



**RAWLINSON ROAD MIDDLE SCHOOL- Home of Raider PRIDE**



**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**\*\*Instructions to complete the student packet:**

Work through each daily lesson on the given. Work a little each day so you don't get too far behind. Playing catch-up is difficult. If you do get behind, that's ok... just work a little extra one day and get back on track. You've got this and we can do it together! I'm here if you need me. ☺

Thursday 4/2 – Census Article and Questions  
Friday 4/3- Census Close Reading and Graph work  
Monday 4/13 – Poetry Level-Up  
Tuesday 4/14 –Poetry Pages with “Hanging Fire” and “Teenagers”  
Wednesday 4/15 – Poetry Pages – Poems About Growing Up

**MAKE SURE YOUR NAME IS ON YOUR WORK!**

**\*\*Instructions to submit work (paper copies)**

From a phone, use your NOTES APP, click: Scan documents, Keep scan, Save, Then in upper right corner click the send arrow pointed up. Send as a message by clicking on the green message button like a text to me at 704-208-8391 or email to [kmondo@rhmail.org](mailto:kmondo@rhmail.org). This makes it easiest for me to see on my end.

**MAKE SURE YOUR NAME IS ON IT!**

**Technology**

**Laptop issues:** please email the help desk- [helpdesk@rhmail.org](mailto:helpdesk@rhmail.org) or phone at (803)981-3531 and include the following information:

**Student ID** number (ex: RS12345)

**Parent/Guardian name,** Parent/Guardian email and phone number contact information.

**School Name / Teacher name**

**A description of the problem with the computer**

The Rock Hill Schools Technology Department Staff will be on call between the hours of 8AM - 8PM

**Launchpad:** <https://launchpad.classlink.com/rockhill>

**Canvas:** <https://rockhill.instructure.com/login/canvas>

**\*\* For more information on remote learning, please visit:**



**RAWLINSON ROAD MIDDLE SCHOOL- Home of Raider PRIDE**



RRMS website at <https://www.rock-hill.k12.sc.us/domain/2596>

RHS District website at: <https://www.rock-hill.k12.sc.us/elearning>



# Why Every One is Talking About The Census

The government is preparing to take its once-a-decade count of every person in the United States. Here's what you should know.

MARCH 23, 2020

By Brooke Ross

The United States is counting on Americans—to count themselves! April 1 marks the official start of the 2020 U.S. Census. That is a nationwide tally of every person living in the country.

The [federal](#) government conducts a census every 10 years. That is required by the [Constitution](#). As part of this national head count, U.S. residents answer a short questionnaire about themselves and their households. Their combined responses provide the government with important data about the country's population. The results help determine everything from how to distribute [tax](#) dollars to where to build new schools and public parks. (By law, the U.S. Census Bureau uses data collected from the census for statistical purposes only. It keeps people's individual responses private.)

How is the census conducted? What kinds of questions are in it? And how will the information the government gathers affect your life? Here is what you need to know.

## 1. Who gets counted in a census—and how?

The census aims to count every person living in the country. That includes citizens, noncitizens who are here legally, and [undocumented](#) immigrants. Deployed military members, people in prison, and homeless people are also counted.

Earlier this year, the Census Bureau mailed a notice to every known household in the nation. The notice detailed how to participate. Most people are encouraged to respond to the questions by mail, by phone, or via the internet. The internet option is new this year.

To make sure that every person is counted, the Bureau plans to hire about 500,000 workers. They will go door-to-door starting next month. They will collect answers from people who have not responded.



Jeffrey Isaac Greenberg 7/Alamy Stock Photo



A census worker interviews a family in Florida during the 2010 Census

## 2. What questions are included?

The census asks respondents about their age, sex, race, and more. Everyone in each household must answer the questions. Or someone else, such as a parent or spouse, must answer for them.

Respondents will *not* be asked whether they are U.S. citizens. President Donald Trump's administration tried to have that question added. But the Supreme Court blocked it. The Court said the question could discourage participation among undocumented immigrants, who may fear [deportation](#).

**What's new about the 2020 Census?**

-  People can answer the questions online for the first time.
-  It will count same-sex couples, married and unmarried.
-  The survey is now offered in 13 languages total, including Arabic.

Shutterstock.com (Icons)

## 3. Why does the census matter?

Census data help the government determine how to distribute about \$675 billion a year in federal funds. That money is used for everything from repairing highways to building schools. Businesses also use the data. For example, a clothing company might analyze census statistics to decide where to open new stores.

Census results also determine how many seats each state gets in the U.S. House of Representatives. House seats are based on each state's share of the nation's population. The total number of House seats is 435 and does not change, so some states may gain or lose seats after each census. That, in turn, affects presidential elections. That is because each state is allotted votes in the Electoral College based on the number of seats it has in [Congress](#).

(The 2020 Census will not affect November's presidential election, because officials will not begin releasing data until December.)

**Comprehension**

## Know the News: Why Everyone's Talking About the Census

Read the article on pages 10-11, then answer the questions.

**1. Which is a central idea of the article?**

- Ⓐ Officials will begin releasing data from the 2020 Census in December.
- Ⓑ This year's census is offered in 13 languages.
- Ⓒ The U.S. Census Bureau plans to hire about 500,000 workers this year.
- Ⓓ Census responses give the government important data about the U.S. population.

**2. Which statement about the census is true?**

- Ⓐ The results determine how many seats each state gets in the U.S. Senate.
- Ⓑ It does not count U.S. military members deployed overseas.
- Ⓒ It asks respondents questions about their age, sex, and race.
- Ⓓ It can only be completed over the phone.

**3. When does the 2020 Census officially begin?**

- Ⓐ March 23                      Ⓒ November 3
- Ⓑ April 1                        Ⓓ December 1

**4. The \_\_\_\_ requires the federal government to conduct a census every 10 years.**

- Ⓐ Constitution
- Ⓑ Electoral College
- Ⓒ House of Representatives
- Ⓓ president

**5. Census data helps the government determine how to distribute about how much in federal funds a year?**

- Ⓐ \$135 billion                      Ⓒ \$435 billion
- Ⓑ \$350 billion                     Ⓓ \$675 billion

**6. According to the article, the census aims to count all of the following people except \_\_\_\_.**

- Ⓐ people in prison
- Ⓑ homeless people
- Ⓒ immigrants who live in the U.S.
- Ⓓ travelers visiting the U.S. from other countries

**7. Which of these statements is an opinion?**

- Ⓐ The Census Bureau keeps people's individual responses private.
- Ⓑ This year, people can answer census questions online for the first time.
- Ⓒ Helping the government determine how to distribute federal funds is the most important reason to respond to the census.
- Ⓓ Each state is allotted Electoral College votes based on the number of seats it has in Congress.

**8. The photo at the bottom of page 11 best supports which detail from the article?**

- Ⓐ "The U.S. Census Bureau uses data collected from the census for statistical purposes only."
- Ⓑ "The Bureau plans to hire about 500,000 workers to go door-to-door starting next month."
- Ⓒ "Respondents will *not* be asked whether they are U.S. citizens."
- Ⓓ "Businesses also use the data."

**9. According to the article, the Supreme Court \_\_\_\_.**

- Ⓐ uses census data to determine whether states gain or lose seats in the House of Representatives
- Ⓑ blocked the Trump administration from adding a citizenship question to the census
- Ⓒ ruled that the census had to count married and unmarried couples of the same sex
- Ⓓ decides where companies should open stores

**10. Which detail would be *least* important to include in a summary of the article?**

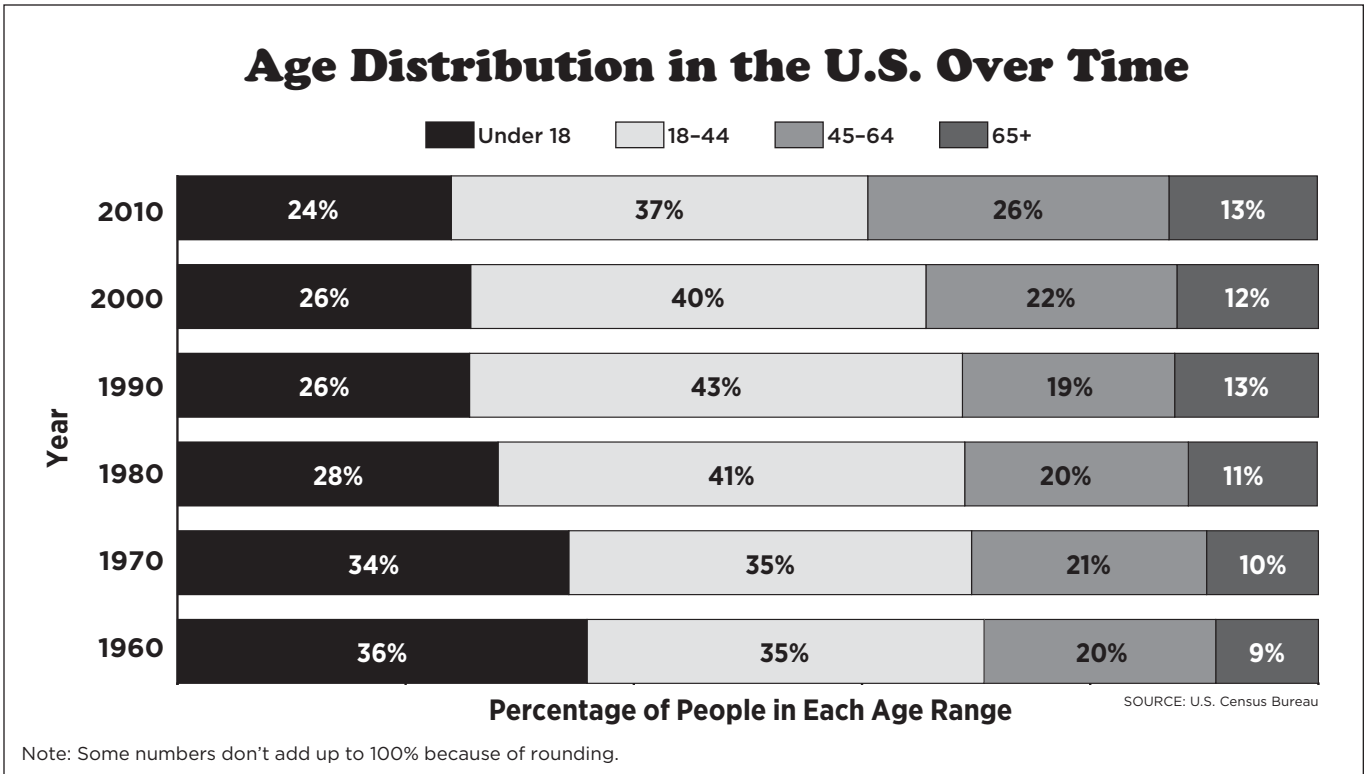
- Ⓐ The goal of the census is to count every person living in the United States.
- Ⓑ The next U.S. presidential election will take place in November.
- Ⓒ People can answer census questions online.
- Ⓓ The census involves a short questionnaire about U.S. residents and their households.

Graph Reading

KEY STANDARD  
**RI.6-8.7**

## Counting Americans

In “Why Everyone’s Talking About the Census” (pp. 10-11), you learned that the federal government conducts a census every 10 years. This graph shows information about Americans’ ages since 1960. Study it and answer the questions.



### Questions

- In 2010, what percentage of Americans were under 18?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How has the percentage of Americans under 18 changed since 1960?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- In what year on the graph did the population of Americans 65 or over reach 10 percent?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- About how old would someone born in 1960 have been in 2010? In which section of the graph would that person be represented in 2010?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- In one or two sentences, summarize what the graph reveals about the U.S. population.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Textual Evidence

KEY STANDARD

RI.6-8.1

# Close-Reading Questions: Why Everyone's Talking About the Census

Refer to the article on pages 10-11 to respond to the questions below. Include evidence from the text that supports your responses.

1. What is the goal of the census?

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2. How does the government use census data?

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3. How will the census be different this time?

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**April is National Poetry Month! Let's Celebrate!**

This is a printed version of the Level-Up Tutorial from our online textook just like we've used in class.  
This is a great introduction of notes and practice to start us on some poetry!

Elements of Poetry < 1 of 21 >

**▶ In this tutorial, you will learn**


- to understand the basics of poetry—speaker and form
- to distinguish between traditional and free verse poetry
- to identify sound devices in poetry
- to identify imagery and figurative language in poetry

Elements of Poetry < 2 of 21 >

**■ What Is Poetry?**

When you hear the word *poetry*, do you think of flowery words and sing-song rhymes? Do you think of your favorite songs?

Poetry is a type of literature in which words are chosen and arranged in specific ways to create an effect. Poems come in many different types, styles, and forms. Some poems tell stories, while others express emotions or paint pictures in words.



Elements of Poetry < 3 of 21 >


**▶ The Basics: Speaker**

Just as a story has a narrator, a poem has a **speaker**—the voice that talks to the reader. It's important to remember that the speaker and the poet are not necessarily the same.

Who is the speaker in this example?

a teacher

a student



The teacher's face falls.  
Wrong answer.  
A slow burn creeps,  
Turning pink and red,  
Crawling up my neck,  
Fanning out over my cheeks.  
I look down  
And pretend to study the name  
Carved into my desk.


Elements of Poetry < 4 of 21 >

**▶ The Basics: Form**

**Form** refers to the way a poem is laid out on the page. Unlike prose, in which sentences follow one after another in paragraphs, poetry is divided into lines and stanzas. Stanzas are groups of lines. The place where a line ends is called a line break.

The end of a line of poetry does not always signal the end of a sentence or thought. Often, poets will continue a sentence or thought across several lines.

Select the image to analyze the form of a poem. Ask yourself: How many lines and stanzas does this poem have? Where does each thought begin and end?



It was July, and the sun toasted the emerald grass  
until it smelled of  
warmth and green and life.

It was July, and my heart  
soaked up the airy warmth  
until it sang of joy  
and love and life.




Elements of Poetry 5 of 21

### Analyzing Form

You have learned about the pieces that make up a poem—lines and stanzas. Now read the poem again, using what you have learned to answer a question about its form.

Which is a correct description of this poem's form?

- It has two stanzas and eight sentences.
- It has eight stanzas.
- It has eight lines and two stanzas.
- It has eight lines and no stanzas.



It was July, and the sun  
toasted the emerald grass  
until it smelled of warmth  
and green and life.


It was July, and my heart  
soaked up the airy warmth  
until it sang of joy  
and love and life.

Elements of Poetry 6 of 21


### Poetic Forms

One thing you will notice about poetry is that it comes in all kinds of different forms. Some poems follow strict rules about lines, stanzas, rhythm, and rhyme. These are called **traditional poems**. Some traditional types of poetry you might know are ballads, sonnets, and limericks.

Other poems have no recognizable patterns or rules. Their lines do not rhyme in any regular way, and might not even be similar lengths. These poems are called **free verse** poems.



*Some types of poetry follow formal rules.*




*Others are unconventional.*

Elements of Poetry 7 of 21

### Traditional Poetry

Traditional, or conventional, poems follow rules for lines, stanzas, rhythm, and rhyme. For example, a **sonnet** must always have 14 lines and use a particular pattern of rhyme. **Ballads**, **odes**, and other traditional forms have different rules.

In many traditional forms, the rhyme, beat, and structure repeat regularly throughout the poem. For instance, if the first stanza contains 5 lines, so might the other stanzas. Usually, traditional poems have a **rhyme scheme**, or pattern of rhyme, that repeats across the different stanzas. To identify a traditional poem, ask yourself: Do the lines, stanzas, rhyme, and beat in this poem follow patterns?



*Shall I compare thee to a summer  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate  
Rough winds do shake the dark  
And summer's lease hath all too short  
Some times too hot the eye of  
And often times his gold complexion  
And every fair from fair  
chance or nature's*

*Traditional poems rhyme and have a regular beat.*


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### Free Verse Poetry

While traditional poems follow rules, **free verse** poems break them. Free verse poems do not contain regular patterns of rhythm and rhyme. In free verse poems, lines and stanzas may be of varying lengths.

The poet lets ideas, rather than a set number of lines or stanzas, dictate how a free verse poem looks on the page. This type of poetry is often described as sounding like everyday speech.

Select the image to read a free verse poem. Pay attention to the irregular line breaks. Also, notice how the poet uses rhyming words without creating a pattern.



The bell rings.  
With a roar, the doors  
fly open down the halls.  
Tile squeaks  
under a hundred sneakers.  
The music  
between classes.

Elements of Poetry < 9 of 21 >

### Identifying Poetic Forms

You have learned about the characteristics of and the differences between traditional and free verse poetry. Now, practice what you have learned.

Drag each characteristic of poetry into its correct box—traditional or free verse.

**Traditional**

**Free Verse**

Sounds like everyday speech.

Includes ballads, limericks, and sonnets.


Has regular patterns of rhythm and rhyme.

Elements of Poetry < 10 of 21 >

### Identifying Poetic Forms


You might remember the difference between traditional and free verse poetry by telling yourself that free verse is "free" of rules and patterns.

Read each poem. Is it free verse or traditional?



Day and night, I pluck the strings,  
While my backup singer sings.  
We'll be famous, wait and see—  
One day we'll rock out on TV.

Free Verse  Traditional



Looking out my window  
I see a towering mass of cloud—  
a kingdom of air  
reaching to heaven  
in optimism and hope.

Free Verse  Traditional


Elements of Poetry < 11 of 21 >

### Sound Devices


Sound devices are techniques used to give poetry a musical quality. Both traditional and free verse poetry often contain sound devices.

Select each sound device to learn more.


- rhyme
- rhythm
- onomatopoeia
- alliteration
- assonance and consonance



Rhyme refers to the repetition of sounds at the end of words, as in *night and light*. There are several kinds of rhyme: **end rhyme** (the rhyming of words at the ends of lines); **internal rhyme** (the rhyming of words within a line); and **slant rhyme** (words have similar, but not identical, sounds). When end rhyme has a pattern, it is called a **rhyme scheme**.




**Onomatopoeia** is the use of words whose sounds echo their meanings. Some common examples are *buzz*, *gargle*, *hiss*, and *thump*. You can find onomatopoeia in many kinds of writing. It is used to vividly describe certain sounds so that readers can clearly "hear" them.




**Alliteration** is the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of two or more nearby words. Alliteration can help a poet highlight key words, make a poem memorable, or create a certain mood, or feeling.

**Example:** A litter of playful, pretty puppies pranced in the park.



**Rhythm** is the musical quality produced by the repetition of stressed and unstressed syllables. A regular pattern of rhythm is called **meter**. Both free verse and traditional poetry use rhythm; however, free verse poetry does not have meter.



These are two more ways of repeating sounds to achieve a certain effect. **Assonance** is the repetition of vowel sounds in words, such as in *stare* and *slaw*. **Consonance** is the repetition of consonant sounds either within or at the ends of words, as in the phrase *wide muddy field*.


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### Rhythm and Meter

As you have learned, rhythm is the "beat" of a poem—the sound created by repeating stressed and unstressed syllables. A stressed syllable is one that is emphasized. For example, in the word *student* the syllable *stu* is stressed, while *dent* is unstressed.


When the rhythm is regular and repeats throughout the poem, it is called meter. Poets create meter by arranging words to form patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables.

Select the images to see examples of meter.



**Roses are red,  
violets are blue.**

**Explanation:** In this example, one stressed syllable is followed by two unstressed syllables.



**Come dance with me  
Tonight, my dear,  
Forget your cares,  
Forget your fear.**


**Explanation:** In this example, one unstressed syllable is followed by one stressed syllable.

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### Rhythm and Meter


As you now know, meter is a regular repetition of stressed and unstressed syllables. Remember that a poem can have rhythm without having meter. Reading lines aloud can help you hear the pattern of beats.

Decide whether each example demonstrates meter.




And they walked at a pace  
That would make your heart race

Yes  No



The grass waves like  
A yellow-green sea  
Tossed by the wind

Yes  No



The fields lay smooth and white  
And crisp with snow.

Yes  No

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### Identifying Sound Devices

You have learned about the types of sound devices that help poets create meaning and emphasis. Now, practice identifying some of these devices.

Drag examples of alliteration and assonance into the correct boxes.

Alliteration

Assonance

These old bones groan and  
creak.

On the chair, a cat snored its  
soft sighs.

The breeze gusts freely and  
teases my hair.

Elements of Poetry < 15 of 21 >

### Identifying Sound Devices

Read the sample poem. Then, answer the question.


What sound devices are used in this poem?

alliteration and onomatopoeia

assonance and onomatopoeia

rhyme and meter

consonance and rhyme




On a warm, sunny beach  
I sit  
in my mind  
waves crash, gurgle, sigh,  
slush.  
Suddenly shadows invade my  
eyes,  
and someone calls my name.  
Once more I am locked  
in the dungeon of algebra.

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### Word Choice

Because poems, as a general rule, have fewer words than short stories or other prose, word choice is an important element of poetry. Poets must choose each word carefully to communicate their intended meaning and effect.

Select the image on the bottom left to read lines from a free verse poem. Notice the words in bold. Now, select the image below to see how the boldfaced words have been changed to convey a different feeling.



Suddenly,  
She felt the wind  
**Rip** through  
Her long, curling hair.



Suddenly,  
She felt the wind  
Whisper through  
Her long, curling hair.


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### Imagery

Imagery is language that helps a reader recreate, in his or her own mind, what the writer is describing. Poets use imagery—in addition to word choice, sound devices, and form—to give their poems meaning and to tap into different emotions.

Poets create imagery by using sensory details, or words and phrases that appeal to any of the five senses—smell, touch, sight, hearing, and taste.

Select the image to see an example of imagery in poetry.



The storm rolls in  
Growling and rumbling  
On the heels of the  
night,  
Arriving with a  
blinding flash.  
Each flash bringing A  
breathless pause  
Before the sky-splitting  
thunder.  
I sit at the window,  
Metallic air on my  
tongue.  
And wait for the rain.


**Analyze the Text:** In this example, the poet appeals to the senses of sight (*blinding flash*), hearing (*growling and rumbling*), and taste (*Metallic air on my tongue*) to create a vivid image.

Elements of Poetry < 18 of 21 >

### Analyzing Imagery

You have discovered how poets create imagery through the use of sensory details. Now, read a different example, paying attention to the imagery.

The imagery in this poem appeals to—



On a hot day,  
Your whole self melts.  
A wall of sunshine  
Knocks you down, and  
You drip down into  
The shimmering sidewalks  
And turn to a wisp of steam  
Before  
You even have the chance  
To be a puddle.

sight and hearing

taste and touch

hearing and taste

sight and touch

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### Figurative Language

One way that poets create vivid imagery is through figurative language—creative comparisons that are not literally true.

Select each type of figurative language to learn more.


- simile
- metaphor
- personification
- exaggeration

Figurative language can help you picture ordinary things in new ways.




A simile is a comparison between two unlike things using *like* or *as*.

Example: The singer purred like a kitten as she sang the old love song.




A metaphor is a comparison between two unlike things without using *like* or *as*.

Example: He never forgot a thing; his mind was a steel trap.



Personification gives human traits to something that is non-human. (The word *person* in *personification* can help you remember what this word means.)

Example: The ocean tossed us around without mercy.



Exaggeration, sometimes called hyperbole, is an overstatement used to emphasize a point or create humor.


Example: That flight was a thousand hours long!

Elements of Poetry < 20 of 21 >

### Identify Figurative Language


You've just learned about different types of figurative language. Now, use this knowledge to complete the following activity.

Read each sample poem, and select the type of figurative language being used.



In this lonely street  
I am a tumbleweed  
Bouncing from nowhere  
To nowhere.

Simile    Metaphor



The clouds jog  
Across the sky,  
Chasing playfully after  
One another.

Personification    Exaggeration




Elements of Poetry < 21 of 21 >

### Summary

Poetry is a type of literature in which words are chosen and arranged in specific ways to create an effect. Instead of sentences and paragraphs, poems are made up of lines and stanzas.

Traditional poetry is arranged according to rules about lines, stanzas, rhyme, and rhythm. By contrast, free verse poetry does not follow such rules. As a result, it tends to sound like everyday speech.

Poets use imagery, figurative language, and sound devices (rhyme, meter, alliteration, onomatopoeia, assonance, and consonance) to create meaning and emotion.

Elements of Poetry < 1 of 6 >

### Question 1

Which statement describes a major difference between a traditional poem and a free verse poem?

- A traditional poem may contain alliteration, but a free verse poem does not contain this sound device.
- A traditional poem may contain regular meter and rhyme scheme, but a free verse poem does not contain these elements.
- A traditional poem may contain rhyme and figurative language, but a free verse poem does not contain these elements.
- A traditional poem may contain imagery, but a free verse poem does not relay vivid images to the reader.

[Check](#)

Elements of Poetry < 2 of 6 >

### Question 2

Which answer choice best describes the elements used in this free verse poem?

- irregular line breaks and clear images
- very long lines containing complete sentences
- details that describe a humorous scene
- word choices that make readers feel depressed

The rain has stopped  
 And I hear birds  
 In the distance.  
 They've emerged from the trees  
 And are filling the air with  
 Crisp, precise notes.  
 The sun is peeking out from behind  
 A few stubborn clouds.  
 The heavy puddles reflect its light.  
 The wet grass gleams, and  
 The leaves patiently wait for the  
 Raindrops to fall.

My umbrella sits, beaten down and tired.  
 I put it away and step outside.  
 A ray of sun stabs at me  
 And I gleefully squint.

[Check](#)

Elements of Poetry < 3 of 6 >

### Question 3

Which line of poetry displays onomatopoeia?

- I was told of his bold actions.
- The rope slowly floated away.
- The cat crawled over the concrete wall.
- I listened to the frogs croak and the geese squawk.

[Check](#)

Elements of Poetry < 4 of 6 >

**Question 4**

Which line of poetry includes an example of assonance?

- The frantic flocks cried out in fear.
- I felt the tide glide over my tired feet.
- The dazzling fire sizzled and crackled.
- My stomach stabbed at me as I walked.

Check

Elements of Poetry < 5 of 6 >

**Question 5**

Read this excerpt from a poem. Which element does it contain?

A strong wind clamors against the old  
back gate  
And rattles at the windows in a  
vicious spate.  
There's a crashing of a shutter,  
And the candles start to flutter,  
When the brawny howling wind  
accelerates.

- rhyme scheme
- alliteration
- simile
- exaggeration

Check



**Audre Lorde** (1934–1992) was born in New York City and found early success in writing poetry. Lorde used poetry as a means of expression and a way to communicate. She became a published author when a popular magazine published one of her poems while she was still in high school. In addition to poetry, Lorde also wrote acclaimed essays and novels. She won many important awards for her writing and worked to support several social causes close to her heart. Toward the end of her life, Lorde took the African name Gamba Adisa, which is believed to mean “she who makes her meaning clear.”



**Pat Mora** (b. 1942) was born in El Paso, Texas. She comes from a Mexican American family and considers herself fortunate to be bilingual and have the ability to write in both Spanish and English. She has written several books of poetry, as well as children’s books and essays. Mora takes pride in being a Hispanic writer. She says that she will continue to write and to struggle to say what no other writer can say in quite the same way she can. Family, Mexican American culture, and the desert are all important themes in Mora’s work.



An illustration of Pat Mora.

**SETTING A PURPOSE** Both of these poems focus on communication during adolescence. As you read, think about the subject and how it is presented from two different points of view. How is the message in each poem communicated to readers?

The Poems to read:



### Hanging Fire

Poem by Audre Lorde

I am fourteen  
and my skin has betrayed me  
the boy I cannot live without  
still sucks his thumb  
5 in secret  
how come my knees are  
always so ashy  
what if I die  
before morning  
10 and momma’s in the bedroom  
with the door closed.

I have to learn how to dance  
in time for the next party  
my room is too small for me  
suppose I die before graduation  
15 they will sing sad melodies  
but finally  
tell the truth about me  
There is nothing I want to do  
and too much  
20 that has to be done  
and momma’s in the bedroom  
with the door closed.

Nobody even stops to think  
25 about my side of it  
I should have been on Math Team  
my marks were better than his  
why do I have to be  
the one  
30 wearing braces  
I have nothing to wear tomorrow  
will I live long enough  
to grow up  
and momma’s in the bedroom  
35 with the door closed.



### Teenagers

Poem by Pat Mora

One day they disappear  
into their rooms.  
Doors and lips shut,  
and we become strangers  
5 in our own home.

I pace the hall, hear whispers,  
a code I knew but can’t remember,  
mouthed by mouths I taught to speak.

Years later the door opens.  
10 I see faces I once held,  
open as sunflowers in my hands. I see  
familiar skin now stretched on long bodies  
that move past me  
glowing  
15 almost like pearls.

## Make Inferences

Both "Hanging Fire" and "Teenagers" are poems about adolescence, but they offer starkly different points of view—in part because the speakers in the poems are quite different. In poetry, the **speaker** is the voice that "talks" to the reader and shares his or her point of view, similar to the narrator in a story. A poem's speaker may or may not be the poet.

Often readers must make an **inference**, or logical guess based on text clues and their own knowledge and experience, in order to identify a poem's speaker. For example, in "Teenagers," text clues help readers figure out that the speaker is an adult, probably a parent or guardian, commenting on the behavior of a child becoming a teen.



As you continue to analyze the two poems, think about what text-based inferences you can make about each speaker and his or her point of view.

## Determine Theme

Readers also may need to make inferences about themes in a poem. A **theme** is a message about life or human nature that a writer shares with readers. A theme usually is developed over the course of a poem, rather than stated directly at the beginning or end. Sometimes the lesson a speaker or character learns is a sufficient clue to help readers determine theme. Other elements within the text should be considered as well.

- the poem's title
- important statements the speaker makes
- images and details that stand out
- repeated words and phrases

Pay attention to text details as you dig deeper into the poems. Use text clues to determine the themes in each poem and to analyze how those themes are developed through word choice, imagery, and the speaker.

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS! PLEASE USE COMPLETE SENTENCES AND USE TEXT EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT YOUR ANSWERS.

## Analyzing the Text

**Cite Text Evidence** Support your responses with evidence from the texts.

1. **Infer** Figurative language in which human qualities are given to an object, idea, or animal is called **personification**. What does the example of personification in the first stanza of "Hanging Fire" reveal about the speaker?
2. **Infer** Reread lines 1–7 of "Hanging Fire." Based on these lines, what inferences can you make about the speaker of the poem?
3. **Analyze** Reread lines 19–21 of "Hanging Fire." What does the contradiction or inconsistency expressed in these lines suggest about the speaker?
4. **Analyze** Several themes are touched on in "Hanging Fire." Identify and explain one or two of these themes, using text evidence as support.
5. **Interpret** A **simile** is a figure of speech that compares two unlike things using the word *like* or *as*. Identify a simile Mora uses in "Teenagers" that suggests what the speaker's grown children are like.
6. **Compare** The speaker in each poem has a specific point of view, or position about the subject matter of the poem. Tell one way the points of view are similar and one way they are different.



**Background** *The Italian poet Salvatore Quasimodo once wrote that “Poetry is the revelation of a feeling that the poet believes to be interior and personal which the reader recognizes as his own.” While you read the following poems, think about how each speaker feels about growing up. Perhaps you will relate to the feelings the poems express about approaching adulthood.*



## Identity

Julio.Noboa.Polanco

### Hard on the Gas

Janet S. Wong

**Julio Noboa Polanco** (born 1949) grew up in the Bronx, a part of New York City. He now lives in Texas. Polanco wrote “Identity,” his best-known poem, when he was in the eighth grade. He had just broken up with his girlfriend, an event that marked a turning point in the young poet’s life. He continued to write poetry for many years until he decided to focus on writing essays and articles on educational and cultural issues.

**Janet S. Wong** (born 1962) decided to become a poet after working as a lawyer for several years. Many of Wong’s poems are about her experiences as an Asian American. Wong has said that a poem is a bit like shouting—since it’s impossible to yell for very long, “you have to decide what you really need to say, and say it quickly.”

- READ** ▶ As you read, collect and cite textual evidence.
  - Highlight where flowers and weeds grow.
  - Underline what the speaker wants each time he says “I’d rather.”
  - In the margin next to stanzas 2, 5, and 6, write one or two words that describe the speaker.

### Identity

Julio Noboa Polanco

Let them be as flowers,  
always watered, fed, guarded, admired,  
but harnessed to a pot of dirt.

I’d rather be a tall, ugly weed,  
clinging on cliffs, like an eagle  
wind-wavering above high, jagged rocks.

To have broken through the surface of stone  
to live, to feel exposed to madness  
of the vast, eternal sky.

To be swayed by the breezes of an ancient sea,  
carrying my soul, my seed, beyond the mountains of time  
or into the abyss of the bizarre.

I’d rather be unseen, and if  
then shunned by everyone  
than to be a pleasant-smelling flower,  
growing in clusters in the fertile valley  
where they’re praised, handled, and plucked  
by greedy, human hands.

I’d rather smell of musty, green stench  
than of sweet, fragrant lilac.  
If I could stand alone, strong and free,  
I’d rather be a tall, ugly weed.



2. ◀ **REREAD** Reread the poem. What can you infer about what the flowers and the weed represent?

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### SHORT RESPONSE

**Cite Text Evidence** Why does the speaker want to be a weed? Review your reading notes and be sure to cite evidence from the text in your response.

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Poem #2 in this lesson:

1. **READ** ▶ As you read, collect and cite text evidence:
- Underline the two things the speaker compares in the first stanza.
  - In the margin, explain what line 6 means.

### Hard on the Gas

Janet S. Wong

My grandfather taught himself to driverough,  
the way he learned to live,

push the pedal, hard on the gas,  
rush up to 50,  
5 coast a bit,

*rush, rest, rush, rest—*

When you clutch the bar above your right shoulder,  
he shoots you a look that asks,  
*Who said the ride would be smooth?*

2. ◀ **REREAD AND DISCUSS** Reread the poem. With a small group, discuss why the grandfather “shoots a look” at the speaker. Why does the speaker clutch the bar? Cite evidence from the poem in your discussion.

### SHORT RESPONSE

**Cite Text Evidence** This poem is about more than the grandfather's driving ability. Explain the message, or larger meaning, of the question “*Who said the ride would be smooth?*” Cite text evidence in your response.

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