Understanding about verse, rhythm, meter, and other features used in poems will help you write and talk about them.

Read  A poem has features you can both see and hear.

Each line in a poem is called a **verse**. Several verses grouped together form **stanzas**. These are **structural elements** you see.

Other elements in a poem are ones you hear. **Meter** sets up a pattern of strong and weak syllables in each verse. **Rhythm** is the regular pattern of sounds in the whole poem, like the beats in music. **Rhyme** repeats the same ending sounds in different words. Poets use these elements to express their ideas in new and surprising ways.

Read the poem below. Look and listen for structural elements.

**Bigfoot’s Complaint**

_by John Hansen_

Why do they have to call me that?
I’m more than just a pair of feet.
If humans took a closer look,
They’d see my eyes are rather sweet.

But I walk these woods and hide my face
My footprints left in mud and snow.
The rest of me they’ll never see
So I am called by what they know.
**Think** Use what you’ve learned about structural elements to complete the chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>verse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stanza</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rhyme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Talk** Share your chart with a partner.
- Did you list the same elements, descriptions, and examples?
- Which parts of the poem do you see?
- Which parts do you hear?

**Academic Talk**
Use these words to talk about the text.
- **structural element**
- **verse**
- **stanza**
- **meter**
- **rhythm**
- **rhyme**
While I am working hard at school,
To master math and this and that,
At home Big Willie sleeps a lot
And dreams of chasing neighbors’ cats.

5    Big Willie shakes himself awake
When through the door I come at three.
A furry bullet knocks me down.
A leash is dropped upon my knee.

We’re on the street. No time to waste.

10   A million squirrels must be treed.
Some cats must be tormented next.
Will does this all at double speed.

Around the block and up the street,
He travels at the speed of sound,

15   And I, attached to him by leash,
Am led around and ’round and ’round.

I must confess I like the speed.
It’s fun to travel zip–zam–zoom.
But sometimes when I’m out with Will,

20   I wonder, who is walking whom?
Explore
How do the elements in “Walking Big Willie” contribute to the poem’s structure and meaning?

Think
1. The pattern of strong (stressed) and weak syllables in a verse is its **meter**. Each verse in this poem has eight syllables, and every other syllable is **STRONG**. Study the meter of verse 1. Then underline the strong syllables in verse 2.

   - **Verse 1** While I am **WORKing** **HARD** at **SCHOOL**,
   - **Verse 2** To master math and this and that,

2. Complete the chart below by adding information about the elements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pattern of rhymes</td>
<td>Repeats sounds that help shape the poem stanzas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creates a pattern of strong and weak beats in a verse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creates a sense of sadness, excitement, or other feelings beyond the poet’s words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Talk
3. Describe the structural elements used in “Walking Big Willie.” How do they work together to create a feeling of exciting, speedy walks?

   **HINT** Reread the poem to figure out what elements of poetry the poet chose to use.

Write
4. **Short Response** Describe how the structural elements in “Walking Big Willie,” including meter, create certain effects, or feelings. Use the space on page 304 to write your answer.
There lived a sage in days of yore,
And he a handsome pigtail wore;
But wondered much and sorrowed more,
Because it hung behind him.

He mused upon this curious case,
And swore he’d change the pigtail’s place,
And have it hanging at his face,
Not dangling there behind him.

Says he, “The mystery I’ve found,—
I’ll turn me round”—he turned him round;
But still it hung behind him.

Then round and round, and out and in,
All day the puzzled sage did spin;
In vain—it mattered not a pin,
The pigtail hung behind him.

And right and left, and round about,
And up and down, and in and out,
He turned; but still the pigtail stout
Hung steadily behind him.

And though his efforts never slack,
And though he twist and twirl and tack,
Alas! still faithful to his back,
The pigtail hangs behind him.

1 sage: a wise person

Close Reader Habits

How does the poet use rhythm in this poem for effect? As you reread the poem, underline the verse in each stanza that has a different beat than the others.
**Think**  Use what you learned from reading the poem to respond to the following questions.

1. Which statement best describes the last verse of each stanza?
   - A. It uses a different meter and does not rhyme with the last words of the other verses.
   - B. It uses the same meter and rhymes with words in the first verse of every stanza.
   - C. It uses the same meter, but only the last two verses in the stanza rhyme.
   - D. It uses a different meter, but the last verse rhymes with the other verses in the stanza.

2. What effect does the rhythm of each stanza have on a reader’s understanding of how the sage feels?
   - A. The change in the last line creates a feeling of excitement.
   - B. The change in the last line creates a feeling of disappointment.
   - C. The change in the last line creates a feeling of boredom and restlessness.
   - D. The change in the last line creates a feeling of nervousness and concern.

**Talk**

3. Explain how the poet’s use of structural elements adds to the meaning of the narrative poem. How do they combine to provide a clearer picture of the sage’s problem in “A Tragic Story”? Make a list of your ideas.

**Write**

4. **Short Response**  Describe how the poet’s use of structural elements adds to the meaning of “A Tragic Story.” Use at least two details from the passage to support your response. Use the space provided on page 305 to write your response.
Short Response  Describe how the structural elements in “Walking Big Willie,” including meter, create certain effects, or feelings.

Walking BIG WILLIE

Don’t forget to check your writing.
A TRAGIC STORY

4 Short Response  Describe how the poet’s use of structural elements adds to the meaning of “A Tragic Story.” Use at least two details from the passage to support your response.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Check Your Writing

☐ Did you read the prompt carefully?
☐ Did you put the prompt in your own words?
☐ Did you use the best evidence from the text to support your ideas?
☐ Are your ideas clearly organized?
☐ Did you write in clear and complete sentences?
☐ Did you check your spelling and punctuation?
“A very fine Friday,” Fiona did say,  
And set out to write up a plan for her day.  
“The first thing I’ll do,” said Fiona with flair  
“Is find out who planted this gum in my hair.”

For Fiona, just moments ago, had tried prying  
Her head from her pillow, which made her start crying.  
For stuck ’twixt her head and the pillow so dewy  
Was a wad of gum—sticky, icky, and chewy.

“Who did this thing?” asked Fiona, whose eyes  
Narrowed to slits of the tiniest size.  
“Maybe a kid on whom I’ve played a prank—  
But that’s nearly everyone!” Fiona’s heart sank.

Yes, it’s true, our Fiona was known as a trickster  
Neither parents nor doctors nor teachers could fix her.  
Every soul in her school had at some point been bitten  
By her tricks, though she seemed like an innocent kitten.
So it made all the sense in the world, she admitted, 
That the gum in her hair was a message to quit it. 
“I’ve played some great tricks on that crybaby, Jack. 
Bet he put this old gum in my hair to get back.”

She would have to get back at that back-getter, Jack, 
And she thoughtfully planned out the perfect attack. 
Jack’s habits were something that Fiona knew 
So she set out to replace his shampoo with glue.

But Fiona, in haste to avenge her gummed head, 
Had missed all the gum wrappers under her bed. 
She’d forgotten her own constant habit of chewing 
And that the past night, that’s what she’d been doing.
The Crocodile

by Lewis Carroll

from The Hunting of the Snark and Other Poems and Verses

How doth the little crocodile
Improve his shining tail,
And pour the waters of the Nile
On every golden scale!

5 How cheerfully he seems to grin!
How neatly spread his claws,
And welcomes little fishes in
With gently smiling jaws!
Think  Use what you learned from reading the poems to respond to the following questions.

1  Complete the chart below by using options from the box. Some options may not be used at all.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>glue</th>
<th>scale</th>
<th>“And pour the waters of the Nile”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tail</td>
<td>flew</td>
<td>“Was a wad of gum— sticky, icky, and chewy.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sorrow</td>
<td>frail</td>
<td>playfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knew</td>
<td>anger</td>
<td>cleverness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grin</td>
<td>weak</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>“Revenge”</th>
<th>“The Crocodile”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is an example of a verse in the poem?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are two words that rhyme in the poem?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is one effect the poet created by using meter and rhythm?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2  In “Revenge,” what is the feeling the poet most likely wanted readers to experience by using long verses and a fast rhythm?
   - A  how upset Fiona is about finding the gum in her hair
   - B  how tired Fiona is after waking up in the morning
   - C  how happy Fiona is about all the pranks she has played
   - D  how determined Fiona is to play even more pranks
3. What is the main purpose of the last stanza in “The Crocodile”?
   A. to show the crocodile is crafty
   B. to show the crocodile eats fish
   C. to show the crocodile is hungry
   D. to show the crocodile is a cheater

4. This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then answer Part B.

   **Part A**
   Read line 25 from the poem “Revenge.”
   
   But Fiona, in haste to **avenge** her gummed head,

   What does the word **avenge** mean as it is used in this line?
   A. to stick something together quickly
   B. to show who is now in control
   C. to teach an important lesson
   D. to punish for an earlier action

   **Part B**
   Which line from the poem “Revenge” provides the **best** clue for the meaning of **avenge**?
   A. “Neither parents nor doctors nor teachers could fix her.”
   B. “That the gum in her hair was a message to quit it.”
   C. “She would have to get back at that back-getter, Jack.”
   D. “Had missed all the gum wrappers under her bed.”
Write

5 Short Response What structural elements do the poets of “Revenge” and “The Crocodile” use to create certain patterns and feelings? Include details from each poem to support your response.


Learning Target

In this lesson, you learned about the structural elements in poems. Describe how understanding about a poem’s structure helps you write and speak about the poem.