

## Some Rhetorical and Stylistic Devices

### Simile

A direct comparison between two unlike things introduced by *like* or *as*

“His hands were *like* wild birds” John Updike

### Metaphor

A comparison between two unlike things without using *like* or *as*

“An aged man is but a paltry thing,  
*A tattered coat* upon a stick.” William Butler Yeats

### Personification

To give human characteristics to inanimate objects, animals, or abstract ideas.

The stars danced in the sky

### Hyperbole

Exaggeration

“And I will love thee still dear,  
Till a’ the seas gang dry.” Robert Burns

### Mood

The emotional environment of the poem, or the state of mind created by the text

“What is life  
It is a flash of a firefly...” Isapo-muxika (Crowfoot)

### Allusion

A brief reference to a well-known person, place or event that the reader can easily recognize. Allusions can be taken from history, the Bible, mythology or literature

### Imagery

A descriptive passage that conveys mental images that appeal to the senses.

### Oxymoron

Two contrasting terms used to make a point

Bittersweet jumbo shrimp loving hate

### Irony

The recognition about the difference between reality (what is) and appearance (what seems to be)

### Symbol

The use of a concrete object to represent an abstract idea (example- crucifix)

### Diction

The authors/poet’s choice of words

### Dramatic Irony

When the reader knows something that some or all of the characters do not know

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## Devices can also be heard

### Alliteration

The neighbouring words begin with the same letter or sound.

“And wake to the **f**arm **f**orever **f**led” Dylan Thomas

### Assonance

Similarity of vowel sounds

“In silence **dee**p the **legions** stream,” Herman Melville

### Consonance

Repetition of consonant sounds.

“A spring **full** of larks in a rolling cloud” Dylan Thomas

### Onomatopoeia

The sound of the word mimics the sound to which it refers

buzz                  crackle                  blurt                  boom

### Euphony

The inherent sweetness of the sound

chimes                  hush                  vermilion                  wisdom

### Cacophony

The harsh, discordant sound

“Knock-Kneed, **coughing** like hags, we **cursed** through sludge,”  
Wilfred Owen

### Rhythm

The flow of the poem as created by alternating stressed and unstressed syllables

### Pun

A play on words which sound similar but have different meaning

“Ask for me tomorrow and you will find me a **grave** man” Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*

### Repetition

Emphasis on a key word or phrase to make a point

### Tone

The writer’s attitude toward the subject matter

sarcastic                  nostalgic                  sympathetic                  critical