

# Imagery

**Imagery:** Imagery is the name given to elements in a poem that spark the sense. While 'image' is a synonym for picture, images don't need to only be visual; any of the five senses, sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell can be sparked by imagery.

## Poetry with Imagery

A red balloon, bobbing uncertainly  
On a string tied to the wrist  
Of a weary boy  
Breaks free, and floats hopefully skyward  
Fading rapidly into a tiny blood spot.

*Imagery* refers to mental pictures created by words.

**Literal Images:** the words are used to describe something directly by appealing to one or more of our senses.

1. **Visual** images: they consist of things we can see.

The sun was shining on the sea,  
Shining with all his might:  
He did his very best to make  
The billows smooth and bright -  
And this was odd, because it was  
The middle of the night.

(Lewis Carroll)

2. **Tactile** images: they appeal to our sense of touch.

Through the green twilight of a hedge,  
I peered with cheek on the cool leaves pressed

(Walter de la Mare)

3. **Auditory** images: they suggest the sounds of things, usually resulting in an effect **onomatopoeia** (Words that imitate sounds or sounds that are linked with objects).

Bow-wow, says the dog,  
Mew, mew says the cat,  
Grunt, grunt, goes the hog,  
And squeak goes the rat.  
Tu, whu, says the owl,  
Quack, quack, says the duck,

And what the cuckoo says you know.  
(Mother Goose)

4. **Olfactory** images: they suggest the smells of things.

As Mommy washed up  
and the children played,  
smell of warm butter filled the air.

(Anonymous)

5. **Kinesthetic** images: they refer to actions or motions.

A poem once stopped me on the street.  
I've got a poem stuck on my feet.  
A poem attacked me in the shower.  
I find a poem most every hour!

(Mark Stansell)

6. **Gustatory** images: they suggest the tastes of things.

A mouse found a beautiful piece of plum cake,  
The richest and sweetest that mortal could make:  
'Twas heavy with citron and fragrant with spice,  
And covered with sugar all sparkling as ice.

(Iona and Peter Opie)