

Gifts of Grace: Honouring Our Vocations

Literary Devices — Full Answers | CBSE Class 9 English (Kaveri), Poem 2

The poem celebrates the dignity of labour by describing the varied vocations of the people of Bharat — craftspeople, weavers, musicians, carpenters, electricians, shoemakers, cooks, and masons. Below are full, exam-ready answers explaining the key literary devices used in the poem, with references to where they occur.

1. Alliteration

Definition: Alliteration is the repetition of the same initial consonant sound in words that occur close together, usually at the start of successive or nearby words. It gives the lines a musical, rhythmic quality and draws attention to the linked words.

Example and reference: The poem contains two clear instances of alliteration — the words "craft" and "colours" appearing close together in the third line (describing the weavers' craft), and the phrase "work with" and "wires" in the eighth line (describing the electrician's work). Both instances create a pleasing sound pattern that reinforces the rhythm of the poem while emphasising the skill of the workers being described.

2. Imagery (Sensory Imagery)

Definition: Imagery refers to descriptive language that appeals to the five senses, helping the reader visualise or 'hear' what is being described. This poem relies heavily on auditory (sound) imagery, since its central idea is that the speaker 'hears' Bharat celebrating its vocations.

Example and reference: The electrician is described as humming while preparing for work, and the boatman's song is mentioned as one of the sounds of the nation. These sound images appear throughout the middle stanzas describing each profession, and they build a soundscape of a working nation, making the abstract idea of 'dignity of labour' concrete and vivid for the reader.

3. Personification

Definition: Personification is a device where a non-human entity — here, the nation itself — is given human qualities or actions, such as the ability to hear, feel, or celebrate.

Example and reference: The recurring line where the speaker says he 'hears Bharat celebrating' the vocations personifies the nation as a living being capable of listening to and taking joy in the work of its people. This appears both at the opening and the closing of the poem, framing it as a unifying idea.

4. Symbolism

Definition: Symbolism is a literary device where an object, action, or idea stands for something larger or deeper than its literal meaning. In this poem, every vocation described is symbolic rather than merely literal.

Example and reference: Each vocation mentioned across the poem — weaving, carpentry, electrical work, shoemaking, cooking, and masonry — symbolises more than the job itself. It represents the worker's identity, personal pride, and contribution to the nation. The poem's title itself, 'Gifts of Grace', symbolises these vocations as blessings bestowed on the workers,

elevating ordinary labour to something sacred.

5. Repetition / Refrain

Definition: Repetition is the deliberate reuse of a word, phrase, or line for emphasis, unity, or musical effect. A refrain is a repeated line or set of lines that recurs at intervals, often at the beginning and end of a poem.

Example and reference: The phrase describing the speaker hearing 'Bharat celebrating' its varied vocations recurs at both the start and the close of the poem. This refrain-like repetition frames the entire poem, reinforcing its central theme and giving it a circular, song-like structure.

6. Rhyme and Rhythm

Definition: Rhyme is the matching of sounds at the end of lines, while rhythm refers to the musical beat created by the arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables. Together they give a poem its lyrical, song-like quality.

Example and reference: The poem is arranged in short, structured stanzas with a consistent rhyme pattern across the descriptions of each profession. This regular rhythm suits the poem's celebratory tone, making it read almost like a chant or anthem in praise of workers.

7. Theme as a Literary Device (Dignity of Labour)

Definition: Although theme is not a figure of speech in the strict sense, examiners often ask students to identify the poem's central idea or message as part of appreciating its literary craft.

Example and reference: Running through every stanza — from the weaver's colours to the mason's bricks — is the single unifying theme that all forms of labour possess equal dignity and are essential to a nation's identity. This theme ties together the individual images, symbols, and sounds used throughout the poem into one coherent message.

Quick Reference Table

Literary Device	Where it appears / Reference
Alliteration	"craft/colours" (line 3); "work with/wires" (line 8)
Imagery (sound)	Electrician's humming; boatman's song
Personification	Bharat 'hears' and 'celebrates' — opening and closing lines
Symbolism	Each vocation; the title 'Gifts of Grace' itself
Repetition/Refrain	'Hear Bharat celebrating' — beginning and end
Rhyme & Rhythm	Regular stanza pattern throughout the poem
Theme	Dignity of labour — running through all stanzas

Note: Answers are prepared in original wording for study purposes and do not reproduce the poem's text verbatim.