



What Makes a Poem Different From Other Writing

KS2 ENGLISH

KS3 ENGLISH

Ages 10-14 ⌚ 3 min read

What Makes Poetry Special?

When you read a **poem**, something feels different from reading a story or a newspaper article. Poems are a special kind of writing that pack big feelings and ideas into smaller spaces. They use language in creative ways that make us stop and think, imagine, and feel.

One of the biggest differences is that poems often have **rhythm** and **rhyme**. This means the words follow a particular beat (like music) and some lines end with words that sound similar. Think about nursery rhymes you learned when you were younger – poems work in a similar way, using patterns to make words memorable and enjoyable to read aloud.

Think of it like a song: songs have a melody and beat that stick in your head, and poems do the same thing with words instead of music notes.

Poetry Uses Words Differently

Poets are very careful about choosing exactly the right words. They often use **imagery** – which means painting pictures with words so you can see, hear, smell, taste, or feel what they're describing. Instead of saying 'the day was hot,' a poet might write 'the sun blazed like molten gold' to make you really feel that heat.

Poems also use **metaphors** and **similes**. A **metaphor** says something IS something else (like 'time is money'), while a **simile** compares things using 'like' or 'as' (like 'busy as a bee'). These tools help poets express complex ideas in clever, surprising ways.

Think of it like a magician: instead of showing you a plain card, a magician makes it disappear and reappear in surprising ways – poets do the same thing with words.

Why Do Poems Look Different?

Another thing you'll notice is that poems look different on the page. They're often broken into **lines** and **stanzas** (groups of lines), rather than using regular paragraphs. This shape and spacing are actually part of how the poem works – it affects how you read it and where you pause.

Poetry also often says a lot using very few words. Where a story might take a whole paragraph to describe something, a poem might do it in just two lines. This **compression** makes every single word important and powerful. Poetry is like the distilled essence of language – concentrated and intense.

Finally, poems are meant to express **feelings and emotions** more directly than other types of writing. While stories tell you what happens, poems show you how someone feels about what happens. This is why many people turn to poetry when they're experiencing strong emotions – happy, sad, angry, or amazed.