

Recognizing Poetic Devices

Instructions:

Read through the list of Poetic Devices and Examples below.

Then choose one [or both] of the poems linked in the Lessons to do this exercise.

Your task is to search for & find an example of each poetic device listed below.

Then write your example in the space provided.

If you feel ambitious – and would like a few extra credit points – try to write your examples by quoting them correctly in these formats.

Note: When quoting poetry use double quotation marks around the quote. Also, when quoting more than one line use a / to separate each line. For example: The third stanza of Emily Dickinson's poem "Hope is the Thing with Feathers" looks like this:

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm –

But it looks like this when properly quoted:

“And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard - / And sore must be the storm - / That could abash the little Bird / That kept so many warm –”

Notice the quote is written EXACTLY the way it looks with capitals and dashes. All quotations should be quoted exactly as they look.

Metaphor

A comparison that isn't literal.

Examples: “Eyes are the windows of the soul”

Your Examples:

Simile

A comparison between two things that typically uses the words “like” or “as.”

Examples: “Eyes are like the windows of the soul”

Your Examples:

Imagery

Visually descriptive language. (Imagery uses the five senses -seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling) and attempts to evoke images in the mind’s eye, and/or bodily sensations.

Examples: “The child’s eyes were colored like rich smooth chocolate”

Your Examples:

Tone

The attitude or feeling of a piece of writing. Tones can be silly, nostalgic, somber, irritated, sarcastic, smug, intellectual, cheerful, sad, etc.

Note: There is a difference between tone and mood. The **tone of a poem** is the attitude of character of the poem – and is usually the attitude of the speaker in the poem or writer of the poem. The **mood of a poem** is the effect it has on the reader. It is how the poem makes you feel.

Example of an angry tone:

“It is a God-damned lie to say that these / Saved, or knew, anything worth any man’s pride. / They were professional murderers and they took / Their blood money and impious risks and died. / In spite of all their kind some elements of worth / With difficulty persist here and there on earth.”

Hugh MacDiarmid “Another Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries”

Example of a happy tone:

“For oft, when on my couch I lie / In vacant or in pensive mood, / They flash upon that inward eye / Which is the bliss of solitude; And then my heart with pleasure fills, / and dances with the daffodils.”

William Wordsworth “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud”

Your Examples:

Symbol

An object, person, or place that represents a deeper meaning or idea.

Examples:

A reference to a heart could mean Love, Faithfulness, Warmth While a reference to a broken heart could mean Betrayal, Suffering.

A gun could mean Violence.

Red could mean Passion, Romance, or Life

Your Examples:

Theme

An abstract idea which shows up again and again. Ideas like love, death, justice, friendship, war, romance etc.

Examples: Edgar Allen Poe's poem "Annabel Lee" uses the two most popular themes in literature: Love & Death

I have highlighted the words in Poe's poem that communicate these themes:

Annabel Lee

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of Annabel Lee;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
Went envying her and me—
Yes!—that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of [the cloud](#) by night,
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love

Of those who were older than we—

Of many far wiser than we—

And neither the angels in heaven above,

Nor the demons down under the sea,

Can ever dissever my soul from the soul

Of the **beautiful Annabel Lee**;

For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams

Of the **beautiful Annabel Lee**;

And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes

Of the **beautiful Annabel Lee**;

And so, all the night-tide, **I lie down by the side**

Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,

In her **sepulchre** there by the sea,

In her **tomb** by the sounding sea.

Your Examples:

Repetition

Repeated sentences, phrases, or words.

Examples: “Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.” — Martin Luther King, Jr.

Your Examples:

Rhyme

A word, syllable, or line ending that has a sound which matches another word, syllable, or line.

Examples: “The road goes ever on and on / Down from the door where it began. / Now far ahead the road as gone/ And I must follow if I can.” J.R.R. Tolkien *The Lord of the Rings*

Your Examples:

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