

POETIC LANGUAGE

DEVICES USED IN POETIC WRITING

- ALLITERATION** The repetition of word starting sounds. "The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew. The furrow followed free. We were the first that ever burst into that silent sea" (Coleridge)
- ASSONANCE** The repetition of vowel sounds. This is less obvious and softer in effect than alliteration. eg. /a/ s / u/. "In Xanadu did Kubla Khan A stately pleasure dome decree." (Coleridge)
- IRONY** The humorous or mildly sarcastic use of words to imply the opposite of what they normally mean.
- CLICHE** An over-used and worn out expression: any phrase that is not fresh and original. eg. to bury the hatchet, nose to the grindstone.
- COLLOQUIALISM** Colloquial language is language suitable for conversation, is for everyday speech rather than for formal written or spoken language. So a colloquialism is an expression found in, and typical of, ordinary speech. eg. 'I'll see you' 'He's a good joker', (very formal-formal-colloquial-slang-swearing).
- EUPHEMISM** A mild or vague expression used instead of a harsher or blunter one. eg. queer-mad; make love; pass on; one's reward.
- HYPERBOLE** Overstatement - an extravagant exaggeration of fact.
- IMPERATIVE** An order or command. You will go to town - - - - Go to town! Subj. + (aux) + verb ---- - - - Verb + -----
- METAPHOR** An unstated comparison of one thing with another. One thing is said to BE another. eg. The boy hared around the track.
- ONOMATOPOEIA** The correspondence of sound with meaning. The sound of the word resembles the meaning of the word. eg. his, buzz, rustle, pop. "A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch and blue spurt of a lighted match". (Browning) "The moan of doves in immemorial elms, and murmuring of innumerable bees". (Tennyson).
- PERSONIFICATION** A metaphor or simile in which an inanimate object or an abstract concept is given HUMAN qualities. eg. The mountains marched to the sea.
- PUN** The use of two words with the same sound (homophones) for humorous effect eg. the mortician's description of his client as a grave man.
- RHETORICAL QUESTION** A statement in the form of a question: a question asked not to gain a reply, but to achieve a rhetorical emphasis stronger than a direct statement, eg. "Now could things be worse? There is nothing left to go wrong."
- SIMILE** The comparison of two things is stated. One thing is said to be the LIKE or the same AS the other. eg "The boy ran like a hare".