STYLE IN POETRY
This refers to how a poet uses language to pass his message across. Poetic language is compact, as the poet strives to pack more meaning using fewer words. Poets employ different stylistic devices that make a poem more interesting, memorable, musical and enjoyable to read.

STYLISTIC DEVICES

1. SIMILE - This refers to the indirect comparison between two things using the words like, as, than, look like, or resembles. For example,

   The smoke descended on us like a blanket

   She is as tall as a giraffe

   Your back resembles a bent twig

SIGNIFICANCE OF SIMILES
Similes enable us to draw a clear mental picture of what is being described. By applying the attributes of that which we know, to what it is being compared to. For instance instead of saying: My sister is beautiful, one can say: My sister is a flower. We create a mental picture of a flower and apply to the sister like being soft, beautiful, colourful, scented etc.

READ THE POEM BELOW AND IDENTIFY THE SIMILES IN IT

1. A MAN OF WORDS
A man of words and not deeds
Is like a garden full of weeds;
And when the weeds begin to grow,
It's like a garden full of snow;
And when the snow begins to fall,
It's like a bird upon the wall;
And when the bird does fly away,
It's like an eagle in the sky;
And when the sky begins to roar,
It's like a lion at the door;
And when the door begins to crack,
It's like a stick across your back;
And when your back begins to smart,
It's like a penknife in your heart;
And when your heart begins to bleed,
You're dead, and dead, and dead indeed.

TRADITIONAL

THE FACE OF HUNGER
I counted ribs on his concertina chest
Bones protruding as if chiseled
By a sculptor's hand of famine

He looked with glazed pupils
seeing only a bun on some sky high shelf.

The skin was pale and taut
Like a glove on a doctor's hand
His tongue darted in and out
Like a chameleon’s
Snatching a confetti of flies.
O! Child,

Your stomach is a den of lions
Roaring day and night

OSWALD MTSHALI

QUESTIONS

a) Who is the persona in the poem? (2mks)

b) Identify the imagery used and show its effectiveness. (6mks)

c) Explain the meaning of the following lines:
"Your stomach is a den of lions
Roaring day and night"

d) What is the attitude of the persona towards the boy? (2mks)

2. METAPHOR

Just like a simile, a metaphor compares one thing to another to bring out their similarities.

A metaphor is the direct comparison between two things ie without using the words of comparisons used in similes.

READ THE FOLLOWING POEM

I LOVE YOU, MY GENTLE ONE

I love you, my gentle one;
My love is the fresh milk in the rubindi
Which you drank on the wedding day;
My love is the butter we were smeared with
To seal fidelity into our hearts.
You are the cattle-bird's eggs,
For those who saw you are wealthy;
You are the papyrus reed of the lake,
Which they pull out with both hands,
And I sing for you with tears
Because you possess my heart:
I love you, my gentle one.

RALPH BITAMAZIRE

What does the poet compare his love for the 'you' of the poem to? Describe the qualities of the items that his love is compared to.

When identifying either a simile or a metaphor, make sure you include what has been compared to what for example. A man of words and not deeds is like a garden full of weeds, it would be wrong to say that the simile is ...like a garden full of weeds

3. REPETITION

This is when a poet uses either a word or phrase more than once within the same poem.

SIGNIFICANCE/IMPORTANCE

Repetition is used to:
- create rhythm/Musicality
- Stress important features /Create emphasis

I SHALL RETURN
I shall return again. I shall return
To laugh and love and watch with wonder-eyes
At golden noon the forest fires burn,
Wafting their blue black smoke to sapphire skies,
I shall return to loiter by the streams
That bathe the brown blades of the bending grasses,
And realize once more my thousand dreams
Of waters rushing down the mountain passes.
I shall return to hear the fiddle and the fife
Of village dances, dear, delicious tunes
That stir the hidden depths of native life,
Stray melodies of dim-remembered tunes,
I shall return. I shall return again.
To ease my mind of long, long years of pain.

CLAUDE MCKAY (JAMAICA)

Questions
a) What is this poem about?(2MKS)
b) Identify the stylistic devices used in the poem(4MKS)
c) Identify three instances of alliteration in the poem(3MKS)

4. PERSONIFICATION

This is the giving of human qualities to things which are not human. These things can be animals or plants or even non-living things like stones, clouds ...
For example, the sky wept buckets. The sky cannot cry so that is a human quality that personifies the sky

SIGNIFICANCE OF PERSONIFICATION

It helps the poet make an abstract entity concrete by giving it human qualities. It is easier to understand another human being than it is to understand a thing or a concept.

-In your statement if you have identified personification, make sure you state what object has been personified, exactly what human attributes the personified object or concept has been given and what the poet achieves by using personification.

I MET A THIEF

On the beach, on the coast,
Under the idle whispering coconut towers,
Before the growling, foaming waves,
I met a thief, who guessed I had
An innocent heart for her to steal.
I gazed! Her hair was like the wool of a mountain sheep
Her eyes; a pair of brown black beans floating in milk
Juicy and round as plantain shoots
Her legs, arms and neck
And like wine gourds, her pillowy breasts
Her throat uttered fresh banana juice
Matching her face- smooth and banana ripe

I touched but long before I even tasted
My heart had flowed from me into her breast
And then she went high and south
And left my carcass roasting in the fire
She'd lit.

QUESTIONS
1. Identify the persona in the poem (2mks)
2. Briefly describe what is happening in the poem (3mks)

3. Identify and illustrate 3 stylistic devices used in the poem (6mks)
4. In what ways is the title relevant. (2mks)
5. State two economic activities practiced in this community (4mks)

5. RHYME
This is the repetition of matching sounds. Words that end with the same sound rhyme.
E.g. bleak/streak

Half rhyme
When only the last part of the words sound the same. E.g calmly/lonely

Full rhyme
These are words which occur in minimal pairs eg strangled/tangled, bare/care.
Internal rhyme
When words rhyme within the line

Rhyme scheme
This is a regular pattern of rhyming words in a poem.
To indicate the rhyme scheme of a poem one uses lower case letters.

SIGNIFICANCE OF RHYME
-To give the poem a musical quality/ Create rhythm
-To emphasize certain words and ideas

THE RAVEN
Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered weak and weary
While I nodded nearly napping, Suddenly there came a tapping
As of someone gently rapping,rapping at my chamber door

THE FAIRIES LULLABY
Fairies you spotted snakes with double tongue (a)
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen (b)
Newts and blind worms, do no wrong (a)
Come not near or fairy queen (b)
Chorus Philomel, with melody (c )
Sing our sweet lullaby (d)
Lulla, lulla, lullaby (d)
Never harm (e)
Nor spell nor charm (e)
Come our lovely lady nigh (d)
So, good with lullaby (d)
SEA LULLABY
The old moon is tarnished (a)
With smoke of the flood (b)
The dead are vanished (a)
With color like blood (b)

A treacherous smiller (c)
With teeth white as milk (d)
A sange beguiler (c)
In sheathing not silk (d)
It has regular rhyme scheme- abab cdcd

THE PARROT
He uses his beak like a hook (a)
To lift himself up with or break (a)
Open a sunflower seed (b)
And his eye, in a bold white ring (c)
Has a lapidary look (a)
What a most astonishing bird (b)
Whose voice when he chooses to sing (c)
Must be believed to be heard (b)
Rhyme scheme -irregular aabcabcb

THE DEATH OF A ZULU
The weather is mild
At the house of one or the dead.
There is fruit in the hands of his child,
With flowers on his head.

Smoke rises up from the floor,
And the hands of a ghost
(No shadow darkens the door)
Caress the door-post.

The woman inside cannot sleep,
Too wild to weep:
Food lies uncooked at her feet, and is taken
By scavenging fowls.

Outside with a sudden fear shaken
The little one howls.

PRQ-South Africa

*Mother to Child

Another mother wishes you were hers,
But you are mine
She wants you to nurse you on her gorgeous rug
She wishes you were hers
To lay you on her rug of camel-hair
But you are mine
To lay on my poor ragged mat
She wishes you were hers,
But you are mine.

Akan Ghana

QUESTIONS
1. Identify this type of poem and state in what way has it satisfied the characteristics of such a poem. (6mks) - Lullaby-..she wants to nurse you...

WHY?
The words are short and soothing.

2. State one economic activity of the society in the poem. (2mks)
Pastoralism...r

3. What are the stylistic devices used in the poem? (6mks)

4. Identify the character traits of the mother. (4mks)

5. Explain the tone of the poem. (2mks)

6. RHETORICAL QUESTIONS

These refers to questions asked in the poem without expecting answers or questions in the poem that do not get responses. The question poses no difficulty to the reader, the answer being something that is obvious to the reader.

SIGNIFICANCE/IMPORTANCE

Rhetorical questions are meant to make the reader think deeply about issues/look at issues critically.

Rhetorical qns may also be used to inject satire in the poem or even develop irony
May also be used to emphasise the subject matter.

IF DEATH WERE NOT THERE
If death were not there,
Where would the inheritor get things?
The cattle have been left for the inheritor;
Ee, how would the inheritor get things?
The iron-roofed house has been left for the inheritor;
Ee, if death were not there,
How would the inheritor get rich?
The bicycle has been left for the inheritor;
This inheritor is most lucky;
Ee, brother, tell me,
If death were not there,
Ugly one, whose daughter would have married you?
A wife has been left for the inheritor;
Ee, inheritor, how would you have lived?
The house has been left for the inheritor;
If death were not there,
How would the inheritor get things?

ACHOLI UGANDA

QUESTIONS
1. Who is the performer of this song? 2mks
2. How do you know this is a song? 4mks
3. What social values are upheld in the community from which the song is taken? 3mks

4. What type of song is this? 2mks

5. How would you enrich the song in performance? 6mks

6. Identify one economic activity practiced in this community. 2mks

7. What is the community's view about death? 2mks

I SPEAK FOR THE BUSH
When my friend sees me
He swells and pants like a frog
Because I talk the wisdom of the bush!
He says we from the bush
Do not understand civilized ways
For we tell our women
To keep the hem of their dresses
Below the knee.
We from the bush, my friend insists,
Do not know how to 'enjoy'
When we come to the civilized city,
Like nuns, we stay away from the nightclubs
Where women belong to no men
And men belong to no women
And these civilized people
Quarrel and fight like hungry lions

But, my friend, why do men
With crippled legs, lifeless eyes,
Wooden legs, empty stomachs
Wander about the streets
Of this civilized world?

Teach me, my friend, the trick,
So that my eyes may not
See those whose houses have no walls
But emptiness all around;
Show me the wax you use
To seal your ears
To stop hearing the cry of the hungry;

Tell your God to convert
Me to the faith of the indifferent,
The faith of those
Who will never listen until
They are shaken with bows.
I speak for the bush:
You speak for the civilized-
Will you hear me?

EVEREST STANDA(Kenya)

QUESTIONS
1. Mention and illustrate three negative characteristics associated with the 'civilized'. (6mks)
2. Identify the stylistic devices in the poem. (4mks)

3. What do you think the 'bush' is a symbol of? (4mks)

4. What is ironic about the 'he' in the poem looking down upon people from the 'bush'? (4mks)

5. Identify satire in the poem. (4mks)

6. What do you think the poet means by 'those whose houses have no walls'? (2mks)

SYMBOLISM

A symbol can be defined as something physical that represents or stands for another thing that is abstract. For instance, white stands for peace, red for bloodshed and violence, the National Flag stands for unity, a dove is a symbol of peace...

Symbolism is therefore when a poet uses symbols in their poems.

* Say what the following objects is a symbol of in your community:
  - A cross on top of a building
  - A clenched fist
  - A lion
  - A white bridal gown

* READ THE POEM 'I SPEAK FOR THE BUSH' AND IDENTIFY THE SYMBOLS USED IN IT

THE KRAAL

The Kraal fence
Hide quarrels
Of jealous wives;
It hides the miseries within
And sadness
Of wives fallen from favour.
It excludes anyone
Beyond its gate
That reed fence
Spells laughter, joy
And happiness to the outBut hides the cruelty
Of the husband within
To the tortured tormented wife,
The sad ones full of woes:
The favoured ones full of ease and joy.
Yes, that reed fence hides plenty

STELLA NGATHO`

QUESTIONS
1. What four things happen in the Kraal that are excluded from the outside world. (4mks)
2. According to the poem, why would the reed fence be described as misleading? (2mks)
3. Identify and explain the significance of two stylistic devices the poet has used. (6mks)
4. What is the tone of the poem? (2mks)
5. Classify this poem. (2mks)

THE DOG IN KIVULU
The dog in Kivulu,
Thin, bony and yawning;
The dog in Kivulu,
Panting and squatting
Like it's master.
The dog in Kivulu,
Barking at naked children,
Children who sing a thanksgiving
As they leave the rubbish heaps.
The dog in Kivulu,
Running away from fat flies
And scratching it's tail with teeth,
Biting nothing but it's own gums,
Swallowing nothing more than it's own saliva.
The dog of Kivulu,
Guarding its drunken master
And the hoard of fermenting millet,
Kwete and Malwa in clay-pots.
But the dog of Kivulu
Lies by, with nothing to drink;
Nobody calls it Acaali, the bitch,
It looks on-at the trenches-
And drinks the water from the cattleshed.

QUESTIONS
1. Categorize the poem (2mks)
It is a social poem---It deals with social issues such as poverty, drunkardness
2. What is the setting of the poem. (2mks)

The poem is set in the slums: The dog is kivulu. Kivulu is a slum area in Uganda.

3. State and illustrate the theme of the poem. (2mks)

Squatter and misery life of the slum/ Poverty/ Deprivation/ The plight of the slum dwellers/ Dehumanisation

Illustration: Naked children/ Children leave the rubbish heap.

4. Explain the significance of the use of the term dog. (4mks)

The term is used figuratively to show the misery and squalor of slum life. It represents the underdog.

The fact that nobody calls it Acaali, the bitch-pet name- points to the impossibility of development of tender feelings in an atmosphere of such poverty and deprivation.

5. Give the details of the hardships experienced by the slum dwellers. (4mks)

Poverty _ naked children

Hunger- Children who leave...rubbish heaps

6. What is the significance of the following lines.

"Children who sing a thanksgiving
As they leave the rubbish heap" (2mks)

Shows great poverty and hunger, for children get food from rubbish pit and this makes them happy.

7. Identify and illustrate the social and economic aspects of the life of the slum dwellers. (4mks)

(SOCIAL) Brewing of local brew from millet and maize
- Board of fermenting millet

(ECONOMIC) Cultivation/ farming...millet
- Livestock keeping/ cattle rearing...water from cattleshed.