

Poetic Terms & Devices - MASTERLIST

Device	Meaning	Example	Why it's used/effect on audience
Alliteration	<p>A repeated consonant or vowel sound at the start of several words</p> <p>Some specific types: liquid alliteration – repeated L sound Sibilance – repeated S sound</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wordlessly watching, he waits by the window • Upside-down under the umbrella with us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draws attention to certain key words or links them to other words • Can mimic the sound of what it's describing e.g. repeated sss sound mimics a snake. • Can create euphony or cacophony – repeated soft sounds create calm gentle feel, repeated harsh sounds create jarring uncomfortable feel.
Allusion	<p>A reference to something – usually a well-known story, saying, song, or person. Refers to it indirectly without explaining it in detail.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It won't matter if you're home after midnight, I'm sure the car won't turn into a pumpkin. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links to the reader's prior knowledge • Concise way of referencing a complex idea • Adds depth and complexity • Can mean different things to the audience depending on their culture/background
Assonance	<p>A series of repeated vowel sounds in a line of poetry – occurring in the middle or ends of words.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He's asleep beneath the tree • The rain in Spain stays mainly on the plain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draws attention to certain key words or links them to other words • Can mimic the sound of what it's describing e.g. repeated sss sound mimics a snake. • Can create euphony or cacophony – repeated soft sounds create calm gentle feel, repeated harsh sounds create jarring uncomfortable feel.

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Cacophony	Using harsh or discordant sounds in poetry to reflect an unpleasant, noisy or chaotic scene. Short vowel sounds and harsh or guttural consonants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail • The grim ungainly, ghastly, gaunt and ominous bird of yore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When read aloud, creates harsh or jarring sounds which mirror the theme or topic of the poem • Creates an uncomfortable or unpleasant mood to suit the topic
Caesura	A pause or break in a line of poetry. It can be at the beginning or end but is more often in the middle of the line. It can be marked by punctuation (a full stop or dash), by two parallel vertical lines , or sometimes not marked.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sing a song of sixpence a pocket full of rye • To be or not to be – that is the question 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows the reader where the author wants them to pause for breath when reading aloud • Pauses can give emphasis or meaning to certain words and draw attention to them
Consonance	A series of repeated consonant sounds in a line of poetry – in the middle or ends of words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitter patter, getting wetter • I think I like the pink cake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draws attention to certain key words or links them to other words • Can mimic the sound of what it's describing e.g. repeated sss sound mimics a snake. • Can create euphony or cacophony – repeated soft sounds create calm gentle feel, repeated harsh sounds create jarrish uncomfortable feel.
Dialogue	When the narrator of the poem quotes another character's words directly. A 'dialogue poem' is a type of poem where two characters have a conversation in the poem.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the road wind up-hill all the way? "Yes, to the very end." Will the day's journey take the whole long day? "From morn to night, my friend." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps create characters or 'personas' in the poem in order to tell a story • Can represent different ideas or perspectives on a topic • Gives the reader an idea of the background and personality of the persona e.g. nationality, education, wealth

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Diction	The 'style' of the persona's voice. How formal or casual it is, what type of words they use, and what the reader can infer (guess) about them based on this.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good day to you, Sir! • See ya, buddy! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps the reader understand and form an impression of the persona of the poem • Gives an idea the background and personality of the persona e.g. nationality, education, wealth
Enjambment – also called a line break, or run-on line	When a new line occurs in an unusual place, in the middle of a thought or a sentence. The thought continues across the line break.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At 4am I woke, thinking of the man who left in September. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes the way a line is read • Might hurry the reader on to an important point • Might draw attention to a key word which would normally be lost in the middle or end of a line
Euphony	Pleasant soothing sounds help to create the impression of a calm or beautiful scene. Created with long vowel sounds and soft consonants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five miles meandering in a mazy motion the sacred river ran • When Zeus stills the winds asleep in the solid drift 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When read aloud, creates soft, gentle or soothing sounds which mirror the theme or topic of the poem • Creates a calm or peaceful mood to suit the topic
Hyperbole	Exaggeration for effect.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He was light-years ahead of the rest of the class. • I've told you a million times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the poem more interesting, memorable, entertaining or humorous • Expresses an extreme feeling – shows how strongly the author feels about it
Imagery	Creating a picture in the reader's mind, often by using language that describes the senses (sight, taste, smell, touch, sound) or appeals to feelings and emotions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sky was a flickering, fiery orange and thick smoke burned my throat and made my eyes sting. Even from miles away I could feel the heat on my face and hear the roaring crash of trees falling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a clearer and more specific image in the reader's mind • Links to past experiences or memories the reader has • Makes the poem more interesting, memorable, entertaining or humorous

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Metaphor	Making a direct comparison by saying something IS something else	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The moon is a silver penny 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparisons help the reader create a specific and accurate mental image of what the poet is describing Links to past memories or previous experiences the reader has Concise way to communicate multiple or complex ideas Is interesting & sticks in the reader's memory Adds layers of meaning, creating depth and complexity
Persona (also called Narrative voice or Point of view)	The person who is speaking in the poem – not necessarily the author. The writer of the poem can speak from the point of view of another character.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well, son, I'll tell you: Life for me ain't been no crystal stair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the persona is the author's own voice, then it is a reflection of their personal thoughts and feelings If the persona is someone else, this might be a creative way for the poet to speak from another character's point of view
Onomatopoeia	Words that sound like the thing that they describe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pop, fizz, hum, crash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mimics the real sound of the thing the poem is describing Makes the reader feel like they are really there and can 'hear' the scene Make the poem more memorable, entertaining or humorous
Parallelism	A technique used in Hebrew poetry where ideas are repeated in a certain pattern for emphasis. Can be synonymous, antithesis, or chiasm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a balance of ideas and leads the reader to the key point Providing an example plus an opposite (what it's like, what it's NOT like) is a good way to clearly explain a concept

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Personification	Giving human characteristics to an inanimate object.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The hills clap their hands and the mountains sing for joy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a personal connection between the reader and the object Makes the reader feel an emotional response that they wouldn't get from just an adjective e.g. feel sorry for a 'lonely' car or annoyed with the 'screaming' wind
Refrain	A repeated 'chorus' in a poem. Can be a single line, a phrase, or a whole verse. Usually appears at the end of each verse, or between verses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'For his mercy endureth forever' in psalm 136 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlights a key point or idea Helps it stick in the reader's memory In a ballad or song (intended to be put to music) it creates a familiar and predictable starting point which is returned to again and again. Audience can join in.
Rhetorical questions	Asking a question for which no answer is expected – the answer is unknown, or obvious.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who knows? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prompts the reader consider the question in their own mind Creates a thoughtful, contemplative mood
Rhyme	When two words have the same or similar sound at the end of a line of poetry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perfect rhyme: plunder & thunder Imperfect rhyme (slant rhyme/half rhyme): lake & fate, sparring & caring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draws attention to certain key words or links them to other words Creates a predictable pattern which is pleasing to the ear (euphony) Creates anticipation, the reader can mentally predict which word will come next Helps it stick in the reader's memory
Rhythm/metre	A regular pattern of stressed and unstressed beats of poetry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I <u>must</u> go <u>down</u> to the <u>seas</u> <u>again</u>, to the <u>lonely</u> <u>sea</u> and the <u>sky</u>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a predictable pattern which is pleasing to the ear (euphony) Rhythmic beat can mimic the sound of what it's describing e.g. galloping horses, rattle of train

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps it stick in the reader's memory • Can draw attention to certain key words or link them to other words
Simile	Making a comparison using 'like' or 'as'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The moon is like a silver penny • The moon is as bright as a silver penny 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparisons help the reader create an accurate mental image • Links to past memories or previous experiences the reader has • Concise way to communicate multiple or complex ideas • Adds layers of meaning, creating depth and complexity
Symbol	A physical object that represents a concept or idea.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wings symbolise freedom, chains symbolise captivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concise way to communicate multiple or complex ideas • Appeals to the reader's imagination – is interesting and memorable • Adds layers of meaning, creating depth and complexity • Makes the reader feel clever when they work it out! • Can mean different things to the audience depending on their culture/background
Tone & mood	Tone = how the author of the poem feels about the subject Mood = the feeling or emotion created for the reader – might seem cheerful, gloomy, thoughtful, silly...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I wandered, lonely as a cloud... • You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poet may want to give an impression of the mood they felt when they were writing the poem, or help the reader experience the feelings they had when writing it • May want to influence the reader, try and make them feel the same way about a topic as they do

Feet & Meter

Feet:

Trochee (DAH-da) e.g. TROphy

iamb (da-DAH) e.g. inDEED

Spondee (DAH-DAH) e.g. TV

Dactyl (DAH-da-da) e.g. CERtainly

Anapest (da-da-DAH) e.g. interrupt

(Trochaic, iambic, dactylic, anapestic, spondaic)

Example:

If there are three IAMBS (three 'da-DAH's) per line, the meter would be **iambic trimeter**. Remember, it does not have to be exact – you are looking for the general/overall pattern

one foot = monometer

two feet = dimeter

three feet = trimeter

four feet = tetrameter

five feet = pentameter

six feet = hexameter

seven feet = heptameter

eight feet = octameter