

Characteristics of Walt Whitman's Poetry

1. **Promotes use of free-verse**— no style restrictions exist in his work; lack of rhyme and lack of strict meter; prefers to show the natural cadence and pacing of language.
2. His poems display **extended lines** which do not follow the standard for line length.
3. He employs **enumerations**— a listing of items or a cataloging of activities which detail the different types of people in America and all over the world.
4. He often uses the literary concept of **anaphora**, repetition of key phrases through a verse; used to aid recitations, this element is a common style within Biblical passages.
(see: <http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Genesis-Chapter-11/>)
5. His overall work **celebrates the diversity of America** and the average citizen.
6. The importance of the **average, commonplace worker** is also stressed: carpenters, farmers, seamstresses, laundrywomen.
7. He finds beauty in **the ordinary, the mundane**.
8. His themes place an **emphasis on the importance of the individual** and the importance of understanding the recognition of yourself in the wide scheme of the world.
9. He stresses the transcendental concept that all humans are equal to all elements in Nature.
10. He utilizes a strong sense of optimism, **celebrating the American experience**.