

Poetic Techniques Cheat Sheet

Technique	Definition	Example
Tone	The implied attitude of a writer toward the subject	Sarcastic, excited, negative, positive, amused, humorous
Litotes	Understatement	(when referring to a deep wound) "Oh, it's just a scratch"
Theme	The big idea in a poem	The power of love; the importance of family; the danger of greed
Alliteration	The repetition of consonant sounds, especially at the beginning of words	Incredible Innes
symbolism	An object or action in a literary work that means more than itself, that stands for something beyond itself.	A rose representing love
Enjambment	A sentence that continues onto the next line in a poem	That's my last Duchess painted on the wall, Looking as if she were alive. I call That piece a wonder, now....
Rhyme	The matching of final vowel or consonant sounds in two or more words	Whenever Richard Cory went down town, We people on the pavement looked at <u>him</u> ; He was a gentleman from sole to crown Clean favored and imperially <u>slim</u> .
Synecdoche	Where part of an object/person/concept is used to represent the whole	"hired hands"=workers
Assonance	The repetition of similar vowel sounds in a sentence or a line of poetry	I rose and told him of my woe

Simile	a comparison between unlike things using <i>like</i> , <i>as</i> , or <i>as though</i>	"My love is like a red, red rose"
onomatopoeia	The use of words to imitate the sounds they describe	Bang, pow, boom
Hyperbole	Exaggeration	If I've told you once, I've told you a million times!
metaphor	A direct comparison between unlike things	I felt a wave of disgust towards him
personification	Giving an object human qualities	The table trembled under the weight of the plates
Repetition	Stating the same information over and over	And slowly we go down. And slowly we go down.
Contrast/juxtaposition	Two opposing ideas placed together	A beautiful disaster
Rhetorical question	A question asked to make the reader think; asked for effect	Do you think I'm stupid?
Pathetic fallacy	Where the weather is used to convey atmosphere or mood	Thunder crashed as he stared angrily out of the window