

POETRY I

(INTRODUCTION TO POETRY)

DEFINITION AND ORIGINS

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POETRY: DEFINITION & ORIGINS

- ✘ **Poetry** (from the Greek "ποίησις", *poiesis*, a "making" or "creating") is a form of literary art in which language is used for its aesthetic and evocative qualities in addition to, or in lieu of, its ostensible meaning. Poetry may be written independently, as discrete poems, or may occur in conjunction with other arts, as in poetic drama, hymns or lyrics.

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- ✘ Poetry as an art form may predate literacy. Many ancient works, from the Vedas (1700–1200 BC) to the Odyssey (800–675 BC), appear to have been composed in poetic form to aid memorization and oral transmission, in prehistoric and ancient societies
- ✘ Poetry appears among the earliest records of most literate cultures, with poetic fragments found on early monoliths, runestones and stelae.

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- ✘ The oldest surviving poem is the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, from the 3rd millennium BC in Sumer (in Mesopotamia, now Iraq), which was written in script on clay tablets and, later, papyrus. Other ancient epic poetry includes the Greek epics, *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the Roman national epic, Virgil's *Aeneid*, and the Indian epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*.