

What Is Poetry?

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS:

A verse is defined as writing arranged with metrical rhythm that typically rhymes. Stories, plays, and music have all been written in verse. The stories of Dr. Seuss, poetry of Maya Angelou, plays of Shakespeare, and chart-topping hits of Beyoncé are all examples of writing in verse. When verses evoke imagery or specific emotional response, it is considered poetry. Think about the type of verses exemplified above and consider, are they poetry?

Let's understand the definition of a poem and see its uses by watching the short [TedEd](#) video.

View an example of verse performed by artist Mark Bradford in his poetic rant "[Wild Wild West.](#)"

As you watch, think about these guiding questions:

- What is the difference between rap and poetry? Are they different?
- What is the subject of Mark Bradford's rant?
- What makes Mark Bradford's delivery poetic?
- How does Mark Bradford address identity?

ACTIVITY

Write a verse, poetic or rap, about yourself. What are you choosing to focus on: your personality, an event in your life, your name, your appearance, etc.? Does your verse rhyme? What makes it poetic or a rap?

Proud of your verse? We'd love to see it. Share it on Facebook or Instagram using the hashtag #americanverses.