

## Language and its use

Due to the expressive nature of poetry and the emphasis on often complex and unusual writing structure, poets often need to make readers aware of the literal and figurative meanings of the language used in very economical ways.

This is where rhyme scheme and diction (the poet's choice of words) very often come into play, but they are hardly the only tools at the poet's disposal. Poets often make use of two other powerful tools to manipulate language:

### Tropes

*Tropes* are words and expressions that are used figuratively, as opposed to literally. When a poet adds additional layers of meaning to a word or alters a word's meaning to suit the symbolic needs of a poem, the poet is said to be using a *trope*. As such, many of the literary techniques and figurative devices you are already used to are considered to be tropes, such as the list provided in your Study Guide:

- Metaphor; simile; personification; metonymy; hyperbole; irony; oxymoron and understatement.

Naturally, many other figures of speech also qualify as tropes, such as the list below, which you should be familiar with:

- Synecdoche; allegory; allusion; personification; irony; hyperbole and oxymoron.

You do not need to memorise a complete list of tropes and how they work, but you do need to remember that whenever a poet uses a word to mean something other than its normal, everyday meaning, that is a *trope*.

### Schemes

Very often a poet will manipulate the pattern or order of words from what we would expect, or will repeat words, rather than using pronouns or prepositions, in order to emphasise an aspect of the poem, such as a phrase or theme. This technique is known as a *scheme* and it requires you to make connections between similar words and phrases to identify it. Fortunately, *schemes* also include a number of literary techniques you should be familiar with, such as the list provided in your study guide:

- Repetition; anaphora; alliteration; parallelism; antithesis; ellipsis and parenthesis.

Other schemes you might be familiar with include:

- Assonance; consonance and caesura.

As with tropes, you do not need to memorise a complete list of schemes and how they work, but you should know that when a poet uses unusual word order and diction the poet is using a *scheme*.

If you *do* want a list of tropes and schemes and their various, beyond the common ones listed above, you can find a good one here:

<http://www.mrgunnar.net/ap.cfm?subpage=347181>