

Ten Basic Poetry and Literary Elements

1. **Simile** – a comparison of two unlike things using ‘like’ or ‘as’.
 - Example: “Some issues need to be addressed like envelopes”
 - Andre 3000 “13th Floor/Growing Old” on *Atliens*
2. **Metaphor** – a comparison of two unlike things *without* using like or as
 - Example: “God's a seamstress who tailorfitted my pain”
 - 50 Cent “Patiently Waiting” on *Get Rich or Die Tryin’*
3. **Personification** – an inanimate object is given human like characteristic
 - Example: “Yo, if rap gets jealous, words that were admitted // I used to be a public enemy, don't forget it”
 - K’naan “If Rap Gets Jealous”
4. **Hyperbole** – a great exaggeration
 - Example: “Put food on the table, fed the whole city”
 - Rick Ross “Valley of Death” on *Deeper Than Rap*
5. **Alliteration** –at the beginning of words, there is a repetition of consonants
 - Example: “Cuz it's cool when ya cause a cozy conditionin’ // Which we create, cuz that's our mission”
 - Snoop Dogg “Lodi Dodi” on *Doggystyle*
6. **Assonance** – anywhere in the words, there is a repetition of vowels
 - Example: “Hustlers, dealers and killers'ca move swift”
 - Nas “Made You Look” on *God’s Son*
7. **Consonance** – anywhere in words, there is repetition of consonant sounds
 - Example: “The most meanest emcee on this -- on this Earth”
 - Eminem “The Way I Am” on *The Marshall Mathers LP*
8. **Onomatopoeia** – words that sound like the name of the word
 - Example: “I’ll make you say, ‘wee ohh wee ohh wee, wee ohh wee ohh wee, wee ohh wee ohh wee,’ like a cop car.”
 - Lil Wayne “Mrs. Officer” on *Tha Carter III*
9. **Repetition** – words or phrases are repeated
 - Example: “I’m educated but I’m dumb on that microphone // Don't even bother, you'll get done on that microphone // I turn a father to a son on that microphone // I'm a revolver in the slum on that microphone // And tell the Source I don't need no microphone.”
 - Joell Ortiz (from Slaughterhouse) “Microphone” on *Slaughterhouse*
10. **Rhyme** – sound alike endings of words
 - a. **End rhyme** – At the end of lines, words rhyme.
 - Example: “Just think of all the people that you knew in the past // that passed on, they in heaven, found peace at last”
 - Tupac Shakur “Thugz Mansion”
 - b. **Internal rhyme** – Words that rhyme are in the middle of the line.
 - Example: “My function is to make much 'n' lay back munchin’”
 - Jay-Z “Can’t Knock the Hustle” on *Reasonable Doubt*

Work as a group with to identify as many literary elements as you can in the following quotations as well as the Langston Hughes poem on the following page:

1. “And in a slug fest I get physical like physicians
And visual like magicians with mystical mic traditions
Wicked wizardry, like a sorcerer and no remorse for ya
When I torture ya throughout the course of my orchestra”
- Eminem “Open Mic” on *Infinite*

2. “Player I grind, my focus is crime
Raw with the rhyme, I’m slick with the slime
My words are diamonds dug out a mine
Spit ‘em, polish, look how they shine”
- Big Boi “The Whole World”

3. “My rhymes never ricochet needless to say
I’m just like the word kill only minus the ‘K’
If you hear my track play close your eyes and pray
I’m just like the word basic only minus ‘B-A’”
- Benefit “Exact”

4. “If the game shakes me or breaks me
I hope it makes me a better man
Take a better stand
Put money in my mom’s hand”
- Notorious B.I.G. “Sky is the Limit”