

Poetry

1 Reading and writing

a. Read the following text and, for each description in the table, write if it is a “metaphor”, a “simile” or a “personification”.

LANGUAGE DEVICES

Poets usually do not use everyday language in their poems¹. They often use language devices² to stimulate the reader’s imagination and to make poems more effective³. The most common devices are similes⁴, metaphors and personifications. All three of these are comparisons⁵, but each comparison has special characteristics and produces different effects on the reader. You will find a description of these devices, that are also called “word pictures⁶” or “images”, in the following table.

(1) It is a comparison in which the poet says that something resembles something else ⁷ using the words “as” or “like ⁸ ”.	(2) It is a comparison in which the poet says that something “is” something else. It produces a stronger effect than a simile.	(3) It is a comparison in which the poet says that something non-human has the same qualities or abilities that human beings ⁹ have.
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b. Read the lines¹⁰ and their Italian translations. Then answer the questions below.

1 Stars are great drops of golden dew.
Le stelle sono grandi gocce di rugiada d’oro.
(from *An Evening in Harlem* by Langston Hughes)

.....

2 Down the street a band is playing.
Nella strada un’orchestrina suona.
(from *An Evening in Harlem* by Langston Hughes)

.....

3 A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair.
Un albero che in estate può indossare un nido di pettirossi nei suoi capelli.
(from *Trees* by Joyce Kilmer)

.....

4 I come among the peoples like a shadow.
Io vengo fra le genti come un’ombra.
(from *Hunger* by Laurence Binyon)

.....

- Do all the lines contain word pictures?
- Which lines contain a simile? Which one/s a metaphor? Which one/s a personification? Write it in the space at the end of the lines.
- Which lines do not contain any word picture?

Glossary

1 poems poesie **2 devices** artifici, accorgimenti **3 effective** efficaci **4 similes** similitudini **5 comparisons** paragoni **6 word pictures** figure retoriche **7 resembles ... else** rassomiglia a qualcos’altro **8 as/like** come **9 beings** esseri **10 lines** versi



2 Reading and listening

a. Read the following paragraphs and complete them with the words in the box.

imagination • imitate • everyday • repetition • difference • similar • stimulate

SOUND DEVICES

Poets use the devices described below to produce sound effects¹. There is a (1) between word pictures and sound devices. Word pictures act on the reader’s (2), while sound devices want to (3) one of the five senses: hearing². Word pictures and sound effects make poetic language very different from (4) language.

Rhyme is the repetition of an identical or very (5) sound at the end of two or more lines. The way³ the poet arranges⁴ the rhyme is called rhyme pattern⁵ and it is usually indicated with the letters of the alphabet.

If four lines in a poem end with these words:
plain ... rain ... green ... between,
the rhyme pattern is **aa bb**.

If four lines end as follows:
plain ... green ... rain ... between,
the rhyme pattern is **ab ab**.

Alliteration is the repetition of the same sound, usually initial consonants, of two or more words in sequence.

*If I cannot carry forests on my back,
Neither can you crack a nut.
Se io non posso portare foreste sulla mia schiena,
tu non puoi schiacciare una noce.*
(from *Fable* by Ralph Waldo Emerson)

The sound repeated is [k].

Assonance is the (6) of the same vowel⁶ sound in a sequence of words.

*Myself alive, light
Shaking hair out of my eyes.
Proprio io vivo, leggero
mentre scrollo i capelli via dai miei occhi.*
(from *Dive* by Stanley Sutton)

The vowel sound repeated is [ai].

Onomatopoeia is the formation or use of words that (7) the sounds associated with the objects or actions that they refer to.

*I can hear the bells “tinkle, tinkle tinkle”
Sento le campane tintinnare, tintinnare, tintinnare*
(from *The Bells* by Edgar Allan Poe)

The word **tinkle** resembles the sound produced by the bells ringing.

b. Read and listen to the following lines. Write, in the spaces provided, the name of the sound device used in each line.

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- The swaying sound⁷ of the sea*
(from *Look, Stranger* by W.H. Auden)
- Bang-whang-whang goes the drum⁸,
tootle-te-tootle the fife⁹,*
(from *Up at a Villa - Down in the City* by R. Browning)
- Whose woods these are¹⁰ I think I know.
His house is in the village though¹¹;
He will not see me stopping¹² here
To watch his woods fill up¹³ with snow.*
(from *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* by R. Frost)
- On either side the river lie¹⁴*



Glossary

1 sound effects effetti sonori **2 hearing** udito **3 way** modo **4 arranges** organizza **5 rhyme pattern** schema di rima **6 vowel** vocalico **7 swaying sound** rumore ondeggiante **8 drum** tamburo **9 fife** flauto **10 whose ... are** di chi sono questi boschi **11 though** comunque **12 stopping** fermare **13 fill up** riempirsi **14 on ... lie** su entrambi i lati del fiume giace