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Translation Department

Third Year
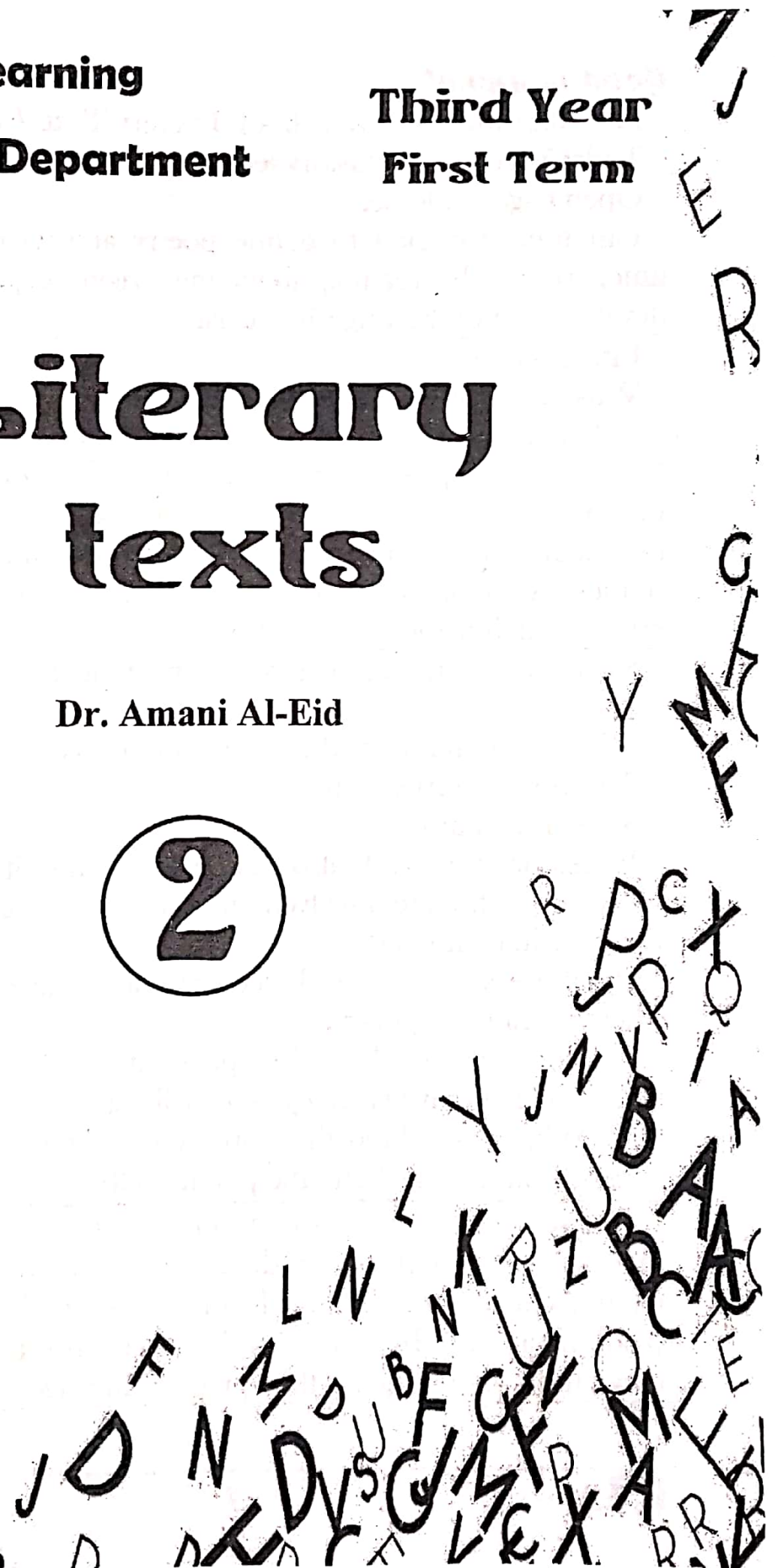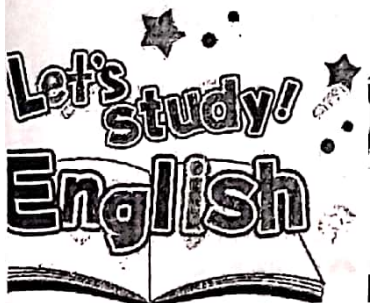## First Term

Literary texts

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②

Let's study! English

Good morning!

Let's start with our lovely book Literary Texts for Translators.

Today's lecture is a history lecture.

Open page 7, please.

Last time, we tried to define poetry and its element. This time, we will be reading about the origin of poetry and the development of the English language.

> Introduction
>
> **What is poetry?**
>
> Robert Frost, an American poet, is reported to have said that "poetry is what gets lost in translation." This non-definition by one of the most famous and celebrated American poets of the twentieth century constitutes a memorable contribution to the numerous attempts by English poets, intellectuals and literary critics, to define the nature of poetry."

So, poetry by its very nature is very difficult to comprehend, and we will see why.

Why the definition of Robert Frost is a frustrating comment?

To whom is it frustrating?

Students: Translators

Professor: yes, and also for readers, but it is more for translators who are involved in translating poetry from one language into another.

What are some of the difficulties that we face as translators when we translate poetry?

1. The understanding of the poetry itself
2. The figurative language is a challenge
3. What lies behind the words (not only look at the literal meaning but comprehend the poem itself)

> "These difficulties are more apparent in the case of poetry than they are in prose or drama, since a poem, in its very nature, conveys heightened forms of perception, experience, [and] meaning." In other words, poetic production is more condensed, more intense than prosaic language.

When I say "prosaic language", what do I mean?

Student: prose is the opposite of poetry.

Professor: give an example, please.

Students: novels, short stories, anecdotes

Professor: right, and by drama I mean plays.

The nature of drama and prose is very different from the nature of poetry. The language used in poetry, the poetic language is condensing and intensive because it talks about emotions, feelings, suffering of human being, etc.

It is very precise and very concise in line, but the meaning is huge.

It often attempts to rely on understanding of an experience or an explication of an idea with a sense of urgency in terms of space (the compactness of the text) and time (the compactness of meaning)."

So, we need to understand what lies behind or between the lines and to be able to decode the text itself.

The Origin of Poetry

How did poetry originate?

Do you have any idea about development of poetry or origin of poetry?

Student: Shakespeare?

Professor: no, when I say Shakespeare, I am just talking about the 16th century. Poetry is way too old than Shakespeare.

The beginnings of poetry in most cultures are found in the quintessential human need, individual or collective, to communicate in memorable words the wildest spectrum of human activities.

Quintessential: perfect

What are they talking about in these three lines? Are they actually talking the beginning of poetry?

They are talking about the importance of poetry.

Why is poetry important?

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Poetry is important because it addresses human need whether this need is individualistic or collective, and by collective I mean society.

Also, it is important because the purpose of poetry is to communicate in memorable words the widest spectrum of human activity. The activity could be social, political, etc.

This is why the beginning of poetry is often associated with singing and music.

This is how poetry originated. It originated as an oral form as spoken tradition; it wasn't written. This was before writing.

So, it is as old as human civilization, and basically, as old as culture.

Before the invention of writing as a way to record and preserve for posterity the annals of a given culture or society, oral poetry with its rhythms, rhymes and repetitive sound patterns prevailed as a vehicle for collective consciousness and identity.

Posterity: generations.

How oral poetry was important for people at that time?

It is a vehicle for collective consciousness and identity.

Vehicle means a medium.

So, it was a medium for preserving cultural uniqueness, a medium for preserving identity, and that is why it went on and on from one generation to another.

It is safe to presume that poetic production at one stage acquired an important religious status in many cultures where the lines between the sacred and the artistic were not as clearly defined as they are in many literary traditions of the world today.

They are still talking about the origin of poetry.

It had almost a religious status for ancient cultures.

When you think about the origin of drama and the origin of the theatre, the theatre originated in ancient Greek theatres. That is how drama and theatre originated.

It originated as a religious ritual, and drama at that time was written in poetry. This is how poetry began.

It began in religious ritual. At that time, thousands of years ago, it was very difficult for people to differentiate and distinguish, to draw a line between the sacred (religious) on one hand, and the artistic and creative the other hand.

English poetry: historical overview
The history of the evolution of the English poetry is closely related to the history of the English language itself.

What is this paragraph about?
Students: evolution of English poetry
Professor: and by evolution I mean...
Students: development
Professor: so, in this paragraph, we know from the first sentence that it is going to be about development of poetry. What do we call the first sentence of a paragraph?
Student: topic sentence.
Professor: that's right. So, this is the topic sentence.

Unlike Arabic for example, the English language had undergone tremendous changes on syntax, morphology and spelling over the last millennium. This is why scholars of the history of the English language speak of Old English (ca. 650-1066), Middle English (ca. 1066-1500) and Modern English (ca. 1500-present day). Each is a language that is not mutually comprehensible with the other two. As a result an educated native speaker of Modern English needs to take a specialized course in Middle English before being able to read most documents written in that language.

Next Friday, we will be studying William Shakespeare for the first time, and you will understand what I am talking about here.

It is very hard not only for us being foreign language learners, but it is also very difficult for native speaker to understand what Shakespeare is talking about in his sonnets because it is old English or we call it sometimes early modern English, but it is

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actually old English. Even when you study poets before Shakespeare, it is way more difficult than reading Shakespeare. Sometimes, it actually takes time to comprehend the language they use because the language that they used then reflected the time and the place they lived in.

The structures of English poetry, its rhythms, and at times, its very themes, often reflect these changes in the language itself, and in the culture as a whole. So, Old English poetry is foreign not only to the modern British ear but also to the sensibilities and tastes of the people who speak the language natively today.

So, when people living in England today read old English poetry, this is like reading a new language for them. Like us when we read for example Al-Motanabi or Amro Alkais.

So, this is a historical overview of development of English. Let's start with **Old English**.

* *

Old English

Old English traces it's beginning to the Anglo-Saxon Conquest of the southern parts of Britain. The Angels and the Saxons were Germanic tribes that poured into Britain in successive waves of conquest and migration. The origin of these tribes explains why Old English "displays it's kinship with other Germanic languages ...much more clearly than does contemporary British and American English.

So, how did old English originate?

By the conquest of the Anglo-Saxon who invaded Britain, and these Anglo-Saxon were Germanic tribes. They influenced the English language. That's why when you read old English you will find traces from German language in the English language.

To the ears and eyes of the native speaker of Modern English, Old English sounds and reads like a very foreign language.

How did old English poetry survive?

> Old English poetry survived "thanks to the early Christian conversions of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and to the literacy associated with monastic culture

What is "monastic culture"?

It is the culture of the monks and the nuns who live in the monastery.

So, how did the old English survive?

It survived because early Christian arrived to the area. They took over; this is what happened, and this is history. They took over and preserved the language.

> The connection between the spread of literacy and the advent of Christianity in Britain explains the religious themes and subject matter of Old English poetry. Although strong secular pre-Christian themes and motifs continued to manifest themselves in the literary production of that era.

What do you understand?

So, with the coming of Christianity to old Britain, they managed to preserve old poetry by the spread of literacy, by the invention of writing and because of the calling of Christianity and having that pagan tradition. There was a kind of a marriage between the pagan culture and Christianity itself. So, the poetry reflected that kind of change (historical and social change) by using religious or Christian themes as well as pagan themes. So, we had on one hand the marriage between the Christian and the pagan in poetry itself, and we had an interest in the secular and the non-secular. This is as far as old English is concern.

Now, the second stage of English development is Middle English.

* *

Middle English

In 1066 The French-speaking Normans conquered Britain Within few years of the decisive battle of Hastings that sealed the fate of the British Islands, the predominantly Anglo-Saxon population of Britain found itself under the control of a French- speaking ruling class.

First, they had the Germanic Anglo-Saxon, then they had the Christians, and now they have the French.

Old English had to gradually give way to what we call today Middle English, a new variety of English that was greatly and increasingly exhibiting marked French influences.

So, when you study Middle English such as Chaucer, for example, you will find French words.

Added to influence already exerted by Latin, the sacred language of the Catholic Church, the transmutation of French vocabulary, idioms and grammatical structures into Old English meant that by the 13th century we see examples of poems mixing French, English and Latin (NPE, 335).

At that time, Latin was the sacred language of the Catholic Church. It was also the language of the rich people. Then, they had all these influences: English, French and Latin that influenced poetry writing.

This rich inter-linguistic exchange and cross-cultural fertilization resulted not only in the emergence of novel venues for poetic expression, but also in superb works of literature. Unarguably the most notable contributions are those of Geoffrey Chaucer in the 14th Century whose life and work exhibit marked French influences (OCEE, 188). Chaucer's most celebrated work is The Canterbury Tales, a collection of stories narrated by pilgrims on their way to visit the shrine of the famous English saint Thomas à Becket. The following lines from the Canterbury Tales may serve as a good example of how Middle English looked and sounded:

Let's look at the first verse by Chaucer. Can you translate it into modern English?

Students: no

The poem:

Why sholde I noghte as wel eek telle yow al
The portreiture that was upon the wal
Withinne the temple of myghty Mars the rede?

> *Al peynted was the wal, in lengthe and brede,*
> *Lyk to the estres of the grisly place*
> *That highte the grete temple of Mars in Trace*
> *In thilke colde, frosty regioun*
> *There as Mars hath his sovereyn mansioun.*

What is "portreiture"?

Students: portrait

Professor: Who is "Mars"?

Student: the god of war in Roman methodology

Professor: very good.

What kind of figure of speech do we have in the second line? "Referring to Mars"

It is a classical allusion because the poet here is referring to the Roman god of war "Mars".

What do we notice about the language?

It is very different from the modern English, un-understandable.

Are there any French words?

Regioun, mansioun

So, we can see the French influence.

Let's read the translation into modern English.

> In modern English, the above lines would be:
> *Why should I not as well also tell you*
> *Of the paintings that were upon the wall*
> *Inside the temple of mighty Mars the Red?*
> *The walls were covered in paintings, in length and breadth*
> *Similar in style to the interior of the terrible place*
> *That is known as the great temple of Mars, in Thrace.*
> *It is in that cold and frosty area*
> *That the home of Mars is to be found.*

It is totally different, right?

The reader would most likely notice the differences in spelling between the two versions. Some are easily noticed (rede/ red and wal/ wall). Others are more difficult to detect (brede/ breadth and sovereyn/ sovereign). More challenging for

> the reader of Modern English are the archaic words such as eek (also) and portrieture (painting).

What is "archaic"?

Old-fashioned, out of use

> The above passage is also significant in that in exemplifies a shift that we see in English poetry, indeed in most European traditions of the late Medieval and early Renaissance periods, an interest in classical allusions and themes.

What is "shift"?

Change

What is "medieval"?

The adjective of middle ages

> The reference to Mars, the ancient god of war shows the tension that begins to rise between the sacred and the profane or the secular. One of the pilgrims of Chaucer's work is depicting an image in the center of which stands the temple of a pagan god.

I think they put the secular and the profane in the same boat because they are referring to paganism here, In contrast to the sacred from a Christian perspective.

> As has been mentioned above, the pilgrims were telling stories on their way to another, albeit figurative "temple," that of a Christian saint. This conflation of the sacred (the Christian, or the dogmatic) with the secular or the profane (the non-Christian or the anti-Christian) becomes an important trend to follow throughout the history of not only English literature, but European literatures and arts in general, even to the present day.

So, even today when you read modern English poetry, you will find an interest in methodologies as well as in Abrahamic religion. So, this interest in paganism is still alive even in literature until today.

* * *

Now, we move to Modern English.

When I say modern English, which period am I referring to?

Students: Renaissance

Professor: when I say Renaissance, I am talking about early modern English.

More specific, I will say 20th century.

Modern English

Unlike the circumstances that led to the emergence of Middle-English language and literature, no sudden or singular traumatic event leads to the next stage of transformation that resulted in the birth of Modern English.

Let me ask you a question: why does the writer refer to the events that shacked the history of old English and Middle English as "traumatic"? And, what is the meaning of "trauma"?

Trauma: something very harmful, a shock.

When we talk about what we had in our country, unfortunately, we talk about trauma survivors and victims'.

So, why did the writer choose the word "traumatic events" to describe the history of Old English and Middle English?

Student: because there is a very huge shift between the old English and the modern English.

Professor: interesting, because of the very huge shift between the previous stages of poetry and the modern English.

Student: because of the wars and the conquest

Professor: because of the conquest and the wars that took place. Anglo-Saxon, Christians and French, all of these people occupied old Britain. That is why they called it traumatic history.

A host of factors contributed to the surfacing of the English that we know today, which was founded on the dialect of the East Midlands in Middle English (OCEL, 319). This is the language of such great poets in the English literary tradition as Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Wordsworth, and T.S. Eliot. It is a language that had undergone, and continues to undergo tremendous changes through time. Although we speak of Modern English as a language that begins roughly around the

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> beginning of the 16h century, the first serious attempt at standardizing the spelling of this language, and canonizing the usage of its vocabulary did not come until the 18th century in the monumental work of Samuel Johnson.

So, they are saying in this paragraph that English language especially modern English language has gone through big changes since the time of William Shakespeare until today.

What is the meaning of "canonizing"?

It comes from the word "canon" which means...

Student: customizing.

Professor: I accept that. It means: Making it formal, making it usable for public. It is customized and categorized in a dictionary. This is the meaning of canonized. Now, we can study its vocabulary in a dictionary for the first time in 18th century thanks to Samuel Johnson. Believe it or not, the first dictionary was in 18th century; it is very recent.

They explain the meaning of "standardizing and canonizing" in the next paragraph.

> In 1755, Johnson published his Dictionary of the English Language, which contained "definitions of over 40.000 words, illustrating them with about 114.000 quotations drawn from every field of learning and literature from the time of Sidney onwards (OCEL 514)."

This is how the language came to be as a language. Now, you can study it and many other branches of sciences emerged as a result of having words in a writing form (verb, noun), and people started studying it like linguists such as Samuel Johnson.

> Success in defining the beginnings of modern English poetry may appear to be as elusive as the attempt to define all the factors that led to the birth of the Modern English language.

What do we mean by "elusive"?

Difficult to catch

> For all intents and purposes, however, it is generally agreed upon that we can consider as a starting point those poets whose

> works exhibit a genuine impact of Renaissance style and sensibilities, and a marked departure from medieval spirit

So, we want to talk about the origins of or the birth of Modern language; we can go back to Renaissance poets to study their style and how they made a departure from medieval English.

> The first such poet to consistently reflect such a shift is Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503- 42). The editors of the New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics explain the significance of Wyatt's precursory work:
> A generation after [Wyatt's] death, Puttenham commended him and Surrey for introducing Italian polish into "our rude and homely manner of vulgar poetry,"...

This is how they described the medieval poetry and medieval language as rude and vulgar. So, by having poets, such as William Shakespeare and Sir Thomas Wyatt, they kind of civilized and polished the language and made it sharper. So, thanks to William Shakespeare and Sir Thomas Wyatt the language became softer.

> A generation after [Wyatt's] death, Puttenham commended him and Surrey for introducing Italian polish into "our rude and homely manner of vulgar poetry," and praised them as "the first reformers of our English metre and style ... Wyatt's love poems...express the laments of the unrequited or deserted lover rather than the joys of mutability; and his sonnets introduce many of the [themes and motifs] that became so popular in the Elizabethan sonnet:

Metre: بحر شعري

Praise Wyatt, because he improved the English language and reformed it, and by reform I mean change, he change the metre and the style.

Unrequited love: love from one side

What the "sonnet" is?

Type of poem: It has 14 lines. It is written in specific metre, and it consists of three Quatrains and a Couplet. In a minute, I will be talking about it.

> Sexual love as a hunt, the lover as a ship running aground on the rocks. Technically, Wyatt is important for the musical quality of his lyrics...

Actually, it was Thomas Wyatt who introduced the sonnet into English; originally the sonnet is not English; the sonnet is Italian. Word "sonnet" comes from the Italian word "sonneto", and it means a little song.

So, the poet who introduced the sonnet into English poetry is Sir Thomas Wyatt.

> Scholars have argued- and still disagree-whether the broken, hesitant rhythms of his lyrics result from our ignorance of 16th century pronunciation or are a deliberate departure from regularity in the interests of artistic expressiveness (339).
>
> The impact of the poets of that period appears, therefore, to be multifaceted. Modern English poetry, and by extension literature, began with shifts in meter and style. These changes reflected influences from the Italian tradition, and were enhanced by a departure from Middle English forms and themes. The Elizabethan period marks the beginning of these changes, and of Modern poetry.

* IN THE EXAM, I DON'T BRING QUESTIONS ABOUT DATES. IT IS ALL QUESTIONS ABOUT COMPREHENSION.

When I say "the musical quality of his lyrics," lyrics refer to poems; they are poems that can be song accompanied with music.

When I am saying "musicality or music quality," I am referring to the metre.

By "regularity in the interests of artistic expressiveness," I mean that Wyatt made a departure; he has left a footprint/

milestone in the field of poetry writing by writing his poems and by introducing the sonnets into English, how?

By departing from the old traditional conventions and introducing us to new ways of writing and new ways of poetic metres

* *

Now, let me teach you a little bit about **poetic metres.**
So what is it?

❖ **Poetic Metres:** البحور الشعرية

- The rhythmic structure of a verse
- The regular recurrence of accents

Verse: is a line of poetry.
Recurrence: repetition
Accents: stressed syllables

In poetry we have different kinds of feet; we have 5 feet, and the singular from feet is called foot.

➢ **Foot**

It is a unit of a measurement. It helps you to measure a line of poetry and then you can know which metre it follows.

1. Iambic: unstressed syllable followed by stressed one.
2. Trochaic: stressed followed by unstressed syllable.
3. Spondaic: two stressed syllables.

They are actually five, but I will focus on three.
Examples:
Repeat: two syllables, the stress is on the second syllable. (the sign of the stress is ´). So, this is *iambic.*

Angel: two syllables, the stress is on the first syllable, so it is *trochaic.*

Ice-cream: two syllables, both of them are stressed, so it is *spondaic.*

Reaper: two syllables, the stress is on the first syllable, so it is *trochaic.* (like teacher, doctor)

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Unite: two syllables, the stress is on the second syllable, so it is iambic.

Unit: two syllables, the stress is on the first syllable, so it is trochaic.

Today: two syllables, the stress is on the second syllable, so it is iambic. (also betray)

Heartbreak: two syllables, both of them are stressed, so it is spondaic.

If I say to a student "out out," what is this? What kind of foot do I have?

Spondaic

So, a foot is a unit of a measurement that is repeated in a line to give a steady rhythm to a poem.

➢ How to identify the metre?

Study how many syllables I have in a line and how many feet. By measuring the number of feet, I know the kind of metre that I have.

In English, the metres come from the Greek language, and there are eight types of metres.

➢ Types of metres:
1. Monometre (mono: one)
2. Dimeter. (two)
3. Trimeter. (three)
4. Tetrameter. (four)
5. Pentameter. (five)
6. Hexameter. (six)
7. Heptameter. (seven)
8. Octameter. (eight)

What do these numbers refer to?
Number of foot
So, in monometer I have one foot, in dimeter I have two feet, etc.

Can you explain the meaning of a rhythm? Either show me an example of a rhythm or give me one word in English explaining it.

Student: heart beat

Professor: thank you, rhythm is a beat.

Now, let's look at a verse by William Shakespeare sonnet 18.

(I want you next time to bring sonnet 18 with you because it is not in the book; google it and bring it down on a piece of paper)

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

Thai art more lovely and more temperate

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of may

Buds: small flowers

The first word "shall", how many syllables?

One syllable

I: one syllable

Shall + I: the first foot

The second foot: compare

Compare: two syllables

Thee to: the third foot

A summ: the fourth foot

Er's day: the fifth foot

So, we have five feet. So, it is a pentameter.

It is written in **iambic pentameter**.

Every Shakespearian sonnet is written in iambic pentameter.

When we read a poem, how do we discover the meter?

By the number of the feet

If you pronounce incorrectly, you will not be able to identify the meter.

Meter is about sound not about spelling.

Pentameter is very easy to recognize and memorize because it is similar to our heart beats.

Pentameter is exciting in romantic and physical, and it alerts the audience.

The second line:

Thai art: first foot
More love: second foot
Ly and: third foot
More tem: forth foot
Perate: fifth foot
Only sonnets are written in iambic pentameter.
So, this is how meter sounds; it has 5 beats in a line.
5 beats: 10 syllables.
The third line:
Rough winds: the first foot
Do shake: the second foot
The dar: the third foot
Ling buds: the forth foot
Of may: the fifth foot

➤ We don't stress prepositions and articles (of, the...)
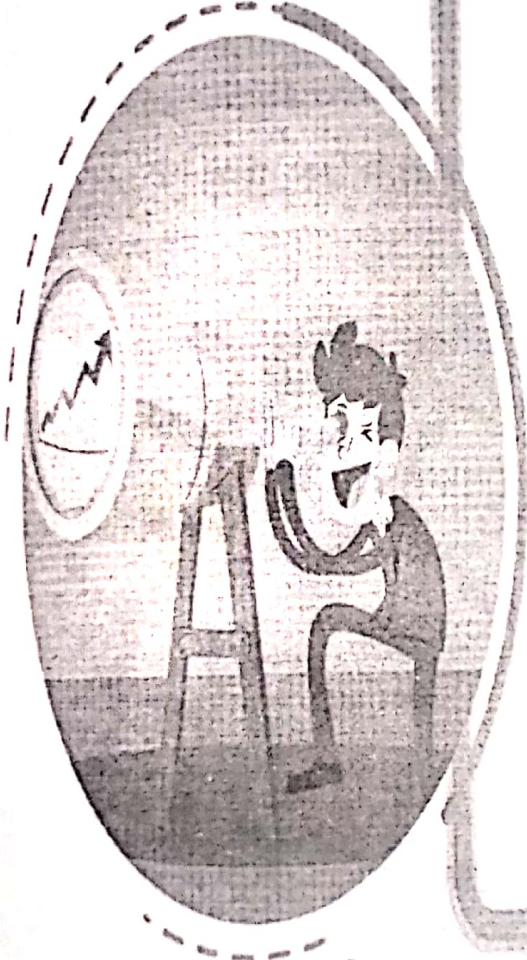➤ *I will bring you questions about the meter in the exam.*

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That's all is all for today
See you next time.

لن تستطيع تبديل الماضي لذلك ركز على صنع مستقبل عظيم

You can't change the

past , so focus on making

a great future

#كل_يوم_مقولة_الأنوار