



GLOSSARY OF POETIC DEVICES



POETIC DEVICES: THREE LEVELS

Poetic devices operate on **three** levels:

1. Sound: the way that words sound when read aloud

THINK: How does the poem sound when you read it aloud?

Is it full of elongated vowel sounds (e.g. free/see/me, you/blue/through) or short consonant sounds (e.g. dead/head/lead, got/shot/not)?

How do these sounds affect the mood of the poem?

Does it follow a regular meter? Does that meter plod slowly or gallop quickly?

Or, does it drift along with no regular rhythm?

Are certain words or phrases repeated in a way that makes them ring out?

Words you can use to describe the sound of a poem that:

- a) Rhymes, with elongated vowel sounds: *euphonic, melodious, harmonious, mellifluous*
- b) Rhymes, but with short consonant sounds: *blunt, dull, harsh, staccato*
- c) Does not rhyme at all: *jarring, discordant, cacophonic, disjointed*

2. Images & ideas: the pictures or concepts evoked by the words

THINK: What images or ideas do you think of as you read the poem?

Does the poem refer to a specific event, person or concept?

What images or sensory experiences do you imagine as you read it?

Do you interpret the meaning of certain words or lines literally, or figuratively?

3. Arrangement: the way that the words are set out on the page

THINK: How does the way that each line is set out change the way that you read it?

Is the poem divided into separate chunks of text (stanzas)?

What might be the difference between the ideas in each stanza?

Are there spaces between specific words or lines?

Does each line come to a rest at the end, or does it flow on to the next line?

Remember, the **purpose** or **effect** of using poetic devices is usually to:

1. Establish the **mood or tone** of the poem
2. Create **images** in the reader's mind
3. Emphasise certain **themes or messages**
4. **Link together** or separate certain ideas

FINDING EXAMPLES OF POETIC DEVICES

Use the following poem to help you fill out your glossary with an example of each poetic device. You should be able to find an example of every device listed!

You might like to annotate the poem (underline or highlight specific words or phrases) as you read through it.

Spiritual Song Of The Aborigine

Hyllus Noel Maris

I am a child of the Dreamtime People
Part of this land, like the gnarled gumtree
I am the river, softly singing
Chanting our songs on my way to the sea
My spirit is the dust-devils
Mirages, that dance on the plain
I'm the snow, the wind and the falling rain
I'm part of the rocks and the red desert earth
Red as the blood that flows in my veins
I am eagle, crow and snake that glides
Through the rainforest that clings to the mountainside
I awakened here when the earth was new
There was emu, wombat, kangaroo
No other man of a different hue
I am this land
And this land is me
I am Australia.

The Sounds of Words (Aural Devices)

POETIC DEVICE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE IN TEXT	PURPOSE/EFFECT
Alliteration	Repeated consonant sounds at the beginning of at least two words placed near each other.	“I am the river, softly singing”	The repetition of the soft “s” sound has a soothing effect, which establishes a peaceful mood.
Repetition	The re-use of words and phrases.		
Rhyme	The use of the same final vowel sound at the end of two or more lines.		
Assonance	The repetition of vowel sounds to create internal rhyming within phrases or sentences.		

<p>Consonance</p>	<p>The repetition of the same consonant in the middle or at the end of two or more words.</p>	<p>“Red as the blood”</p>	<p>The repetition of the blunt “d” sound at the end of “red” and “blood” emphasises the phrase to the reader and makes it sound forceful.</p>
<p>Rhythm</p>	<p>The beat of the poem: the pattern of stressed syllables separated by unstressed syllables.</p>		
<p>Caesura</p>	<p>A pause in a line of poetry that takes up a syllable space.</p>		

Images & Ideas

POETIC DEVICE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE IN TEXT	PURPOSE/EFFECT
Imagery	The way that words are used to create certain images in the mind of the reader.	“ ...the snow, the wind and the falling rain”	The vivid description of the natural landscape creates a mental picture for the reader, drawing them in to the poem. It also suggests the author's love of the land.
Allusion	A brief reference to some person, concept, event, work of art, Biblical or mythological situation or character.		
Symbolism	A symbol is one thing that represents another. In poetry it is generally an object, person, situation or idea that adds meaning by symbolising something else.		

<p>Metaphor (Figurative language)</p>	<p>A direct comparison between two unlike things, stating that one is the other or <i>does the action</i> of the other.</p>	<p>“I am the river, softly singing”</p>	<p>By saying that she is the river, the author is highlighting the powerful connection between herself (as an Aboriginal person) and the land.</p>
<p>Simile (Figurative language)</p>	<p>A direct comparison of two unlike things using “like” or “as”.</p>		
<p>Personification (Figurative language)</p>	<p>Where humanlike qualities are given to objects or animals.</p>		

The Arrangement of Words

POETIC DEVICE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE IN TEXT	PURPOSE/EFFECT
<p>Stanza/Verse</p>	<p>A group of lines that are grouped together and set apart by a space.</p>	<p>The poem is not divided into stanzas, but is set out as one chunk of text.</p>	<p>By arranging the poem into one cohesive verse, the author conveys the sense that she is delivering a single strong statement- i.e. the poem is based on one major idea or theme.</p>
<p>End-Stopped Line</p>	<p>A line of poetry that naturally comes to a rest/pause at its end. This is often (but not always) signalled by punctuation, like a semi-colon or a full stop.</p>		
<p>Enjambment</p>	<p>The extension of a sentence or phrase into the next line of the poem (i.e. the opposite of an end-stopped line).</p>		