

Techn'ode

The *techn'ode*, short for an ode to technology, is a comic ripoff of the old-fashioned ode, a lyric poem written in flowery language paying tribute to a person or object the poet admires. John Keats, the 19th Century English romantic poet, is most often associated with this kind of poem. In "Ode on a Grecian Urn," his best known work, he paid tribute in very dignified verse to an ancient form of technology, a clay pot. The techn'ode turns that form on its head and pays humorous tribute to a modern form of technology much admired by the poet: maybe the cruise control on her car, the cell phone in his pocket, the remote control on the TV, or whatever. In terms of meter and rhyme, the techn'ode consists of ten lines written in an abab rhyme scheme with no prescribed meter. The poet may use the lofty language of Keats as illustrated below or a mixture of archaic and modern phrasing as in the second example.

Final Stanza of "Ode on a Grecian Urn"

by John Keats

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity. Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty"---that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

Ode to My Honda Generator

Ah, thou source of power when lightning bolts strike
Or squirrels get fried on the transformer at night,
Electricity is thy product and just what I like
I praise thee for keeping my house warm and bright.
When Entergy fails me on a hot summer's day,
Thou art there to power my trusty Trane
When ice storms cast trees across my way,
Thy portable energy keeps me safe and sane.

The most common literary device in this kind of poem is the *apostrophe*, a figure of speech in which the poet directly addresses or invokes the subject of the poem. When the subject is non-animate, this becomes personification.

To write this kind of poem, pick your favorite form of technology; and brainstorm all of its benefits. Jot these down, and reflect on how the subject specifically helps you in various situations. Weave these together into a ten-line poetic tribute to the subject. Poets who have trouble with rhyming may wish to access the Rhyme Zone on the Internet at <http://www.rhymezone.com/> to find long lists of rhyming words.

My Favorite Technology: Some Suggested Topics

personal digital assistant (PDA)

digital music player (iPod)

cell phone

Tivo

electronic game box (Game Boy, XBox, etc.)

personal water craft (AquaJet, Sea Doo, Polaris, etc.)

laptop computer

car DVD player

dish washer

Segway human transporter

photocopier

nail gun

synthesizer

calculator

electronic burglar alarm system

microwave oven

scanner

text messaging

airplanes

Internet surfing

digital camera

air conditioning

wakeboard

global positioning system (Onstar)

all terrain vehicle

wide screen TV

email

fax machine

answering machine/voice mail

four-wheel drive

custom sound system

electronic treadmill

digital dictionary/thesaurus

remote start for automobile

the car or truck of your choice

voice recognition software

satellite radio

microscopes/telescopes