Poetry Terms & Examples

**Figurative & Stylistic Language:**
Devices that enhance and add interest to the written and spoken word
Imagery Devices

Purpose is to create an IMAGE in the reader’s mind.

- 1. Simile
- 2. Metaphor
- 3. Personification
1. Simile

• A comparison of two things (that may or not be alike) using the words *like* or *as*. 
Examples of a Simile

• Bob is hungry as a wolf.

• **Bob and wolf** are the two **things** being compared, using “as”

• Sue smells like a rose.

• **Sue & rose** are the two **things** being compared, using “like”
2. Metaphor

• A comparison of two unlike things without using like or as. (Things = person, place, thing, or thought)
Examples of a Metaphor

• Bob is a hungry wolf.
• **Bob is compared to a wolf.**
• Sue is a rose, filling the room with her sweet scent.
• **Sue (or Sue’s scent) and rose are being compared.**
3. Personification

• A type of metaphor in which non-human things or ideas possess human qualities or actions.
Examples of Personification

• The wind whispered her name.

• Wind is being personified: “wind whispered”, because “wind” can’t actually “whisper.”

• Justice is blind.

• Justice is being personified: blind justice, because justice has no actual eyes that could be blinded.
Sound Devices

Purpose is to create a *RHYTHM* or set the *TONE* in the poem.

1. Alliteration
2. Assonance
3. Onomatopoeia
4. Rhyme
   A. (True/Pure) Rhyme
   B. Internal Rhyme
   C. Near/Half Rhyme (or Impure rhyme)
   D. Eye Rhyme
1. Alliteration

• The repetition of a consonant sound at the beginning of neighboring words. (Consonants are all the letters except a, e, i, o, u, and y.)
Examples of Alliteration

• The dark dance of death whisked her away.

• Repetition of the “d” sound in “dark dance of death”

• Like a lucky charm, he looks on.

• Repetition of the “l” sound in “Like,” “lucky,” and “looks”
2. Assonance

• The repetition of vowel sounds (within stressed syllables) of neighboring words. (Vowels are a, e, i, o, u, and y.)
Examples of Assonance

• Talking and walking, hours on end.

• Repetition of the “ah” sound in “talking” “walking”

• A turtle in the fertile soil.

• Repetition of the “er” sound in “turtle” “fertile”
3. Onomatopoeia

- Words which imitate the sound they refer to.
Examples of Onomatopoeia

• The eagle whizzed past the buzzing bees.

• “whizzed” and “buzzing”

• Rip-roar fire, the gun stutters on.

• “Rip-roar” and “stutters”
4. Rhyme

• A. Rhyme (true or pure rhyme): Words which end with the same sounds, usually at the end of lines.
Examples of Rhyme

• The deepest night burning bright.

• “night” and “bright”

• A time to feel, and a time to heal.

• “feel” and “heal”
4. Rhyme

• B. Internal Rhyme: Rhyme within a line.
Examples of Internal Rhyme

• Bright night, a full moon above.
• “bright” and “night”
• We will stay today and then we must go.
• “stay” and “today”
4. Rhyme

• C. Near/Half Rhyme: Slight or inaccurate repetition of sounds (also called impure rhyme).
Examples of Near/Half Rhyme

• On top of the hill,
  the moon is full.
• “hill” and “full”
• Give this to the man,
  he’ll know what I mean.
• “man” and “mean”
4. Rhyme

• D. Eye Rhyme: Words that *look* like they rhyme (similar spelling), but do *NOT* rhyme (also called sight rhyme).


Examples of Eye Rhyme

• Listen to the water flow,
  from top I don’t see how.

• “flow” and “how”

• When the game is over,
  a true champion we’ll discover.

• “over” and “discover”
Miscellaneous Devices

• 1. Hyperbole
• 2. Irony
• 3. Paradox
1. Hyperbole

• An obvious and deliberate exaggeration (to emphasize something or for humorous purposes).
Examples of a Hyperbole

• I love you more than life itself.

• Love is exaggerated.

• He could eat a horse.

• His appetite is exaggerated.
2. Irony

• Saying the opposite of what you actually mean.
Examples of Irony

• Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink.

• Surrounded by water in the ocean, but none of it is drinkable.

• The directions were as clear as mud.

• Obviously, they weren’t very clear directions (this is also a simile!).
3. Paradox

• A statement that seems to contradict or oppose itself, yet actually reveals some truth.
Examples of a Paradox

• It’s hard work doing nothing.
• Youth is wasted on the young.
• The more we know, the less we understand.
• The less you have, the more you are free. (Or …the more you have.)
• I can resist anything but temptation.
• Her silence was deafening.
How Figurative & Stylistic Devices are used in Song Lyrics

Examples using the songs:

“The River” by Garth Brooks
“Crossroads” by Tracy Chapman
“She” by Green Day
“One” by Metallica
Examples of Simile

• “The River” by Garth Brooks
• You know a dream is like a river / Ever changing as it flows

• Which two things are being compared?
• Dream and river using the word “like”
Trickier Example in “The River”

• And I will sail my vessel / ‘Til the river runs dry / Like a bird upon the wind / These waters are my sky

• Which two things are being compared using a simile?

• I (the speaker) and bird using “like”

• Re-wording the sentence helps to see the simile:

• I sail these waters like a bird flies through the sky.
Examples of Metaphor

• “Crossroads” by Tracy Chapman
• Some say the devil be a mystical thing / I say the devil he a walking man

• Which two things are being compared?
• Devil and man
• Take off the adjectives to get the two NOUNS that are being compared (not comparing devil with “walking man,” just “man”).
Are These Metaphors?
More from “Crossroads”

• I say the devil he a walking man  
  \textit{(yes: devil \& man)}
• He a fool \textit{(devil/man \& fool?)}
• He a liar \textit{(devil/man \& liar?)}
• (a) conjurer \textit{(devil/man \& conjurer?)}
• and a thief \textit{(devil/man \& thief?)}

• Devil \& man is a metaphor
• Devil/man and fool is NOT a metaphor. “Fool” is an ADJECTIVE describing the man/devil
• Same for liar, conjurer, and thief--he could actually BE all these things, so it is not a metaphor.
Trickier Example of Metaphor from “Crossroads”

• All you folks think you run my life / say I should be willing to compromise / I say all you demons go back to hell / I’ll save my soul, save myself

• Which two things are being compared?

• Folks and demons

• Even though the speaker never says “folks are demons,” it is implied. When someone uses the cliché, “Go to hell,” they are calling that person a devil or demon--or a resident of Hell. The meaning of the metaphor is for the “folks” to stay out of other people’s business & let the speaker live her own life.
Examples of Personification

• “She” by Green Day

• Waiting for a sign / To smash the silence with the brick of self-control

• What “thing” is given human-like qualities?

• Sign

• The “sign to smash the silence” because a “sign” cannot physically “smash” anything.
Practice:
Listen to “One” by Metallica
In this *One* song (that’s a pun), find examples of:

1. Simile
2. Personification
3. Alliteration
4. Rhyme
5. Internal Rhyme
6. Near/Half Rhyme
7. Irony
8. Paradox
Examples in “One”

• 1. **Simile**: Speaker/narrator and a wartime novelty
• 2. **Personification**:
  “Darkness imprisoning me”
• 3. **Alliteration**: “…scream / This terrible silence stops me”
• 4. **Rhyme**: dream/scream, me/see, real/feel/reveal, etc.
• 5. **Internal rhyme**: “Hold my breath as I wish for death”
• 6. **Near/Half Rhyme**: speech/hearing, myself/cell
• 7. **Irony**: Machines keep him alive, but he wishes to die
• 8. **Paradox**: Speaker can’t live, yet he can’t die; war is also the implied paradox: soldier sent to kill in order to save lives.
• **Kudos if you found an Eye Rhyme**: live/die
Practice: Group work
Which group can find the most examples in the following songs?

• “The Remedy” by Jason Mraz
• “Stairway to Heaven” by Led Zeppelin
• “Oblivion” by Mastodon
• “Stay Together for the Kids” by Blink-182
• “Just Like Heaven” by The Cure
• “With Me” by Sum 41
• “Buffalo Soldier” by Bob Marley & the Wailers
• “It’s a New Day” by will.i.am
“The Remedy”

by Jason Mraz

Copyright 2002
“Stairway to Heaven”
by Led Zeppelin
Copyright 1971
“Oblivion”
by Mastodon
Copyright 2009
“Stay Together for the Kids”

by Blink-182

Copyright 2002
“Just Like Heaven”
by The Cure
Copyright 1987
“With Me”

by Sum 41

Copyright 2008
“Buffalo Soldier”

by Bob Marley & the Wailers

Copyright 1977
“It’s a New Day”

by will.i.am

Copyright Nov. 7, 2008