

Alliteration is the repetition of initial consonant sounds. Poets use alliteration to create musical effects and draw attention to certain words or ideas, and to imitate sounds. In the following lines Christina Rossetti uses alliteration to imitate the sound of the wind:

Who has seen the wind

Neither you nor I:

But when the trees bow down their heads

The wind is passing by.

Consonance and alliteration, as we have seen, involve the repetition of consonant sounds. **Assonance** refers to the repetition of vowel sounds in words next to or near to one another: "take ... fate".

Ways Into Poetry

Poems give a lot of people a lot of pleasure. Sometimes a poem appeals to you straight away. At other times a new poem will have to be read several times and thought about or talked about before you start to enjoy it. However, a poem can give you pleasure each time you come to it — just like a piece of music that you have begun to enjoy. Each reading can bring more understanding and more satisfaction. Again, as with pieces of music, not everybody will appreciate the same poem in the same way. Sometimes you need to find your way into the meaning and pleasure of a poem.

Here are a number of approaches you can use to help you find that way in. Of course not *all* of them may be suitable for you or for all the poems in this book. Some of these activities you will find best to do on your own. Some will be most effective with another person or a small group in your class.

1. Be prepared to read a poem a great many times, if necessary, both for pleasure and to add to your understanding.
2. Read a poem silently then read it aloud to one person or to a small group.
3. Prepare a dramatic reading with another person or a small group so as to convey the meaning of a poem as best you can. You could record your version for playing back to the class and for further discussion.
4. Prepare a group choral reading of a suitable poem.
5. Choose a poem you wish to learn by heart and when you have mastered it, present it to your group or the class.
6. Choose music or sound effects or pictures to accompany the reading of a poem.

UNIT ONE

The poems in this unit are short and easy to read. As you read them ask questions about the meaning of the words and the effect of the language. Stop to think about the vivid images. The words in poetry are often easy to read, but getting the sense of the word is more difficult. Stop to clarify or clear up any questions you may have. If the words do not make sense to you perhaps the poet is using them figuratively and intends to play with your imagination.

Students best begin reading poems without the distraction of an unfamiliar vocabulary. It is best to assign examples, then gradually introduce examples from poetry's part.

This collection of ten poems has been selected for warm-up. The aim is to provide enjoyment, stimulate discussion and appeal to each individual's imagination.

What Is the Sun?

Wes Magee

The sun is an orange dinghy
sailing across a calm sea
it is a gold coin
dropped down a drain in Heaven
the sun is a yellow beach ball
kicked high into the summer sky
it is a red thumb-print
on a sheet of pale blue paper
the sun is a milk bottle's gold top
floating in a puddle.

Children's Song R.S. Thomas

We live in our world,
A world that is too small