

Poetry devices

Poetry devices and figures of speech help convey images and feelings from the poem; they paint word pictures in our minds.

They also help evoke the five senses- sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell -as well as the mood and tone of the poem.

Sound devices:

Onomatopoeia: words that sound the same as the sound they describe. Examples: crash, bang, buzz, snap.

Assonance: a repeated vowel sound in words next to each other. Examples: bright white lights /toes, nose, and elbows.

The spelling is not important-the sound must be the same.

Consonance: The same consonant is repeated in words close to each other. Examples: slowly tolling bells / crooked crags close to the sky.

Alliteration: The same consonant is repeated at the beginning of consecutive (next to each other) words. Examples: baby bees buzzing / singing skylarks soaring skyward.

Repetition: Repeating words, groups of words, or lines in a poem for emphasis. Often, repetition is used in songs.

Example: And miles to go before I sleep/ And miles to go before I sleep. (Robert Frost)

Euphony: The use of harmonious, pleasing sounds. Example: "Silently sailing upon the soothing seas and lulled to sleep." The soft "s" sounds are soothing and pleasing.

Cacophony (Dissonance) The use of harsh, discordant sounds
Example: "Cawing crows heckling an eagle." The "k" sounds are harsh and not soothing.

Image devices:

Metaphor: The comparison of two unlike things. Example: “Tiny lamps of blueberry.” Blueberries hanging on bushes are compared to tiny hanging lamps. Example: “Her eyes were pools of blue.” Eyes are compared to blue pools of water.

Simile: The comparison of two unlike things using the words “like” or “as”. Examples: “The cat’s eyes were like saucers”. This gives an image of very big, round eyes. / “He is as big as a house.”

Simile or Metaphor? Simile uses “like” or “as” to compare two things, but metaphor suggests that something *is* something else.

Personification: comparing an inanimate/nonhuman thing to a person. Examples: The waves sighed upon the shore. / The furnace groaned and moaned into action. / The sun smiled down upon us.

Hyperbole: A big exaggeration. Examples: I have a mountain of laundry to do. / I am so hungry I could eat a horse!

Others:

Oxymoron: An apparent contradiction that has some truth. Many of Shakespeare’s poems and plays have series of these “opposites”. Examples: little giant / heavy feathers / loving hate

Allusion: A reference to something in history, literature, mythology, or well-known people, events, etc. that create a bigger image or understanding when used. Example: In *Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo compares Rosaline to Diana, who was the goddess of unmarried women, so we immediately understand that Rosaline will never marry Romeo.

