

## Understanding Poetry

1. In every poem **pay special attention to punctuations**.
2. This is because poets use punctuations for building in the extra emotion and intensity of thought within the limited number of lines of a stanza.
3. Normally, the following use is made:
  1. Full stop (.) means the completion of one thought.
  2. Colon ( : ) means one part of the thought is complete and what follows is for defending the novelty of the thought or is the second part of the thought
  3. Semi-colon (;) means part of the thought is complete and illustrations follow.
  4. Comma (,) separates more than one example given to illustrate the thought being conveyed.
  5. Other punctuations have the same meaning as in prose.
4. **A stanza** is another name for **a verse** in a poem. Normally a stanza consists of a **pre-determined number of lines** three or four, usually **rhyming in a pattern** regularly repeated though out the poem. John Keats and P.B. Shelley have used complex stanza patterns as you can see in the example included in this collection.
5. **Different forms of stanza** are used **to convey different kinds of thoughts**. Here, itself observe stanza / verses ranging from **2 lines to 16 lines**. The **longest stanza** is a form called the '**Blank Verse**'. A blank verse **has no limit** of the number of lines and was used in Drama from 1490s to 1890.

6. In the literature of many languages drama / plays were written by using the poetic form. Best examples of the 'blank verse' form are available in the plays of William Shakespeare. See his sonnet 'Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind' (No.17).
7. When attempting to understand English poems written by English writers (In contrast to English poems by Indian writers) , we need to keep in mind that they **lived in a Temperate Climate country**, which has **very severe and cold winters**. Land is snow covered from October to March every year. There is very little greenery during this period and most of the birds have migrated southwards. So in the northern parts of England that includes the Scotland, the **winter** season **conveys isolation**, because of difficulty in visiting and communicating with people. The overall emotion is of **desolation** because even chirping of birds is missing. Due to isolation and desolation the feeling **of loneliness predominates**.
8. After the long winter months, the **coming of Spring** in mid-March and April **has a very special significance**. This is difficult to understand by people living in the tropical climate of India. The white snow frozen ground melts into the lush greenery of the grass and the blossoming of the flowers in Spring. The chirping of birds returning after winter and the greenery comes as a great relief for the poet. This gives greater importance to simple lines such as "When swallows are here, can Spring be far behind?" or 'a single swallow does not make a Spring'.

9. Therefore, some of the best poems on Spring and Autumn seasons are found in English poetry. In Indian it is the summer months followed by the monsoon, that have inspired some of the best literary works.
  
10. As such, while studying or reading for leisure a literary work, first know the climatic conditions in which it was written.