

Scarborough Poetry Workshop
POETIC DEVICES and FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE TECHNIQUES

Using poetic devices and figurative language techniques in your work doesn't necessarily have to mean that you have an in-depth knowledge of the names and terminology. For example, someone can have an advanced perception of what words sound good together, without knowing the technical terms. Conversely, someone might have mastery of the technical terms, but lack the ability to create original poetic work. In other words, don't worry! But these technical terms may help when you take part in discussions.

Poetic devices:	Very basically, this is putting words together that are pleasing to hear!
Alliteration:	the repetition of the initial consonant sound in words. <i>The grass grew green in the graveyard.</i>
Assonance:	the repetition of vowel sounds. <i>The snow in the rose garden groaned.</i>
Consonance:	the repetition of consonant sounds in the middle or at the end of words. <i>Her finger hungered for a ring.</i>
Enjambment:	the writer is using line breaks, meaningfully and abruptly, either to emphasise or to create dual meaning. The reader will make a slight pause (shorter than a comma). <i>Rolling through the field in the dead of winter.</i>
Imagery:	the writer uses descriptions to access the senses of the reader: sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell. <i>The chirping crickets filled the empty night air.</i>
Repetition:	knowingly repeating a word or group of words for effect. <i>Nobody, nobody can make it out here alone.</i>
Figurative language:	This when your writing goes beyond the actual meanings of the words, so that the reader gains new insights into the objects or subjects you are writing about.
Simile:	compares two things using the words 'like' or 'as'. <i>Dry as a bone. or Stand out like a sore thumb.</i>
Metaphor:	saying one thing is another thing. <i>You are a couch potato. Or Scarborough is a melting pot.</i>
Personification :	giving human characteristics to inanimate objects, animal or ideas. <i>The sun played hide and seek with the clouds.</i>
Hyperbole:	Outrageous exaggeration to emphasise a point. <i>I spent a couple of weeks there one day.</i>
Onomatopoeia:	use of words that sound like their meaning. <i>The burning wood hissed and crackled.</i>