GLOSSARY

Introduction

The following definitions are intended to help teachers and students use this study guide. The glossary provides external web links for further information and sources. Some definitions are taken from the curriculum glossary.

a capella

Singing without instrumental accompaniment

alliteration

The initial sounds of a word, beginning either with a consonant or a vowel, repeated in close succession. Examples: angrily acting out Nate never knows; people who pen poetry.

aphorism

A pithy observation that contains a general truth, such as, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it."

assonance

When the vowel sound within a word matches the same sound in a nearby word, but the surrounding consonant sounds are different. "Tune" and "June" are rhymes; "tune" and "food" are assonant. The function of assonance is frequently the same as end rhyme or alliteration: all serve to give a sense of continuity or fluidity to the verse. Assonance might be especially effective when rhyme is absent: It gives the poet more flexibility, and it is not typically used as part of a predetermined pattern. Like alliteration, it does not so much determine the structure or form of a poem; rather, it is more ornamental.

Source: Elements of Poetry)

diction

The choice and use of words and phrases in speech or writing

dub poetry

A form of performance poetry of West Indian origin. Evolved into dub music consisting of spoken word over reggae rhythms in Jamaica in the 1970s.

Dub poetry is mostly of an overtly political and social nature. The odd love-song or elegy appears, but dub poetry is predominantly concerned with politics and social justice, commonly voiced through a commentary on current events (thus sharing these elements with Dancehall and "Conscious" or "Roots" reggae music).

Toronto has the second highest concentration of Dub Poets preceded by Jamaica and followed by England.

Source: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dub_poetry

epic poem

A long poem, typically one derived from ancient oral tradition, narrating the deeds and adventures of heroic or legendary figures or the history of a nation.

forms of literary texts

Examples include: story, short story, adventure story, detective story, myth, legend, folk tale, cumulative tale, lyric poem, dramatic poem, ballad, novel, mystery novel, historical novel, science fiction novel, soliloquy, play, script, storybook, picture book, pattern book, chapter book. See also *genres*.

free verse

Poetry written without a regular pattern of rhyme or rhythm. A free-verse poem is based on natural rhythms of speech and free expression rather than on a predetermined form.

free writing

A technique that is used for developing possible content for a piece of writing and that involves recording thoughts, images, and ideas without restraint. Also called "rapid write." It's an integral part of most English classes. Based on Natalie Goldberg's "Writing Down the Bones" and includes the rules: don't stop the pen; don't worry about grammar and spelling; don't censor.

genres

The types or categories into which literary works are grouped. Examples include: novel, short story, essay, poetry, and drama. See also *forms of literary texts*.

haiku

a Japanese lyric verse form having three unrhymed lines of five, seven, and five syllables, traditionally invoking an aspect of nature or the seasons and connecting it to the human condition. Here's an introduction to haiku.

irony

A meaning of words in context that differs from, and is often the opposite of, the literal meaning. See also *dramatic irony*, *verbal irony*, *situational irony*.

level of language

A style of language (e.g., formal, colloquial) appropriate to a specific purpose, audience, or situation. The style is determined by the degree of formality in a particular social situation, the relationship among the individuals involved in the communication, and the purpose of the interaction. Sometimes referred to as *register*.

imagery

Descriptions and figures of speech (e.g., metaphors, similes) used by writers to create vivid mental pictures in the mind of the reader. See also *figurative language, literary device.*

literary device (or stylistic device)

A particular pattern of words, a figure of speech, or a technique used in literature to produce a specific effect. Examples include: rhyme, parallel structure, analogy, comparison, contrast, irony, foreshadowing, allusion, juxtaposition, simile, metaphor, personification, pun, hyperbole, oxymoron, symbolism. See also *figurative language*, *imagery*.

lyric poetry

A short poem with one speaker (not necessarily the poet) who expresses thoughts and feelings. Though it is sometimes used only for a brief poem about feeling (like the sonnet), it is more often applied to a poem expressing the complex evolution of thoughts and feelings, such as the elegy, the dramatic monologue, and the ode.

Source: http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/lit_term.html

metaphor

A figure of speech in which an implied comparison is made between two unlike things that actually have something important in common. A metaphor expresses the unfamiliar (the tenor) in terms of the familiar (the vehicle). When Neil Young sings, "Love is a rose," "rose" is the vehicle for "love," the tenor.

Source: http://www.about.com

narrative poetry

The narrative poem tells a story. The poems may be short or long, and the story it relates to may be simple or complex. Narrative poems include epics, ballads, and idylls.

Narrative poetry is among the oldest, and perhaps *the* oldest, genre of poetry. Much of the earliest literary works we have from many literatures, from the epic of Gilgamesh to those of Homer, in Old English poetry and Old Norse poetry, or the Sanskrit poem the Mahabarata, consist of narrative poems.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narrative_poetry

non-discriminatory language

Language that conveys respect for all people and avoids stereotyping based on gender, race, religion, culture, social class, sexual orientation, ability, or age. See also *inclusive language*.

non-verbal cues

Performers use a variety of non-verbal cues, including facial expressions, gestures, and eye contact to help convey their meaning, with sensitivity to audience needs and cultural differences

oral tradition

The spoken relation and preservation, from one generation to the next, of a people's cultural history and ancestry, often by a storyteller in narrative form. The forms of oral tradition include poetry (often chanted or sung), folktales, and proverbs as well as magical spells, religious instruction, and recollections of the past.

Source: http://www.answers.com/topic/oral-tradition

performance poetry

Poetry that is specifically composed for performance before an audience. During the 1980s, the term came into popular usage to describe poetry written or composed for performance rather than print distribution. Performance poetry is linked to pop culture rather than to the great literature of the past, and tends to be denied credibility by academics, but has created a wider audience for poetry.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Performance_poetry

Performance poetry is not solely a postmodern phenomenon. It begins with the performance of oral poems in pre-literate societies. By definition, these poems were transmitted orally from performer to performer and were constructed using devices such as repetition, alliteration, rhyme and kennings to facilitate memorization and recall. The performers "composed" the poem from memory, using the version they had learned as a kind of mental template. This process allowed the performers to add their own flavor to the poem in question, although fidelity to the traditional versions of the poems was generally favored.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Performance_poetry

pitch

Determined by the rate of vibration of the vocal cords. The greater the number of vibrations per second, the higher the pitch. Voice control is dependent largely upon emotional control. When a person is excited or frightened, unconsciously the muscles around the voice box or larynx are tightened. The resulting tension in the vocal cords, according to the science of sound, produces a greater frequency of vibration and consequently a higher pitch.

parody

An imitation of the style of a particular writer, artist, or genre with deliberate exaggeration, sometimes for comic effect.

point of view

The position of the narrator in relation to the story; thus, the vantage point from which events are seen (e.g., the omniscient, the third-person, objective, or the first person point of view).

rhetorical devices and techniques

Elements of style used in speech or writing to achieve special effects, usually in order to persuade, interest, or impress an audience (e.g., rhythm, repetition, rhetorical question, emphasis, balance, dramatic pause).

rant

Violent or extravagant speech or writing.

simile

A figure of speech comparing two unlike things, introduced with the word “like” or “as”. Even though similes and metaphors are both forms of comparison, similes allow the two ideas to remain distinct in spite of their similarities, whereas metaphors compare two things without using “like” or “as”. For instance, a simile that compares a person with a bullet would go as follows: “John was a record-setting runner and as fast as a speeding bullet.” A metaphor might read something like, “John was a record-setting runner. That speeding bullet could zip past you without you even knowing he was there.”

Source: http://www.wikipedia.com

slam poetry

The competitive art of performance poetry. It puts a dual emphasis on writing and performance, encouraging poets to focus on what they're saying and how they're saying it. Toronto Poetry Slam explains the rules.

slang

Very informal language patterns or vocabulary used by particular groups, or in special contexts, or to reflect trends.

spoken word

An umbrella term that covers everything from performance poetry, to dub, to hip hop, to slam and storytelling. Each sub-genre has its own unique aesthetic. It’s a genre with a big territory, and a long tradition in this country. It could be argued that the Four Horsemen were some of Canada's performance poetry pioneers. Going back even further, spoken word as an art form can be seen to be an evolution of the oral tradition.

Some types of spoken word are close cousins to other, more easily defined art forms, such as stand up comedy and dramatic monologue, and of course poetry.

All forms, however, share a focus on orality, live performance, and the interplay between practitioner and audience. (By Andrea Thompson, poet and spoken word artist)

storyboard

A sequence of drawings, usually with some directions and dialogue, representing the shots planned for a movie or television production.

story grammar

The structure and elements of narrative text. In Western cultures, story grammars have the following elements: setting (time, place); characters; the introduction of a problem or conflict; events (e.g., the reaction of the central character and his or her attempts to solve the problem); a resolution or conclusion; and a theme. A story map is a graphic organizer that traces the story grammar.

storytelling

The ancient art of conveying events in words, images, and sounds often by improvisation or embellishment. Stories or narratives have been shared in every culture and in every land as a means of entertainment, education, preservation of culture and in order to instill moral values. Crucial elements of stories and storytelling include plot and characters, as well as the narrative point of view. Stories are frequently used to teach, explain, and/or entertain. Less frequently, but occasionally with major consequences, they have been used to mislead. There can be much truth in a story of fiction, and much falsehood in a story that uses facts.

Source: http://www.storytellingtoronto.org/

Storytelling as an art form

Though nearly all humans tell stories, many individuals have brought this skill to the level of art. Storytelling Festivals feature the work of these individuals. Elements of the storytelling art form include visualization (the seeing of images in the mind's eye), and vocal and bodily gestures. In many ways, the art of storytelling draws upon other art forms such as acting, oral interpretation, and performance studies. (From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Storytelling)

The stories we share with one another give our culture its values, beliefs, goals, and traditions, binding us together into a cohesive society, allowing us to work together with a common purpose. Storytelling lives at the heart of human experience—a compelling form of personal communication as ancient as language itself. Since the beginnings of humankind, we have shared through stories the events, beliefs, and values held dear by our families, communities, and cultures.

Source: http://www.callofstory.org/en/storytelling/default.asp

sound devices

Literary techniques in which words are selected for the sounds they make (e.g., rhyme assonance, consonance, alliteration, and onomatopoeia).

tone

A manner of speaking, writing, or creating that reveals the speaker's, author's, or producer's attitude towards a subject and/or audience. Tone may be formal, informal, intimate, solemn, somber, playful, serious, ironic, condescending, or many other possible attitudes. Here is an extensive list of tones.

vocal strategies

Performers use a variety of vocal strategies, including tone, pace, pitch, and volume with a sensitivity to audience needs and cultural differences.

voice

The style or character of a piece of writing conveyed through the author's use of vocabulary, sentence structure, imagery, rhythm, and other elements that contribute to the mood of the piece as a whole.

writer's notebook

A notebook in which individual students record notes, lists, drafts, observations, strategies, information, and ideas to support their writing development. The writer's notebook is personal – a place where writers capture moments and scenes that they want to remember and outline strategies that will help them develop as writers.

writing process

The process involved in producing a polished piece of writing. The writing process comprises several stages, each of which focuses on specific tasks. The main stages of the writing process are: planning for writing, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and publishing.

Glossary of Traditional Poetic Terms

Extensive list at http://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/display_rpo/poetterm.cfm