Definitions of Poetic Devices

1. **Form:** The way a poem looks- or its arrangement on the page- Poetry is written in lines, which may or may not be sentences. Sometimes the lines are combined into groups called stanzas. Poets deliberately choose the arrangements of words and lines. Some poets even plan the spaces between words and letters to create the form.

2. **Rhyme:** Words that end with the same sound.

3. **Rhyme Scheme:** The pattern of rhymes in a stanza in a poem. An example of rhyme scheme abab abab.

4. **Rhythm:** Internal 'feel' of beat and meter perceived when poetry is read aloud. The rhythm is the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry. Stressed syllables are those word parts that are read with more emphasis; they can be indicated with a ' mark. Unstressed syllables are those word parts that are read with less emphasis; they can be indicated with a mark.

5. **Meter:** The recurrence of a pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables.

6. **Free Verse:** Poems that do not have a regular rhythm and sound more like conversation.

7. **Repetition:** Repeating sounds, words, phrases, or whole lines in a poem. Repetition helps the poet emphasize an idea or convey a certain feeling.

8. **Refrain:** The stanza that keeps on repeating after some lines in a poem.

9. **Figurative Language:** Poets choose words and phrases that help the reader to picture ordinary things in new ways. Simile, metaphor, and personification are examples of figurative language.

10. **Imagery:** Words and phrases that appeal to the five senses. Poets use imagery to create a picture in the reader’s mind or to remind the reader of a familiar sensation.

11. **Simile:** A comparison of two unlike things using "as" or "like", e.g. "Her hair is as bright as the sun."

12. **Metaphor:** A comparison of two unlike things not using “as” or “like”; implied comparison.

13. **Personification:** Giving an animal or an object human qualities or motives.

14. **Theme:** The message about life that the poem conveys. All of the poetry devices help the poet establish the theme.

15. **Hyperbole:** Exaggeration for dramatic effect e.g. "This book weighs a ton."

16. **Oxymoron:** A seeming contradiction in two words put together: "parting is such sweet sorrow."

17. **Paradox:** A seemingly contradictory statement, e.g. “When you increase your knowledge, you see how little you know.”

18. **Onomatopoeia:** Use of words resembling the sounds they mean, e.g., biz buzz, humming, pant and puff.

19. **Alliteration:** Deliberate repetition of initial consonant sounds, e.g., "Build, build your Babels!"

20. **Assonance:** Deliberate repetition of identical or similar vowel sound, e.g., "the tread of the feet of the dead".

21. **Consonance:** Repetition of consonant sounds, e.g., “The chalk fell into the crack in the rock.”

22. **Epigram or Aphorism:** Concise or witty saying. “An apple a day keeps the doctor away.”

23. **Apostrophe:** A figure of speech in which someone absent or dead or something nonhuman is addressed as if it were alive and present and was able to reply.

24. **Diction:** Poet's distinctive choices in vocabulary.

25. **Tone:** Dominant feeling the poet feel towards the subject.
A self test on devices of poetry

Identify the poetical devices in these examples:
(There may be more than one in each)

1. "like a rocket shot to a ship ashore/ the lean red bolt of his body tore"
2. "Arabia will not sweeten this little hand"
3. "If anything might rouse him now/ the kind old sun will know"
4. "the road was a ribbon of moonlight, looping the purple moor"
5. "having a glass of blessings standing by."
6. "grass ...... following wind-worried"
7. "they were bright bubbles bursting from the trees"
8. "the murmuring of innumerable bees"
9. "lightening his load of links with pant and puff"
10. "Tonight it doth inherit the vastly Hall of Death"
11. "faint of ghosts of ghosts, the dreams of ghostly eyes"
12. "leaves hung like dumb tongues that loll and gasp for air"
13. "Thou art my life, my love, my heart/ The very eyes of me"
14. "Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky"
15. "By his dead smile, I knew we stood in Hell"
16. "the cockatoo ..the wise, harsh bird, as old and wise as Time"
17. "the curious bird, his cynic eyes half closed"
18. "Hail to thee bright spirit/ Bird thou never wert!"
19. "The evil that men do lives after them The good is oft interred with their bones."
20. "Where are the songs of Spring? Ay where are they?"

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ANSWERS to the Self Test on devices

1. simile/metaphor
2. hyperbole
3. personification
4. ribbon = metaphor
5. glass of blessings = metaphor
6. wind-worried = alliteration
7. bright bubbles bursting = alliteration
8. murmuring of innumerable = assonance
9. "load of links" = metaphor "with pant and puff" = alliteration/
10. "Tonight it doth inherit the vasty Hall of Death = onomatopoeia
11. ghosts of ghosts, ghostly = repetition for effect
12. "like dumb tongues" = simile "that loll and gasp for air" = personification
13. "Thou art my life" = apostrophe “The very eyes of me” = metaphor
14. "Ring out, wild bells" = apostrophe
15. dead smile = oxymoron/ we stood in Hell = slight hyperbole
16. bird, as old and wise as Time = similes, falling cadence
17. "the curious bird, his cynic eyes half closed" = personification
18. "Hail to thee bright spirit!" = apostrophe
19. "The evil that men do lives after them/ The good is oft interred with their bones." = epigram
20. "Where are the songs of Spring? Ay where are they?" = repetition