

# Poetic Devices

**Allegory** - An allegory is a story, poem, or other written work that can be interpreted to have a secondary meaning.

*The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis is a religious allegory. In it, we find that Aslan the lion represents Christ, the White Witch represents evil, and Edmund represents Judas as the betrayer.

**Alliteration** - Alliteration is the repetition of a sound or letter at the beginning of multiple words in a series.

*Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.*

*Dead as a doornail*

*Make a mountain out of a molehill*

**Allusion** - An allusion is an indirect reference to something.

*"He was a Good Samaritan yesterday when he helped the lady start her car." This allusion refers to the story of the Good Samaritan who was the only one to stop and help a man in need.*

*"Chocolate cake is my Achilles heel." The allusion here is to "Achilles' heel," or the Greek myth about the hero Achilles and how his heel was his one weakness. In this case, the speaker's "weakness" is chocolate cake.*

*"We got a new Einstein in school today." This allusion is to the real-life genius physicist Albert Einstein and means that the new student is extremely smart.*

**Apostrophe** - An apostrophe is a poetic device where the writer addresses a person who isn't present, or speaks to an inanimate object, with an exclamation.

*"Twinkle, twinkle, little star,  
How I wonder what you are.  
Up above the world so high,  
Like a diamond in the sky."*

*– In this famous nursery rhyme, the child is addressing an inanimate object, a star, so it is an apostrophe.*

*God rest you, happy gentlemen,  
Who laid your good lives down,  
Who took the khaki and the gun  
Instead of cap and gown.  
God bring you to a fairer place  
Than even Oxford town.*

*– In this poem, the speaker is addressing people who are not present – people who are in fact already dead. This type of address is a common example of apostrophe.*

Assonance - Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds in one or more words found close together.

*William Wordsworth employs assonance to create an internal rhyme in his poem Daffodils:*

*"I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze..."*

*"The rain in Spain stays mainly on the plain."*

Consonance - Consonance is the repetition of specific consonant sounds in close proximity.

*She sells seashells by the seashore.*

*All's well that ends well.*


*The early bird gets the worm.*



*"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."*

*("Annabel Lee" by Edgar Allen Poe)*

*– In this excerpt from Edgar Allen Poe's poem "Annabel Lee" there is consonance of the "n" sound and the "l" sound. Poe repeats the name of his lost love, Annabel Lee, many times in the poem (at least once in each stanza). He also uses many words with similar sounds to create unity and rhythm throughout the poem.*

Enjambment - An enjambment is the continuation of a sentence beyond a line break, couplet, or stanza without an expected pause.

*"Shift at the corner into uproarious gear  
And make it around the turn in a squall of traction,"* 

*"Exalted into Steeples they  
Disperse their Sound, and from on high  
Chime in our Souls; they ev'ry way  
Speak to us through the Sky:"*  

Irony – Irony is the expression of one’s meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite.

*The desert was as cool as a bed of burning coals.*

*They get along like cats and dogs.*

*“Water, water, everywhere, but not a drop to drink.” (referring to sea water, which you cannot drink when you are thirsty.)*

Metaphor - A metaphor is when a writer compares two things that are unrelated, but share common characteristics.

*My brother was **boiling mad**. (This implies he was too angry.)*

*Her voice is **music to his ears**. (This implies that her voice makes him feel happy)*

*The assignment was a **breeze**. (This implies that the assignment was not difficult.)*

*Laughter is the best medicine.*

Pun - A pun is a play on words, using multiple meanings or similar sounds to make a joke.

*Santa Claus' helpers are known as subordinate Clauses.*

*I was struggling to figure out how lightning works, but then it struck me.*

*A chicken farmer's favorite car is a coupe.*

*What did one plant say to another? What's stomata?*

Rhetorical Question - A rhetorical question is a question asked to make a point rather than in expectation of an answer.

*Why not?*

*The actors played the roles well, didn't they?*

*If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?*

*Who knows?*

*Should you be speaking right now?*

Rhyme - A rhyme is a repetition of syllables at the end of words, often at the end of a line of poetry, but there are many unique kinds of rhymes.

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <i>“Humpty Dumpty sat on a <b>wall</b>,</i>                 | <i>A</i> |
| <i>Humpty Dumpty had a great <b>fall</b>.</i>               | <i>A</i> |
| <i>All the King’s horses, And all the King’s <b>men</b></i> | <i>B</i> |
| <i>Couldn’t put Humpty together <b>again!</b>”</i>          | <i>B</i> |

*This is an example of **rhyme scheme**.  
It is the pattern of rhyme that comes  
at the end of each verse or line in  
poetry, and is listed in alphabetical  
order.  
Ex.) AA BB CC or ABBA CDDC*