

Poetry – Some Terms and Techniques – Samples from Longfellow

Alliteration – the repetition of consonant sounds, most often at the beginning of words – used to create pleasing, memorable sounds.

“And with wave and whirlwind wrestle!”

Allusion – a reference to a character, place or situation from another literary work – used to make the poem more interesting or to give additional meaning

“Devoured by worms, like Herod, was the town”

Imagery – creating a picture with words appealing to any of the five senses – used to make a poem come alive and create an atmosphere

“I heard the trailing garments of the Night Sweep through her marble halls!”

Metaphor – a figure of speech that compares two basically different things – used to bring things to life in unexpected ways

“The Lighthouse lifts its massive masonry,
A pillar of fire by night, of cloud by day.”

Simile – a figure of speech that uses the word like or as to make a comparison of two seemingly yet like things – used to add color to poetry

“Blue were her eyes as the fairy-flax,
Her cheeks like the dawn of day”

Onomatopoeia - use of words that sound like what they describe – used to help the reader hear the sounds and for effect

“He heard the bleating of the flock,
And the twittering of birds among the trees.”

Repetition – refers to repeated sounds, words, phrase, lines and even whole verses- used for emphasis, to add a sense of unity and/or pattern and to make a poem more musical

“A boy’s will is the wind’s will
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.”

Rhyme – repetition of the same sounds in words that appear near each other in a poem, often at the end of a line – used to create a musical effect

“I heard the bells on Christmas Day,
Their old, familiar carols play”

Rhythm - the pattern of beats made by stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry – used to create pleasant musical effects

“On the shores of Gitche Gumee,
Of the shining big-Sea-Water”

Personification – giving human/animal characteristics to nonliving things creates imagery

“The vessel in its strength; She shuddered and paused like a frightened steed.”

Total Effect of a poem is the overall impact of a poem on the reader

Sound – rhythm, rhymes, alliteration and onomatopoeia

Language – imagery, metaphor, simile, personification

Form – type of poem (narrative or lyrical)

Meaning – feeling, mood, or theme