

Poetic Techniques

Technique	Definition	Purpose and Example
Alliteration	The repetition of a consonant sound at the beginning of words	Used to create a particular sound or draw attention to something important. Example: "Clogs clacked clumsily on the cobbles."
Ambiguity	Words or phrases in which the meaning is unclear or has several interpretations	Used to remind reader that both examples are possible. Example: title of "Mid-Term Break by Seamus Heaney"
Colloquial language	Ordinary, everyday speech	To create a certain familiarity between the reader and the speaker or to give a sense of place to the piece. Example: "She is that guid tae me so she is."
Connotations	The implication or suggestion attached to a word or phrase	To give the reader a particular impression of something or someone. Example: Owning a Rolls Royce – connotation of being extremely rich
Enjambment	A line of a poem that flows into another one	To create a sense of time passing or highlight the importance of a particular word.
Euphemism	A nicer way of phrasing something quite harsh	To show that the situation requires subtlety. Example: "passing away" rather than died
Imagery	Simile, metaphor, or personification	Used to create a picture in the reader's mind. Example: "ropes on the back of my hand I could strangle with"
Inversion	Mixing up the word order - usually by placing the verb before the subject in order	Used to place emphasis on the word that sounds out of order. Example: "Blushing, she fled" or "Longingly, she looked at the puppy"
Metaphor	A comparison of two things in which you state that something is something else - doesn't always have to use the words "is" or "was"	To create a picture in the readers mind by drawing similarities. Example: "life is a rollercoaster" or "the rollercoaster of life."
Onomatopoeia	Using sounds which copy the action taking place	To recreate the sound or exaggerate it. Example: "bang" or "hiss"
Oxymoron	Placing together two items which are not usually placed together.	To emphasise the contrast or create a feeling of uncertainty around the speaker. Example: "Beloved sweetheart bastard" or "Pretty ugly."
Personification	Giving human characteristics to an inanimate object	To create a picture in the readers mind by drawing similarities. Example: "The sun kissed the windowsill" or "the bite of winter"
Rhetorical Question	A question which does not need an answer either because the answer is obvious or implied in the question	To make the reader think about the question or agree with the writer's opinion. Example: "How would you prepare to die on a perfect April evening?"
Simile	The comparison of two things using the words "like" or "as"	To create a picture in the readers mind by drawing similarities. Example : "Upright as statues" or "she is like an angel"