

# Index of Poetic Techniques



Technique	Explanation	Example
		<i>Italicised examples are from the poem 'Municipal Gum' by Oodgeroo Noonuccal</i>
<b>Poetic meaning</b>	Topic	The subject matter of the poem; what the author is talking about. First Nations people's forceful dispossession and assimilation into white environments, culture and law.
	Theme	The idea or purpose of the whole poem. The themes are dispossession, interrelatedness, colonisation.
	Tone	The manner in which the author expresses the topic and theme – their attitude. The tone is mournful and begrudging. <i>"Castrated, broken, a thing wronged, Strapped and buckled, its hell prolonged"</i>
	Mood	The atmosphere created by the author (established by theme, topic and tone). Sombre, mournful, bleak and dark. <i>"O fellow citizen, What have they done to us?"</i>
	Voice	Who is the narrator? Is it the author? Is it a fictional character, human or non-human? What are they saying and how are they saying it? The voice is of Noonuccal herself observing the tree. <i>"Here you seem to me"</i>

<b>Word devices</b>	Nouns	Who or what the author is talking about or using for imagery.	The author compares herself to a gumtree, signifying rootedness to country and First Nations ties to pre-colonial Australia. The author also looks at the “ <i>poor cart-horse</i> ”, the invisible driver of labor; exploited and bestialised.
	Adjectives	What words is the author using to describe the nouns?	“ <i>leafy</i> ” forest – plentiful and giving / “ <i>wild</i> ” bird – free and unchained / “ <i>municipal</i> ” gum – colonised
	Verbs	What actions are taking place? What kind of actions are they?	Noonuccal’s verbs are pleading and final, the bird “ <i>calls</i> ” and the horses face “ <i>express</i> ”, combined with “ <i>done</i> ”, “ <i>set</i> ”, “ <i>strapped</i> ” and “ <i>buckled</i> ”.
	Imagery	This can be visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory and sensuous.	Visual – “ <i>gumtree in the street</i> ” Auditory – “ <i>a wild bird calls</i> ”
<b>Language devices</b>	Repetition	Is the author repeating any words? Are the words repeated deliberately?	<p>From Kevin Gilbert’s poem ‘Shame’:</p> <p><i>‘And some say “Shame” when we’re talkin’ up And “Shame” for the way we are And “Shame” cause we ain’t got a big flash house Or a steady job and a car.’</i></p> <p>The effect of the repetition is to make the audience aware of the significance of shame culture, and to reiterate shame for the audience in the same way it has been reiterated for First Nations peoples.</p>

<b>Language devices</b>	Personification	Are there any human-like qualities given to any animals or objects?	<p><i>“Gumtree in the city street, Hard bitumen around your feet”</i></p> <p>The objects become mirrors for the author’s or characters’ sentiments.</p>
	Contrast / juxtaposition	Placing two different ideas, objects or images side-by-side.	<p><i>“Hard bitumen around your feet... In the cool world of leafy forest halls”</i></p>
	Symbolism	Using a symbol to represent the essence of another thing.	The municipal gum symbolises Noonuccal and First Nations peoples.
	Simile	Comparing two things using ‘like’ or ‘as’.	<p><i>“Here you seem to me Like that poor cart-horse”</i></p>
	Metaphor	Comparing two things using ‘is’.	Saying that the tree is a <i>“citizen”</i> is a metaphor that highlights the continual forced labelling of First Nations peoples in terms of their identity.
	Allusion	Making reference to other known works of literature, events in history, and/or people (fictional or not).	Noonuccal is alluding to the history of dispossession, identification and colonisation in Australia.
	Hyperbole	Exaggerating an image or idea.	The word <i>“hell”</i> is hyperbole and metaphorical. It serves to emphasise the gravity of what the author is saying.

Sound effects	Alliteration	Repetition of the same sound via the first letters of words.	<i>“<u>l</u>ung”, “<u>h</u>ead”</i>
	Onomatopoeia	Words that mimic a sound.	<i>“bang”, “hiss”, “whisper”, etc.</i>
	Assonance	Repetition of the same sound via vowels.	<i>“Gum<u>tree</u> in the city <u>street</u>”</i>
	Consonance	Repetition of the same sound via consonants.	<i>“<u>listless</u> <u>men</u> <u>express</u>”</i>
	Rhyme	Repetition of similar sounds. Rhyme often appears at the end of a line (end-rhyme, like in this example) but it can appear anywhere in a poem.	<i>Gumtree in the city street,</i> A <i>Hard bitumen around your feet,</i> A <i>Rather you should be</i> B <i>In the cool world of leafy forest halls</i> C <i>And wild bird calls</i> C <i>Here you seem to me</i> B
	Rhythm	The beat made by the flow of each stanza.	Read the poem and tap to the beat. Which words are emphasized, prolonged or muted?