

**People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**  
**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**  
**Echahid Hamma Lakhdar University**  
**Faculty of Arts and Languages**  
**Department of the English Language**



**Course Title:**

**Literature**

First year LMD students of English

**For Semester One**

**Prepared by**

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## **General Course Information**

**Course Title:** Literature

**Target Audience:** 1<sup>st</sup> year LMD students of English

**Coefficient:** 01

**Average Teaching Weeks:** 15 weeks

**Number of sessions per week:** 01 session

**Course Delivery Modality:** Lecture /tutorial

## **Evaluation Criteria:**

The preparation of the weekly assigned texts and readings

Active participation in the class

Written tests

Final exam

## **Objective:**

- Enhancing students' background knowledge of literature as a field of study, including its meaning, scope, and significance.
- Introducing the major types of literature, helping students distinguish between oral and written forms, as well as fiction and non-fiction.
- Familiarizing students with the main literary genres such as poetry, prose, drama, and non-fiction, and their key features.
- Developing an understanding of the essential characteristics of literature, including imagination, emotional expression, artistic language, and cultural representation.
- Building a basic framework that prepares students for deeper literary analysis in later academic years.
- Encouraging awareness of how different literary forms reflect human experience and society.

**Prerequisites:**

To successfully achieve these objectives in teaching Literature, students are expected to have certain prerequisites that will support their learning process. First, they should possess a basic command of the language of instruction, including adequate vocabulary and reading comprehension skills, in order to understand and engage with literary texts. They should also have prior exposure to reading simple stories, poems, or texts that help build interest and familiarity with written expression. In addition, students need an open and receptive attitude toward interpretation and discussion, since literature often involves multiple meanings and perspectives. Basic critical thinking skills, such as the ability to identify ideas, express opinions, and make simple comparisons, are also important. Finally, motivation and willingness to participate actively in reading, discussion, and analysis are essential prerequisites for meaningful progress in understanding literary forms, genres, and their characteristics.

# Table of content

1. What is Literature?
2. Introduction to Poetry
3. Types of Poetry
4. Poetry : Lexical Thematic Dimension
5. Prosody: The Musical Dimension of Schemes
6. Prose
7. Elements of Prose
8. Types of Prose
9. Theoretical Approaches to Analysing Prose
10. Analysis of The Tell Tale Heart
11. Drama
12. Main Types of Drama
13. Historical and Cultural Context of Drama
14. Figurative Language
15. Types of Figurative Language

# Lesson 01: What is Literature

## 1. Definition of Literature

Literature is one of the most complex and multifaceted concepts in human thought. It is not merely a beautiful linguistic creation, but rather an expression of human experience in its deepest psychological, social, and cultural dimensions. Many Western philosophers and critics have attempted to define literature, each according to their intellectual background and theoretical perspective.

- The English critic Terry Eagleton (2008) argues that literature is not a fixed entity that can be easily defined, but rather a flexible concept that changes with cultural and historical contexts. He emphasizes that what is considered literature in one time or society may not be so in another. From this perspective, literature is not simply texts, but the result of an interaction between the text, the reader, and the cultural institution that bestows upon it the quality of "literature."
- The French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre (1988), on the other hand, viewed literature as an existential act. He believed that through their writing, the writer engages with the issues of their time, and that literature is a means of revealing and influencing reality. For him, the novel or play is not merely an intellectual indulgence, but a form of freedom and responsibility, as clearly demonstrated in his works such as "Nausea," which reflects the anxieties of modern man.
- On the other hand, the Russian critic Roman Jakobson (1960) focuses on the linguistic dimension of literature, considering that what distinguishes a literary text is its emphasis on "the message for its own sake," that is, on form and style. For him, literature is characterized by the deviation of language from its ordinary usage, which

gives it a special aesthetic quality. This can be observed in poetry, where metaphor and rhythm are used to create an aesthetic effect that transcends direct meaning.

- The American critic Northrop Frye (1957) also presented a comprehensive conception of literature as a system of recurring symbols and myths, arguing that literary works share certain narrative patterns that reflect the deep structure of the human imagination. From this perspective, literature can be understood as a mirror of the collective consciousness.

These definitions are evident in numerous examples from Western literature. For example, Dostoevsky's novels reflect the psychological and moral struggles of humanity, while Virginia Woolf's works demonstrate an interest in inner consciousness and the flow of ideas. Samuel Beckett's plays, on the other hand, embody the absurdity of human existence in a dense and abstract linguistic style.

Based on the above, it can be said that literature is not merely written texts, but a complex human experience that combines beauty, thought, and critique. It is a means of understanding the self and the world, and a tool for expressing values, conflicts, and aspirations. The multiplicity of its definitions reflects its richness and depth, and confirms that it is an open field for interpretation and study.

## **2. Literary genres**

Literary genres are fundamental concepts in literary studies, used to classify literary works according to their formal and thematic characteristics. Western critics have sought to define and analyze these genres, emphasizing that they are not fixed but rather evolve with the development of literary creativity and cultural contexts.

A literary genre can be defined as a category of texts that share a set of features, such as structure, style, and subject matter. Critic Terry Eagleton argues that literary genres are not rigid rules but rather organizational tools that aid in understanding texts, while remaining open to change and interpretation. Among the most prominent literary genres are:

### **First: Poetry**

Poetry is one of the oldest literary genres, characterized by its use of concise language, rhythm, and rhetorical imagery. Roman Jakobson (1960) emphasized that poetry highlights the aesthetic function of language, where the focus is on the form of expression as much as on meaning. Examples include the poems of the English poet William Wordsworth, which blend nature and personal experience.

### **Second: Prose**

This genre encompasses the novel and the short story, relying on storytelling and the construction of events and characters. Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) considered the novel an open literary genre characterized by polyphony (dialogic), where different viewpoints intertwine within the text. Dostoevsky's novels exemplify this multiplicity of voices and ideas.

### **Third: Drama**

Drama is based on dialogue and acting, and is written to be performed before an audience. Jean-Paul Sartre viewed drama as a philosophical means of addressing issues of existence and freedom. Samuel Beckett's plays are considered a model of absurdist theater, where existential questions are posed in a style that is both simple and profound.

It is important to note that these genres are no longer strictly separate in modern literature. Hybrid forms have emerged, blending poetry and narrative, or theater and the novel, reflecting the evolution of literary taste and its liberation from traditional constraints.

In short, literary genres provide a framework for understanding literary production, but they are not closed boundaries; rather, they are open spaces for creativity and experimentation. This is what makes literature a living and evolving field that reflects the diversity of human experience.

## Lesson 02: Introduction to Poetry

There is no exact definition of poetry. Yet, it is described by prominent theorists and literary critics as follow:

Aristotle posits that “Poetry is the imitation of nature, not in the sense of mere copying, but as a creative representation of human action and emotion.” (*Poetics* 4th century BCE). Hence, for Aristotle, poetry represents an art of *mimesis* or imitation, but this does not imply merely reflecting reality. Instead, poetry *reconstructs* life in a manner that unveils universal truths about human behavior and emotion. Through imitation, poetry evokes feelings of pity and fear, leading to *catharsis* (emotional purification).

Poetry, akin to tragedy and epic, depicts life not as it is but as it *could be* an artistic shaping of reality. For instance, In **Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex***, Oedipus’s downfall is not just the narrative of one man but a symbolic embodiment of human unawareness and doom. Aristotle would call this *mimetic truth*: the events within the poem copy human action to reveal a universal truth. Likewise, in Homer’s *Iliad*, the battles and grief portray the universal nature of pride, rage, and loss.

In *Preface to Lyrical Ballads*, William Wordsworth (1798) asserts that “Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility.” For Wordsworth, poetry is profoundly emotional and subjective. It originates from intense feelings such as; admiration, love, sorrow, but the poet must reflect calmly on them before writing. This contemplation allows the poet to transform raw emotion into language that resonate universally.

Wordsworth also defended simplicity of language and commonplace subjects, believing that poetry should articulate “the real language of men” and expose beauty in everyday existence. For example, in *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*, Wordsworth recalls about seeing daffodils:

“They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude.”

He is no longer among the daffodils, he’s reminiscing the experience in tranquility, transforming sentiments (joy, wonder) into verse that others can feel.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1817) claims, “Prose ... words in their best order; poetry... the best words in the best order” (Table Talk, July 12, 1827). Coleridge contended that what distinguishes poetry from prose is not the subject matter but the arrangement and precision of language. Each word in a poem must be chosen for its sound, rhythm, and connotations. Poetry, in this view, is an act of linguistic craftsmanship.

Furthermore, he underscored the role of imagination, a creative faculty that melds emotion with intellect, transforming reality into something more glowing and meaningful.

In Coleridge’s *Kubla Khan*, every word contributes to the musical, dreamlike atmosphere:

“In Xanadu did Kubla Khan  
A stately pleasure-dome decree.”

The sound pattern (“Xanadu,” “Khan,” “pleasure-dome”) and rhythm exemplify Coleridge’s concept of “best words in the best order.”

In *Tradition and the Individual Talent*, T. S. Eliot (1920) suggests that “Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality.”

Eliot challenges romantic notions of poetry as a personal expression. For him, great poetry transcends the individual sentiments of the poet. The poet employs beliefs, form, and mental capacities to metamorphose subjective feelings into a more objective, world-wide art. The poet's feelings operate like materials in a laboratory; they are utilized rather than directly infused into the poem. In Eliot's *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, "the speaker's feelings of insecurity and alienation are not images of Eliot's personal confessions; they represent broader subjects of modern disenchantment: "I have measured out my life with coffee spoons." The emotion is powerful but carefully controlled by structure, allusion, and irony.

For Pound, a leading modernist and Imagist, poetry should be condensed, precise, and energetic. It should disregard unnecessary vocabularies and make emphasis on exact images. The objective is to make language vibrant and intense, thrilled with meaning and rhythm. Pound claims "Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree" (*How to Read*). He argues that poetry is defined directly through descriptions and sound rather than abstract concepts. Pound's *In a Station of the Metro* (1913) perfectly demonstrates his definition:

"The apparition of these faces in the crowd;  
Petals on a wet, black bough."

Only 14 words long, yet the imagery is striking, a visual and emotional influence that exceeds what prose could express.

In *Conversations on the Craft of Poetry*, Robert Frost (1939) states that "Poetry is when an emotion has found its thought and the thought has found words." Frost's definition combines emotion and intellect. Poetry, he believes, arises when emotion befits thought, or becomes aware enough to find form in thought and language. For Frost, poetry poises emotion, thought, and sound. It is not just about what you feel, but how that emotion takes

form in meaningful words. He also appreciated the sound of sense, ordinary speech rhythms moulded into artful music. In *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*, Frost blends sound, rhythm, and reflection:

“The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
But I have promises to keep.”

The feeling (peace, attraction, duty) finds its thought (the pull between relaxation and responsibility), and the thought finds perfect words and rhythm

Poetry, in its extensive and most persistent sense, is a determined and imaginative form of language that aims to express human experience through rhythm, sound, and meaning in a way that transcends everyday language. It is both an art of sentiment and intellect, the blending of emotion with form, where speech is sensitive, flattened, and charged to capture truths that might otherwise remain unspeakable

Poems have some aspects that can be used as indicators in order to separate poetry from other literary genres.

## **1. Form: The Structural Indicator of Poetry**

Form refers to the shape or structure of a poem, how it is organized on the page and how it moves through rhythm, sound, stanza, and pattern. Form gives poetry its music, rhythm, and visual identity, shaping how meaning is experienced. Unlike prose, which flows in sentences and paragraphs, poetry is organized through lines, stanzas, and metrical patterns that create intentional pauses, emphasis, and pace.

Form can be fixed (strictly following a traditional structure like a sonnet, haiku, or villanelle) or free (following natural rhythms rather than a set meter or rhyme). Nevertheless, whether regular or irregular, form always affects *how* a poem means, not just *what* it says.

### *Types of Form:*

- **Closed Form** (Fixed Form): Structured according to set rules of rhyme, meter, and stanza length.

*Examples:*

Sonnet (14 lines, iambic pentameter): Shakespeare's *Sonnet 18* uses the form's constraints to heighten the theme of immortal beauty:

"So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee."

Haiku (5–7–5 syllables): Compresses nature and emotion into a strict pattern, *form embodies simplicity and intensity*.

- **Open Form** (Free Verse): Rejects regular meter and rhyme, focusing on natural rhythms of speech.

*Example:* Walt Whitman's *Song of Myself*:

"I celebrate myself, and sing myself,  
And what I assume you shall assume..."

The long, breath-like lines create a form that mirrors freedom and expansiveness.

**NB.** *In poetry, stanzas are groups of lines (or verses) that form a structural and rhythmic unit within a poem, and they are often named according to the number of lines they*

***contain. Each stanza can function like a paragraph in prose, organizing ideas, rhythm, and rhyme into meaningful sections.***

A one-line stanza is called a monostich. It consists of a single line standing alone, often used to deliver a powerful image or idea with brevity and intensity. Because it appears by itself, a monostich draws attention to its language and emotion. For example, the poet Emily Dickinson sometimes used single lines that stand out as complete thoughts, such as: “*A wounded deer leaps highest.*” This one line creates a striking paradox and emotional resonance.

A two-line stanza is called a couplet. Couplets often rhyme (following an *aa* pattern) and can be used to express a complete thought or to conclude a longer poem. They are frequently used in Shakespeare’s sonnets, where the final couplet delivers resolution or insight. For instance, in *Sonnet 18*, Shakespeare ends with:

“So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.”

- The rhyming couplet gives the poem a memorable sense of closure and permanence.

A three-line stanza is known as a tercet (or triplet). Tercets may rhyme in patterns such as *aaa* or appear unrhymed. One famous form built from tercets is *terza rima*, an interlocking rhyme scheme (*aba bcb cdc*), famously used by Dante Alighieri in *The Divine Comedy*:

*“Midway upon the journey of our life  
I found myself within a forest dark,  
For the straightforward pathway had been lost.”*

- Here, each tercet links to the next through rhyme, giving the poem a flowing continuity.

A four-line stanza is called a quatrain, and it is the most common stanza form in English poetry. Quatrains can follow several rhyme patterns, such as *abab*, *aabb*, or *abcb*. They provide balance and musicality, allowing poets to develop ideas within a clear rhythmic frame. For example, in Thomas Gray's *"Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard,"* he writes:

*"The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,  
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,  
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,  
And leaves the world to darkness and to me."*

This quatrain uses an *abab* rhyme scheme, creating a reflective and measured rhythm.

A five-line stanza is known as a cinquain or quintain. There are many variations, including humorous limericks (which follow the *aabba* rhyme scheme) or serious poetic forms that focus on imagery and brevity. For instance, a classic limerick might go:

*"There once was a man from Peru,  
Who dreamed he was eating his shoe.  
He awoke with a fright,  
In the dead of the night,  
To find that his dream had come true."*

- Though playful, the strict rhythm and rhyme show the formal control typical of the quintain.

A six-line stanza is called a sestet (or sometimes a sextain). The sestet often serves as the second part of a Petrarchan sonnet, providing a response or resolution to the problem posed in the opening eight-line section (the octave). **John Milton's "Sonnet 19,"** for example, ends with a reflective sestet:

*"God doth not need either man's work or his own gifts; who best  
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state  
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed  
And post o'er land and ocean without rest:  
They also serve who only stand and wait."*

- Here, the sestet resolves the tension of the octave through reflection and acceptance.

A seven-line stanza is called a septet, and one of the most famous septet forms is the rhyme royal, which follows the pattern *ababbcc*. It was used by Geoffrey Chaucer in *Troilus and Criseyde*. For example, a stanza from that work reads:

*“And after winter folweth grene May,  
Whan Phebus doth his bryght bemes sprede;  
Right in the white season of that day  
Whan every floure y-wonne hath lost his sede,  
I gan to walken out of myn aray,  
The faire fresshe air to take and hede,  
For lusty list draweth my herte to play.”*

- The septet creates a flowing, courtly rhythm suited to narrative poetry.

A stanza of eight lines is called an octave (or octet). In the Petrarchan sonnet, the octave introduces a problem, idea, or emotional situation, which the sestet then resolves. The octave usually follows the rhyme scheme *abbaabba*. Christina Rossetti uses a clear octave in her sonnet “Remember”:

*“Remember me when I am gone away,  
Gone far away into the silent land;  
When you can no more hold me by the hand,  
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.  
Remember me when no more day by day  
You tell me of our future that you planned:  
Only remember me; you understand  
It will be late to counsel then or pray.”*

- The octave here builds a mood of quiet farewell and longing.

A nine-line stanza is known as a Spenserian stanza, invented by Edmund Spenser for *The Faerie Queene*. It consists of eight lines in iambic pentameter followed by a ninth line in iambic hexameter (called an Alexandrine). The rhyme pattern is *ababbcbcc*. For example, from *The Faerie Queene*:

*“A gentle knight was pricking on the plain,  
Yclad in mighty arms and silver shield,  
Wherein old dints of deep wounds did remain,  
The cruel marks of many a bloody field;  
Yet arms till that time did he never wield:  
His angry steed did chide his foaming bit,  
As much disdainig to the curb to yield:  
Full jolly knight he seem’d, and fair did sit,  
As one for knightly jousts and fierce encounters fit.”*

- The final longer line gives the stanza a stately, resonant ending.

Finally, a ten-line stanza is called a decastich. This simply means a stanza or poem composed of ten lines, without a single fixed pattern or rhyme scheme. Poets may use it freely for expressive or structural reasons. For example, in Thomas Hardy's "The Convergence of the Twain," many of the stanzas contain ten lines that flow with deliberate rhythm and symmetry, reflecting the slow, inevitable movement of fate.

In short, stanzas serve as the architectural framework of poetry, shaping rhythm, pacing, and emphasis. Each type of stanza brings its own balance of sound and meaning: the tightness of a couplet, the harmony of a quatrain, the resolution of a sestet, or the grandeur of a Spenserian stanza. Even in free verse, where poets abandon traditional patterns, the division of lines into stanzas still helps guide the reader's breath and emotion, proving that the arrangement of verses, whether strict or free, is essential to what makes poetry an art of form as well as language.

### Why Form Defines Poetry:

Form gives poetry shape and discipline, it organizes language in ways that enhance meaning through rhythm, pause, repetition, and symmetry. The same idea written as prose might state something; as poetry, it performs it. In poetry, form and meaning are inseparable, the structure itself becomes part of the message.

## 2. Language: The Expressive Indicator of Poetry

Language in poetry is not ordinary communication; it is *heightened, condensed, and charged with emotion and meaning*. Poetic language uses the connotative (suggestive,

emotional) dimension of words rather than the denotative (literal) one. The poet manipulates sound, image, and metaphor to make language itself a medium of art.

Whereas everyday language aims to inform, poetic language aims to evoke, suggest, and resonate. Every word in a poem is chosen for its sound, rhythm, imagery, and association what Samuel Taylor Coleridge called “the best words in the best order.”

### Key Features of Poetic Language:

- **Imagery:** Creates mental pictures and sensory impressions.

*Example:* In Sylvia Plath’s “*Ariel*,” the image of motion and rebirth is immediate and vivid:

“And now I  
Foam to wheat, a glitter of seas.”

- **Figurative Language:** Uses metaphor, simile, and symbolism to suggest deeper meanings.

*Example:* In Emily Dickinson’s “*Hope is the thing with feathers*,” hope is personified as a bird that “perches in the soul”, transforming an abstract idea into a living image.

- **Sound Devices:** Such as alliteration, assonance, rhyme, and rhythm that make language musical and memorable.

*Example:* In Poe’s “*The Raven*,” the repetition and rhyme build atmosphere:  
“And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain...”

- **Economy and Precision:** Poetry condenses meaning, it says more in fewer words.

*Example:* Ezra Pound’s Imagist poem “*In a Station of the Metro*” conveys an entire emotional and visual experience in just 14 words.

## Why Language Defines Poetry:

Language is the soul of poetry. It transforms thought and feeling into art by compressing meaning, engaging sound and rhythm, and invoking imagination. Where prose describes, poetry *reveals*. The poet's control of diction, imagery, and musicality is what makes language poetic, it turns communication into *creation*.

Form and language together make poetry *distinct*. Form gives poetry its body; its rhythm, pattern, and visible structure. Language gives it its soul; the emotional, imaginative, and musical quality that makes it more than mere statement. A poem's true power emerges when these two elements intertwine: form controls the flow of feeling, and language gives that feeling voice.

## Lesson 03: Types of Poetry

### 1. Narrative Poetry

#### 1. Narrative poetry

Narrative poetry tells a story, it has characters, a setting, and a plot, much like fiction. The poet acts as a narrator, guiding the reader through events, emotions, and conflicts.

- **Epic:** A long, serious poem about heroic deeds and significant cultural or national events.

*Example: Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, or John Milton's *Paradise Lost*.*

- **Ballad:** A shorter, often musical narrative poem that tells a story of love, tragedy, or adventure. Ballads were originally sung.

*Example: "La Belle Dame sans Merci" by John Keats, or the traditional folk ballad "Barbara Allen."*

Narrative poems aim to entertain, memorialize heroes, or convey moral and cultural values through storytelling.

### 2. Lyric Poetry

Lyric poetry expresses personal emotions, thoughts, and feelings rather than telling a story. It is often written in the first person and uses musical language, rhythm, and imagery.

The term “lyric” comes from the ancient Greek *lyre*, a musical instrument that accompanied such poems. Examples of lyric poetry:

- William Wordsworth’s “*I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*” expresses joy and tranquility.
- Emily Dickinson’s “*Because I could not stop for Death*” reflects on mortality and eternity.
- Pablo Neruda’s “*Sonnet XVII*” conveys deep romantic emotion.

Lyric poetry includes the following Subtypes:

- **Sonnet** (14 lines, often about love or reflection)
- **Ode** (a formal, elevated poem addressing a subject with admiration or awe)
- **Elegy** (a mournful poem written in memory of someone who has died)
- **Pastoral** (idealizes rural life and nature)

Lyric poems aim to express emotion and capture inner experience through vivid imagery and sound.

### 3. Dramatic Poetry

Dramatic poetry is written in the form of a speech or dialogue intended to be spoken or performed. It presents the voice of one or more characters in a situation of emotional intensity. Examples of dramatic poetry:

- William Shakespeare’s plays (like *Hamlet* or *Macbeth*) are largely written in blank verse, a type of dramatic poetry.
- Robert Browning’s “*My Last Duchess*” is a dramatic monologue, where a character speaks to an implied listener, revealing their psychology.

- T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* is a verse drama exploring martyrdom and faith.

Dramatic poetry explores human behavior, conflict, and motivation, often through dialogue or monologue, blending poetry with theatre.

#### 4. Descriptive Poetry

Descriptive poetry focuses on vivid imagery and sensory detail, painting a picture of scenes, objects, or moments in nature or human life. The aim is not necessarily to tell a story or express emotion, but to capture an atmosphere or visual impression. Examples of descriptive poetry:

- John Keats's "*Ode to a Nightingale*" and "*To Autumn*" describe nature in rich, sensuous language.
- Alfred, Lord Tennyson's "*The Eagle*" captures the majesty of the bird in only six lines:

"He clasps the crag with crooked hands;  
Close to the sun in lonely lands..."

To make the reader *see* and *feel* a scene vividly, often blending observation with reflection.

#### 5. Didactic Poetry

Didactic poetry is intended to **teach, instruct, or moralize**. It often conveys lessons about life, religion, philosophy, or human behavior. Examples of didactic poetry:

- Alexander Pope's "*Essay on Man*" explores philosophical ideas in verse.
- Rudyard Kipling's "*If*" teaches virtues such as patience, courage, and humility.

- John Milton's *Paradise Lost* also contains moral and theological instruction within its epic narrative.

To educate and inspire, using poetic form to make wisdom memorable and emotionally resonant.

## 6. Satirical Poetry

Satirical poetry uses **humor, irony, or ridicule** to criticize human vices, politics, or society. It aims to correct foolishness or injustice through wit. Examples of satirical poetry:

- Alexander Pope's "*The Rape of the Lock*", a mock-epic that humorously exaggerates a trivial event to comment on vanity and class.
- Jonathan Swift's "*Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift*", a self-satire on fame and mortality.
- Dorothy Parker's short poems often poke fun at modern relationships and hypocrisy.

It provoke thought through laughter, highlighting flaws in individuals or society.

## 7. Free Verse (Modern Poetry)

Free verse poems have no fixed meter, rhyme, or formal structure. They rely instead on rhythm, imagery, and natural speech patterns. This form became popular in the 20th century with modernist poets. Examples of modern poetry:

- Walt Whitman's "*Song of Myself*" celebrates individuality and democracy in free-flowing lines.

- T. S. Eliot's "*The Waste Land*" mixes voices and forms to portray postwar disillusionment.
- Langston Hughes's "*The Negro Speaks of Rivers*" combines music, history, and identity in free rhythm.

It allows poets complete freedom of expression, emphasizing tone, image, and emotion over structure.

## 8. Concrete (or Visual) Poetry

Concrete poetry is where the visual arrangement of words on the page forms part of the poem's meaning. The shape or layout creates a visual image related to the theme.

Examples of Concrete poetry :

- George Herbert's "*The Altar*", shaped like an altar.
- E. E. Cummings's poems often play with spacing, typography, and word placement to reflect feeling and motion.

It combines visual art and language, making meaning through both form and content.

Modern poetry often blends these categories, for example, a lyric poem might also be satirical or descriptive, but understanding these types helps seeing the range and richness of poetic expression

## Lesson 04: Poetry : Lexical Thematic Dimension

### 1. Overview of Schemes and Tropes

Schemes and tropes are two broad categories of rhetorical devices, techniques that writers and speakers use to persuade, embellish, or add stylistic flair to language. Both manipulate language to create effect, but they do so in fundamentally different ways:

- Schemes manipulate the form or structure of words, phrases, or sentences. They are patterns of arrangement that catch attention or create rhythm.
- Tropes manipulate the meaning of words. They involve figurative language that conveys ideas in imaginative or unexpected ways.

Think of it this way: a scheme is about **how something is said**, while a trope is about **what is being said**.

### **1. Tropes**

A trope is a deviation from the ordinary or literal use of words; it changes the meaning to create figurative or imaginative effect. Tropes are used to:

- Make abstract ideas vivid and concrete.
- Add emotional or aesthetic impact.
- Engage the audience through surprise or metaphorical thinking.
- Encourage reflection or deeper interpretation.

## Types and Examples:

1. **Metaphor** – an implied comparison between two unlike things:

*Example:* “Time is a thief.”

*Purpose:* **Conveys the idea of time stealing moments from life in a vivid, imaginative way.**

2. **Simile** – an explicit comparison using “like” or “as”:

*Example:* “Her smile was like sunshine.”

*Purpose:* **Creates a clear, visual connection between two concepts.**

3. **Irony** – expressing something contrary to what is meant, often for humor or emphasis:

*Example:* Saying “What a pleasant day!” during a storm.

*Purpose:* Highlights **contrast between reality and expectation, often to provoke thought or amusement.**

4. **Hyperbole** – deliberate exaggeration for effect:

*Example:* “I’ve told you a million times.”

*Purpose:* Emphasizes **intensity or emotion.**

## 2. Schemes

A scheme is a deviation from the ordinary pattern of words or sentences, focusing on structure, sound, or order rather than literal meaning. Schemes are used to:

- Make language more memorable.
- Enhance rhythm or sound.
- Emphasize key ideas.
- Create stylistic elegance or drama.

## Types and Examples:

1. **Alliteration** – repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words:

*Example:* “Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.”

*Purpose:* Creates rhythm and musicality, making the sentence memorable.

2. **Anaphora** – repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses:

*Example:* “We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields...”

*Purpose:* Emphasizes persistence and determination, adds rhetorical force.

3. **Antithesis** – placing contrasting ideas in parallel structures:

*Example:* “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.”

*Purpose:* Highlights contrast, making the difference between ideas sharper and more striking.

4. **Chiasmus** – reversing the order of words in parallel phrases:

*Example:* “Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.”

*Purpose:* Creates balance and draws attention to the reversal of meaning.

## 2. Key Differences in Structure and Function

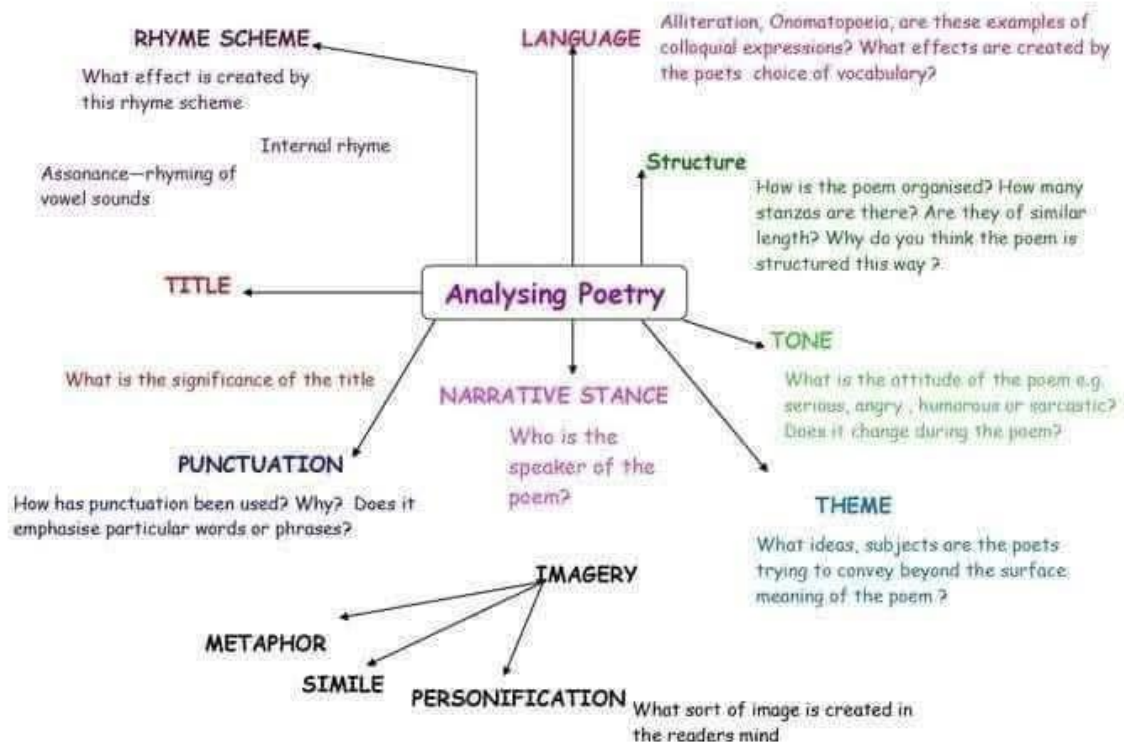
- **Schemes:** Focus on *form*, sound, word order, or sentence structure. They manipulate **how words appear or sound**.  
*Example:* Parallelism emphasizes rhythm and balance in a sentence.
- **Tropes:** Focus on *meaning* and interpretation. They manipulate **what words mean or suggest**.

*Example:* Metaphor conveys meaning indirectly, prompting imaginative understanding.

➤ Writers often combine schemes and tropes for maximum effect. For instance, Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech uses:

- **Scheme:** Anaphora with repeated "I have a dream" for rhythm and emphasis.
- **Trope:** Metaphors like "the manacles of segregation" to convey abstract ideas vividly.

*Together, they make the speech memorable, powerful, and emotionally resonant.*



## Lesson 05: Prosody: The Musical Dimension of Schemes

### Poetry: Rhythmic-Acoustic Dimension

Studying the rhythmic-acoustic dimension in poetry means studying the prosodic features in a poem. The meaning of the term “prosody” changes according to the field that it is used in. In Latin, *prosōdia* means the accent or stress in a syllable. In Greek, however, *prosōidia* is to set a song into music.

From a linguistic perspective, prosody refers to the stress pattern and intonation in language. In poetry, prosody is used to indicate the form and the sound in which poetry is written. Prosodic features in poetry deal with the form of each stanza, the division of verses, the number of syllables in each verse, and the way stress is used in each syllable.

### Rhythm

Rhythm is the pattern of sounds and silences in speech or writing, created by the arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables, pauses, and the length of words or lines. It is essentially the “beat” of language.

- Gives language a musical flow, making it pleasant to read or hear.
- Emphasizes important words or ideas.
- Builds mood, tension, or excitement.
- Helps make poetry, speeches, or prose more memorable and engaging.

Rhythm is Created by:

1. **Meter:** Repeating patterns of stressed (ˈ) and unstressed (˘) syllables, e.g., iambic pentameter.
2. **Rhyme:** Repetition of sounds at line endings can reinforce rhythm.
3. **Repetition:** Words or phrases repeated at intervals create a steady beat.
4. **Pauses/Caesura:** Breaks or stops affect timing and flow.
5. **Tempo and Intonation:** Speaking speed and pitch changes in oral delivery affect rhythm.

Rhythm, then is the musical heartbeat of language, shaped by stress patterns, repetition, pauses, and delivery. It overlaps with prosody and schemes, since both influence how the rhythm feels.

# 1. Meter

## 1. What is Meter?

Meter is the rhythmic structure of a line of poetry, created by a regular pattern of stressed (ˈ) and unstressed (˘) syllables. Think of it as the musical beat of poetry.

- **Stressed syllable (ˈ):** Strong, emphasized syllable.

*Example:* “re**TURN**” → **TURN** is stressed.

- **Unstressed syllable (˘):** Weak, less emphasized syllable.

*Example:* “**re**turn” → **re** is unstressed.

A line of poetry is made of repeating **feet** (units of meter), which form the rhythm.

## 2. Types of Meter

### A. Iamb (˘ ˊ)

- Pattern: Unstressed followed by stressed.
- Effect: Sounds natural and conversational.

Example: Shakespeare's *Sonnet 18*:

- “Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?”
  - **Breakdown:** ˘ ˊ | ˘ ˊ | ˘ ˊ | ˘ ˊ | ˘ ˊ
  - Shall I | com**PARE** | thee **TO** | a **SUM** | mer's **DAY**
- ˘   ˊ   ˘   ˊ   ˘   ˊ   ˘   ˊ   ˘   ˊ

The iambic pentameter gives the line a smooth, flowing rhythm, which feels natural in English. It mirrors normal speech, making the poem elegant yet readable.

### B. Trochee (ˊ ˘)

- Pattern: Stressed followed by unstressed.
- Effect: Gives a falling, emphatic rhythm, often dramatic or chant-like.

Example: William Blake's “*The Tyger*”:

- “Tyger! Tyger! burning bright”
  - **Breakdown:** ˊ ˘ | ˊ ˘ | ˊ ˘
- TY**ger! | **TY**ger! | **BURN**ing | **BRIGHT**

ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ

The trochaic meter emphasizes “Tyger” with a strong beat first, creating a striking, almost fierce effect, fitting the poem’s subject.

### C. Anapest (˘˘ˈ)

- Pattern: Two unstressed syllables followed by one stressed.
- Effect: Quick, bouncy, playful rhythm.

Example: Clement Clarke Moore’s “*A Visit from St. Nicholas*”:

- “‘Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house”
- **Breakdown:** ˘˘ˈ | ˘˘ˈ | ˘˘ˈ

ˈTwas the NIGHT | before CHRIST | mas, when ALL | through the HOUSE

˘˘ˈ , ˘˘ˈ , ˘˘ˈ , ˘˘ˈ ,

The anapestic meter creates a lively, sing-song rhythm, perfect for a fun, magical Christmas story.

### D. Dactyl (ˈ˘˘)

- Pattern: One stressed syllable followed by two unstressed.
- Effect: Rolling, rhythmic, dramatic.

Example: Alfred, Lord Tennyson’s “*The Charge of the Light Brigade*”:

- “HALF a league, HALF a league, HALF a league onward”
- **Breakdown:** ˈ˘˘ | ˈ˘˘ | ˈ˘˘ ...

**HALF** a LEA | gue, **HALF** a | **LEA**gue, **HALF** | a **LEA** | gue **ON**ward

ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ

The dactylic meter mimics the galloping of horses, creating a fast, dramatic pace for the battlefield scene.

### E. Spondee (´ ´)

- Pattern: Two stressed syllables.
- Effect: Heavy, slow, emphasizes strong words. Rarely used for a whole line.

Example: Edgar Allan Poe's "*The Raven*":

- "Deep into that darkness peering"
- **Breakdown:** ´ ´ | ´ ´ | ´ ´ | ... (mixed with other feet)

**DEEP IN**to | **THAT DARK** | ness **PEE** | ring

ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ ˌ

Spondees are used to slow the rhythm and create weight or tension, fitting the poem's mysterious and haunting tone.

### 3. Why Meter is Important

- Creates rhythm and flow in poetry.
- Emphasizes key words or emotions.
- Makes poetry memorable and musical.

- Sets mood or tone: light, playful, solemn, or dramatic.

#### 4. *Students' Identification of Meter*

1. Read aloud to feel natural stresses.
2. Identify stressed (´) and unstressed (˘) syllables.
3. Break the line into repeating feet.
4. Match to iamb, trochee, anapest, dactyl, or spondee.

Meter is the “heartbeat” of poetry. By examining the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables, you can understand the rhythm and emotional impact of a poem. Famous examples from Shakespeare, Blake, Tennyson, and Moore show how meter enhances meaning and creates musicality.

#### Student Practice Sheet: Poetry Meter

Instructions:

1. Read each line aloud slowly.
2. Mark stressed (´) and unstressed (˘) syllables.
3. Clap or tap on stressed syllables.
4. Identify the meter type: iamb, trochee, anapest, dactyl, or spondee.

#### 1. **Iambic Meter** (˘ ´)

“Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow” – Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

“The woods are lovely, dark and deep” – Robert Frost, *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*

Syllables: \_\_\_\_\_

Marks: ˘ ´ / ˘ ´ / ˘ ´ / ˘ ´ / ˘ ´

Meter type: \_\_\_\_\_



i do not | LIKE green | EGGS and | HAM

Meter type: Anapestic

#### 4. Dactylic Meter (´ ~ ~)

“Forward, the Light Brigade! Charge for the guns!” – Tennyson, *The Charge of the Light Brigade*

“This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks” – Longfellow, *Evangeline*

Syllables: \_\_\_\_\_

Marks: ´ ~ ~ / ´ ~ ~ / ´ ~ ~

Meter type: \_\_\_\_\_

FOR-ward, the | LIGHT bri- | GADE! CHARGE | for the GUNS!

Meter type: Dactylic

THIS is the | FOR-est | PRI-me-val | the MUR-mur- | ING pines | and the HEM-locks

Meter type: Dactylic

#### 5. Spondee (´ ´)

“And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain” – Poe, *The Raven*

“Hail holy Light, offspring of Heaven firstborn” – Milton, *Paradise Lost*

Syllables: \_\_\_\_\_

Marks: ´ ´ / ´ ´ / ´ ´

Meter type: \_\_\_\_\_

AND the | SIL-ken | SAD un- | CER-tain | RUS-tling | OF each | PUR-ple | CUR-tain

Meter type: Spondaic (mixed with other feet, used for emphasis)

HAIL HO- | LY LIGHT | OFF-spring | OF HEA- | VEN FIRST- | BORN

Meter type: Spondaic (used for weight/emphasis)

# What is Foot

## 1. Definition of a Foot

In poetry, a foot is the basic unit of rhythm or meter. It's made up of a specific combination of stressed (´) and unstressed (˘) syllables.

Think of a *foot* like a beat in music; it is the repeating rhythmic pattern that gives poetry its tempo. Each line of poetry is made up of one or more feet, and the type of foot determines the poem's meter.

## 2. Structure of a Foot

Each foot usually contains two or three syllables, arranged in patterns of unstressed (˘) and stressed (´) beats.

For example:

An iamb (˘ ´) has 2 syllables → *beLONG*

A trochee (´ ˘) has 2 syllables → *Table*

An anapest (˘ ˘ ´) has 3 syllables → *in the SKY*

A dactyl (´ ˘ ˘) has 3 syllables → *EL-e-phant*

A spondee (´ ´) has 2 stressed syllables → *HEART-BREAK*

## 3. How Feet Create Meter

The meter of a poem is determined by:

1. The type of foot (e.g., iamb, trochee)
2. The number of feet per line

Example:

- Iambic Pentameter = 5 iambs per line (˘ ´ × 5)  
“*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?*”  
→ 5 iambic feet, giving 10 syllables.

- Trochaic Tetrameter = 4 trochees per line (ˈ ~ × 4)  
*“By the shores of Gitche Gumee”*  
 → 4 trochaic feet, giving 8 syllables.

## 5. Why the Foot Matters

- The foot is the foundation of meter, it creates the rhythm that shapes how a poem sounds.
- Changing the type or number of feet changes the feel and mood of a poem.
- Poets use different feet to make lines flow naturally, sound musical, or feel emphatic.

## 2. Rhyme:

Rhyme is the repetition of similar sounds in the final stressed syllables of two or more words, often at the ends of lines in poems or songs. It gives poetry a musical quality, helps with memorability, and can emphasize connections in meaning or emotion between lines.

Example:

“The woods are lovely, dark and *deep*,  
 But I have promises to *keep*.”  
 — *Robert Frost, “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”*  
 → *deep / keep* rhyme perfectly (same final sound “eep”).

**The Purpose of Rhyme/** Rhyme helps to:

- Create rhythm and musicality
- Connect ideas or images across lines
- Emphasize emotions or endings
- Make poems easier to remember and recite
- Structure verses through predictable patterns

## 1) Main Types of Rhyme

## 1. Perfect (or True) Rhyme

The final stressed vowel and all following sounds are identical, but the beginning consonants differ.

Example:

“Twinkle, twinkle, little *star*,  
How I wonder what you *are*.”  
— *Jane Taylor*  
→ *star* / *are* — same final sound -ar.

## 2. Slant (or Half / Near) Rhyme

Sounds are similar but not identical — the consonants or vowels are close but not exact.

Example:

“Hope is the thing with *feathers*  
That perches in the *soul*.”  
— *Emily Dickinson*  
→ *feathers* / *soul* don’t perfectly rhyme but have a gentle echo; typical of Dickinson’s style.

Even though the sounds don’t match, Dickinson often creates what we call a “*gentle echo*.”

This is because:

- ✓ Both words are one-syllable or lightly stressed endings, giving the same *rhythmic weight* at the line’s end.
- ✓ They share a soft, liquid ending sound (-ers / -l), both smooth and lingering, not harsh.
- ✓ The emotion and imagery of both lines are connected — the *feathered hope* and the *soul* it perches in.

So the sound may differ, but the tone and texture feel balanced.

## 3. Eye Rhyme

Words look like they rhyme because of spelling but sound different when spoken.

Example:

“He watched the flames that *burned so low*,  
With trembling heart and *brow* of snow.”  
→ *low* / *brow* look like they rhyme, but they don’t when spoken.

#### 4. End Rhyme

Occurs when the final words of two or more lines rhyme.

Example:

“The cat sat on the *mat*,  
And wore a tiny *hat*.”  
→ *mat* / *hat* rhyme at the line ends.

**N.B.** Most common type in traditional poetry.

#### 5. Internal Rhyme

Occurs when a word within a line rhymes with another word in the same or nearby line.

Example:

“Once upon a midnight *dreary*, while I pondered, weak and *weary*.”  
— Edgar Allan Poe, “The Raven”  
→ *dreary* / *weary* rhyme inside the same line.

### 3. Repetition:

1. **Definition** Repetition means the intentional reuse of words, sounds, phrases, or lines in a poem. When poets repeat certain elements, they create a steady beat or rhythm,

just like a drumbeat in music. It helps the poem flow, makes it memorable, and emphasizes key ideas or emotions.

## 2. How Repetition Creates Rhythm

Repetition builds rhythm in three main ways:

### a. Sound Repetition

When poets repeat sounds (like consonants or vowels), it creates musical patterns. This includes **alliteration** (repeating initial consonants), **assonance** (repeating vowels), and **consonance** (repeating final consonants).

Example:

“The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,  
The furrow followed free.”  
— Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*”

Here, the repeated *f* and *b* sounds make a flowing, wave-like rhythm, matching the motion of the sea.

### b. Word or Phrase Repetition

Repeating whole words or phrases gives a poem a steady pulse and emotional intensity.

Example:

“Because I do not hope to turn again  
Because I do not hope...”  
— T.S. Eliot, “*Ash Wednesday*”

The repeated phrase “*Because I do not hope*” creates a slow, chanting rhythm that shows despair and resignation.

### c. Line or Stanza Repetition

When entire lines or refrains are repeated, they create a rhythmic pattern, like the chorus in a song.

Example:

“And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.”  
— Robert Frost, “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”

The repetition slows the rhythm at the end, giving the poem a calm, hypnotic feeling — and emphasizing duty and persistence.

### 3. The Purpose of Repetition in Rhythm

- ✓ Repetition helps poets:
- ✓ Maintain musical rhythm across lines.
- ✓ Emphasize important emotions or ideas.
- ✓ Unify the poem (give it structure and balance).
- ✓ Control the pace fast with short repeats, slow with long refrains.
- ✓ Create mood soothing, dramatic, or haunting, depending on the pattern.

### 4. Different Forms of Repetition that Affect Rhythm

| Type                | Description                                              | Example                                        |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Alliteration</b> | Repetition of consonant sounds at word beginnings        | “Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers” |
| <b>Assonance</b>    | Repetition of vowel sounds                               | “Hear the mellow wedding bells” (Poe)          |
| <b>Consonance</b>   | Repetition of final or middle consonant sounds           | “Blank and think”                              |
| <b>Anaphora</b>     | Repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of lines | “I have a dream...” (Martin Luther King Jr.)   |
| <b>Refrain</b>      | Repeated line or stanza                                  | “Quoth the Raven, ‘Nevermore.’” (Poe)          |

|                   |                                |                                                                 |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Epistrophe</b> | Repetition at the end of lines | "...of the people, by the people, for the people."<br>(Lincoln) |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|

***Example Combining All:***

"The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,  
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,  
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,  
And leaves the world to darkness and to me."

— *Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"*

Notice how the repetition of sounds (*l, w, p*) and words (*the*) creates a slow, steady rhythm that matches the quiet sunset mood.

**Practice**

Read this short poem aloud twice.

Notice how repetition makes it feel musical and steady.

"The rain keeps falling, falling still,  
It whispers softly on the hill,  
It taps the roof, it hums, it sings,  
The rain keeps falling — gentle rings."

**Task A: Identify the Repetitions**

1. Circle the repeated word(s).
2. Underline the repeated sounds (letters that make the rhythm).
3. Mark which type of repetition it is.

#### 4. **Pauses/Caesura:**

A caesura (pronounced *si-ZYUR-uh* or *si-SUR-uh*) is a pause or break within a line of poetry. It is not a pause at the end of a line (that's called an *end-stop*), but one inside the line, a kind of rhythmic stop or breath.

It often appears as punctuation (a comma, period, dash, or semicolon) or a natural pause in speech, even without punctuation. Caesura helps to:

- ✓ Create rhythm by adding a pause or break in the flow of a line.
- ✓ Control the pace, slowing down or emphasizing a thought.
- ✓ Add emotional or dramatic effect.
- ✓ Imitate natural speech, poets often use caesura to make lines sound more human and conversational.

It is like a breath in music, a moment of silence that gives the next beat more power.

##### 1. Types of Caesura

###### **a. Medial Caesura**

Medial Caesura is a pause in the middle of the line (the most common).

Example:

“To be, || or not to be, that is the question.”

— *William Shakespeare, Hamlet*

Here the pause “||” comes after “be” — dividing the line into two balanced halves.

###### **b. Initial Caesura**

Initial Caesura is a pause near the beginning of the line.

Example:

“|| Dead! one of them shot by the sea in the east...”

— *Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

The early pause gives a strong, dramatic opening — almost like a gasp or a sudden break.

### c. Terminal Caesura

Terminal Caesura is a pause at or near the end of a line (before the line break).

Example:

“And the stars are bright. ||”

The line stops just before it ends creating a sense of reflection or finality.

#### Example 1: Shakespeare (Medial Caesura)

“It is for you we speak, || not for ourselves.”

*The Winter's Tale*

The pause divides the line, emphasizing “for you” adding rhythm and meaning.

#### Example 2: Alexander Pope

“To err is human; || to forgive, divine.”

*An Essay on Criticism*

The caesura divides the line into opposite ideas, giving balance and clarity one of Pope’s signature rhythms.

#### Example 3: Emily Dickinson

“I’m Nobody! || Who are you?”

*Emily Dickinson*

The sharp pause after *Nobody!* makes the rhythm feel sudden and conversational — showing surprise and curiosity.

#### Example 4: Alfred Lord Tennyson

“Theirs not to make reply, ||  
Theirs not to reason why, ||  
Theirs but to do and die.”

— *“The Charge of the Light Brigade”*

Each pause (caesura) makes the rhythm march-like, echoing the soldiers’ steady movement.

## 2. Caesura vs. End-Stop

Caesura adds variety *within* the line, while end-stops finish the thought *at* the line’s end.

## 3. The Effect of Caesura on Rhythm

Caesura makes poetry feel:

- More natural (like speech, not mechanical meter)
- Balanced or dramatic, depending on where the pause is placed
- Emotionally expressive, a pause can suggest thought, hesitation, grief, or emphasis

## Example

“The curfew tolls || the knell of parting day.”

*Thomas Gray, “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard”*

Here the pause after “tolls” slows the line and imitates the sound of a bell tolling enhancing the poem’s mood of quiet reflection and death.

## 5. Tempo and Intonation:

These two features belong to prosody. It is the study of the sound, rhythm, and melody of speech or poetry. They describe how a poem is spoken or read aloud its *speed, tone, and musical rise and fall*.

## 1. Tempo

Tempo is the speed or pace at which a poem is read, just like in music. It tells us how fast or slow the rhythm flows. Tempo depends on:

- The length of syllables and words
- The presence of pauses (like caesura or punctuation)
- The emotional tone of the poem

Fast tempo occurs when a poem is read quickly, using short words and minimal pauses. This gives the rhythm a light, rapid quality, creating a sense of excitement, energy, or tension. For example, in Longfellow's line "*I shot an arrow into the air...*", the quick rhythm mirrors the swift motion of the arrow, making the reader feel the action vividly.

**Slow tempo** happens when a poem contains long vowels, more pauses, or heavier, drawn-out rhythm. This slows the pace of reading and often conveys calmness, reflection, or sadness. Dylan Thomas's "*Do not go gentle into that good night...*" is a perfect example: the long vowels and measured pace emphasize the solemn, reflective tone of the poem.

**Varied tempo** changes the speed within a poem for dramatic effect. By alternating between fast and slow sections, the poet can create surprise or highlight contrasts. Thomas Gray's "*The curfew tolls the knell of parting day...*" begins slowly, evoking a quiet, somber mood, and is followed by a faster line like "*Now fades the glimmering landscape...*", which brings energy and movement to the scene.

### Example 1: Fast Tempo

“The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees,  
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas.”  
— *Alfred Noyes, “The Highwayman”*

The quick, galloping rhythm matches the horse’s motion. the tempo builds excitement.

### Example 2: Slow Tempo

“And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.”  
— *Robert Frost*

Repetition and long vowels slow the pace, giving the lines a dreamy, reflective tempo.

Tempo = speed of the poem’s rhythm.

It can be fast, slow, or changing, controlling emotion and intensity.

## 2. Intonation

Intonation is the rise and fall of the voice, the *musical pitch* when reading a poem aloud. It shows emotion, mood, and meaning through tone changes, just as we do in everyday speech. Intonation is crucial because

- ✓ It helps listeners understand feeling (joy, sadness, anger, calm).
- ✓ It adds melody and expression to the rhythm.
- ✓ It prevents poetry from sounding flat or mechanical.

Think of it as the “melody” of speaking poetry.

### Example 1: Rising Intonation (Curiosity, Questioning)

“I’m Nobody! Who are you?”  
— *Emily Dickinson*

The voice rises slightly at “Who are you?” showing curiosity and playfulness.

### Example 2: Falling Intonation (Finality, Calm)

“The woods are lovely, dark and deep.”  
— *Robert Frost*

The voice falls softly at “deep,” signaling rest and closure — fitting the calm tone.

### Example 3: Varied Intonation (Emotion, Movement)

“Rage, rage against the dying of the light.”  
— *Dylan Thomas*

The repeated “Rage” rises and falls forcefully — creating passion and intensity.

## The Connection Between Tempo, Intonation, and Rhythm

| Element    | Focus                                        | Effect on Rhythm                             |
|------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Tempo      | Speed                                        | Fast = lively beat; Slow = reflective rhythm |
| Intonation | Pitch (rise/fall of voice)                   | Adds melody and emotion                      |
| Rhythm     | Beat pattern (stressed/unstressed syllables) | Gives structure and flow                     |
| Element    | Focus                                        | Effect on Rhythm                             |

So:

- Rhythm = the structure of sound.
- Tempo = how fast or slow that rhythm moves.
- Intonation = how high or low the voice moves while reading it.

*Together, they make poetry sound alive, not mechanical*

### Example Bringing All Together

“Do not go gentle into that good night,  
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;  
**Rage, rage** against the dying of **the light**.”

— *Dylan Thomas*

- Tempo: Slow and heavy — matching grief and defiance.
- Intonation: Rising on “*Rage, rage*” (anger), falling on “*light*” (finality).
- Rhythm: Repeated stresses build power and resistance.

- **Structural Prosody (Schemes):** Meter, rhyme, alliteration, assonance, consonance, caesura, enjambment, repetition.
- **Performance Prosody (Oral Features):** Tempo, volume, intonation.

Together, these elements create rhythm, musicality, emphasis, emotional impact, and memorability in poetry or speech.

## Lesson 06: Prose

Prose is the ordinary form of written or spoken language that expresses ideas in natural, everyday speech. Unlike poetry, prose does not follow a fixed meter, rhyme, or rhythm. It communicates thoughts, stories, or information in complete sentences and paragraphs, making it straightforward and flexible.

Example:

“It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen.”

George Orwell, *1984*

This is prose because it communicates clearly in ordinary language without relying on verse or rhyme.

### Definition and Nature of Prose

1. **Samuel Johnson (1709–1784):**

Johnson, a major English critic, emphasized the **clarity and simplicity of prose**. He defined prose as: “A composition in which ideas are conveyed in their natural order, without the adornment of rhyme or measured rhythm.”

2. **C. Hugh Holman (Literary Critic):** Holman described prose as: “Language written or spoken in its ordinary form, without metrical structure, used for practical, narrative, or expository purposes.”

3. **M.H. Abrams (Modern Literary Theorist):** Abrams notes that prose is: “The natural flow of speech in language, arranged in sentences and paragraphs rather than lines and stanzas, capable of expressing any kind of idea, thought, or emotion.”

4. **Cleanth Brooks (New Criticism):** While primarily known for his work on poetry, Brooks highlighted prose's **functional and narrative nature**, saying: "Prose is the medium of everyday thought, designed for clarity, persuasion, or storytelling rather than for musicality or patterned sound."

### Nature of Prose

Prose has several key characteristics, confirmed by both practical observation and critical perspectives:

1. **Natural Flow of Language:** Prose mirrors ordinary speech patterns.
  - Example: "She walked along the beach, watching the waves crash against the shore."
2. **Structured in Sentences and Paragraphs:** Ideas are organized logically, unlike poetry's lines or stanzas.
3. **Flexibility and Variety:** Prose can be formal (essays, reports) or informal (letters, dialogues), offering freedom to explore style, tone, and subject.
4. **Direct Communication of Ideas:** Prose's main function is clarity and comprehension.
  - Example: Academic writing, news articles, or novels convey information and stories efficiently.
5. **Use of Literary Devices:** Prose can still employ imagery, metaphor, or symbolism for aesthetic effect.
  - Example: "Time is a thief that steals our moments silently."

Prose is the ordinary, adaptable, and expressive form of language used in both written and spoken communication. Critics emphasize its clarity, naturalness, and flexibility, distinguishing it from poetry, which relies on meter, rhyme, and musicality

## Lesson 07: Elements of Prose

Prose, being ordinary written or spoken language, has several essential elements that give it structure, meaning, and literary value. These elements help writers express ideas clearly and engage readers effectively.

### 1. Theme

The theme is the central idea, message, or insight that a prose work conveys. It is what the story or essay is “about” at a deeper level.

- Example: In George Orwell’s *1984*, the theme is the dangers of totalitarianism and loss of personal freedom.

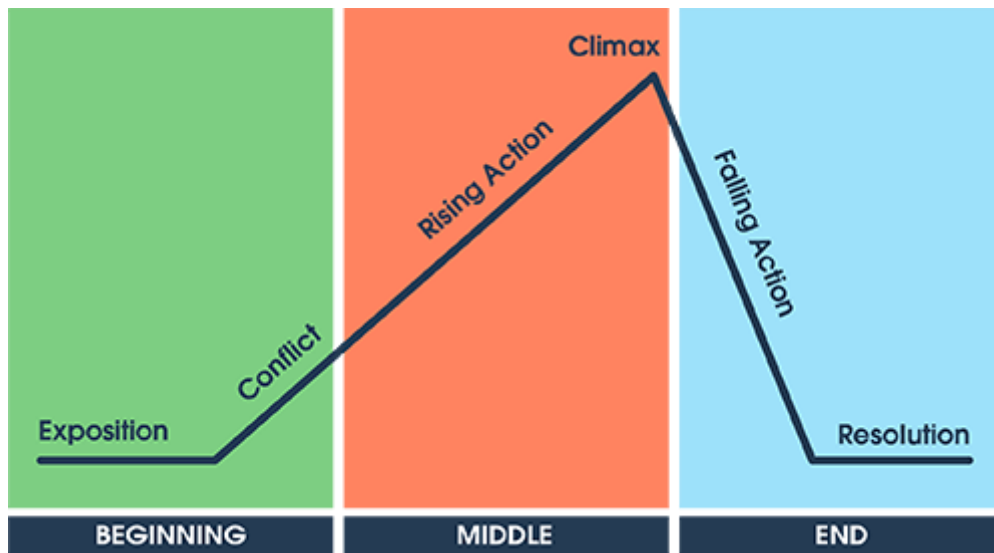
The theme gives the prose work a unifying focus and helps the reader understand its significance.

### 2. Plot

The plot refers to the sequence of events in a story, including conflicts, climaxes, and resolutions. Even essays and narratives can have a plot if they tell a story or describe processes.

- Example: In Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, the plot follows Pip's journey from childhood poverty to adulthood, filled with challenges, surprises, and personal growth.

The plot organizes events logically, creating suspense, interest, and clarity.



### 3. Characters

Characters are the people, animals, or sometimes objects endowed with human qualities that take part in the action. Characters are essential in stories, novels, and narratives.

- Example: In Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennet is a central character whose thoughts, actions, and growth drive the story.

Characters make the narrative relatable and allow readers to explore human experiences, emotions, and conflicts.

### 4. Setting

The setting is the time, place, and social environment in which the story occurs.

- Example: In Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, the bleak, windy moors create a mood of isolation and passion.

Setting situates the story, builds atmosphere, and sometimes influences characters' behavior.

## 5. Point of View (POV)

POV is the perspective from which the story is told. It can be:

- **First-person:** "I" or "we" narrates the story (e.g., J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*).
- **Third-person limited:** Focuses on one character's thoughts (e.g., *Harry Potter* by J.K. Rowling).
- **Third-person omniscient:** The narrator knows all thoughts and events (e.g., Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*).

POV shapes how readers perceive the story and the information they receive.

## 6. Style

Style is the author's unique way of using language, including vocabulary, sentence structure, tone, and figurative language.

- Example: Ernest Hemingway's prose is simple, direct, and economical, creating tension and realism.

Style gives prose its voice and personality, distinguishing one writer from another.

## 7. Tone

Tone is the author's attitude toward the subject, audience, or characters. It can be formal, humorous, sarcastic, sympathetic, or ironic.

- Example: Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* uses a humorous and satirical tone to critique society.

Tone conveys mood, influences reader reaction, and enhances meaning.

## 8. Language and Diction

Language refers to the choice of words (diction), sentence length, and rhythm in prose. Clear, precise language makes the prose accessible, while figurative language can add depth and beauty.

- Example: Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* uses poetic, flowing diction to explore consciousness and perception.

Language and diction affect readability, style, and emotional impact.

## 9. Conflict

Conflict is the struggle between opposing forces that drives the narrative. It can be:

- **Internal:** A character struggles with their own feelings (e.g., Hamlet's indecision in *Hamlet*).
- **External:** A character faces obstacles from outside forces (e.g., man vs. nature in *Moby-Dick*).

Conflict creates tension, interest, and drives the plot forward.

## 10. Symbolism

Symbolism is the use of objects, characters, or events to represent larger ideas.

- **Example:** In F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, the green light symbolizes Gatsby's hopes and dreams.

Symbolism adds layers of meaning and encourages deeper interpretation.

The main elements of prose, **theme, plot, characters, setting, POV, style, tone, language, conflict, and symbolism**, work together to create a complete, meaningful, and engaging narrative. Understanding these elements helps readers analyze prose critically and helps writers craft effective stories or essays.

## Lesson 08: Types of Prose

Prose can be categorized based on form and purpose. Generally, there are two main types:

### 1. Fictional Prose

Fictional prose deals with imaginary events and characters, created from the writer's imagination. Its main aim is to entertain, tell stories, or explore human experience. For example novels, short stories, and novellas.

- Example: *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen (novel), *The Necklace* by Guy de Maupassant (short story).

To tell stories, explore characters, and evoke emotions or insights about life.

### 2. Non-Fictional Prose

Non-fictional prose deals with real events, facts, ideas, or opinions. Its main aim is to inform, explain, persuade, or reflect. For examples: Essays, biographies, autobiographies, journals, letters, articles, and reports.

- Example from literature: *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (autobiography), *A Modest Proposal* by Jonathan Swift (essay).

To communicate knowledge, provide reflection, persuade readers, or record real-life experiences.

## Genres of Prose

Prose genres are more specific categories that describe the *content, style, or purpose* of the prose. Common genres include:

### **1. Novel**

A long narrative work of fiction with complex characters, plot, and themes. To tell a complete story, explore ideas, and portray human experience.

- Example: *1984* by George Orwell.

### **2. Short Story**

A brief work of fiction focusing on a single event, character, or theme. To entertain or deliver a concise moral or message.

- Example: *The Gift of the Magi* by O. Henry.

### **3. Essay**

A short prose composition expressing the writer's thoughts or arguments on a subject. To inform, persuade, or reflect on a topic.

- Example: *A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Woolf.

#### 4. Biography / Autobiography

- **Biography:** A detailed account of someone's life written by another person.
- **Autobiography:** A person's account of their own life.
- Examples: *The Diary of Anne Frank* (autobiography), *Alexander Hamilton* by Ron Chernow (biography).

The purpose is to record life experiences and inspire or educate readers.

#### 5. Journal / Diary

Personal accounts of daily life or experiences, often reflective. To preserve thoughts, emotions, and events.

- Example: *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*.

#### 6. Letters / Epistolary Prose

Written communication intended for a specific audience, sometimes published as literature.

To communicate personal or formal messages, ideas, or emotions.

- Example: *Letters of John Keats*.

#### 7. Travel Writing / Report

Descriptive or narrative accounts of journeys, explorations, or observations. To inform, entertain, or provide insight into places and experiences.

- Example: *Travels with Charley* by John Steinbeck.

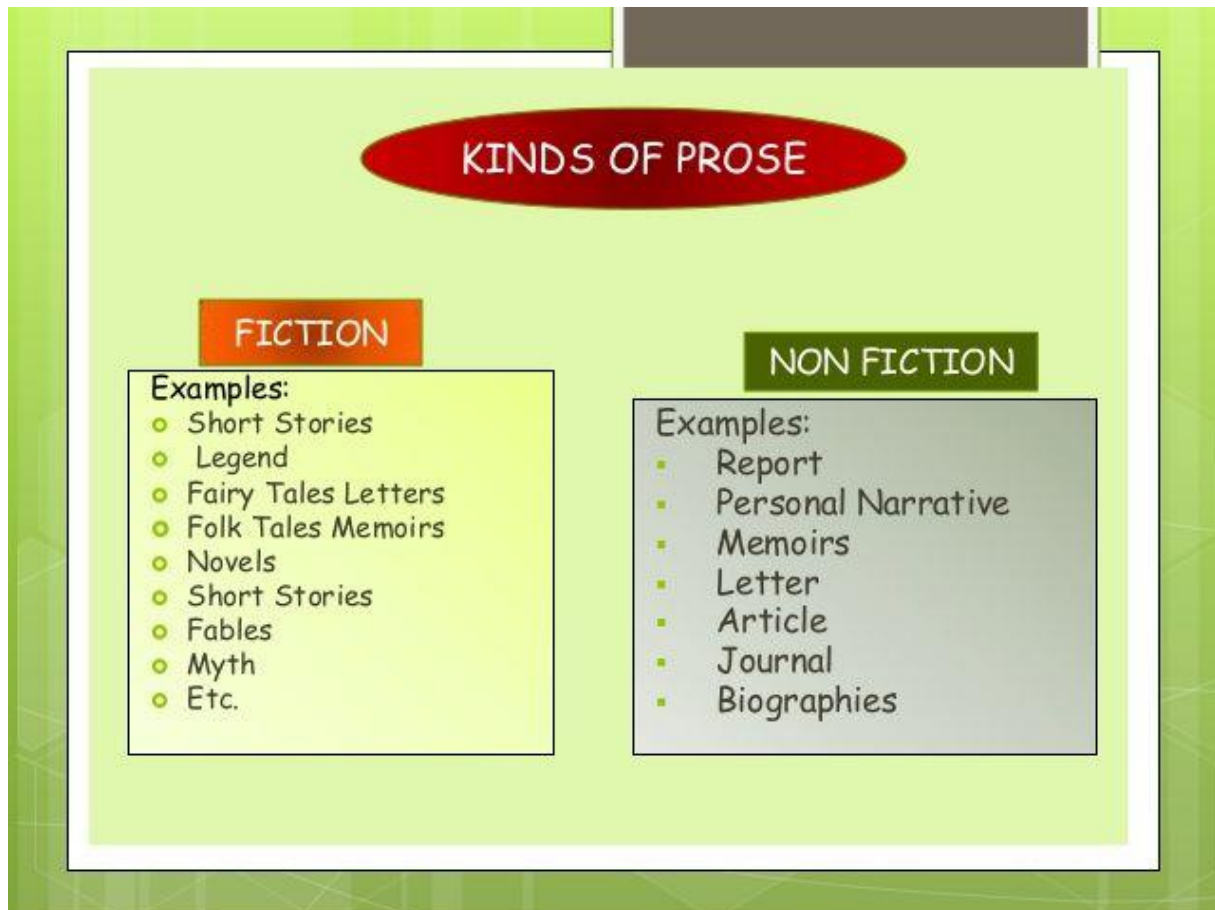
## 8. Journalism / Articles

Non-fictional prose intended for newspapers, magazines, or online media. To inform, report facts, or analyze issues for the public.

- Example: Investigative reports or feature articles.

Prose can be fictional (imaginary, narrative) or non-fictional (real, factual),  
and it spans many genres, each with its own purpose and style.

Understanding the types and genres of prose helps readers analyze texts  
and writers choose the right form for their ideas.



## Lesson 09: Theoretical Approaches to Analysing Prose

Analyzing prose involves more than just reading it; it requires examining *how meaning is created, the techniques used, and the effects on the reader*. Literary theorists have developed different approaches to help study prose critically. Here are the main approaches:

### 1. Formalist / New Criticism Approach

**Focus:** The text itself, its language, structure, style, and literary devices. A prose work should be analyzed as an independent object, without relying on the author's biography or historical context. It aims to appreciate the text's artistic construction and internal coherence.

- Elements Examined: Plot, character, theme, symbols, diction, and imagery.
- Example: Analyzing George Orwell's *1984* for its use of dystopian imagery, motifs of surveillance, and narrative structure to understand its themes of oppression and control.

## **2. Biographical Approach**

**Focus:** The author's life and experiences. It tends to understanding the author's personal history, beliefs, and social background can illuminate the meaning of the prose. Its objective is to connect the text to real-life experiences that shaped its creation.

- Example: Studying Jane Austen's novels in the context of her life in early 19th-century England helps explain her focus on social class, marriage, and gender roles.

## **3. Historical / Contextual Approach**

**Focus:** The time period, culture, and society in which the prose was written. Literary works reflect the historical, political, and cultural environment of their era. Its objective is to understand the social, political, or cultural forces that influenced the prose.

- Example: Analyzing Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* within the context of 19th-century London highlights the social injustices and conditions of the poor.

#### **4. Psychological Approach**

**Focus:** The minds of characters, authors, or readers. Literature can be analyzed using principles of psychology, including motives, desires, and conflicts. Its objective is to explore character motivation, unconscious desires, and emotional depth.

- Example: Reading Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* through Freud's theory of guilt and conscience explains Raskolnikov's inner conflict and moral struggles.

#### **5. Structuralist Approach**

**Focus:** Patterns, codes, and underlying structures in the text. Prose can be understood as a system of signs and conventions that follow universal rules or patterns. The objective is to uncover the universal structures and conventions shaping narrative meaning.

- Example: Analyzing myths and archetypes in Joseph Campbell's "Hero's Journey" framework when studying J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series.

#### **6. Reader-Response Approach**

**Focus:** The reader's interpretation and experience. Meaning is created through the interaction between the text and the reader, rather than existing solely in the text. The objective is to recognize the subjective, interactive nature of literary meaning.

- Example: Two readers may interpret the moral lessons in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* differently based on personal beliefs and experiences.

## **7. Marxist Approach**

**Focus:** Class, social inequality, and economic power. Literature reflects social struggles, economic conditions, and the dynamics between oppressors and the oppressed. The objective is to reveal socio-economic influences and ideological messages in prose.

- Example: Analyzing George Orwell's *Animal Farm* as an allegory of class struggle and totalitarian politics.

## **8. Feminist Approach**

**Focus:** Gender roles, patriarchy, and women's representation. Literature can reinforce or challenge gender norms, and feminist criticism examines power dynamics between men and women. The objective is to highlight gender issues and critique societal norms.

- Example: Studying Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* to analyze women's oppression and domestic confinement.

## **9. Postcolonial Approach**

**Focus:** Colonialism, cultural identity, and power relations. Prose can be analyzed in terms of imperialism, resistance, and the effects of colonization on identity. The objective is to explore historical and cultural domination, resistance, and identity formation.

- Example: Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* examines African society under colonial pressures and cultural clashes.

Different theoretical approaches offer unique lenses to understand prose. While formalist criticism focuses on the text itself, approaches like biographical, historical, Marxist, feminist, and postcolonial connect it to context, society, and ideology. Psychological and reader-response approaches explore the minds of characters, authors, and readers, while structuralist approaches study universal patterns.

Using multiple approaches together can give a richer, deeper understanding of prose, helping readers analyze meaning, style, and impact.

## Lesson 10: Analysis of The Tell Tale Heart

**Author:** Edgar Allan Poe

**Genre/Type:** Fictional prose – Short story (narrative fiction)

**Nature:** Written in ordinary prose (not verse), the story uses natural language, sentences, and paragraphs to narrate a psychological and suspenseful tale.

### 1. Elements of Prose in the Story

#### a) Theme:

The central themes of the story are guilt, madness, and the nature of evil. Poe explores how guilt can consume the human mind, leading to irrational behavior.

### **b) Plot:**

The plot is tightly constructed: the narrator insists he is sane, becomes obsessed with the old man's "vulture eye," plans and executes the murder, and finally succumbs to guilt, confessing his crime. The story follows a clear conflict → climax → resolution pattern.

### **c) Characters:**

- **Narrator:** Unnamed, unreliable, obsessed, and mentally unstable.
- **Old Man:** Victim, symbolized by his "vulture eye."

Characters are central to the story's psychological tension, showing how obsession and paranoia manifest in extreme actions.

### **d) Setting:**

The story's events occur mainly in the old man's house at night, creating a claustrophobic, tense atmosphere that enhances suspense.

### **e) Point of View (POV):**

First-person narration from the murderer's perspective. Readers get direct insight into the narrator's disturbed mind, which heightens psychological horror.

### **f) Style and Language:**

- Poe's diction is simple yet intense, with repetition

*"It is not the old man who vexes me, but his eye!"* and vivid imagery.

- Short, rhythmic sentences create tension and mirror the narrator's obsessive thoughts.

### **g) Tone:**

The tone is dark, suspenseful, and obsessive, reflecting the narrator's unstable mind.

### **h) Conflict:**

- **Internal conflict:** The narrator struggles with his obsession and guilt.
- **External conflict:** The act of murdering the old man, which brings tension and suspense.

### **i) Symbolism:**

- **The old man's eye** symbolizes the narrator's obsession and perhaps moral scrutiny.
- **The beating heart** symbolizes guilt and conscience.

## **2. Prosody Features in the Prose**

Even though “The Tell-Tale Heart” is prose, Poe uses rhythm, repetition, tempo, and pauses to enhance suspense:

- **Repetition:** Phrases like “I think it was his eye” or “louder! louder!” create a rhythmic obsession, almost musical in its pacing.
- **Tempo:** Quick, short sentences during the murder heighten tension; longer, descriptive sentences during stalking build suspense.
- **Intonation and Pauses:** The prose reads like the narrator speaking under strain, with pauses emphasizing madness and anxiety.

## **3. Type and Genre**

- **Type:** Fictional prose (imaginary events, psychological focus).
- **Genre:** Short story, Gothic literature.

The story Entertain, evoke horror, and explore psychological depth.

#### **4. Theoretical Approaches to Analysis**

**a) Formalist Approach:** Focus on structure, narrative style, and literary devices.

Example: Poe's use of *repetition*, suspense, and *first-person narration* contributes to the story's tension and immersive psychological effect.

**b) Biographical Approach:**

Poe's own struggles with mental health and loss may illuminate his focus on madness and obsession.

**c) Historical / Contextual Approach:**

Written in 1843, during the rise of American Gothic literature. Themes of death, horror, and obsession reflect contemporary fascination with psychological extremes and moral anxiety.

**d) Psychological Approach:**

The narrator exhibits signs of paranoia and psychosis. His guilt manifests as auditory hallucinations (the "beating heart").

*The Tell-Tale Heart* exemplifies fictional prose that uses all key elements of prose, plot, theme, characters, setting, POV, style, tone, language, conflict, and symbolism, to create a psychologically intense Gothic narrative. Poe's careful use of rhythm, tempo, and repetition

demonstrates how prose can mimic musicality and psychological intensity without verse. Using multiple theoretical approaches from formalist to psychological reveals the story's layers of meaning and emotional impact.

## Lesson 11: Drama

Drama is a literary form designed for performance, where stories are told through dialogue and action rather than narration. Unlike prose or poetry, drama is meant to be acted on stage or screen, engaging both actors and audience. It often explores human conflicts, emotions, and social issues.

### 1. Definition:

- Aristotle (Poetics): Drama imitates “action and life” and evokes catharsis, a purging of emotions like pity and fear. He emphasized tragedy, but his definition applies broadly to dramatic literature.

- Edward Bond: Drama is “a form of literature that is realized through performance”, focusing on the interaction between text, actor, and audience.
- A.C. Bradley: Drama is “the artistic representation of life in action”, showing human character through speech and deeds rather than description.

Drama exists in two forms:

1. **Textual Drama**: The written script or play.
2. **Performed Drama**: The realization of the text on stage, involving actors, directors, and visual elements.

## Essential Characteristics of Drama

Drama has several defining features that distinguish it from other literary genres.

### 1. Dialogue and Action

Drama communicates primarily through spoken words and actions of characters rather than descriptive narration. Dialogue allows the audience to experience the story directly through character interaction.

- Example: In Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Hamlet’s soliloquies reveal his internal conflicts, while his dialogue with Claudius advances the plot.

### 2. Conflict

Drama revolves around conflict between characters, within a character, or between characters and society/nature. Conflict drives the narrative, creating tension and emotional engagement.

- Example: In Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, individual vs. society conflict fuels the tragic unfolding of events.

### 3. Plot

Drama has a structured plot, typically with exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution (Aristotelian structure). Plot provides coherence and dramatic tension.

- Example: In Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, the plot follows a tightly constructed sequence leading to the inevitable tragic revelation.

### 4. Characters

Characters are central; they drive the action through speech and behavior. Characters' decisions, motivations, and personalities create engagement and thematic depth.

- Example: Willy Loman in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* exemplifies a tragic character whose flaws lead to his downfall.

### 5. Spectacle

Drama often involves visual and auditory elements, stage directions, scenery, props, lighting, and costumes, to enhance the story. It creates a sensory experience for the audience.

- Example: In Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, the witches' appearance and stage effects heighten the eerie, supernatural atmosphere.

### 6. Emotional Effect

Drama is designed to evoke emotions in the audience, fear, pity, joy, anger, or suspense. Emotional effect establishes a connection between the audience and the narrative.

- Example: Tragedy in *Romeo and Juliet* elicits both pity and fear, engaging viewers emotionally.

## 7. Performative Nature

Drama is meant to be enacted, not just read; performance transforms written text into a shared experience. It creates immediacy and intimacy between characters and audience.

- Example: Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* gains much of its emotional resonance through actors' performances and timing.

## 8. Use of Language

Dialogue in drama may use prose or verse, depending on the style, period, and intended effect. It conveys character, emotion, and theme effectively.

- Example: Shakespeare often uses iambic pentameter in noble characters' speech and prose in comic scenes for contrast.

Drama is a literary genre built for performance, emphasizing dialogue, action, conflict, character, and emotional effect. According to Aristotle, A.C. Bradley, and modern critics like Edward

Bond, it combines text, performance, and audience interaction to depict life in action. Its essence lies in its ability to show rather than tell, engaging both the mind and emotions of the audience.

# Practice

**TRIFLES**  
a play in one-act  
by Susan Glaspell

## 1. Dialogue and Action

Drama communicates through **dialogue and characters' actions** rather than narration. In *Trifles*, the audience understands the story through conversations among the characters and their behavior inside the Wrights' house.

The women's quiet conversations reveal important details about Minnie Wright's unhappy life, while the men's dismissive comments show gender inequality.

Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters discuss Minnie Wright's lonely marriage and discover the dead bird. Their dialogue gradually uncovers the motive behind John Wright's murder.

Here is an organized analysis of *Trifles* by Susan Glaspell using the characteristics of drama you provided.

## 2. Conflict

Conflict is the central force that drives drama. In *Trifles*, several types of conflict appear.

- **Individual vs. Society:** Minnie Wright struggles against the restrictive expectations placed on women.
- **Gender Conflict:** The men underestimate the women and consider their concerns "trifles."
- **Internal Conflict:** Mrs. Peters struggles between obeying the law and sympathizing with Minnie.

The sheriff and county attorney laugh at the women for worrying about kitchen matters, but these “small things” become the key evidence in solving the crime.

### 3. Plot

Drama follows a structured sequence of events. *Trifles* has a clear dramatic structure.

- Exposition: The characters arrive at the Wright farmhouse to investigate the murder.
- Rising Action: The women begin discovering clues such as the unfinished quilt and broken birdcage.
- Climax: The women find the dead canary wrapped in silk.
- Falling Action and Resolution: Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters decide to hide the evidence to protect Minnie Wright.

The discovery of the dead bird becomes the turning point that explains Minnie’s emotional suffering and likely motive.

### 4. Characters

Characters are essential in drama because they develop the themes through their actions and speech.

Each character represents different attitudes in society:

- Mrs. Hale represents sympathy and regret.
- Mrs. Peters represents moral conflict and female solidarity.
- The men represent authority and male dominance.
- Minnie Wright, though absent, remains the emotional center of the play.

Mrs. Hale says she regrets not visiting Minnie more often, revealing both guilt and compassion.

## 5. Spectacle

Drama includes visual elements such as setting, props, and stage directions that help create meaning.

- The gloomy farmhouse kitchen reflects Minnie Wright's unhappy and isolated life. Objects such as the broken birdcage and unfinished quilt become important dramatic symbols.
- The dead canary serves as a visual symbol of Minnie herself—once lively and joyful, but emotionally destroyed by her husband.

## 6. Emotional Effect

Drama aims to **create emotional responses** in the audience.

*Trifles* creates feelings of sympathy, tension, sadness, and anger. The audience gradually understands Minnie Wright's suffering and questions whether justice has truly been served.

When the women discover the strangled bird, the audience feels pity for Minnie and horror at the emotional cruelty she experienced.

## 7. Performative Nature

Drama is written to be performed before an audience.

The meaning of *Trifles* becomes stronger through actors' facial expressions, tone of voice, pauses, and movement on stage. Silence and small gestures carry significant emotional meaning.

Mrs. Peters' hesitation before hiding the bird creates dramatic tension that is especially effective in performance.

## **8. Use of Language**

The language of drama reflects character, emotion, and theme.

Glaspell uses simple and realistic everyday language. The ordinary conversations about domestic life reveal deeper issues such as loneliness, oppression, and injustice.

The men repeatedly use the word "trifles" to dismiss women's concerns, but the title ironically shows that these "trifles" contain the truth of the case.

*Trifles* by Susan Glaspell is an excellent example of drama because it contains all the essential dramatic characteristics: dialogue, conflict, plot, characters, spectacle, emotional effect, performative qualities, and meaningful language. Through a simple murder investigation, the play explores serious themes such as gender inequality, isolation, and justice.

## Lesson 12: Main Types of Drama

Drama can be broadly classified based on tone, purpose, and subject matter. The major types are:

### 1. Tragedy

Tragedy is a type of drama that depicts the downfall of a noble or exceptional character due to a combination of personal flaws, fate, or societal forces. It often evokes pity and fear, leading to catharsis (emotional cleansing) in the audience.

#### Key Characteristics:

- Serious and somber tone
- Focus on human suffering and moral dilemmas
- Hero's tragic flaw (hamartia) leads to downfall
- Often ends with death or catastrophe

#### Examples:

- *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles, Oedipus' quest for truth leads to his tragic revelation.
- *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare – Hamlet's indecision and obsession with revenge cause his and others' deaths.

### 2. Comedy

Comedy is drama that portrays humorous or satirical situations, often highlighting human folly, misunderstandings, or societal absurdities. Comedies typically end happily.

#### Key Characteristics:

- Light-hearted tone
- Use of wit, irony, exaggeration, or absurd situations
- Often includes mistaken identities, misunderstandings, or clever resolutions
- Ends with reconciliation, marriage, or social harmony

**Examples:**

- *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Shakespeare – Confusions and magical interventions lead to love and harmony.
- *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde – Satirical humor highlights social pretensions.

**3. Tragicomedy**

Tragicomedy combines elements of tragedy and comedy, blending serious and humorous situations. It may include danger, suffering, and moral dilemmas but usually ends with a hopeful or less catastrophic resolution.

**Key Characteristics:**

- Mix of serious and comic elements
- Evokes both tension and relief
- Often explores human complexity and contradictions

**Examples:**

- *The Tempest* by Shakespeare – Themes of revenge and betrayal mix with humor and eventual reconciliation.

- Modern plays by Samuel Beckett, like *Waiting for Godot*, blend existential despair with absurd comedy.

#### **4. Melodrama**

Melodrama is drama that emphasizes strong emotional appeal, often with exaggerated characters, moral polarization (good vs. evil), and suspenseful plots.

##### **Key Characteristics:**

- Clear distinction between heroes and villains
- Over-the-top emotional situations
- Designed to evoke strong audience reactions
- Often includes sensational events or climaxes

##### **Examples:**

- *The Octoroon* by Dion Boucicault, Dramatic exaggeration and heightened emotions highlight social injustice.
- Many early 19th-century stage plays relied on melodrama to attract mass audiences.

## Lesson 13: Historical and Cultural Context of Drama

Drama does not exist in isolation; it reflects the historical, social, political, and cultural conditions of its time. Understanding this context helps us interpret plays more deeply, as themes, styles, and structures are often shaped by the society that produced them.

### 1. Origins of Drama

#### Ancient Greece (5th century BCE):

- Drama emerged from religious festivals honoring Dionysus, the god of wine and fertility.
- Tragedy: Focused on human suffering and moral dilemmas. Playwrights like Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides explored fate, justice, and the human condition.
- Comedy: Satirical plays, like those of Aristophanes, mocked political figures and social norms.
- Drama was deeply intertwined with religion, civic life, and morality.

#### Ancient Rome:

- Roman drama borrowed from Greek models but emphasized spectacle and entertainment.
- Playwrights like Plautus and Terence specialized in comedy.
- Roman theater reflected the hierarchical and public nature of Roman society, often using exaggerated characters and broad humor.

#### Medieval Drama (5th–15th centuries)

- Drama was largely religious and didactic, performed to teach moral lessons.
- Mystery plays depicted biblical stories.
- Morality plays dramatized abstract concepts like Virtue and Vice to teach ethical lessons.
- Performance often took place in churchyards or public squares, reflecting the communal and spiritual culture of the Middle Ages.

### Renaissance Drama (14th–17th centuries)

- The Renaissance emphasized humanism, individuality, and classical revival.
- England: Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Ben Jonson dramatized human emotions, politics, and social issues.
- Italy and Spain: Commedia dell'arte and Spanish Golden Age drama combined comedy, spectacle, and social commentary.
- Drama reflected social hierarchies, exploration, and the complexities of human nature, with greater focus on character psychology.

### Neoclassical and Enlightenment Drama (17th–18th centuries)

- Drama followed strict structural rules, inspired by classical Greek and Roman models.
- French neoclassicism: Playwrights like Racine and Molière emphasized unity of time, place, and action and moral instruction.
- Drama reflected rationalism, order, and societal norms, serving both as entertainment and moral guidance.

### 19th-Century Drama

- Romanticism: Focused on emotion, imagination, and the individual against society.  
Example: Goethe's *Faust*.
- Melodrama: Popular among the masses, emphasizing emotional appeal, suspense, and moral polarization.
- Drama mirrored industrialization, social change, and political revolutions, often highlighting class struggle, injustice, and heroism.

### 20th-Century and Modern Drama

- Modern drama experimented with form, language, and performance to explore psychology, existentialism, and social critique.
- Realism and Naturalism: Playwrights like Henrik Ibsen (*A Doll's House*) and Anton Chekhov (*The Cherry Orchard*) depicted everyday life and social issues.
- Absurdism and Experimental Drama: Samuel Beckett (*Waiting for Godot*) and Harold Pinter challenged traditional narrative, reflecting existential anxiety and disillusionment after world wars.
- Drama became a medium for political protest, philosophical exploration, and psychological study.

### Cultural Contexts and Influences

- Drama often reflects cultural values, taboos, rituals, and language. For example:

- Japanese Noh theater emphasizes stylized movement, symbolism, and spiritual themes.
- African traditional drama uses music, dance, and oral storytelling to transmit community values and history.
- Indian Sanskrit drama, like Kalidasa's plays, integrates poetry, music, and mythology, reflecting courtly culture.
- The cultural context shapes:
  - Language and dialogue style
  - Themes and moral messages
  - Staging, costumes, and music
  - Audience expectations and reactions

## Lesson 14: Figurative Language

Figurative language is a literary tool in which words, phrases, or expressions are used beyond their literal meaning to create vivid imagery, emphasis, or symbolic significance. It allows writers to convey abstract ideas, emotions, or complex experiences in a more imaginative, memorable, or impactful way.

### Notable Critics' Views

1. I.A. Richards (1893–1979) – Literary theorist and critic
  - Richards emphasized the role of figurative language in expressing meaning indirectly.
  - He argued that figurative expressions like metaphors are “semantic innovations” that create new ways of seeing or thinking about reality.
  - Example: A metaphor such as “Time is a thief” conveys the abstract concept of fleeting time more powerfully than a literal description.
2. Cleanth Brooks (1906–1994) – New Criticism scholar
  - Brooks highlighted that figurative language is central to the structure and unity of poetry.
  - Figures of speech such as irony, paradox, and metaphor give poems their tension and depth, allowing multiple layers of meaning.
  - Example: In John Donne’s poetry, metaphysical conceits compare abstract concepts to everyday objects, creating intellectual and emotional resonance.
3. Aristotle (384–322 BCE) – Classical philosopher

- Aristotle considered metaphor a mark of genius and “the ability to see similarities between dissimilar things”.
- He believed figurative language enhances persuasion, memorability, and emotional impact in rhetoric and drama.

Literal language uses words in their exact, dictionary sense to convey information clearly and directly. It is straightforward, factual, and leaves little room for interpretation. For example, when someone says, “*The sun is bright today*,” they are describing the actual condition of the sun in plain terms. The primary purpose of literal language is to inform or describe without ambiguity.

In contrast, figurative language uses words symbolically, imaginatively, or metaphorically to create imagery, evoke emotions, or convey abstract ideas. Instead of stating facts directly, it invites interpretation and stimulates the imagination. For instance, the phrase “*The sun smiled down on us*” personifies the sun, giving it human qualities to evoke warmth and happiness. Figurative expressions like metaphors, similes, personification, hyperbole, and symbolism transform ordinary statements into vivid, memorable, and emotionally impactful language. For example, Shakespeare’s “*All the world’s a stage*” is a metaphor suggesting that life has roles and performances, while Robert Burns’ simile “*My love is like a red, red rose*” compares love to a rose to highlight its beauty and freshness.

In short, literal language tells the reader what is directly happening, while figurative language enhances meaning, deepens emotion, and adds layers of interpretation, making writing more expressive and powerful.

### **Functions of figurative language:**

#### **1. Creating Vivid Imagery**

Figurative language helps writers paint mental pictures for readers, making scenes, characters, or emotions more vivid and memorable. Through metaphors, similes, and personification, abstract ideas become tangible.

- Example: In Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, "Life's but a walking shadow" uses metaphor to convey the fleeting, insubstantial nature of life.

## **2. Expressing Emotions**

Figurative language allows writers to communicate complex or intense emotions that literal language might fail to capture. It conveys subtle nuances of feeling in a more powerful, imaginative way.

- Example: Emily Dickinson's line, "Hope is the thing with feathers," personifies hope to give it warmth, resilience, and emotional resonance.

## **3. Enhancing Meaning and Depth**

By going beyond literal meaning, figurative language adds layers of interpretation. It encourages readers to think critically and uncover symbolic or thematic significance.

- Example: In Robert Frost's *The Road Not Taken*, the roads symbolize life choices, making the poem's meaning richer than a literal description of a forest path.

## **4. Creating Musicality and Aesthetic Pleasure**

Figures of speech like alliteration, assonance, and rhyme add rhythm, sound, and musicality to writing, making it more enjoyable to read or hear. This is especially significant in poetry and drama.

- Example: Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven* uses alliteration ("Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream") to enhance its hypnotic, melancholic mood.

## **5. Persuasion and Rhetorical Effect**

Figurative language strengthens argumentative or persuasive writing by appealing to emotion (pathos), creating memorable comparisons, or emphasizing key ideas.

- Example: In Martin Luther King Jr.'s *I Have a Dream* speech, metaphors and vivid imagery ("justice rolls down like waters") make abstract ideals tangible and compelling.

## **6. Highlighting Universal Truths**

Writers often use figurative language to express truths about human nature, society, or existence in symbolic ways, making them more relatable across time and culture.

- Example: George Orwell's *Animal Farm* uses allegory, a form of extended metaphor, to critique political corruption and totalitarianism.

In literature, figurative language functions to create imagery, express emotions, deepen meaning, enhance musicality, persuade, and reveal universal truths. It transforms ordinary language into something imaginative, memorable, and emotionally powerful, which is why it is central to poetry, drama, and narrative prose alike.

# Lesson 15: Types of Figurative Language

## 1. Metaphor

A metaphor is a direct comparison between two unlike things without using “like” or “as.” It suggests that one thing is another, creating a symbolic or imaginative meaning.

- Example: Shakespeare in *As You Like It*: “All the world’s a stage” — Life is compared to a stage, implying that people play roles in life.

## 2. Simile

A simile is a comparison between two unlike things using “like” or “as.” It draws attention to a specific quality of one object by linking it to another.

- Example: Robert Burns: “*My love is like a red, red rose*” — Love is compared to a rose to emphasize its freshness and beauty.

## 3. Personification

Personification gives human traits, emotions, or actions to non-human objects, animals, or ideas. It makes descriptions more vivid and relatable.

- Example: Emily Dickinson: “Hope is the thing with feathers” — Hope is described as a bird, giving it life and movement.

## 4. Hyperbole

Hyperbole is deliberate exaggeration for emphasis or dramatic effect. It highlights intensity, emotion, or absurdity.

- Example: “I’ve told you a million times” — The exaggeration emphasizes frustration, though not meant literally.

## **5. Symbolism**

Symbolism uses an object, character, or event to represent a larger idea or abstract concept.

- Example: In *The Great Gatsby*, the green light symbolizes hope, desire, and the American Dream.

## **6. Alliteration**

Alliteration is the repetition of initial consonant sounds in words close together, often to create rhythm or emphasis.

- Example: Edgar Allan Poe in *The Raven*: “Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream” — The repeated “d” sound adds musicality and mood.

## **7. Assonance**

Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds in nearby words to create internal rhyme, musicality, or mood.

- Example: “Hear the mellow wedding bells” (Edgar Allan Poe) — The repeated “e” sound enhances the melodic quality of the line.

## **8. Onomatopoeia**

Onomatopoeia uses words that imitate natural sounds, making descriptions more vivid and immediate.

- Example: “The buzzing bee flew past my ear.”

## **9. Irony**

Irony occurs when there is a contrast between appearance and reality, or between what is said and what is meant.

- Example: In Jonathan Swift’s *A Modest Proposal*, suggesting that poor children be eaten is ironic—he uses exaggeration to criticize social injustice.

## **10. Allegory**

Allegory is an extended metaphor in which characters, events, or settings represent larger abstract ideas or moral truths.

- Example: George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* — The farm represents a society under totalitarian rule, and the characters symbolize political figures and ideologies.

These types of figurative language—metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, symbolism, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, irony, and allegory allow writers to enhance meaning, evoke emotion, and create memorable, imaginative writing. They transform literal statements into expressive, multi-layered literary art.

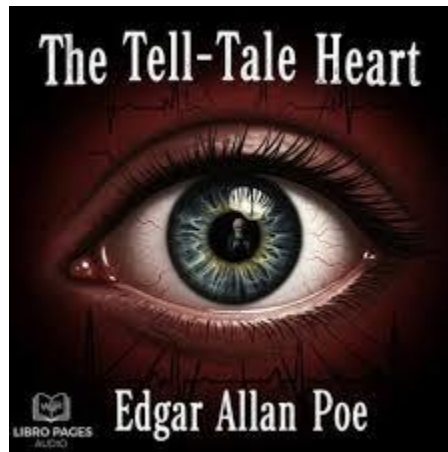
## **Appendix A: Short Story – *The Tell-Tale Heart***

It's True! yes, i have been ill, very ill. But why do you say that I have lost control of my mind, why do you say that I am mad? Can you not see that I have full control of my mind? Is it not clear that I am not mad? Indeed, the illness only made my mind, my feelings, my senses stronger, more powerful. My sense of hearing especially became more powerful. I could hear sounds I had never heard before. I heard sounds from heaven; and I heard sounds from hell! Listen! Listen, and I will tell you how it happened. You will see, you will hear how healthy my mind is. It is impossible to say how the idea first entered my head. There was no reason for what I did. I did not hate the old man; I even loved him. He had never hurt me. I did not want his money. I think it was his eye. His eye was like the eye of a vulture, the eye of one of those terrible birds that watch and wait while an animal dies, and then fall upon the dead body and pull it to pieces to eat it. When the old man looked at me with his vulture eye a cold feeling went up and down my back; even my blood became cold. And so, I finally decided I had to kill the old man and close that eye forever! So you think that I am mad? A madman cannot plan. But you should have seen me. During all of that week I was as friendly to the old man as I could be, and warm, and loving. Every night about twelve o'clock I slowly opened his door. And when the door was opened wide enough I put my hand in, and then my head. In my hand I held a light covered over with a cloth so that no light showed. And I stood there quietly. Then, carefully, I lifted the cloth, just a little, so that a single, thin, small light fell across that eye. For seven nights I did this, seven long nights, every night at midnight. Always the eye was closed, so it was impossible for me to do the work. For it was not the old man I felt I had to kill; it was the eye, his Evil Eye. And every morning I went to his room, and with a warm, friendly voice I asked him how he had slept. He could not guess that every night, just at twelve, I looked in at him as he slept. The eighth night I was more than usually careful as I opened the door. The hands of a clock move more quickly than did my hand. Never before

had I felt so strongly my own power; I was now sure of success. The old man was lying there not dreaming that I was at his door. Suddenly he moved in his bed. You may think I became afraid. But no. The darkness in his room was thick and black. I knew he could not see the opening of the door. I continued to push the door, slowly, softly. I put in my head. I put in my hand, with the covered light. Suddenly the old man sat straight up in bed and cried, “Who’s there??!” I stood quite still. For a whole hour I did not move. Nor did I hear him again lie down in his bed. He just sat there, listening. Then I heard a sound, a low cry of fear which escaped from the old man. Now I knew that he was sitting up in his bed, filled with fear; I knew that he knew that I was there. He did not see me there. He could not hear me there. He felt me there. Now he knew that Death was standing there. Slowly, little by little, I lifted the cloth, until a small, small light escaped from under it to fall upon — to fall upon that vulture eye! It was open — wide, wide open, and my anger increased as it looked straight at me. I could not see the old man’s face. Only that eye, that hard blue eye, and the blood in my body became like ice. Have I not told you that my hearing had become unusually strong? Now I could hear a quick, low, soft sound, like the sound of a clock heard through a wall. It was the beating of the old man’s heart. I tried to stand quietly. But the sound grew louder. The old man’s fear must have been great indeed. And as the sound grew louder my anger became greater and more painful. But it was more than anger. In the quiet night, in the dark silence of the bedroom my anger became fear — for the heart was beating so loudly that I was sure some one must hear. The time had come! I rushed into the room, crying, “Die! Die!” The old man gave a loud cry of fear as I fell upon him and held the bedcovers tightly over his head. Still his heart was beating; but I smiled as I felt that success was near. For many minutes that heart continued to beat; but at last the beating stopped. The old man was dead. I took away the bed covers and held my ear over his heart. There was no sound. Yes. He was dead! Dead as a stone. His eye would trouble me no more! So I am mad, you say? You should have seen how

careful I was to put the body where no one could find it. First I cut off the head, then the arms and the legs. I was careful not to let a single drop of blood fall on the floor. I pulled up three of the boards that formed the floor, and put the pieces of the body there. Then I put the boards down again, carefully, so carefully that no human eye could see that they had been moved. As I finished this work I heard that someone was at the door. It was now four o'clock in the morning, but still dark. I had no fear, however, as I went down to open the door. Three men were at the door, three officers of the police. One of the neighbors had heard the old man's cry and had called the police; these three had come to ask questions and to search the house. I asked the policemen to come in. The cry, I said, was my own, in a dream. The old man, I said, was away; he had gone to visit a friend in the country. I took them through the whole house, telling them to search it all, to search well. I led them finally into the old man's bed room. As if playing a game with them I asked them to sit down and talk for a while. My easy, quiet manner made the policemen believe my story. So they sat talking with me in a friendly way. But although I answered them in the same way, I soon wished that they would go. My head hurt and there was a strange sound in my ears. I talked more, and faster. The sound became clearer. And still they sat and talked. Suddenly I knew that the sound was not in my ears, it was not just inside my head. At that moment I must have become quite white. I talked still faster and louder. And the sound, too, became louder. It was a quick, low, soft sound, like the sound of a clock heard through a wall, a sound I knew well. Louder it became, and louder. Why did the men not go? Louder, louder. I stood up and walked quickly around the room. I pushed my chair across the floor to make more noise, to cover that terrible sound. I talked even louder. And still the men sat and talked, and smiled. Was it possible that they could not hear?? No! They heard! I was certain of it. They knew! Now it was they who were playing a game with me. I was suffering more than I could bear, from their smiles, and from that sound. Louder, louder, louder! Suddenly I could bear it no longer. I pointed at the boards and cried,

“Yes! Yes, I killed him. Pull up the boards and you shall see! I killed him. But why does his heart not stop beating?! Why does it not stop!?”



## Appendix B: Play – *Trifles*

### SCENE

The kitchen is the now abandoned farmhouse of JOHN WRIGHT, a gloomy kitchen, and left without having been put in order—unwashed pans under the sink, a loaf of bread outside the bread-box, a dish-towel on the table—other signs of incompleting work. At the rear the outer door opens and the SHERIFF comes in followed by the COUNTY ATTORNEY and HALE. The SHERIFF and HALE are men in middle life, the COUNTY ATTORNEY is a young man; all are much bundled up and go at once to the stove. They are followed by the two women—the SHERIFF's wife first; she is a slight wiry woman, a thin nervous face. MRS HALE is larger and would ordinarily be called more comfortable looking, but she is disturbed now and looks fearfully about as she enters. The women have come in slowly, and stand close together near the door.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (rubbing his hands) This feels good. Come up to the fire, ladies.

MRS PETERS: (after taking a step forward) I'm not—cold.

SHERIFF: (unbuttoning his overcoat and stepping away from the stove as if to mark the beginning of official business) Now, Mr Hale, before we move things about, you explain to Mr Henderson just what you saw when you came here yesterday morning.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: By the way, has anything been moved? Are things just as you left them yesterday?

SHERIFF: (looking about) It's just the same. When it dropped below zero last night I thought I'd better send Frank out this morning to make a fire for us—no use getting pneumonia with a big case on, but I told him not to touch anything except the stove—and you know Frank.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Somebody should have been left here yesterday.

SHERIFF: Oh—yesterday. When I had to send Frank to Morris Center for that man who went crazy—I want you to know I had my hands full yesterday. I knew you could get back from Omaha by today and as long as I went over everything here myself—

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Well, Mr Hale, tell just what happened when you came here yesterday morning.

HALE: Harry and I had started to town with a load of potatoes. We came along the road from my place and as I got here I said, I'm going to see if I can't get John Wright to go in with me on a party telephone.'

I spoke to Wright about it once before and he put me off, saying folks talked too much anyway, and all he asked was peace and quiet—I guess you know about how much he talked himself; but I thought maybe if I went to the house and talked about it before his wife, though I said to Harry that I didn't know as what his wife wanted made much difference to John—

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Let's talk about that later, Mr Hale. I do want to talk about that, but tell now just what happened when you got to the house.

HALE: I didn't hear or see anything; I knocked at the door, and still it was all quiet inside. I knew they must be up, it was past eight o'clock. So I knocked again, and I thought I heard somebody say, 'Come in.' I wasn't sure, I'm not sure yet, but I opened the door—this door (indicating the door by which the two women are still standing) and there in that rocker— (pointing to it) sat Mrs Wright.

(They all look at the rocker.)

COUNTY ATTORNEY: What—was she doing?

HALE: She was rockin' back and forth. She had her apron in her hand and was kind of—pleating it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: And how did she—look?

HALE: Well, she looked queer.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: How do you mean—queer?

HALE: Well, as if she didn't know what she was going to do next. And kind of done up.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: How did she seem to feel about your coming?

HALE: Why, I don't think she minded—one way or other. She didn't pay much attention. I said, 'How do, Mrs Wright it's cold, ain't it?' And she said, 'Is it?'—and went on kind of pleating at her apron. Well, I was surprised; she didn't ask me to come up to the stove, or to set down, but just sat there, not even looking at me, so I said, 'I want to see John.' And then she—laughed. I guess you would call it a laugh. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp: 'Can't I see John?' 'No', she says, kind o' dull like. 'Ain't he home?' says I. 'Yes', says she, 'he's home'. 'Then why can't I see him?' I asked her, out of patience. 'Cause he's dead', says she. 'Dead?' says I.

She just nodded her head, not getting a bit excited, but rockin' back and forth. 'Why—where is he?' says I, not knowing what to say. She just pointed upstairs—like that (himself pointing to the room above) I got up, with the idea of going up there.

I walked from there to here—then I says, 'Why, what did he die of?' 'He died of a rope round his neck', says she, and just went on pleatin' at her apron. Well, I went out and called Harry. I thought I might—need help. We went upstairs and there he was lyin'—

COUNTY ATTORNEY: I think I'd rather have you go into that upstairs, where you can point it all out. Just go on now with the rest of the story.

HALE: Well, my first thought was to get that rope off. It looked ... (stops, his face twitches) ... but Harry, he went up to him, and he said, 'No, he's dead all right, and we'd better not touch anything.' So we went back down stairs.

She was still sitting that same way. 'Has anybody been notified?' I asked. 'No', says she unconcerned. 'Who did this, Mrs Wright?' said Harry. He said it business-like—and she stopped pleatin' of her apron. 'I don't know', she says. 'You don't know?' says Harry. 'No', says she.

'Weren't you sleepin' in the bed with him?' says Harry.

'Yes', says she, 'but I was on the inside'. 'Somebody slipped a rope round his neck and strangled him and you didn't wake up?' says Harry. 'I didn't wake up', she said after him. We must 'a looked as if we didn't see how that could be, for after a minute she said, 'I sleep sound'.

Harry was going to ask her more questions but I said maybe we ought to let her tell her story first to the coroner, or the sheriff, so Harry went fast as he could to Rivers' place, where there's a telephone.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: And what did Mrs Wright do when she knew that you had gone for the coroner?

HALE: She moved from that chair to this one over here (pointing to a small chair in the corner) and just sat there with her hands held together and looking down.

I got a feeling that I ought to make some conversation, so I said I had come in to see if John wanted to put in a telephone, and at that she started to laugh, and then she stopped and looked

at me—scared, (the COUNTY ATTORNEY, who has had his notebook out, makes a note) I dunno, maybe it wasn't scared.

I wouldn't like to say it was. Soon Harry got back, and then Dr Lloyd came, and you, Mr Peters, and so I guess that's all I know that you don't.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (looking around) I guess we'll go upstairs first—and then out to the barn and around there, (to the SHERIFF) You're convinced that there was nothing important here—nothing that would point to any motive.

SHERIFF: Nothing here but kitchen things.

(The COUNTY ATTORNEY, after again looking around the kitchen, opens the door of a cupboard closet. He gets up on a chair and looks on a shelf. Pulls his hand away, sticky.)

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Here's a nice mess.

(The women draw nearer.)

MRS PETERS: (to the other woman) Oh, her fruit; it did freeze, (to the LAWYER) She worried about that when it turned so cold. She said the fire'd go out and her jars would break.

SHERIFF: Well, can you beat the women! Held for murder and worryin' about her preserves.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: I guess before we're through she may have something more serious than preserves to worry about.

HALE: Well, women are used to worrying over trifles.

(The two women move a little closer together.)

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (with the gallantry of a young politician) And yet, for all their worries, what would we do without the ladies? (the women do not unbend. He goes to the sink, takes a dipperful of water from the pail and pouring it into a basin, washes his hands. Starts to wipe them on the roller-towel, turns it for a cleaner place) Dirty towels! (kicks his foot against the pans under the sink) Not much of a housekeeper, would you say, ladies?

MRS HALE: (stiffly) There's a great deal of work to be done on a farm.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: To be sure. And yet (with a little bow to her) I know there are some Dickson county farmhouses which do not have such roller towels. (He gives it a pull to expose its length again.)

MRS HALE: Those towels get dirty awful quick. Men's hands aren't always as clean as they might be.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Ah, loyal to your sex, I see. But you and Mrs Wright were neighbors. I suppose you were friends, too.

MRS HALE: (shaking her head) I've not seen much of her of late years. I've not been in this house—it's more than a year.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: And why was that? You didn't like her?

MRS HALE: I liked her all well enough. Farmers' wives have their hands full, Mr Henderson.  
And then—

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Yes—?

MRS HALE: (looking about) It never seemed a very cheerful place.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: No—it's not cheerful. I shouldn't say she had the homemaking instinct.

MRS HALE: Well, I don't know as Wright had, either.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: You mean that they didn't get on very well?

MRS HALE: No, I don't mean anything. But I don't think a place'd be any cheerfuller for John Wright's being in it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: I'd like to talk more of that a little later. I want to get the lay of things upstairs now. (He goes to the left, where three steps lead to a stair door.)

SHERIFF: I suppose anything Mrs Peters does'll be all right. She was to take in some clothes for her, you know, and a few little things. We left in such a hurry yesterday.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Yes, but I would like to see what you take, Mrs Peters, and keep an eye out for anything that might be of use to us.

MRS PETERS: Yes, Mr Henderson.

(The women listen to the men's steps on the stairs, then look about the kitchen.)

MRS HALE: I'd hate to have men coming into my kitchen, snooping around and criticising.

(She arranges the pans under sink which the LAWYER had shoved out of place.)

MRS PETERS: Of course it's no more than their duty.

MRS HALE: Duty's all right, but I guess that deputy sheriff that came out to make the fire might have got a little of this on. (gives the roller towel a pull) Wish I'd thought of that sooner. Seems mean to talk about her for not having things slicked up when she had to come away in such a hurry.

MRS PETERS: (who has gone to a small table in the left rear corner of the room, and lifted one end of a towel that covers a pan) She had bread set. (Stands still.)

MRS HALE: (eyes fixed on a loaf of bread beside the bread-box, which is on a low shelf at the other side of the room. Moves slowly toward it) She was going to put this in there. (picks up loaf, then abruptly drops it. In a manner of returning to familiar things) It's a shame about her fruit. I wonder if it's all gone. (gets up on the chair and looks) I think there's some here that's all right, Mrs Peters. Yes—here; (holding it toward the window) this is cherries, too. (looking again) I declare I believe that's the only one. (gets down, bottle in her hand. Goes to

the sink and wipes it off on the outside) She'll feel awful bad after all her hard work in the hot weather. I remember the afternoon I put up my cherries last summer.

(She puts the bottle on the big kitchen table, center of the room. With a sigh, is about to sit down in the rocking-chair. Before she is seated realizes what chair it is; with a slow look at it, steps back. The chair which she has touched rocks back and forth.)

MRS PETERS: Well, I must get those things from the front room closet, (she goes to the door at the right, but after looking into the other room, steps back) You coming with me, Mrs Hale? You could help me carry them.

(They go in the other room; reappear, MRS PETERS carrying a dress and skirt, MRS HALE following with a pair of shoes.)

MRS PETERS: My, it's cold in there.

(She puts the clothes on the big table, and hurries to the stove.)

MRS HALE: (examining the skirt) Wright was close. I think maybe that's why she kept so much to herself. She didn't even belong to the Ladies Aid. I suppose she felt she couldn't do her part, and then you don't enjoy things when you feel shabby. She used to wear pretty clothes and be lively, when she was Minnie Foster, one of the town girls singing in the choir. But that—oh, that was thirty years ago. This all you was to take in?

MRS PETERS: She said she wanted an apron. Funny thing to want, for there isn't much to get you dirty in jail, goodness knows. But I suppose just to make her feel more natural. She said they was in the top drawer in this cupboard. Yes, here. And then her little shawl that always hung behind the door. (opens stair door and looks) Yes, here it is.

(Quickly shuts door leading upstairs.)

MRS HALE: (abruptly moving toward her) Mrs Peters?

MRS PETERS: Yes, Mrs Hale?

MRS HALE: Do you think she did it?

MRS PETERS: (in a frightened voice) Oh, I don't know.

MRS HALE: Well, I don't think she did. Asking for an apron and her little shawl. Worrying about her fruit.

MRS PETERS: (starts to speak, glances up, where footsteps are heard in the room above. In a low voice) Mr Peters says it looks bad for her. Mr Henderson is awful sarcastic in a speech and he'll make fun of her sayin' she didn't wake up.

MRS HALE: Well, I guess John Wright didn't wake when they was slipping that rope under his neck.

MRS PETERS: No, it's strange. It must have been done awful crafty and still. They say it was

such a—funny way to kill a man, rigging it all up like that.

MRS HALE: That's just what Mr Hale said. There was a gun in the house. He says that's what he can't understand.

MRS PETERS: Mr Henderson said coming out that what was needed for the case was a motive; something to show anger, or—sudden feeling.

MRS HALE: (who is standing by the table) Well, I don't see any signs of anger around here, (she puts her hand on the dish towel which lies on the table, stands looking down at table, one half of which is clean, the other half messy) It's wiped to here, (makes a move as if to finish work, then turns and looks at loaf of bread outside the breadbox. Drops towel. In that voice of coming back to familiar things.) Wonder how they are finding things upstairs. I hope she had it a little more red-up up there. You know, it seems kind of sneaking. Locking her up in town and then coming out here and trying to get her own house to turn against her!

MRS PETERS: But Mrs Hale, the law is the law.

MRS HALE: I s'pose 'tis, (unbuttoning her coat) Better loosen up your things, Mrs Peters. You won't feel them when you go out.

(MRS PETERS takes off her fur tippet, goes to hang it on hook at back of room, stands looking at the under part of the small corner table.)

MRS PETERS: She was piecing a quilt. (She brings the large sewing basket and they look at the bright pieces.)

MRS HALE: It's log cabin pattern. Pretty, isn't it? I wonder if she was goin' to quilt it or just knot it?

(Footsteps have been heard coming down the stairs. The SHERIFF enters followed by HALE and the COUNTY ATTORNEY.)

SHERIFF: They wonder if she was going to quilt it or just knot it! (The men laugh, the women look abashed.)

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (rubbing his hands over the stove) Frank's fire didn't do much up there, did it? Well, let's go out to the barn and get that cleared up. (The men go outside.)

MRS HALE: (resentfully) I don't know as there's anything so strange, our takin' up our time with little things while we're waiting for them to get the evidence. (she sits down at the big table smoothing out a block with decision) I don't see as it's anything to laugh about.

MRS PETERS: (apologetically) Of course they've got awful important things on their minds. (Pulls up a chair and joins MRS HALE at the table.)

MRS HALE: (examining another block) Mrs Peters, look at this one. Here, this is the one she was working on, and look at the sewing! All the rest of it has been so nice and even. And look at this! It's all over the place! Why, it looks as if she didn't know what she was about!

(After she has said this they look at each other, then start to glance back at the door. After an instant MRS HALE has pulled at a knot and ripped the sewing.)

MRS PETERS: Oh, what are you doing, Mrs Hale?

MRS HALE: (mildly) Just pulling out a stitch or two that's not sewed very good. (threading a needle) Bad sewing always made me fidgety.

MRS PETERS: (nervously) I don't think we ought to touch things.

MRS HALE: I'll just finish up this end. (suddenly stopping and leaning forward) Mrs Peters?

MRS PETERS: Yes, Mrs Hale?

MRS HALE: What do you suppose she was so nervous about?

MRS PETERS: Oh—I don't know. I don't know as she was nervous. I sometimes sew awful queer when I'm just tired. (MRS HALE starts to say something, looks at MRS PETERS, then goes on sewing) Well I must get these things wrapped up. They may be through sooner than we think, (putting apron and other things together) I wonder where I can find a piece of paper, and string.

MRS HALE: In that cupboard, maybe.

MRS PETERS: (looking in cupboard) Why, here's a bird-cage, (holds it up) Did she have a bird, Mrs Hale?

MRS HALE: Why, I don't know whether she did or not—I've not been here for so long. There was a man around last year selling canaries cheap, but I don't know as she took one; maybe she did. She used to sing real pretty herself.

MRS PETERS: (glancing around) Seems funny to think of a bird here. But she must have had one, or why would she have a cage? I wonder what happened to it.

MRS HALE: I s'pose maybe the cat got it.

MRS PETERS: No, she didn't have a cat. She's got that feeling some people have about cats—being afraid of them. My cat got in her room and she was real upset and asked me to take it out.

MRS HALE: My sister Bessie was like that. Queer, ain't it?

MRS PETERS: (examining the cage) Why, look at this door. It's broke. One hinge is pulled apart. MRS HALE: (looking too) Looks as if someone must have been rough with it.

MRS PETERS: Why, yes.

(She brings the cage forward and puts it on the table.)

MRS HALE: I wish if they're going to find any evidence they'd be about it. I don't like this place.

MRS PETERS: But I'm awful glad you came with me, Mrs Hale. It would be lonesome for me sitting here alone.

MRS HALE: It would, wouldn't it? (dropping her sewing) But I tell you what I do wish, Mrs Peters. I wish I had come over sometimes when she was here. I—(looking around the room)—wish I had.

MRS PETERS: But of course you were awful busy, Mrs Hale—your house and your children.

MRS HALE: I could've come. I stayed away because it weren't cheerful—and that's why I ought to have come. I—I've never liked this place. Maybe because it's down in a hollow and you don't see the road. I dunno what it is, but it's a lonesome place and always was. I wish I had come over to see Minnie Foster sometimes. I can see now—(shakes her head)

MRS PETERS: Well, you mustn't reproach yourself, Mrs Hale. Somehow we just don't see how it is with other folks until—something comes up.

MRS HALE: Not having children makes less work—but it makes a quiet house, and Wright out to work all day, and no company when he did come in. Did you know John Wright, Mrs Peters?

MRS PETERS: Not to know him; I've seen him in town. They say he was a good man.

MRS HALE: Yes—good; he didn't drink, and kept his word as well as most, I guess, and paid his debts. But he was a hard man, Mrs Peters. Just to pass the time of day with him—(shivers) Like a raw wind that gets to the bone, (pauses, her eye falling on the cage) I should think she would 'a wanted a bird. But what do you suppose went with it?

MRS PETERS: I don't know, unless it got sick and died.

(She reaches over and swings the broken door, swings it again, both women watch it.)

MRS HALE: You weren't raised round here, were you? (MRS PETERS shakes her head) You didn't know—her?

MRS PETERS: Not till they brought her yesterday.

MRS HALE: She—come to think of it, she was kind of like a bird herself—real sweet and pretty, but kind of timid and—fluttery. How—she—did—change. (silence; then as if struck by a happy thought and relieved to get back to everyday things) Tell you what, Mrs Peters, why don't you take the quilt in with you? It might take up her mind.

MRS PETERS: Why, I think that's a real nice idea, Mrs Hale. There couldn't possibly be any objection to it, could there? Now, just what would I take? I wonder if her patches are in here—and her things.

(They look in the sewing basket.)

MRS HALE: Here's some red. I expect this has got sewing things in it. (brings out a fancy box) What a pretty box. Looks like something somebody would give you. Maybe her scissors

are in here. (Opens box. Suddenly puts her hand to her nose) Why—(MRS PETERS bends nearer, then turns her face away) There's something wrapped up in this piece of silk.

MRS PETERS: Why, this isn't her scissors.

MRS HALE: (lifting the silk) Oh, Mrs Peters—it's—

(MRS PETERS bends closer.)

MRS PETERS: It's the bird.

MRS HALE: (jumping up) But, Mrs Peters—look at it! It's neck! Look at its neck!

It's all—other side to.

MRS PETERS: Somebody—wrung—its—neck.

(Their eyes meet. A look of growing comprehension, of horror. Steps are heard outside. MRS HALE slips box under quilt pieces, and sinks into her chair. Enter SHERIFF and COUNTY ATTORNEY. MRS PETERS rises.)

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (as one turning from serious things to little pleasantries) Well ladies, have you decided whether she was going to quilt it or knot it?

MRS PETERS: We think she was going to—knot it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Well, that's interesting, I'm sure. (seeing the birdcage) Has the bird flown?

MRS HALE: (putting more quilt pieces over the box) We think the—cat got it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (preoccupied) Is there a cat?

(MRS HALE glances in a quick covert way at MRS PETERS.)

MRS PETERS: Well, not now. They're superstitious, you know. They leave.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (to SHERIFF PETERS, continuing an interrupted conversation) No sign at all of anyone having come from the outside. Their own rope. Now let's go up again and go over it piece by piece. (they start upstairs) It would have to have been someone who knew just the—

(MRS PETERS sits down. The two women sit there not looking at one another, but as if peering into something and at the same time holding back. When they talk now it is in the manner of feeling their way over strange ground, as if afraid of what they are saying, but as if they can not help saying it.)

MRS HALE: She liked the bird. She was going to bury it in that pretty box.

MRS PETERS: (in a whisper) When I was a girl—my kitten—there was a boy took a hatchet,

and before my eyes—and before I could get there—(covers her face an instant) If they hadn't held me back I would have—(catches herself, looks upstairs where steps are heard, falters weakly)—hurt him.

MRS HALE: (with a slow look around her) I wonder how it would seem never to have had any children around, (pause) No, Wright wouldn't like the bird—a thing that sang. She used to sing. He killed that, too.

MRS PETERS: (moving uneasily) We don't know who killed the bird.

MRS HALE: I knew John Wright.

MRS PETERS: It was an awful thing was done in this house that night, Mrs Hale. Killing a man while he slept, slipping a rope around his neck that choked the life out of him.

MRS HALE: His neck. Choked the life out of him.

(Her hand goes out and rests on the bird-cage.)

MRS PETERS: (with rising voice) We don't know who killed him. We don't know.

MRS HALE: (her own feeling not interrupted) If there'd been years and years of nothing, then a bird to sing to you, it would be awful—still, after the bird was still.

MRS PETERS: (something within her speaking) I know what stillness is. When we homesteaded in Dakota, and my first baby died—after he was two years old, and me with no other then—

MRS HALE: (moving) How soon do you suppose they'll be through, looking for the evidence?

MRS PETERS: I know what stillness is. (pulling herself back) The law has got to punish crime,

Mrs Hale.

MRS HALE: (not as if answering that) I wish you'd seen Minnie Foster when she wore a white dress with blue ribbons and stood up there in the choir and sang. (a look around the room) Oh, I wish I'd come over here once in a while! That was a crime! That was a crime! Who's going to punish that?

MRS PETERS: (looking upstairs) We mustn't—take on.

MRS HALE: I might have known she needed help! I know how things can be—for women. I tell you, it's queer, Mrs Peters. We live close together and we live far apart. We all go through the same things—it's all just a different kind of the same thing, (brushes her eyes, noticing the bottle of fruit, reaches out for it) If I was you, I wouldn't tell her her fruit was gone.

Tell her it ain't. Tell her it's all right. Take this in to prove it to her. She—she may never know whether it was broke or not.

MRS PETERS: (takes the bottle, looks about for something to wrap it in; takes petticoat from the clothes brought from the other room, very nervously begins winding this around the bottle. In a false voice)

My, it's a good thing the men couldn't hear us. Wouldn't they just laugh! Getting all stirred up over a little thing like a—dead canary. As if that could have anything to do with—with wouldn't they laugh!

(The men are heard coming down stairs.)

MRS HALE: (under her breath) Maybe they would—maybe they wouldn't.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: No, Peters, it's all perfectly clear except a reason for doing it. But you know juries when it comes to women. If there was some definite thing. Something to show—something to make a story about—a thing that would connect up with this strange way of doing it—

(The women's eyes meet for an instant. Enter HALE from outer door.)

HALE: Well, I've got the team around. Pretty cold out there.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: I'm going to stay here a while by myself, (to the SHERIFF) You can send Frank out for me, can't you? I want to go over everything. I'm not satisfied that we can't do better.

SHERIFF: Do you want to see what Mrs Peters is going to take in?

(The LAWYER goes to the table, picks up the apron, laughs.)

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Oh, I guess they're not very dangerous things the ladies have picked out.

(Moves a few things about, disturbing the quilt pieces which cover the box. Steps back) No, Mrs Peters doesn't need supervising. For that matter, a sheriff's wife is married to the law. Ever think of it that way, Mrs Peters?

MRS PETERS: Not—just that way.

SHERIFF: (chuckling) Married to the law. (moves toward the other room) I just want you to come in here a minute, George. We ought to take a look at these windows.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (scoffingly) Oh, windows!

SHERIFF: We'll be right out, Mr Hale.

(HALE goes outside. The SHERIFF follows the COUNTY ATTORNEY into the other room.

Then MRS HALE rises, hands tight together, looking intensely at MRS PETERS, whose eyes make a slow turn, finally meeting MRS HALE's.

A moment MRS HALE holds her, then her own eyes point the way to where the box is concealed.

Suddenly MRS PETERS throws back quilt pieces and tries to put the box in the bag she is wearing. It is too big. She opens box, starts to take bird out, cannot touch it, goes to pieces, stands there helpless. Sound of a knob turning in the other room. MRS HALE snatches the box and puts it in the pocket of her big coat. Enter COUNTY ATTORNEY and SHERIFF.)

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (facetiously) Well, Henry, at least we found out that she was not going to quilt it. She was going to—what is it you call it, ladies?

MRS HALE: (her hand against her pocket) We call it—knot it, Mr Henderson.

(CURTAIN)

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