Her legs, arms and neck,  
And like wine-gourds, her pillowy breasts,  
Her throat uttered fresh banana juice,  
Marching her face, smooth and banana-ripe.

I touched, but long before I even tasted,  
My heart has flowed from me into her breast,  
And then she went – high and south,  
And left my carcass roasting in the fire she'd lit.

The title of the above poem is symbolic and it is used in the poem to represent who stole the heart of the poet meaning tempted the poet to fall in love with her. In the last line of the last stanza too, “the fire” is a symbol used to represent the love he developed for the woman. The two symbols used in this poem are therefore “the thief” and “the fire”. When identifying symbols and the use of symbolism, it should not be confused with imagery. In the third stanza, we find out that the poet has compared the woman’s hair with that of a mountain sheep, her eyes to brown-black beans floating in milk, her breasts with wine-gourds and her face complexion with a ripe banana. These are not symbols but are metaphors and similes used for comparison and not representation. Always note that symbols are used for representation and not for comparison like imagery.

**d). HYPERBOLE AND OVERSTATEMENT.**

An extravagant statement; the use of exaggerated terms for the purpose of emphasis or heightened effect. It can best be defined as an extravagant exaggeration by which something is represented as much greater or less, better or worse, or as involving a greater intensity than in reality, or beyond possibility expressed in a statement exaggerated fancifully through excitement, or for effect. Hyperbole is an ever-present figure of speech in daily communication. It over-exaggerates the speaker’s meaning through his / her intense feelings and sincere attitude towards the listener, and hence, it reflects the speaker’s real intention.

When used in a poem, it makes the reader to think of what is being talked about in a clear exaggerated manner. In that sense, hyperbole, or simply exaggeration is used by poets;



- ✓ To emphasize on their message to catch the attention of the readers.
- ✓ To make their message clear for the readers.
- ✓ To prevent the readers from underestimating their message by emphasizing on their real feelings and emotions.
- ✓ For reinforcing, strengthening and intensifying the effect of one's message on the reader.

Hyperbole is one of the most widely used figures of speech or as traditionally called a “trope” not only in literature, but also in everyday language. It is an effective communication tool that is used to catch the attention, to emphasize a contrast or even to deceive an idea to the readers. It represents a reflection of a deliberate exaggeration to heighten an effect along with metaphor and simile and used for emphasis and not to be taken literally.

However, hyperbole should not be confused with overstatement. Overstatement is a superordinate term which encompasses hyperbole and other notions such as excess and amplification. It is a person's unintentional expression of a proposition.

**Some possible differences between hyperbole and overstatement.**

- ❖ Hyperbole is an exaggeration. It expresses situations which are not real and totally imaginative. Overstatement is overstating an idea or a statement. It expresses real situations but emphasizes it more than it is in real life.
- ❖ Hyperbole can be a form of amusement and humour as it expresses a situation in a way which is impossible in real life. Overstatement does not arouse amusement in a reader but it arouses deep thinking.
- ❖ In hyperbole, the situation expressed is impossible in real life. In overstatement, the situation can be real but a bit emphasized.

Consider the poems below for hyperbole and overstatement.

**THE BELOVED.**

By A. R. Cliff-Lubwa.

Lapobo, Tall but not too tall, Short but not too short, She is of medium size,	when I think of her, makes food drop from my hand. ..... Lapobo, Her heels have no cracks, Her palms are smooth and tender to touch, Her eyes, hoo they can destroy anybody.
Lapobo, Her teeth are not as ash, Nor the colour of a maize flour, Her teeth are white as fresh milk, The whiteness of her teeth,	

In the poem above the poet describes Lapobo, a woman, extraordinarily. In the seventh line of the second stanza, the poet says, “... makes food drop from my hand”, referring to when he thinks of the whiteness of her teeth. However, this is mere exaggeration and not a real situation. In normal real life situation, just thinking of someone cannot make food to drop from one's hand. This is therefore the use of hyperbole.

In the last line of the last stanza too, the poet used hyperbole to describe her eyes. He states that her eyes can destroy anybody. Hence this is exaggeration and not possible in real life for eyes to destroy people.

**SLEEPLESS IN ANGOLA.** By Joseph Kariuki.

They no longer sleep,  
Dissonant machine gun cracks,  
And the wails of their dying,  
Have drowned their dancing drums,  
And tomorrow,  
Will there be a tomorrow?  
They can no longer sleep.

A wind of awakening blowing from the north,  
To dispel the despair of life's mockery,  
So that by death, their children may live,  
Once again as men –  
Has called them to resist.

They are not alone,  
Their moans find echoes in the torn continent,  
And the oppressors shall never again,  
Till the envied blood clogged earth,  
In peace,  
They shall no longer sleep.

The poem above is about the oppression Africans went through during colonisation. We were told that the people of Angola no longer sleep due to sounds of guns and wails of dying people. Although all this are true and happened during that time, the poet overstated some situation. This is evident where he said,

- The wails of their dying, have drowned their dancing drums.
- Their moans find echoes in the torn continent.
- Till the envied blood-clogged earth.

In the above lines from the poem, the moans of the dying during the war was high but not to the extent of drowning the beat of drums. In the second statement, though it is true that Africa at large was suffering, the poet overstated in saying their moans find echoes in the torn continent. Also in the last statement, blood was shed but not to the extent that it clogged the soil. These are instances of overstatement.

**e). UNDERSTATEMENT AND LITOTES.**

Understatement is a device in which a writer uses deliberate restraint in expressing his idea. In understating, a writer phrases his remark less strongly than would be expected, or communicate the idea in negative terms. The way the writer expresses is less emphasized or expressed as normal. For example, when we say, “the earthquake has brought some destruction when it destroyed the city”. In this statement we find the whole city destroyed but the writer expresses it as just some “destruction”. Understatement is the opposite of overstatement where the way the

writer expresses a statement is more emphasized than reality.

Litotes is a figure of speech consisting of an understatement in which an affirmative is expressed by normality in what is more emphasized in real life or less emphasis in what is normal. It is the opposite compared to hyperbole. While hyperbole refers to a case where the speaker's description is stronger than is warranted by the state of affairs described, litotes refers to the converse of it. Consider the poem below;

#### **UNKNOWN**

He's not so bad,  
He just killed his father,  
by making him eat 10,000 fried chickens.

He's not so bad,  
He just plugged up his brother's tuba,  
with his little sister.

He's not so bad,  
He just cleaned his little brother's nose,  
with an electric toothbrush.

He's not so bad,  
He just fed his cat ball bearings,  
And it sat on a magnet.

In the above poem we are told of somebody who killed his father, cleaned his brother's nose with an electricity which equals to death too and feed a cat with ball bearings and when it sat on a magnet it got stuck. But the poet is saying he is not so bad making this situation just a normality when we should have seen him as very bad in real life. This is litotes as the poet just took what is serious in real life as normality.

#### **f). IRONY.**

This is the use of words to convey the opposite of their literal meaning. Also, a statement or situation where the meaning is contradicted by the appearance or presentation of the idea. What is stated ironically need not always be precisely the opposite of what is suggested. It can be shown through the use of understatement, hyperbole, sarcasm and satire.

#### **THE BEARD.** By Proscovia Rwakyaka.

In the pulpit he swayed and turned,  
Leant forward and backward,  
To the right: to the left;  
His solemn voice echoed,  
Lowly, the congregation followed,  
"Do you love your neighbour?"  
Meekly, they bow at his knee eye,  
Now examining a grey head,  
Heaving under her sobs,

His heart leapt assured,  
 'her sins weigh on her'  
 So with her he chats outside,  
 'weep not child, you are pardoned'  
 But, sir, your beard conjured up  
 The spirit of my dear goat.

In the above poem we find a church congregation, who pretend that they are pious and followed the priest in all the activities. Yet, we were told that they are there to examine his grey hair. This is ironical as we expect them to be in church for worshipping but they are not. We are also told of a woman who among the preaching started crying and the priest thought that she was crying because of her sins and would like to repent. The priest told her not to cry, as her sins have been pardoned. But all comes opposite when we find that she was crying not because of her sins but because the beard of the priest conjured up the spirit of her dead goat. This too is ironical.

**g). EUPHEMISM.**

This is a figure of speech used in substitution of an inoffensive term for one considered offensively explicit. It is the use of words that substitutes or neutralises the effect of offensive words. Euphemism is used because the poet may feel shy to directly state an act, a situation or a thing as it is or does not want to express vulgarity or a sense of immorality. For example; we cannot say 'she has gone to urinate'\*\*\* as this is offensive. We would rather say, 'she has gone to help herself' or 'she has gone for a short call'. These are euphemisms used to cover up the offensiveness in the first statement. Consider the poem below.

**DAUGHTER OF THE LOWLAND.**

After I have communed with them,  
 With dead men's ideas,  
 'Nya dyang' comes to me,  
 With accusing persuasion,  
 Come, 'wuod twon',  
 My activities are vital.

I do not let my balls,  
 Be crushed when am fully awake,  
 By the ghosts of an alien clan,  
 In the half lighted book cave,  
 No!  
 When I sheathe the family spear,  
 And unfeather the poison-horned  
 arrow,  
 When I expose the daughter of the low  
 land,  
 To village gossip and contempt,  
 Then the books that I read,  
 Smash my balls in my sleep!

My balls,

Peter anyang'-Nyong'o.

Have not been smashed,  
 By heavy books!  
 'Ocol,  
 Drink from the roots,  
 You were first wedded to me,  
 And then to Plato,  
 And Aristotle.

I do not sit there,  
 In that forest,  
 Of dead men's head,  
 Letting their heavy tongues,  
 Like 'rungus' –  
 Butt my balls to wind's dust,  
 No!  
 Like the emissary,  
 Of a semi-famished land,  
 Or the scouts of belligerent army,  
 I brew with the enemy,  
 And drink with my people.

And when I return home,

To the daughter of the brave one,                      Rise.  
The yeast from the low land,  
Makes my manhood,

The instances of euphemism in the above poem include; my balls used to replace my testicles as this is offensive, my manhood to replace 'my penis' and also the yeast from the low land. These replacement of offensive words is therefore euphemism.

#### **h). PARADOX AND OXYMORON.**

Paradox and oxymoron are figures of speech that express contradictory statements in different forms. Paradox is a statement that appears to contradict itself at first but on closer examination contains some truth. Oxymoron on the other hand refers to a figure of speech in which incongruous, contradictory or opposite terms appear side by side in a brief statement.

#### **How can we differentiate a paradox from an oxymoron?**

In oxymoron two opposite terms follow each other directly. For example; "Sweet sorrow," "deafening silence," and "living death" are examples of oxymoron. In paradox, one statement appears to be contradicting itself yet it contains some truth. For example, in; "Life is far too important a thing ever to talk seriously about", "The truth is the only thing that no one will believe". Like, wise sayings and quotes, paradoxes come to an individual in a flash of inspiration. However, paradox compared to oxymoron is a whole statement and does not necessarily contain two explicitly contradicting terms. Paradoxes are frequent in most writing.

#### **THE BLIND.**

By John Ssemuwanga.

What formless forms do you sense;  
As you grope after gifts beyond your reach,  
What dark beauties do you stare at;  
As you smile the smile of caged captives,  
What longing thoughts lie behind those diseased sockets.  
As you brood over what might have been,  
What sigh do you sigh as we, the fortunate;  
Rush past you in search of sun-lit beauties,  
What straggle do you stage;  
As you try to tear apart the blinding shroud,  
What pill do you swallow;  
As you try to live the life of the eyed ones,  
What thanks do you give to the maker who gave us light,  
And cast you in a dark, dark world.

The instances of oxymoron in the above poem include;

- The formless forms
- Dark beauties.

These terms contradict each other as the first one is talking about a form which is formless. This is contradicting as a form cannot be formless in a normal state.

However, the poet has a meaning for using that. He might mean a form which is not fully structured hence formless.

In the second statement 'dark' is a symbol for suffering and hard life and we expect no beauty in such a situation. But the poet is talking about a dark beauty by which he may mean, the enjoyment in such a life which is very minimal.

Moreover, in line five of the poem the poet asks, "what longing thoughts lie behind those diseased sockets?" this is paradox as we don't expect any thoughts or longings in a dead eye, and we may ask how possible? But after thinking about it we find that is not really dead but represents an eye of a person in a lot of difficulties.

**THE GUILT OF GIVING.**      Laban Erapu.

You've seen that heaps of rags,  
That pollutes the air-conditioned  
city centre,  
that louse that creeps about,  
in a clean core of sophistication,  
you've seen him waylay his betters,  
and make them start –  
especially when they have no change.....

In the above poem, we find paradox when the poet talks about a louse creeping in a clean core of sophistication. Being a sophisticated clean place, it is contradicting to even talk about lice. Lice are found in dirty places hence the poet talks of a clean sophisticated air conditioned but with lice.

**i). METONYMY AND SYNECDOCHE.**

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it's closely associated; also, the rhetorical strategy of describing something indirectly by referring to things around it.

Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a part is used to represent the whole. For example, ABCs for alphabet, I need your hand to mean I need your help or where the whole for a part e.g. the white house said referring to the president of America.

**j). ANTITHESIS.**

The juxtaposition of contrasting ideas in balanced phrases or an idea which is directly opposite to another idea in one sentence. It is a contrast using opposite ideas. Poets use antithesis to show two perspectives on a topic or reveal a dual nature. Examples:

- Hot and cold
- Many are called, but few are chosen.
- "With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage"

In the poem below the poet uses antithesis to show the varied contrasting feelings of a young tree growing in a forest. This is evident in line six of the poem.

**A YOUNG TREE.**

Stella Ngatho.

Alone, in the vast forest of elders,  
A young tree grows,  
Dreaming of days she would be accepted,  
Surrounded by her silent mates,  
And bearded elders,  
She is gay and sad and happy, yet,  
Not knowing why, .....

**k). APOSTROPHE.**

Breaking off discourse to address some absent person or thing, some abstract quality, an inanimate object, or a non-existent character. It is a form of personification where a non-human thing, or an abstract thing is directly addressed as if it could respond. This could also be the dead or a spirit.

**THE PAUPER.**

Richard Ntiru.

Pauper, pauper, craning your eyes,  
In all directions, in no directions,  
What brutal force, malignant element,  
Dared to forge your piteous fate?  
Was it worth the effort, the time?

You sit alone, on hairless got skins,  
Your ribs and bones reflecting the light,  
Those beautiful cars reflect on you,  
Squashing lies between your nails,  
And cleaning your nails with dry saliva.

You limply lean, on leafless tree,  
Nursing the jiggers that shrivelled your  
bottom,  
Like a baby newly born to an old woman,  
What crime, what treason did you commit?  
That you are thus condemned to human  
indifference?

And when he looks at the grimy coating,  
Caking of your emaciated skin,  
At the rust that uproots all your teeth,  
Lie a pick on a stony piece of land,  
Does he pat his paunch on a wonderful sight?

And when you trudge on the horny pads,  
Gullied like the soles of modern shoes,  
Pads that even jiggers cannot conquer,  
Does he admire your sense of endurance?  
Or turn his head away from your impudent  
presence?

Pauper, pauper, crouching on beautiful  
verandas,  
Of beautiful cities and beautiful people,  
Tourists and I will take your snapshots,  
And your M.P with a shiny head and triple  
chin,  
Will mourn your fate in a supplementary  
question, at  
Question time,

In this poem the poet is addressing someone who is extremely poor by asking questions. Yet the person is not there to reply or answer his questions.

**l). CHIASMUS**

A verbal pattern in which the second half of an expression is balanced against the first but with the parts reversed. It is a reverse parallel grammatical structure in successive phrases and clauses. For example: He exalts his enemies; his friends he destroys.

**m). ANAPHORA**

The repetition of the same word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses or verses. (Contrast with epiphora and epistrophe.)

## **N). ELLIPSIS**

This is the deliberate omission of a word or words implied by the context and by the parallel structure. For example: Susan went to Nanyuki; Mark, to Nairobi. This sentence could have been,

*Susan went to Nanyuki and mark went to Nairobi*

But “and mark went to Nairobi” is omitted.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### **SUBJECT MATTER OF A POEM.**

Subject matter means the general topic of a poem. It is what the poem is about and is sometimes referred to as the meaning. Poems usually have two meanings;

- ❖ Outer meaning: this is shown by the literary meaning of the words and phrases that the poet used in composing the poem. It is important for determining the rhythm of the poem and rhythm include all the sound features that contribute to the musicality of the poem.
- ❖ Inner meaning: Also called the hidden meaning. This is where the message the poet wants to communicate is found. It is the meaning contained in the figures of speech which is called the figurative language of the poet. To determine the inner meaning of a poem we have to understand the symbols, irony, personification as well as all the other figures of speech evident in the poem. The inner meaning is important for determining the mood, tone and atmosphere of a poem as well as the poet's attitude towards what he is communicating.

Let us now explore more on the inner meaning by looking at the mood, tone, atmosphere and attitude in a poem.

#### **Mood.**

Mood of a poem is the general feeling we get from the message in the poem when we are reciting it. When we read a piece of writing we normally feel the message. Feeling the message means assuming the effect of what is contained in the message. When we read something about death we normally get sad and likewise, when we read something about celebrations we feel happy. This feeling of sadness or happiness we get from reciting a poem is what we call mood.

In determining the mood of a poem, we must first identify and understand the experience of the poet or the situation described in the poem. After we have identified the experience or situation is when we identify the feeling of the poet. Poetry is expression of one's feelings so the feeling is evident in the words used to compose the poem. Since a poet is always compelled to compose a poem by his/her feelings, the poet must have a feeling about what he is communicating. He might feel bad, good, regretful or even sorrowful about what he is communicating and would use words which would show these feelings in order to communicate. Consider the poem below;

#### **FOR THAT WAS NOT WHAT WE KNEW.**

By Aizakh kheir.

See how somber, our people are  
None loves the other, rivals they are,  
Fights for family leadership,  
And within the same tribe,  
Not leaving behind, inter-tribes,  
My better brothers, be far from fear,  
For that was not what we knew.  
Brothers oppose each other,  
Propagating, far reaching hatred,  
Finally fighting with each other,

Allowing success and triumph,  
From there foreboding foes,  
My better brothers, be far from fear,  
For that was not what we knew.

The poem above starts with, see how somber, our people are. In this line the poet is showing us how sad our people are. In the lines that follow we are told of why they are sad. We are told that they don't love one another because they are engaged in fights. Husband and wife, fighting for family leadership, people of the same tribe are fighting for leadership too and tribes too are fighting with each for the leadership of the society. After telling us all this fights which made his people sad, the poet in the last two lines, tells his "better brothers" not to fear because this was not what they knew.

In the second line we are again told of other fights. Brothers are opposing each other breaking the brotherhood love between them. They then fight and since they do not support each other, their enemies find it easy harm them. The poet again encourages his "better brothers" not to fear because all this hatred is what came recently and were not there before. He hopes that things are going to change.

If you look at the above poem critically, from the first line to the fifth line, the poet is talking about the sad nature of his people and the fights they are engaging in. when we recite it, we also feel sad. Therefore, the first five lines creates in us a sad mood. The last two lines however, change our feeling of sadness. We are encouraged not to fear because those fights are likely to end. Here, as we are reciting we get encouraged. Therefore, the mood changes from a sad one to an encouraging one. Hence, the mood becomes an encouraging mood.

If we go to the second stanza we again witness fights between brothers and their enemies taking advantage of their disunity and harming them. We feel bitter about this incident hence creating a bitter mood. But if we come to the last two lines, we are encouraged again bringing back to us an encouraging mood.

Now, the general mood of our poem becomes an encouraging mood. It is not a sad mood nor a bitter mood, because; the poem was composed during hard and sad times and the poet was telling us about the sadness and bitterness in order to encourage us not to worry. So, the poem was composed to encourage his people who are sad and bitter. This is also shown by the title of the poem.

We can also interpret the mood of this poem in another way. When the poet was telling his "better brothers" that those were not what they knew, he is hopeful that things would change. Therefore, he is optimistic (hopeful that things will change in future). We can then say the mood of the poem is optimistic.

In examinations, we can be asked the mood of some lines and not that of the whole poem. In this case always give the mood of the lines asked. You can find this using the words used in those lines. As we have discussed above, the mood of our first five lines in the first stanza is a sad mood which is different from the mood of our line. In our second stanza too, the first five lines have a bitter mood but the mood of our poem is optimistic. From this view then, every line also has its own mood. The general mood of a poem always comes from the line that communicates the reason as to why the poem was composed. This is also the line that contains the intention of the poet when composing it. In the poem above, the intention of the poet is to

encourage his people to be optimistic.

The following words are also used to describe moods of a poem according to the subject matter of a poem.

- Optimistic: having hope that something good will happen or a bad situation will change for better.
- Pessimistic: having no hope that something good will happen or expecting no change in a bad situation.
- Romantic: expressing love and great affection towards somebody.
- Nostalgic: expressing the feeling of the effect of your past. When you feel sad or happy or due to the remembrance of what happens in the past.
- Vengeful: showing hatred and desire to punish something or somebody who harmed you before.
- Thankful: expressing thankfulness towards someone
- Sympathetic: showing sympathy for someone in a problem or pain. Being kind and feeling sorry for someone who is in problems or pain.
- Haunting: a feeling that makes someone feels sad and frightened by what happened to or what someone did in the past that cannot be forgotten.
- Remorseful: expressing a feeling of guilt and sadness.
- Hateful: expressing hatred towards someone or something.
- Longing/yearning: expression of a feeling of looking forward to something or eagerly waiting for something or something.
- Suspenseful: expressing a feeling of doubt or undecidedness.
- Sarcastic: expressing humour by mocking someone or something using irony or ridiculing someone.
- Resigned: expression of calmness or a feeling of acceptance of a difficult or unpleasant situation that you cannot change.

### **TONE.**

Like mood, tone is also a feeling but not general as in mood. It is the feeling that is exuded through the voice as one recites the poem. Normally, people do not speak in the same way and with the same voice when they are happy, sad, worried, sympathizing or when they are angry. We have noticed that they speak using different voice in each of those situations. The way someone speaks in a given situation is therefore one's tone. Tone, varies according to what one is talking about hence the way one speaks when one is sad is different from the way one speaks when he is happy. This change in one's voice at different times and different feeling is called tonal variation.

Like mood, we use the message in the words of a poem to determine the tone of a poem. The situation and feeling contained in those words helps in determining the tone. Consider, the poem bellow;

## **KINISA**

**BY AIZAKH KHEIR**

Among the sweet things of the world,  
Aptly named, kinisa is the word,  
Full of honey what we heard,  
And saw, for the peaceful time we had.

So charming, the villagers we have,  
In a cluster caused by love,  
Each other, they are ready to serve,  
As population stretched its curve.

Harbagasa, was its dam,  
Its red waters, shimmered with charm,  
To aliens, contaminated, but brought no harm,  
To the villagers, it was the right arm.

So loving, members had the same eyes,  
In it grew, crops of all kinds,  
With maize to kales, it was so nice,  
They thought it, a corner of a paradise.

A primary school was built,  
With the reflection of iron shit,  
Their happy faces, with smiles were lit,  
The only problem-of ignorance, it's to lift.

So avid, pupils started with greed,  
Relentlessly worked, towards their need,  
The teacher, a friend to every kid,  
Into a happy future, he's ready to lead.

In it prevailed, a so venerated justice,  
Equality, eradicated all forms of despise,  
To form hierarchical classes, they were a novice,  
None thinks different, to advice,  
Justice and brotherhood, in their lives,  
The coming of outsiders, became its demise.

On increase, it had a big chief,  
Love and brotherhood, was shaken like a leaf,  
Their longer greetings, now so brief,  
As the body of elders, turned into a thief.

With their arrival, injustice prevailed,  
Hatred and dirty politics, was maintained,  
Nepotism and division, was detailed,  
The chief got advisors, who gained,  
Anything, on which their hands were laid.

Divided, the members fell,

To 'development' that entailed,  
 With fear, some were veiled,  
 Even the waters of harbagasa, now on sale,  
 KINISA turner a Conner of hell.

The above poem starts with praising a village terming it as being among the sweet things of the world and being full of honey. We were told that the villagers were charming meaning very happy, having love for each other and cooperating. The poet goes ahead and talks about the village dam which looked contaminated but very important to the villagers. In that village all crops grew and so it was productive and all this made the villagers very happy.

In determining the tone of this poem, we use the feelings observed in our voice as we recite. The poem is about a happy village and we would recite the poem happily. Therefore, we use a happy voice which makes the tone of the poem to a happy tone.

If we compare this poem with the one headed for that was not what we knew by Aizakh kheir, we would find out that unlike this one, it is full of sadness. When reciting it we would probably use a sad voice. Therefore, it has a sad tone.

**BUILDING THE NATION.**

by Henry Barlow.

Today I did my share,  
 In building the nation,  
 I drove a permanent secretary,  
 To an important urgent function,  
 The menu reflected its importance,  
 Cold bell bear with small talk,  
 Then fried chicken with niceties,  
 Wine to fill the hollowness of the laughs  
 Ice cream to over the stereotype jokes,  
 Coffee to keep the PS awake on return  
 journey.

I drove the permanent secretary back,  
 He yawned many times in the back of the  
 car,  
 Then to keep awake, he suddenly asked,  
 Did you have any lunch today?  
 I replied looking straight ahead  
 And secretly smiling to his belated  
 concern,  
 That I had not, but was smiling

Upon which he said with a seriousness,  
 That amused more than annoyed me,  
 Mwananchi, I too had none!  
 I attended to matters of state,  
 Highly delicate diplomatic duties you  
 know,  
 And friend, it goes against my grain  
 Causes me stomach ulcers and wind  
 Ah, he continued yawning again  
 The pains we suffer in building the nation.

So the PS had ulcers too  
 My ulcers I think are equally painful  
 Only they are caused by hunger  
 Not sumptuous lunches.

So two nation builders  
 Arrived home this evening,  
 With terrible stomach pains  
 The result of building the nation-  
 -different ways.

This poem contains the story of a permanent secretary's driver who drove his boss to a function. We are told that the permanent secretary attended a luncheon where a lot of delicious foods were served. The driver spent the day in the car and unlike his boss he had nothing for that day. When the PS came out, in the return journey he asks his driver whether he had lunch that day and the driver replied he didn't. we find an irony when the permanent secretary said that he too had none as he attended to a highly delicate diplomatic matters. He also admitted that these matters give him stomach ulcers. The driver too is not comfortable with his work

and had ulcers too. But the ulcers of the driver are caused by hunger while that of the PS is just a claim and if so is caused by sumptuous lunches as the poet stated it. Both of them took part in building the nation in a different way.

The voice of the driver, is exposing the flaws of the permanent secretary as it exposes what they do at the Vic in the name of building the nation and attending to diplomatic duties. It tells us of the lavish life they live and what they claim that their duties give them stomach pains. This is sarcasm. Therefore, the tone of the poem is satirical.

This is because the persona, who is the driver is exposing the ills his boss takes part in claiming that he is attending to the matters of the state and lying to the local citizens that the work gives them stomach pain when in reality they are there for their self-interest and living lavishly while the local citizen spends the whole day hungry serving them.

The following words are used to describe the tone of a poem.

- **Accusatory:** charging someone or something for wrong doing. A voice that accuses someone or something for wrong doing.
- **Jovial:** a tone which expresses a lot of happiness.
- **Satiric:** a tone that ridicules someone or something to show their weakness and faults.
- **Ridiculing:** making fun of someone or something.
- **Optimistic:** hopeful voice.
- **Pessimistic:** a tone which sees the worst side of something or a situation. Hopeless voice.
- **Vengeful:** showing hatred and desire to punish something or somebody who harmed you before.
- **Thankful:** expressing thankfulness towards someone
- **Sympathetic:** showing sympathy for someone in a problem or pain. Being kind and feeling sorry for someone who is in problems or pain.
- **Haunting:** a feeling that makes someone feels sad and frightened by what happened to or what someone did in the past that cannot be forgotten.
- **Remorseful:** expressing a feeling of guilt and sadness.
- **Hateful:** expressing hatred towards someone or something.

### **ATTITUDE OF THE POET.**

The attitude of the poet is how the poet see the topic or the issue in the message he/she is communicating. It is the actual emotion the author has toward the subject, audience, or him/herself. So it is the poet's point of view. Consider the poem below;

#### **THE SHEPHARD.**

By Aizakh kheir.

That a fool, believes in stray,  
 Being his home, clearly assured,  
 That is what our governor is,  
 Never aware'ing, his laws in hand,  
 Thinks a flock of sheep what we are,  
 Its democracy,  
 if the shepherd,  
 Harkens to the idea, of the leading

sheep,  
 But our shepherd says sheep is a  
 sheep,  
 The law equal, to the whole flock,  
 But which kind of law it is?  
 That of his house, meant for his wives,  
 But is he aware of the danger,  
 That lies in the unity of the flock?

In the above poem we are told of an arrogant governor who enforces harsh laws on his subjects. The poet compares his laws with that used in his house for his wives telling us that the governor is a dictator. But how is the poet delivering the message of this poem. First, the poet is narrating the flaws of the governor to tell us his weakness. This is satire. Since the poet uses satire in expressing his message, he is satirizing the governor hence his attitude towards the governor is satirical.

### **Vocabulary for describing attitudes of a poet.**

- ❖ Attitudes of logic: explanatory, didactic, admonitory, condemnatory, indignant, puzzled, curious, guileless, thoughtless, innocent, frank, sincere, questioning, uncertain, doubting, incredulous, critical, cynical, insinuating, persuading, coaxing, pleading, persuasive, argumentative, oracular.
- ❖ Attitudes of pleasure: peaceful, satisfied, contented, happy, cheerful, pleasant, bright, joyful, playful, jubilant, elated, enraptured.
- ❖ Attitudes of pain: worried, uneasy, troubled, disappointed, regretful, vexed, annoyed, bored, disgusted, miserable, cheerless, mournful, sorrowful, sad, dismal, melancholy, plaintive, fretful, querulous, irritable, sore, sulky, dismal, sullen, bitter, crushed, pathetic, tragic.
- ❖ Attitudes of passion: nervous, hysterical, impulsive, impetuous, reckless, desperate, frantic, wild, fierce, serious, savage, enraged, angry, hungry, greedy, jealous, insane, wistful.
- ❖ Attitudes of friendliness: cordial, sociable, gracious, kindly, sympathetic, compassionate, forgiving, pitying, indulgent, tolerant, comforting, soothing, tender, loving, caressing, solicitous, accommodating, approving, helpful, obliging, courteous, polite, confiding, trusting.
- ❖ Attitudes of unfriendliness: sharp, severe, cutting, hateful, antisocial, spiteful, harsh, boorish, pitiless, disparaging, derisive, scornful, satiric, sarcastic, insolent, insulting, impudent, belittling, contemptuous, accusing, reproving, scolding, suspicious.
- ❖ Attitudes of comedy: facetious, comic, ironic, satiric, amused, mocking, playful, humorous, uproarious.
- ❖ Attitudes of animation: lively, eager, excited, earnest, energetic,

vigorous, hearty, ardent, passionate, rapturous, ecstatic, feverish, inspired, exalted, breathless, hasty, brisk, crisp, hopeful.

- ❖ Attitudes of apathy: inert, sluggish, languid, dispassionate, dull, colourless, indifferent, stoical, resigned, defeated, helpless, hopeless, dry, monotonous, vacant, feeble, dreaming, bored, blasé, sophisticated.
- ❖ Attitudes of self-importance: impressive, profound, proud, dignified, lofty, imperious, confident, egotistical, peremptory, bombastic, sententious, arrogant, pompous, stiff, boastful, exultant, insolent, domineering, flippant, saucy, positive, resolute, haughty, condescending, challenging, bold, defiant, contemptuous.
- ❖ Attitudes of submission and timidity: meek, shy, humble, docile, ashamed, modest, timid, unpretentious, respectful, apologetic, devout, reverent, servile, obsequious, grovelling, contrite, obedient, willing, sycophantic, fawning, ingratiating, deprecatory, alarmed, fearful, terrified, trembling, wondering, awed, astounded, shocked, uncomprehending.

### **ATMOSPHERE OF A POEM.**

Atmosphere is a word which is always used to describe the feeling or vibe, the awkwardness, the creepiness or the bursting energy that is imposed upon us in a physical environment, situation or space. So clearly, the setting (environment) of a text is what establishes the atmosphere. Therefore, atmosphere of a poem is the state or situation of the physical environment where the poem is set or where the poet is when composing the poem. This is the Setting of the poem which is usually constructed via the description of objects in the setting (e.g. a creaking floorboard in the haunted house).

Atmosphere is the feeling of an environment, as constructed by a writer's description of the environment and objects within that setting. It is not necessarily emotional. This description of the setting's environments can be shown the time, the actions or situation of the environment during the poem's settings.

The following are some of the words used to describe the atmosphere of a poem.

- Eerie: fearful atmosphere. Description of an environment which influences fear.
- Mysterious: an unknown or understandable atmosphere. Mostly related to spirits, holy beings and places.
- Bustling: an atmosphere of excitement. Of a stir.
- Dynamic: a changing atmosphere due to changes in the environment.
- Awkward: an embarrassing atmosphere
- Uncomfortable: description of an atmosphere or an environment which the poet detests or shows un-comfort being in it.
- Warm: accommodating, welcoming atmosphere.
- Welcoming: good friendly environment



- Inviting: very attractive atmosphere which makes even the reciter like to be in.

Consider the poem below;

**SLEEPLESS IN ANGOLA.** By Joseph Kariuki.

They no longer sleep,  
Dissonant machine gun cracks,  
And the wails of their dying,  
Have drowned their dancing drums,  
And tomorrow,  
Will there be a tomorrow?  
They can no longer sleep.

A wind of awakening blowing from the north,  
To dispel the despair of life's mockery,

So that by death, their children may live,  
Once again as men –  
Has called them to resist.

They are not alone,  
Their moans find echoes in the torn continent,  
And the oppressors shall never again,  
Till the envied blood clogged earth,  
In peace,  
They shall no longer sleep.

In the above poem we are told of sleepless people in Angola due to wars. There are sounds of machine guns and wails of people dying. The environment of the poem's setting is then full of death, suffering and sadness. Therefore, the atmosphere of the poem is morose, sad or fearful.

**ANALYSING A POEM.**

When analysing a poem, always try to use your own interpretation, words and your own language. First you have to understand the poem before you start to analyse it. In understanding the meaning of a poem, you are required to,

- ✓ Put yourself in the shoes of the poet.
- ✓ Compare the message in the poem with your society and derive a meaning.

The following steps will guide you on how to analyse a poem best.

**STEP 1: Think about the poet**

Although you may have never heard of the poet, you can work out quite a lot from the name of the poet. To begin with,

- does it sound foreign or common? what is the possible origin of the name? the origin will help you to analyse the poem using the culture of that place. E.g. in kikuyu community uncircumcised men are despised and seen as filthy but in Luo it is not taken all that serious. Name of an African origin will help you find tribalism, culture and male chauvinism while names of European origin will talk about other things.
- What is the sex of the poet? Male names will talk about men's activities while female names talk about feminism, roles of women etc.

**STEP 2: Think about the date or the possible time of the poems setting.**

Think about the life-time experiences of the poet and relate them to what you found

out in step 1. For example, a poem from the 1950s written by a Kenyan will talk about colonisation. Those written in 1980s will talk about Moi's government. Also ancient poems will express traditions, morality and culture while modern poetry will talk about education, technology and politics.

### **STEP 3: Reading for meaning**

To begin with, read through the poem looking for the simple meaning. Consider the literary meaning of the words and phrases the poet uses. Which register do those words belong to? Of course their specific words used to describe every field, medicine has its own words or register, law has its own, love and relationships have their own words. So every topic has its own vocabulary. This vocabulary will guide you to derive what the poem is about in the outer meaning.

### **STEP 4: Look for the poetic devices.**

This one is done in the third reading. You have derived the outer meaning in step three. Look for the poetic devices used in the poem and derive what it means or represent in the poem. For example: the meanings of similes, metaphors, alliteration, rhyme, rhythm etc. compare the poem with the real society and give each figurative language a meaning.

### **STEP 5: Look at the structure and form**

How is the poem organised? When do the stanzas change and why? Does it follow the pattern of a type of poetry? Look for the sound features used in the poem.

Consider the following table for parts and questions to consider when analysing a poem.

Subject.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the general topic of the poem?</li> <li>• What is the content, what do the words used show?</li> <li>• What is the poem about?</li> </ul>
Occasion / setting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the time and place of the poems setting?</li> <li>• What influenced or compelled the poet to compose the poem?</li> </ul>
Audience .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are the audience? Which group of people is the poem directed to? The audience may be one person, a small group or everybody.</li> <li>• What qualities, believes or values in the poem do the audience have?</li> </ul>
Purpose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the reason behind the composing of the poem?</li> <li>• What believes, qualities and values do the poet want us to acquire from the poem.</li> <li>• What do the poet want us to do, to feel, say or choose?</li> </ul>
Speaker.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To who does the voice of the poem belong to? Whose words are</li> </ul>

	<p>contained in the poem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do we understand about the writers life and views that shapes the poem.</li> </ul>
Tone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What choice of words that lets you know the speakers tone?</li> <li>• How is the message of the poem expressed and what is evident in your voice when you recite the poem?</li> </ul>

**STEP 6: Answer the question.**

After you have understood and analysed the poem, attempt the questions following it. Some poems are complicated and requires you to read many times to understand it. Do not give up in understanding it. However, complicated a poem is it always contains some words or phrases that would help you come up with a meaning.

When answering question always remember to explain your answer and support it with illustrations from the poem. In questions on sound features always consider the sounds and not letters. When illustrating sounds remember to always put them in slashes. i.e. /h/.