

Getting into Poetry

Origins of poetry

Poetry, evolved from music and songs. In this lesson we learn about poetry that was created in different eras.

Lesson Outcomes

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- explain how poetry developed
- recognise the different elements of poetry

Curriculum Links

LO 2: Reading and Viewing

- explore and explain key features of texts and how they contribute to meaning

Lesson notes

The development of poetry through the ages

Prehistoric times

- Thousands of years ago, before the development of writing as a form of communication, the spoken word was the major method of relaying information. Ideas were expressed through songs, stories, body language and pictures.
- Songs usually dealt with stories of great deeds, crime, battles and human conflict.

Religion

- Some of the earliest examples of written poetry are found in religious books such as the Bible, the Koran and the Torah.

Middle Ages

- During the Middle Ages poetry was written in Latin and also dealt with predominantly religious topics.

The Renaissance

- During this time in history there was a renewed interest in art, literature, learning and beauty. People became more interested in individual, personal feelings and experiences too. During the Renaissance, poetry became extremely popular. The most famous form of poetry was the sonnet.

The Enlightenment

- An intellectual movement known as the Enlightenment dominated the eighteenth century. This was a time when people began to place great confidence in the power of the human being to control life and to question ideas. Some of these themes can be seen in the poetry of the time.

Industrial Revolution

- The Industrial Revolution began in the eighteenth century and continued into the nineteenth century. People became fascinated with science and technology and also started experimenting with human psychology.
- During the Industrial Revolution there was a strong feeling that man was losing touch with nature and this idea was reflected in the works of the poets of the time.

The Modern Era

- The time between 1901 and 1945 is known, in poetic terms, as the Modern Era.

- The poetry of the Modern Era displayed a few distinctive characteristics, including:
- Experimentation
- A break with the past
- A renewed interest in history and psychology
- Free verse as opposed to rhyming poetry
- Writing about previously taboo or unmentionable subjects

The Post-modern Era

- The time period from 1945 to 1989 is known as the Post-modern era in poetry. This period saw poets parodying and questioning the political establishment. Big business dominated politics and poets began to rebel against the corruption, which they believed existed in these areas.
- In South Africa, the Post-modern era is defined by the emergence of protest poetry. Protest poetry was written as a backlash against the Apartheid regime and supported the rights of all racial groups in South Africa.

The Global Era

- The current poetic period has been called the global era by many academics.
- Because of the many technologically advanced communication tools that are available, such as the Internet and television, people have easy access to information in all parts of the world. This enables people to connect with influences from around the world and explore other cultures.

TASK

1. Choose one of the poems you have studied in class and research the poet to discover:
 - a. where he/ she lived
 - b. when he/ she lived
 - c. which era the poem corresponds with.
2. Find an example of the language which the poet has used to convey the meaning of the poem.
 - a. Pick out a concentrated description and write it out in greater detail.
 - b. Write down the central message of the poem.