

Poetic devices are a form of literary device used in poetry. A poem is created out of poetic devices composite of: structural, grammatical, rhythmic, metrical, verbal, and visual elements. They are essentially tools that a poet uses to create rhythm, enhance a poem's meaning, or intensify a mood or feeling.

Alliteration can be defined as a series of words, occurring close together in the phrases or lines of poetry, that have the same first consonant sound. The term itself derives from the Latin word "Latira", meaning "letters of alphabet".

A strong example of alliteration is in the tongue twister Peter Piper.
Peter Piper Picked a Peck of Pickled Peppers

Assonance is the repetition of the vowel sound across words within the lines of the poem creating internal rhymes.

Examples of assonance across words include: crying time; hop-scotch; great flakes; between trees; and, the kind knight rides by.

Look at this stanza from John Agard's poem 'Hopaloo Kangaroo':

If you can boogaloo

boogaloo

I can do

the boogaloo too

for I'm the booggiest

hopaloo kangaroo

from *The Puffin Book of Fantastic First Poems* (Puffin, 2000)

There are examples of the repeated /oo/ sound within the 1st, 4th and 6th lines (assonance), as well as it being used as a rhyme at the end of all the lines, except the 5th line.

Imagery, in a literary or poetic sense, is the author's use of description and vivid language, deepening the reader's understanding of the work, by appealing to the senses.

There are different types of imagery. These include:

- Visual imagery which refers to sights and allows the reader to visualise the subject, objects or events in the poem.
- Auditory imagery refers to sounds and reminds the reader of common or specific sounds as a point of reference to deepen understanding.

- Kinaesthetic imagery is related to movement and reminds the reader of body movement or positions that are familiar or imagined – such as the feeling of flying.
- Smells and tastes can be referred to as Olfactory or Gustatory imagery respectively.
- Tactile imagery refers to texture and feeling.

All imagery is aided through the use of other poetic devices, such as simile, metaphor, personification, onomatopoeia, etc.

Metaphor is a common poetic device where an object in, or the subject of, a poem is described as being the same as another otherwise unrelated object.

A beautiful example can be seen in the first stanza of *The Highwayman* by Alfred Noyes, in the line:

The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas...

Onomatopoeia, according to the Oxford Dictionary, is the 'formation of a word which describes its sound'. Examples of onomatopoeic words include sizzle, clap, moo, roar, etc.

It is a common feature in many poems written with children in mind. The onomatopoeia can sometimes form a refrain, that repeats through the poem, providing structure.

Personification is a poetic device where animals, plants or even inanimate objects, are given human qualities – resulting in a poem full of imagery and description.

Consider the first stanza of Jackie Kay's poem *Way Down below in the Streets of Paris*:

I spied a small lonely boy.

I was his beautiful red balloon,
from morning through to noon,

In this example, the poet is the red balloon, and the poem continues by describing the boy and the poet (as the balloon) sharing a walk through Parisian streets.

In poetry, a **refrain** is a word, line or phrase that is repeated within the lines or stanzas of the poem itself.

There are three common types of refrain:

- the **repetend** – where particular words are repeated throughout the poem;

- the **chorus** – usually read by more than one person 'in unison', and sometimes can be considered the theme of the poem;
- the **burden** – the most common form of refrain, in which a whole word or phrase is repeated at regular intervals.

Rhyme is the repetition of syllables, typically at the end of a verse line. Rhymed words conventionally share all sounds following the word's last stressed syllable.

Rhyme is one of the first poetic devices that we become familiar with but it can be a tricky poetic device to work with. Matching content to a rhyming pattern takes a lot of skill.

As James Carter says...

A lazy rhyme is a poetry crime!

There are different types of rhyme and many poems, especially sonnets and sestinas, follow strict rhyme schemes with regular patterns.

Types of rhyme include:

Full rhyme – *cat/hat/, dog/log.*

Half or para-rhyme – *cat/hit, lover/river.*

Internal rhyme – rhyme that does not occur at the end of the line (the usual place rhyme is found) – *Today, as I walked, the large black cat, tipped his hat at me and smiled.*

Rhyming patterns can be in couplets where pairs of lines rhyme or can be alternate where every other line rhymes.

Simile is a common poetic device. The subject of the poem is described by comparing it to another object or subject, using 'as' or 'like'. For example, the subject may be 'creeping as quietly as a mouse' or be 'sly, like a fox.'

Stanzas can be defined as groups of lines, sometimes referred to (less precisely) as verses. Poems can be broken up into stanzas which usually share common features such as length, rhyme or rhythm.

Stanzas can also be *irregular*, and have no regular rhyming patterns to speak of.

The word 'stanza' derives from the Italian for *room*. Some stanzas have precise names. A *Tercet* is three lines long, and a *Quatrain* is four lines long. Stanzas of five, six, seven and eight lines are referred to as *Quintrain*, *Sestet*, *Septet* and *Octave* or *Octet* respectively.

Couplet: A couplet is a pair of lines in a poem which have both the same rhythm (meter) and that rhyme. The lines can be independent sentences (closed form) or can run on from each other (open form). For example:
A queen in a palace, slumped on a throne,
Surrounded by servants but all alone.

(<https://clpe.org.uk/poetryline/poetic-forms-and-devices>)