

Poetic Devices

A) Figurative Language – An expression in which words or sounds are arranged to achieve a particular effect.

Hyperbole – An exaggeration of something.

Example ~ "I am hungry enough to eat a horse."

Example ~ _____

Paradox – A statement that at first appears contradictory, but which on closer examination contain truth.

Example ~ "The longest shortcut."

Example ~ _____

Alliteration – The repetition of sounds in nearby words, usually involving the first consonant sounds.

Example ~ "She sells seashells by the seashore."

Example ~ _____

Assonance – The repetition of sounds in nearby words, involving similar vowel sounds.

Example ~ "Moses supposes his toes are roses."

Example ~ _____

Connotation – The feelings and associations suggested by a word.

Example ~ The difference between thrifty (positive) and cheap (negative.)

Example ~ _____

Irony – A difference or contrast.

Example ~ Verbal Irony / Situational Irony / Dramatic Irony

Metaphor – A comparison between dissimilar things, not using the words "like" or "as."

Example ~ "Life is a highway."

Example ~ _____

Simile – A comparison between dissimilar things, using the words “like” or “as.”

Example ~ “You sing like a misfiring chainsaw!”

Example ~ _____

Personification – Giving human characteristics to nonhuman things.

Example ~ “The wind whispered through the pines.”

Example ~ _____

Onomatopoeia – A figure of speech in which words are used to imitate sounds.

Example ~ “The bee *buzzed*.”

Example ~ _____

Oxymoron – A phrase consisting of contradictory terms.

Example ~ “Parting is such sweet sorrow.”

Example ~ _____

B) Poetic Devices – The techniques used by poets to give their writing style emphasis and meaning.

Imagery – The creation of images using words.

Example ~ In his famous line from Sonnet 18, Shakespeare creates an image by comparing love to a “summer’s day.”

Example ~ _____

Stanza – Two or more lines of poetry that together form one of the divisions of a poem. The stanzas of a poem are usually the same length and follow the same pattern of meter and rhyme.

Refrain – A line or lines repeated at intervals during a poem, usually at the end of each stanza. A refrain serves to establish meter and tone, but it often gives a hint about the poem’s message.

Rhyme – The placing of words with similar end sounds reasonably close together to emphasize the similarity of their sounds. It usually occurs at the end of lines (end rhyme), but it may occur within a line of poetry (internal rhyme.)

Example ~ “I think that I shall never see
A poem as lovely as a tree . . .”

Example ~ _____

Rhyme Scheme – The pattern of rhyme within a stanza or poem, usually shown by marking each similar sound with the same letter of the alphabet.

Example ~ steeple A
 town B
 people A
 down B

This rhyme scheme is said to be ABAB.

Rhythm – A pattern of stressed and unstressed sounds in poems, like a beat in music.

C) Types of Poetry

Blank Verse – Unrhymed iambic pentameter, often resembling the rhythms of ordinary speech. Blank verse is found in much of Shakespeare’s work.

(5 beat per line, with emphasis on the 2nd syllable)

Example ~ “But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?
it is the East, and Juliet is the sun!” (Romeo and Juliet)

Example ~ _____

Narrative Poem – A poem that tells a story. Ballads and epics are types of narrative poetry.

Examples – Alfred Lord Tennyson’s “Charge of the Light Brigade.”

Example ~ _____

Lyrical Poem – A poem that is usually short, and expresses a speaker’s personal thoughts and feelings.

Example ~ “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” by William Wordsworth.

Example ~ _____

Ballad Poem – A fairly short, simple poem that tells a story. Ballads were often meant to be sung, and are one of the earliest forms of literature. Before the written word was in common use, they were a means of passing stories from place to place, and to future generations.

Example ~ Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner."

Example ~ _____

Elegy – A dignified poem mourning the death of an individual.

Example ~ "O Captain! My Captain!" is Walt Whitman's elegy to president Lincoln.

Example ~ _____