**English 2201 Poetic Devices**

**Lyric poetry** – a poem which expresses thoughts, feelings, and personal imaginings.

**Free verse** - poetry without any pattern at all

**Blank verse** – poetry in iambic feet in which the lines do not rhyme

**Sonnet** – a type of lyric poem composed of 14 lines, usually written in iambic pentameter, using any of a number of formal rhyme schemes, and usually having a single theme. The Italian sonnet consists of an 8-line octave followed by a 6-line sestet. The shift from the octave to the sestet may mark a turn in the argument of the poem. The English (or Shakespearean) sonnet consists of 3 quatrains and a final couplet. The couplet may mark the turn or twist in the argument

**Simile** – comparison of two unlike things using ‘like’ or ‘as’

**Metaphor** – comparison of two unlike things, not using ‘like’ or ‘as’

**Personification** – a figure of speech in which animals, objects, or abstract ideas are given human form, actions, or qualities (“Death lays his icy hands on kings.”)

**Imagery** – words or phrases used to evoke mental pictures or sensory impressions (appeals to the 5 senses: visual, auditory, gustation, olfactory, tactile)

**Alliteration** – repetition of the same letter or sound at the beginning of nearby or closely connected words (On the bold street breaks the blank day)

**Allusion** – a reference to a literary, historical, or religious person or event (i.e. Shakespeare, the Bible, mythology)

**Assonance** – the effect created when two syllables in words close together, especially in poetry, have the same vowel sound, but different consonants (face, mailed) (molten golden notes)

**Onomatopoeia** - a device in which the sound of a word reflects its meaning (“bang”)

**Apostrophe** – a passage in which a writer addresses directly a dead or absent person or an abstract or inanimate object

**Concrete language/imagery** – words or phrases denoting material objects that can be seen, heard, touched, smelled or tasted

**Abstract language/imagery** – words or phrases that refer to ideas/concepts that cannot be seen, heard, touched, smelled, or tasted

**Consonance** – the repetition of the same or similar consonants in neighbouring words (coming home)(behind the hill)

**Connotation** – the associations (ideas or feelings that a word or phrase evokes, in addition to its literal or primary dictionary meaning. (‘heart’ by its dictionary definition is that organ of the body responsible for pumping blood, the connotations of the word include the ideas of love, warmth, affection, goodness, etc.)

**Denotation** – the dictionary meaning of a word

**Diction** – the choice of words or phrases in speech or writing

**Hyperbole** – extreme exaggeration used for effect.

**Figurative language** – language used in a way that is different from the usual, literal meaning in order to create a particular mental image

**Figure of speech** – a way of using language to convey or suggest a meaning beyond the literal meaning of the words. **Metaphors, similes,** and **personification** are all examples of figures of speech.

**Rhyming couplet** – a set of lines that are placed together and rhyme

**Rhyme Scheme** – pattern of rhyme found at the ends of the lines of a poem

**Stanzas** – groups of lines in a poem

**Quatrain** – a set of 4 lines in a poem

**Sestet** – a set of 6 lines in a poem

**Octave** – a set of 8 lines in a poem

**Symbol** – a thing that represents, typifies, or recalls something else

**Theme** – the main idea of a piece of literature

**Mood** – the main emotion or feeling that is associated with a piece of literature

**Some overarching questions to keep in mind when analysing poetry:**

1. What is the overall mood? How is it being created?
2. Who is the audience? Why do you think so?
3. What is the main message/theme of the poem?
4. What literary devices are being used throughout the poem?
5. Is there a major symbol? What is it? What does it symbolize?

**When reading poetry:**

1. Read once for literal meaning
2. Read a second time for figurative meaning
3. Read a third time to answer questions