

# The Young Shakespeareans

## OTHER BASIC POETIC DEVICES USED BY SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare was a Wizard of Words; if you learn his tricks, you'll know how to treat each line. It's all about deciphering the patterns. Each of these devices provide clues that help decode Shakespeare's puzzles.

**ALLITERATION:** Repetition of the same/similar sound at the beginning of words (vowel or consonant).  
**ASSONANCE:** Repetition of the same/similar vowel sounds within nearby words.

Here is a line spoken by the Fairies in "*A Midsummer Night's Dream*":

*"You spotted snakes with double tongue"*

Say this line aloud - can you hear the alliteration and assonance?

**Alliteration:** *spotted snakes, double tongue*

**Assonance:** *double tongue*

(the vowels are spelled differently, but they sound the same)

**RHYMING COUPLET:** Pattern of rhyming sounds at the ends of lines of verse.

Here is part of a verse spoken by Helena in "*A Midsummer Night's Dream*":

"How happy some o'er other some can be!  
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she."

**BLANK VERSE:** Pattern of unrhymed lines in a verse.

Here is a verse spoken by Theseus in "*A Midsummer Night's Dream*":

"Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,  
And won thy love doing thee injuries;  
But I will wed thee in another key,  
With pomp, with triumph, and with reveling."

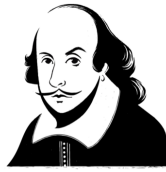
Shakespeare used Poetic Devices to reveal a **character's status**. **Educated** characters of higher status (like Helena and Theseus above) often speak in **Iambic Pentameter** using **rhyming couplets** or **blank verse**. **Less educated characters** often speak in **prose**.

**PROSE:** Lines that have no repeating pattern (how most of us normally speak).

Here are a couple of lines spoken by Bottom in "*A Midsummer Night's Dream*":

"I see their knavery: this is to fright me if they could. I will walk up  
and down here and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid."

*"If I Can Do Shakespeare, I Can Do Anything!"*  
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Other fun Poetic Devices:

## METAPHOR

A comparison substituting one thing to describe another thing.

Here is a line spoken by "*Macbeth*":

*"Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage."*

## SIMILE

A comparison between two things using "like" or "as".

Here is a line spoken by Malcolm in "*Macbeth*":

*"This is the sergeant  
Who like a good and hardy soldier fought  
'Gainst my captivity."*

## ANTITHESIS

Opposing ideas or words in a balanced or parallel structure.

Here is a line spoken by the Witches in "*Macbeth*":

*"Fair is foul, and foul is fair."*

## ONOMATOPOEIA

Words that sound like what they mean or what they are.

*Hiss, Buzz, Meow, Shriek*

*(Fun Fact: Shakespeare invented many onomatopoeic words we still use today!)*

## PUNCTUATION:

Punctuation indicates a continuation or change of thought, and sometimes even a feeling.

**Commas** ask for short pauses;

**Semi-colons** ask for longer pauses;

**Colons** indicate a list or an explanation in several parts;

**Periods** indicate a stop at the end of a sentence;

**Question marks** indicate a question, confusion, or challenge;

**Exclamation points** indicate excitement or another strong feeling.

As we know, lines written in Iambic Pentameter have 10 syllables, but **the end of a line is not necessarily the end of a sentence**. To understand what a line means, keep reading or speaking until the end of a sentence, pausing appropriately at the punctuation.

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