TERMS FOR POETRY

Form:

stanza pattern: how many stanzas are there and how many lines are in each stanza?
stanza: group of related lines (like a paragraph in prose)
couplet: two-line stanza
tercet: three-line stanza
quatrain: four-line stanza
quintain: five-line stanza
sestet: six-line stanza
septet: seven-line stanza
octave: eight-line stanza

rhyme: do any of the lines rhyme and if so, what is the pattern of that rhyme?
pattern: call the word at end of first line A and every line which rhymes with it also A, the next different line and its rhymes B, the next C, etc.
AABBCC . . . is called rhyming couplets
ABABCDCD . . . is called alternate rhyme

line length: how many feet are in each line?
foot: a unit of rhythmic measure containing one stressed and one or two unstressed syllables
pattern: count the syllables in the line - if the total is divisible by two you are looking at a duple meter - if by three then a triple meter
terms:
monometer: one foot
dimeter: two feet
trimeter: three feet
tetrameter: four feet (second most common)
pentameter: five feet (most common)
hexameter: six feet

rhythm: is the rhythm in the poem regular and if so, what is the pattern of the rhythm?
duple meters:
  iambic: unstressed - stressed
trochaic: stressed - unstressed
pyrrhic: unstressed - unstressed (occurs only as exception to pattern)
spondee: stressed - stressed (occurs only as exception to pattern)

triple meters:
daicylic: stressed - unstressed - unstressed
anapestic: unstressed - unstressed - stressed
amphibrachic: unstressed - stressed - unstressed

clues to scansion (the marking of the rhythm):

  mark stressed syllables with a slash above and unstressed with a semicircle
  start with the words that have more than one syllable; they will have stresses or not just as they do in normal speech (if the word language gets stressed on the first syllable in normal speech, then that first syllable will be stressed in poetry, e.g.)
  next, look for relatively unimportant words like articles (the, a, an) and prepositions (in, of, at, etc.); they are most likely unstressed
  if the last word in a line has one syllable, it is stressed
  the most important single-syllable words in the line will be stressed; often these are nouns serving as subject or object, a main verb, etc.
  helping verbs (has in "has made," e.g.) are usually unstressed
Figures of Speech:

- **metaphor**: comparison of two or more unlike things without the use of *like* or *as*
- **simile**: comparison of two of more unlike things using *like* or *as*
- **apostrophe**: direct address to an object or a dead person
- **paradox**: a statement which contains an apparent contradiction
- **synecdoche**: a reference to a whole by only one of its parts
- **personification**: description of something not human using human qualities or traits
- **hyperbole**: exaggeration or overstatement for effect
- **understatement**: description which includes or evokes less emotional response than seems necessary
- **oxymoron**: two-word expression in which the adjective seems contradictory to the noun
- **rhetorical question**: question which implies its answer or requires no answer

Sound Devices:

- **rhyme**: repetition of the same vowel and consonant sounds in the final syllable of two or more words
- **assonance**: repetition of the same vowel sounds in the presence of changing consonants
- **consonance**: repetition of the same consonant sounds in the presence of changing vowels
- **internal rhyme**: rhyme occurring within the same line of poetry
- **alliteration**: repetition of initial sounds in two or more words

Types of Poems:

- **narrative**: tells a story
  - **ballad**: narrative in quatrains with alternating rhyme and line length of tetrameter or shorter
  - **epic**: narrative of significant length addressing issues of national concern through the heroic ventures of a morally admirable but human central character
- **dramatic**: multiple characters interacting in the present time (like actors on a stage)
- **lyric**: addresses emotions or abstract ideas and has no story line
  - **elegy**: subject is a death and the speaker's dealing with grief
  - **encomium**: a poem of praise or tribute
  - **ode**: an elegiac, serious poem written to or about one person or thing, usually of some length, usually having regular rhythm and rhyme
  - **sonnet**: fourteen-lined, rhymed, iambic pentameter poem
    - **Shakespearean**: three quatrains and a couplet, rhymed ABAB CDCD EFEF GG
    - **Italian**: an octave and a sestet, rhymed ABBA ABBA CDCDCD or ABBA ABBA CDECDE