

A Reading Dictionary of Literary Elements

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adage

a saying that conveys a common experience or general truth and has gained credit through extended use (e.g., a stitch in time saves nine)

affix	a non-word letter or group of letters attached to a root or stem to change its meaning or function, as the prefix <i>ad-</i> and the suffix <i>-ing</i> in <i>adjoining</i>
allegory	a literary work with two or more levels of meaning: one literal level and one or more symbolic or figurative levels; events, settings, objects, or characters that stand for ideas or qualities beyond themselves

Allegory

Definition:

An allegory is a symbolism device where the meaning of a greater, often abstract, concept is conveyed with the aid of a more corporeal object or idea being used as an example. Usually a rhetoric device, an allegory suggests a meaning via metaphoric examples.

Example:

Faith is like a stony uphill climb: a single stumble might send you sprawling but belief and steadfastness will see you to the very top.

ALLEGORY

An **allegory** is a device used to represent an idea, principle or meaning, which can be presented in literary form, such as a poem or novel; or in a visual form such as a painting or drawing.

As a literary device, an allegory is defined as an “extended metaphor”, or “symbolic representation”. Very often an allegoric story or [play](#) illustrates an idea or moral principle in which objects take on symbolic meaning.

Example of Allegory:

The Ant and the Grasshopper

In a field one summer's day a Grasshopper was hopping about, chirping and singing to its heart's content. An Ant passed by, bearing along with great toil an ear of corn he was taking to the nest.

"Why not come and chat with me," said the Grasshopper, "instead of toiling and molling in that way?"

"I am helping to lay up food for the winter," said the Ant, "and recommend you to do the same."

"Why bother about winter?" said the Grasshopper; we have got plenty of food at present." But the Ant went on its way and continued its toil. When the winter came the Grasshopper had no food and found itself dying of hunger, while it saw the ants distributing every day corn and grain from the stores they had collected in the summer. Then the Grasshopper knew:

It is best to prepare for the days of necessity. (Moral)

Allegory example

Alliteration

Definition:

Alliteration is a literary device where words are used in quick succession and begin with letters belonging to the same sound group. Whether it is the consonant sound or a specific vowel group, the alliteration involves creating a repetition of similar sounds in the sentence. Alliterations are also created when the words all begin with the same letter. Alliterations are used to add character to the writing and often add an element of 'fun' to the piece..

Example:

The Wicked Witch of the West went her own way. (The 'W' sound is highlighted and repeated throughout the sentence.)

ALLITERATION

Alliteration is the repetition of the first syllables of a series of words and/ or phrases. Modern alliteration is predominantly consonantal.

Alliteration can be broken down into two groups:


Alliteration - repeated consonant sound at the beginning of words or within words; used to establish mood and rhythm in a story; true alliteration has three words beginning with the same sound (two words beginning with the same sound would be called **alliterative**)

Examples: bucking bronco; miserable morning; Bed, Bath, and Beyond

Alliteration

Alliteration is the repetition of sounds, most often consonant sounds, at the beginning of words. Alliteration gives emphasis to words.

Example: Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers

A small, stylized illustration of two peppers. One is green and the other is red, both with black outlines and a small stem. They are positioned diagonally, with the green pepper above the red one. The background of the illustration is a light yellow with some faint, circular patterns.

Allusion

Definition:

An allusion is a figure of speech whereby the author refers to a subject matter such as a place, event, or literary work by way of a passing reference. It is up to the reader to make a connection to the subject being mentioned.

Example:

It's no wonder everyone refers to Mary as another Mother Teresa in the making; she loves to help and care after people everywhere- from the streets to her own friends.

In the example the author uses the mention of Mother Teresa to indicate the sort of qualities that Mary has.

ALLUSION

An **allusion** is a figure of speech that makes a reference to, representation of a place, historical event, literary work, myth, or work of art. Allusions can be direct references or implications.

Examples of Allusion:

- *The girl's love of sweets was her Achilles heel*
- *Harriet Tubman was called the Moses of her time*
- *It must have rained for 40 days and 40 nights*



Allusion example

In the first example above, the sentence alludes to Achilles, the warrior of Greek mythology, who could only be harmed if something hit his heel. (i.e. Achilles' only weakness was his heel)

Allusion - a reference in one story to a well-known character or event from another story, history, or place

Examples: the rise of the baseball team from last place to first was a real Cinderella story; at times teachers need the wisdom of Solomon to make Decisions

ALLUSION

is a casual reference to a famous historical or literary figure or event.

Examples:

If it doesn't stop raining, I'm going to build an ark.

My sister has so many pets I'm going to call myself Old McDonald.



Anagram

Definition:

Anagrams are an extremely popular form of literary device wherein the writer jumbles up parts of the word to create a new word. From the syllables of a phrase to the individual letters of a word, any fraction can be jumbled to create a new form. Anagram is a form of wordplay that allows the writer to infuse mystery and a little interactive fun in the writing so that the reader can decipher the actual word on their own and discover a depth of meaning to the writing.

Example:

An anagram for "debit card" is "bad credit". As you can see, both phrases use the same letters. By mixing the letters a bit of humor is created.

Analogy

Definition:

An analogy is a literary device that helps to establish a relationship based on similarities between two concepts or ideas. By using an analogy we can convey a [new idea](#) by using the blueprint of an old one as a basis for understanding. With a mental linkage between the two, one can create comprehension regarding the new concept in a simple and succinct manner.

Example:

In the same way as one cannot have the rainbow without the rain, one cannot achieve success and riches without hard work.

ANALOGY

An **analogy** is a comparison that is made between two things that are in some way/ ways similar. An analogy is often used to help explain something or make it easier to understand

Examples of Analogy:

- *Shoe is to foot as tire is to wheel*
- *Citizen is to president as solar system is to galaxy*



Analogy example

Antagonist

The **antagonist** is the
"bad guy" or force



Anthropomorphism

Definition:

Anthropomorphism can be understood to be the act of lending a human quality, emotion or ambition to a non-human object or being. This act of lending a human element to a non-human subject is often employed in order to endear the latter to the readers or audience and increase the level of relativity between the two while also lending character to the subject.

Example:

The raging storm brought with it howling winds and fierce lightning as the residents of the village looked up at the angry skies in alarm.

Antithesis

Definition:

An antithesis is used when the writer employs two sentences of contrasting meanings in close proximity to one another. Whether they are words or phrases of the same sentence, an antithesis is used to create a stark contrast using two divergent elements that come together to create one uniform whole. An antithesis plays on the complementary property of opposites to create one vivid picture. The purpose of using an antithesis in literature is to create a balance between opposite qualities and lend a greater insight into the subject.

Example:

When Neil Armstrong walked on the moon it might have been one small step for a man but it was one giant leap for mankind.

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Aphorism

Definition:

An aphorism is a concise statement that is made in a matter of fact tone to state a principle or an opinion that is generally understood to be a universal truth. Aphorisms are often adages, wise sayings and maxims aimed at imparting sense and wisdom. It is to be noted that aphorisms are usually witty and curt and often have an underlying tone of authority to them.

Example:

Upon seeing the shoddy work done by the employee the boss told him to “either shape up or ship out”.

Archetype

Definition:

An archetype is a reference to a concept, a person or an object that has served as a prototype of its kind and is the original idea that has come to be used over and over again. Archetypes are literary devices that employ the use of a famous concept, person or object to convey a wealth of meaning. Archetypes are immediately identifiable and even though they run the risk of being overused, they are still the best examples of their kind.

Example:

Romeo and Juliet are an archetype of eternal love and a star-crossed love story.

aside (uh-SAHYD): Words spoken to the audience by a character in a drama that are not supposed to be heard by the other characters onstage. An aside is usually used to let the audience know what a character is thinking.

aside	a statement delivered by an actor to an audience in such a way that other characters on stage are presumed not to hear what is said; the character reveals his or her private thoughts, reactions, or motivations
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Assonance

Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds but not consonant sounds.

Examples of Assonance:

- *Fleet fet sweep by sleeping geeks*
- *Apt alliterations artful aid*
- *Row row row your boat*



Assonance example

Ex: Fleet feet sweep by sleeping geese.



The repetition of accented vowel sounds in a series of words.

Assonance

Assonance

Definition:

Assonance refers to repetition of sounds produced by vowels within a sentence or phrase. In this regard assonance can be understood to be a kind of alliteration. What sets it apart from alliterations is that it is the repetition of only vowel sounds. Assonance is the opposite of consonance, which implies repetitive usage of consonant sounds.

Example:

“A long song”. (Where the ‘o’ sound is repeated in the last two words of the sentence)

base word	a word to which affixes may be added to change its meaning, tense, or part of speech
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Cacophony

Definition:

A cacophony in literature refers to the use of words and phrases that imply strong, harsh sounds within the phrase. These words have jarring and dissonant sounds that create a disturbing, objectionable atmosphere.

Example:

His fingers rapped and pounded the door, and his foot thumped against the yellowing wood



cause and effect	a strategy for analyzing a subject by examining the reasons for specific actions or events (cause) and the consequences or results of certain causes (effect)
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Every story needs
characters



People

Animals



Or Creatures



Characters:

Characterization

Definition:

Characterization in literature refers to a step-by-step process wherein a character of a story is brought to notice and then detailed upon in front of the reader. Characterization is a sort of initiation wherein the reader is introduced to the character. The initial step is to introduce the character with a marked emergence. After the arrival his behavior is discussed. This is followed by an insight into his thought-process. Then comes the part where the character voices his opinions or converses with others in the story. The last and finalizing part is when others in the plot respond to the character's presence.

cinquain

a five line stanza with successive lines of two, four, six, eight, and two syllables

Circumlocution

Definition:

Circumlocution is a form of writing where the writer uses exaggeratedly long and complex sentences in order to convey a meaning that could have otherwise been conveyed through a shorter, much simpler sentence. Circumlocution involves stating an idea or a view in an indirect manner that leaves the reader guessing and grasping at the actual meaning.

Example:

Instead of writing “he arrived for dinner at 8 pm” the author writes, “8 pm was when he reached the dinner party”.

compare	to use examples to show how things are similar and different, with the greater emphasis on similarities
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contrast	to use examples to show how things are different in one or more important ways
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Compound words are different, since they do NOT eliminate letters when joining the two smaller words.

Examples: dog + house = doghouse

life + guard = lifeguard

Conflict

Definition:

It is a literary device used for expressing a resistance the protagonist of the story finds in achieving his aims/ dreams. The conflict is a discord that can have external aggressors or can even arise from within the self. It occurs when the subject is battling his inner discord, may be at odds with his surroundings and lastly, may be pitted against others in the story. Example: John tried hard to convince himself that his Hollywood dreams were worth the struggle but his parents, and his inner voice of reason, failed to [agree](#).

Great stories have a **conflict**



Man vs. Nature

Man vs. Society



Man vs. Man

Man vs. Machine

Man vs. Himself



Conflict - the problem, or challenge, that the main character faces
Example: The main character may be challenged by another character (two kids running in a race), by nature (a boy struggling to survive in the wilderness), or by him/herself (a girl who must get over her fear of speaking in front of an audience)

external conflict – a problem or struggle between a character and an outside force:

character vs. character

character vs. group

character vs. nature

internal conflict – a problem *within* a character (character vs. self).

Connotation

Definition:

Connotation is a complex literary device wherein the intended meaning is not stated clearly and is instead conveyed through covert, indirect means. Connotations leaves a little of the meaning unstated so that the reader can decode it for himself.

Example:

And once again, the autumn leaves were falling.

This phrase uses 'autumn' to signify something coming to an end.

Connotation

- 1) The definition of a word found outside of the dictionary.
- 2) Figurative meaning of a word.
- 3) The verb form is "to connote" which means "to suggest or imply a meaning beyond the literal meaning of a word."

e.g. The word "cool" connotes
"an awesome or exciting thing."

Consonance

Definition:

Consonance refers to repetition of sounds produced by consonants within a sentence or phrase. In this regard consonance can be understood to be a kind of alliteration. What sets it apart from alliterations is that it is the repetition of only consonant sounds. Consonance is the opposite of assonance, which implies repetitive usage of vowel sounds.

Example:

Sing sweet songs for suzy.

Consonance

Consonance is the repetition of consonant sounds by not vowel sounds.

Examples of Consonance:

- *On scrolls of silver snowy sentences*
- *Some mammals are clammy*
- *Dragging the lazy languid line along*



Consonance definition

Consonance:

The repetition of consonant sounds
as in

"The fair breeze blew, the white
foam flew,
The furrow followed free;"

--The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

CLIMAX

The turning point of the action in a story, play or plot is referred to as the **climax**.

The climax represents the point at which the story gets exciting and more alive. In some stories there may be several points that can be arguably called the climatic points.

Example of Climax:

- *The climax of the Cinderella Story is when Cinderella places her foot in the glass slipper and achieves a perfect fit. Upon this revelation, she wins the marriage of the prince.*



Climax example

Dialogue - spoken lines between characters, set with quotation marks; each new speaker's lines appear in a new paragraph; when one person speaks for an extended time (to himself or the audience) it is called a **monologue**

Example: "Where are you going?" Nicole asked.

"To the library," replied Jeremy.

digraph

two letters representing a single speech sound (e.g., ph in phone)

diphthong

a speech sound beginning with one vowel sound and moving to another vowel sound within the same syllable (e.g., oi in oil)

Denotation

Definition:

Denotation refers to expressing a meaning or the significance of a part of a story in a straightforward, clear-cut manner. There is no roundabout, covert manner employed and hence denotation is the opposite of connotation.

Example:

He packed his bags and made his way out of the house, leaving his old life behind forever.

Diction

Definition: Diction is the distinctive tone or tenor of an author's writings. Diction is not just a writer's choice of words it can include the mood, attitude, dialect and style of writing. Diction is usually judged with reference to the prevailing standards of proper writing and speech and is seen as the mark of quality of the writing. It is also understood as the selection of certain words or phrases that become peculiar to a writer.

Example:

Certain writers in the modern day and age use archaic terms such as 'thy', 'thee' and 'wherefore' to imbue a Shakespearean mood to their work.

Epilogue

Definition: Epilogues are an inherent part of any story or poem and are essential to the structure of any written form. The epilogue is an important literary tool that acts as the afterword once the last chapter is over. The purpose of an epilogue is to add a little insight to some interesting developments that happen once the major plot is over. Epilogues often act as a teaser trailer to any possible sequels that might be created later. Sometimes the epilogue is used to add a little bit about the life/future of the main characters after the story itself has unfolded and wrapped up. Epilogues are an interesting fiction because they can be written in a number of ways: sometimes the same narrative style as adopted in the story is continued while at other times one of the characters might take up the narrative or speak one-to-one with the audience.

Example:

In a remarkably contemporary moment at the end of *The Tempest*, Shakespeare's wizard Prospero addresses the audience directly, breaking down the boundaries of the play. He informs them that the play is over, his powers are gone, and thus his escape from the play's island setting depends on their applause--that they, in effect, get to decide his fate.

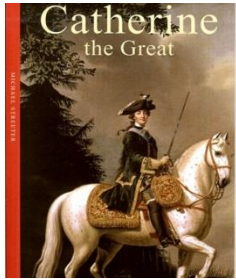
This serves as a Epilogue for Shakespeare's tragi-comedy *The Tempest*.

Epithet

Definition: An epithet is a literary device that is used as a descriptive device. It is usually used to add to a person or place's regular name and attribute some special quality to the same. Epithets are remarkable in that they become a part of common parlance over time. These descriptive words and phrases can be used to enhance the persona of real and fictitious places, objects, persons and divinities.

Example:

"Alexander the Great" is the epithet commonly used to refer to Alexander III of Macedon. The young king has come to be recognized by this epithet in all of history and popular culture owing to his spectacular achievements in creating one of the largest-ever historical empires.



Euphemism

Definition:

The term 'euphemism' is used to refer to the literary practice of using a comparatively milder or less abrasive form of a negative description instead of its original, unsympathetic form. The purpose of euphemisms is to substitute unpleasant and severe words with more genteel ones in order to mask the harshness.. The use of euphemisms is sometimes manipulated to lend a touch of exaggeration or irony in satirical writing.

Example:

Using "to put out to pasture" when one implies retiring a person because they are too old to be effective.

Below are some more examples of Euphemisms

Downsizing - This is used when a company fires or lays off a larger number of employees

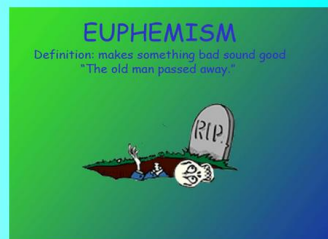
Golden years - This is used to describe the later period of life when someone is of old age.

EUPHEMISM

is a polite word or phrase used in place of one that may be too direct, unpleasant, or embarrassing.

Examples:

pass away = die
vertically challenged = short



Euphony

Definition:

The literary device “euphony” refers to the use of phrases and words that are noted for possessing an extensive degree of notable loveliness or melody in the sound they create. The use of euphony is predominant in literary prose and poetry, where poetic devices such as alliterations, rhymes and assonance are used to create pleasant sounds. Euphony is the opposite of cacophony, which refers to the creation of unpleasant and harsh sounds by using certain words/ phrases together. This literary devices is based on the use and manipulation of phonetics in literature.

Example:

It has been said that the phrase “cellar door” is reportedly the most pleasant sounding phrase in the English language. The phrase is said to depict the [highest degree](#) of euphony, and is said to be especially notable when spoken in the British accent.

Fable:

A story that illustrates a moral
often using animals as
characters

e.g. The Tortoise and the Hare

expository text	writing that explains or informs through the use of facts, reasons, or examples
fable	a short narrative that teaches a moral or lesson; main characters are usually animals that speak and act like humans
fact	a statement that can be verified as true
fairy tale	a fanciful tale about real life problems, usually with imaginary characters such as fairies, trolls, or leprechauns
fantasy	a highly imaginative story characterized by fanciful or supernatural elements

figurative language	the use of words to create vivid pictures and ideas in the mind of the reader; not meant to be literally true (e.g., similes, metaphors, idioms, personification)
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figurative language (FI G-yer-uh-tiv LAN G-gwidj): The *literal* meaning of a word is its definition as you would find it in a dictionary. Figurative language uses words in some way *other* than for their literal meanings to make a comparison, add emphasis, or say something in a fresh and creative way. Examples of figurative language include *alliteration*, *hyperbole*, *idiom*, *imagery*, *metaphor*, *onomatopoeia*, *personification*, and *simile*.

Faulty Parallelism

Definition:

In literature, the term 'parallelism' is used to refer to the practice placing together similarly structure related phrases, words or clauses. Parallelism involves placing sentence items in a parallel grammatical format wherein nouns are listed together, specific verb forms are listed together and the suchlike. When one fails to follow this parallel structure, it results in faulty parallelism. The failure to maintain a balance in grammatical forms is known as faulty parallelism wherein similar grammatical forms receive dissimilar/unequal weight.

Example:

On the [TV](#) show The Simpsons, lead character Bart Simpson says, "they are laughing, not with me".

Flashback

Definition:

Flashback is a literary device wherein the writer/ author depicts the occurrence of specific events to the reader, which have taken place before the present time the narration is [following](#), or events that have happened before the events that are currently being unfolded in the story. Flashback devices that are commonly used are past narratives by characters, depictions and references of dreams and memories and a sub-device known as authorial sovereignty wherein the author directly chooses to refer to a past occurrence by bringing it up in a straightforward manner. Flashback is used to create a background to the present situation, place or person.

Example:

Back in the day when Sarah was a young girl...

You can see flashbacks used very often in movies. For example, it is common in movies for there to be a flashback that gives the viewer a look into the character's life when they were younger, or when they have done something previously. This is done to help the viewer better understand the present situation.

Flashback - interruption of the present action to insert an episode that took place earlier; this gives the reader needed information to understand a current event, or a character's motivation

Example: I could tell that Jimmy wasn't going to back down. He stood up to bullies before, like back in first grade when Roger Neary used to eat everybody's snack. One day Jimmy had caught Roger in *his* snack bag, and...

flashback	an account of a conversation, episode, or event that happened before the beginning of a story, told for the purpose of clarifying something in the present; often interrupts the chronological flow of the story
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Foil

Definition:

The term 'foil' refers to a literary device where the author creates a character whose primary purpose is to create a contrast to another character by laying emphasis or drawing attention to the latter's traits and characteristics through the former's obviously contradictory ones.

Example:

In the popular book series, Harry Potter, the character of Hogwarts principal Albus Dumbledore, who portrays 'good', is constantly shown to believe in the power of true love (of all forms and types) and is portrayed as a strong, benevolent and positive character while the antagonist Lord Voldemort, who depicts the evil and 'bad' in the series is constantly shown to mock and disbelieve the sentiment of love and think of it as a foolish indulgence, a trait that is finally his undoing.

folktale	a narrative piece (e.g., epic, legend, myth, fable) that is part of the oral or written tradition of a culture passed from generation to generation
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foreshadowing	writer's use of hints or clues to indicate events that will occur later in a text
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Foreshadowing

Definition:

The literary device foreshadowing refers to the use of indicative words/phrases and hints that set the stage for a story to unfold and give the reader a hint of something that is going to happen without revealing the story or spoiling the suspense. Foreshadowing is used to suggest an upcoming outcome to the story.

Example:

"He had no idea of the disastrous chain of events to follow". In this sentence, while the protagonist is clueless of further developments, the reader learns that something disastrous and problematic is about to happen to/for him.



A hint about what will happen next is called **foreshadowing**

For example, if you hear this:

Then you know someone's about to get eaten!



Foreshadowing - clues used to alert the reader about events that will occur later; used to build suspense

Example: I laughed as we snuck out the back door. The plan had worked out perfectly. Nothing could possibly go wrong now!

free verse

a style of poetry that has an irregular rhyme or line pattern; verse that is developed according to author's own style

genre	a category or type of literature based on its style, form, and content (e.g., mystery, adventure, romance, science fiction)
graphic features	features within or accompanying text, that help to clarify or explain the text (e.g., labels, illustrations, captions, headings, diagrams, charts, tables, titles)
graphic organizer	a visual representation of information in an organized manner that is intended to enhance understanding (e.g., Venn diagram, T-graph, word web, KWL chart)
haiku	a style of Japanese poetry consisting of three unrhymed lines of five, seven, and five syllables, traditionally about nature or the seasons
historical fiction	a long narrative that recreates an historical period or event based on fact, but embellished with imagined conversation and details
homographs	words with the same spelling but with different pronunciations and meanings (e.g., wind, read, bow)
homonyms/homophones	words with the same pronunciation but with different meanings, different parts of speech, and usually different spelling

Hubris

Definition:

Hubris, in this day and age, is another way of saying overly arrogant. You can tell the difference of hubris and just regular arrogance or pride by the fact that the character has seemed to allow reality slip away from them. The character portraying hubris, also commonly referred to as hybris, may have just gained a huge amount of power and the false belief that they are “untouchable”. This term hubris used to have a slightly different meaning and was a very negative subject back in ancient Greek. It used to be closely related to a crime in Athens. In writing and literature hubris is generally considered a “tragic flaw” and it is saved for the protagonist. The reason for this is because at the end of the story you should be able to see that it is this flaw that brings the “bad guy” down.

Example:

A classic example of hubris is featured in Shakespeare’s play Macbeth. Macbeth, the protagonist, overfilled with ambition and arrogance, allows his hubris to think you would be able to kill the valiant Duncan without penalty so he can claim the throne of Scotland for himself. Obviously murder is highly frowned upon, so this eventually leads to Macbeth’s demise as well.

Hyperbole

Definition:

A hyperbole is a literary device wherein the author uses specific words and phrases that exaggerate and overemphasize the basic crux of the statement in order to produce a grander, more noticeable effect. The purpose of hyperbole is to create a larger-than-life effect and overly stress a specific point. Such sentences usually convey an action or sentiment that is generally not practically/ realistically possible or plausible but helps emphasize an emotion.

Example:

"I am so tired I cannot walk another inch" or "I'm so sleepy I might fall asleep standing here".

HYPERBOLE

A **hyperbole** is a figure of speech in which an overstatement or exaggeration occurs.

Often used in poetry or in casual speech, hyperboles are usually used to create emphasis or effect.

Example of Hyperbole:

- *The bag weighs a ton. (Obviously the bag does not weigh a ton, but is very heavy.)*
- *I waited in the line for centuries. (Again, this simply emphasizes that the wait time was extremely long.)*



Hyperbole example

Hyperbole - obvious exaggeration which is not meant to be taken literally

Example: I'm so hungry I could eat a horse!

Hyperbole

- Extreme exaggeration!
- Exaggeration so extreme that many times the claim cannot possibly be true.
- For Example:
 - - “Mom you NEVER let me go anywhere.”
(chances are, she let's you go SOMEWHERE...)

Hyperbole

- Figure of speech that uses exaggeration to express strong emotion or create a comic effect
- Ex: The limousine was as long as the Titanic.
- Julie wears so much make-up she has to use a sandblaster to get it off at night.



Imagery

Definition:

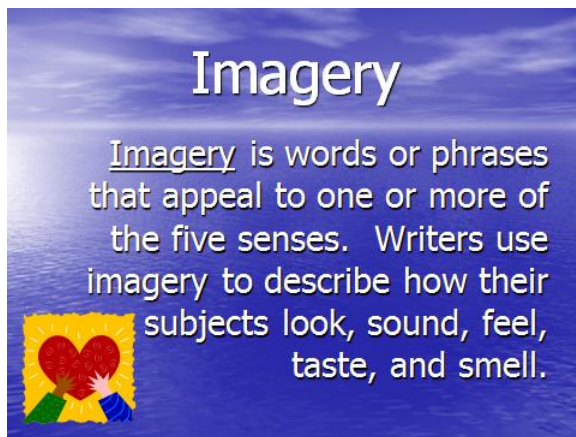
In literature, one of the strongest devices is imagery wherein the author uses words and phrases to create “mental images” for the reader. Imagery helps the reader to visualize and therein more realistically experience the author’s writings. The usage of metaphors, allusions, descriptive words and similes amongst other literary forms in order to “tickle” and awaken the readers’ sensory perceptions is referred to as imagery. Imagery is not limited to only visual sensations, but also refers to igniting kinesthetic, olfactory, tactile, gustatory, thermal and auditory sensations as well.

Example:

The gushing brook stole its way down the lush green mountains, dotted with tiny flowers in a riot of colors and trees coming alive with gaily chirping birds.


Imagery - mental pictures which are created by descriptions of the senses, so that we can see and feel what the character is experiencing

Example: Even the dark, shiny leaves which usually clung to the chimney of my grandmother’s house hung dry and brittle on that hot summer day.



Imagery

- Use of words to create a sensory experience or image
- Uses the 5 senses
- Ex: The family dinner was a “combination of boisterous conversation, badly burnt chicken, and the scent of freshly baked bread.”



Inference - conclusions which can be drawn by the reader based upon limited clues or facts presented by the author; the reader is encouraged to discover things for him/herself without being directed by the author

Example: Mark's father was surprised the following week when, all of a sudden, Mark quit begging for a dog. He began spending much more of his time out at the old barn by the creek, and had even begun to ask for seconds and thirds at suppertime.

Internal Rhyme

Definition:

In literature the internal rhyme is a practice of forming a rhyme in only one lone line of verse. An internal rhyme is also known as the middle rhyme because it is typically constructed in the middle of a line to rhyme with the bit at the end of the same metrical line.

Example:

The line from the famed poem Ancient Mariner, "We were the first that ever burst".

Irony

Definition:

The use of irony in literature refers to playing around with words such that the meaning implied by a sentence/word is actually different from the literal meaning derived. Often, irony is used to suggest the stark contrast of the literal meaning being put forth. The deeper, real layer of significance is revealed not by the words themselves but the situation and the context in which they are placed.

Example:

Writing a sentence such as, "Oh! What fine luck I have!". The sentence on the surface conveys that the speaker is happy with their luck but actually what they mean is that they are extremely unhappy and dissatisfied with their (bad) luck.

IRONY

Irony is incongruity between what might be expected and what actually occurs.

Verbal Irony

Ironic statements (verbal irony) typically imply a meaning that is opposite to the literal meaning.

Sarcasm is a form of verbal irony.

Example of Verbal Irony:

A character may be referred to as “intelligent” while she is actually perceived by others as being foolish.



Verbal irony example

Situational Irony

A situation is ironic if actions taken have an effect exactly opposite from what was intended or expected.

Examples of Situational Irony:

- *Hyde noted the irony of Ireland's copying the nation she most hated.*
- *The water vendor died of thirst.*



Situational irony example

How is this ironic?



Juxtaposition

Definition:

In literature, juxtaposition is a literary device wherein the author places a person, concept, place, idea or theme parallel to another. The purpose of juxtaposing two directly/indirectly related entities [close](#) together in literature is to highlight the contrast between the two and compare them. This literary device is usually used for etching out a character in detail, creating suspense or lending a rhetorical effect.

Example:

In Paradise Lost, Milton has used juxtaposition to draw a parallel between the two protagonists, Satan and God, who he discusses by placing their traits in comparison with one another to highlight their differences.

legend	a traditional, historical story of a culture passed from generation to generation
limerick	a light, humorous, five-line verse with an <i>aabba</i> rhyme pattern
lyric	a short poem that expresses personal feelings or emotions, often in a songlike style or form

Lyric:

A type of poetry that expresses the poet's emotions. It often tells some sort of brief story, engaging the reader in the experience.

main idea	<p>the concept, thought, notion, or impression that is of greatest importance or influence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • literal – adhering to fact or to the primary meaning or intent • implied –a suggested meaning or intent (as opposed to explicit) • explicit – fully revealed or expressed without vagueness, implication, or ambiguity; leaving no question as to the meaning or intent
main character	a character that plays a prominent role in a literary work

Metaphor

Definition:

Metaphors are one of the most extensively used literary devices. A metaphor refers to a meaning or identity ascribed to one subject by way of another. In a metaphor, one subject is implied to be another so as to draw a comparison between their similarities and shared traits. The first subject, which/who is the focus of the sentences is usually compared to the second subject, which is used to convey/carry a degree of meaning that is used to characterize the first. The purpose of using a metaphor is to take an identity or concept that we understand clearly (second subject) and use it to better understand the lesser-known element (the first subject).

Example:

“Henry was a lion on the battlefield”. This sentence suggests that Henry fought so valiantly and bravely that he embodied all the personality traits we attribute to the ferocious animal. This sentence implies immediately that Henry was courageous and fearless, much like the King of the Jungle.

METAPHOR

A **metaphor** is a comparison in which one thing is said to be another. The words “like” and “as” are not used in metaphors.

Examples of Metaphors:

- *You are a gem*
- *Time is thief*
- *Life is a journey*



Metaphor example

Metaphor - a suggested comparison between two unlike things in order to point out a similarity; a metaphor DOES NOT use the word **like, as, or than**.

Example: Hot orange coals burned at the edge of the woods as the wolves watched and waited with hungry eagerness. (the wolves' eyes are compared to orange coals because of their brightness and color)

Mood

Definition:

The literary device 'mood' refers to a definitive stance the author adopts in shaping a specific emotional perspective towards the subject of the literary work. It refers to the mental and emotional disposition of the author towards the subject, which in turn lends a particular character or atmosphere to the work. The final tone achieved thus is instrumental in evoking specific, appropriate responses from the reader.

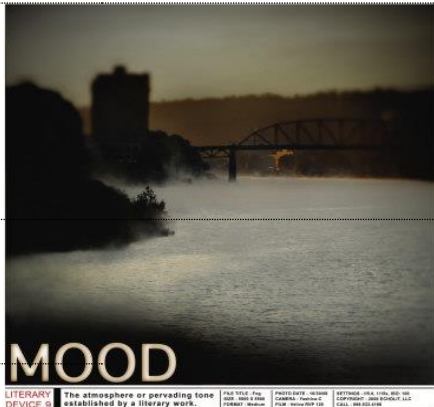
Example:

In Erich Segal's Love Story, the relationship of the two protagonists is handled with such beauty, delicateness and sensitivity that the reader is compelled to feel the trials and tribulations of the characters.

mood (mood): The feeling the reader gets from a work of literature. Another way to describe a story's mood is *atmosphere*. When you walk into a place, it has an atmosphere that makes you feel a certain way; when you "walk into" a story, it too has an atmosphere that makes you feel a certain way. For example, the mood could be calm, creepy, romantic, sad, or tense. Authors create mood through word choice, imagery, dialogue, setting, and plot. The mood can stay the same from the beginning to the end of a story, or it can change.

mood

the feeling(s) the text arouses in the reader (e.g., happiness, sadness, sorrow, peacefulness)



moralthe particular value or lesson the author attempts to convey to the reader

Motif

Definition:

The literary device 'motif' is any element, subject, idea or concept that is constantly present through the entire body of literature. Using a motif refers to the repetition of a specific theme dominating the literary work. Motifs are very noticeable and play a significant role in defining the nature of the story, the course of events and the very fabric of the literary piece.

Example:

In all the famed fairytales, the motif of a 'handsome prince' falling in love with a 'damsel in distress' and the two being bothered by a wicked step-mother/ evil witch/ beast and finally conquering all and living 'happily ever after' is a common motif.

Another common motif is the simple, pretty peasant girl or girl from a modest background in fairytales discovering that she is actually a royal or noble by the end of the tale.

mytha traditional or legendary story that deals with supernatural beings, ancestors, or heroes; intended to explain the mysteries of the natural world, or the customs or ideals of a society

narrative/narrationa type of fiction or nonfiction that tells a story or series of events

Nemesis

Definition:

In literature, the use of a nemesis refers to a situation of poetic justice wherein the positive characters are rewarded and the negative characters are penalized. The word also sometimes refers to the character or medium by which this justice is brought about as Nemesis was the patron goddess of vengeance according to classical mythology.

Example:

In the popular book series Harry Potter, the protagonist Harry Potter is the nemesis of the evil Lord Voldemort.

Onomatopoeia

Definition:

The term 'onomatopoeia' refers to words whose very sound is very close to the sound they are meant to depict. In other words, it refers to sound words whose pronunciation to the actual sound/noise they represent.

Example:

Words such as grunt, huff, buzz and snap are words whose

pronunciation sounds very similar to the actual sounds these words represent. In literature such words are useful in creating a stronger mental image. For instance, sentences such as "the whispering of the forest trees" or "the hum of a thousand bees" or "the click of the door in the nighttime" create vivid mental images.

ONOMATOEPIC

Onomatopoeia is the formation of a word that imitates or suggests the sound that it represents.

Examples of Onomatopoeia:

- *The "oink" of the pig*
- *The "meow" of the cat*
- *The "roar" of the lion*
- *The "quack" of the duck*
- *The "achoo" of the sneeze*
- *The "flutter" of the wings*



Onomatopoeia example

Onomatopoeia - words that imitate, or sound like, the actions they describe

Examples: bang, slurp, ping, slam, hiss, squish

opinion	a belief or conclusion not supported by evidence or facts
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organization of text	<p>format or structure; often varies with type of text, but common patterns exist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• chronological order - details are arranged in the order in which they happen• order of importance - details are arranged in order of importance: least important to most important or most important to least important• cause-effect - details are arranged to show connections between a result and the events that preceded it• comparison-contrast - details are arranged to show similarities and differences between two or more subjects• listing - details are arranged in a simple list• classification - details are placed into categories• problem-solution - details are arranged to show a problem and then a way to solve the problem• spatial - details are arranged geographically from left to right, right to left, top to bottom, and so on• mixed - some details are arranged one way, and other details are arranged in another way
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Oxymoron

Definition:

Oxymoron is a significant literary device as it allows the author to use contradictory, contrasting concepts placed together in a manner that actually ends up making sense in a strange, and slightly complex manner. An oxymoron is an interesting literary device because it helps to perceive a deeper level of truth and explore different layers of semantics while writing.

Example:

Sometimes we cherish things of **little value**.

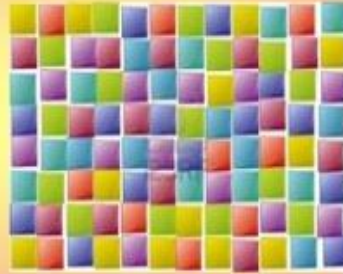
He possessed a **cold fire** in his eyes.

OXYMORON

An **oxymoron** is figure of speech that combines contradictory terms.

Examples of Oxymoron:

- *Act naturally*
- *Random order*
- *Original copy*
- *Awfully good*



OXYMORON

is the juxtaposition of two opposite terms.

Examples:

a peaceful war
a generous tightwad
dark sunshine



Parody - a humorous story that makes fun of another well-known story by imitating it; characters, plot, theme, setting, may all be copied or changed for humorous effect

Examples: *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by John Scieszka has the story of the Three Little Pigs explained from the wolf's point of view, and in his version it was all a big misunderstanding and he was innocent.

Paradox

Definition: A paradox in literature refers to the use of concepts/ ideas that are contradictory to one another, yet, when placed together they hold significant value on several levels. The uniqueness of paradoxes lies in the fact that a deeper level of meaning and significance is not revealed at first glance, but when it does crystallize, it provides astonishing insight.

Example:

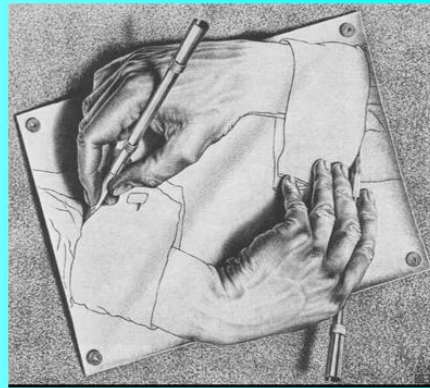
High walls make not a palace; full coffers make not a king.

PARADOX

reveals a truth which at first seems
contradictory.

Examples:

He was cowardly and brave at the
same time.
When you win all the time, you lose.



Pathetic Fallacy

Definition: Pathetic fallacy is a type of literary device whereby the author ascribes the human feelings of one or more of his/her characters to non-human objects or nature or phenomena. It is a type of personification, and is known to occur more by accident and less on purpose.

Example:

The softly whistling teapot informed him it was time for breakfast.

Personification

Definition: Personification is one of the most commonly used and recognized literary devices. It refers to the practice of attaching human traits and characteristics with inanimate objects, phenomena and animals.

Example:

“The raging winds”

“The wise owl”

“The warm and comforting fire”

PERSONIFICATION

Personification is a figure of speech where something nonhuman is given the characteristics of a human.

Examples of Personification:

- *The camera loves me*
- *The flowers begged for water*
- *Lightning danced across the sky*
- *Art is a jealous mistress*



Personification example

Personification - a description in which an object (or animal, or idea, or force of nature) takes on human characteristics or actions

Examples: the tornado stooped to snatch the house; the sun hid its face behind the clouds; the rain tapped against the window with its wet, insistent fingers

PERSONIFICATION

is when a writer gives human qualities to animals or objects.

Examples:

My car drank the gasoline in one gulp.
The cat laughed.
The newspaper headline glared at me.



Plot

Definition:

The plot usually refers to the sequence of events and happenings that make up a story. There is usually a pattern, unintended or intentional, that threads the plot together. The plot basically refers to the main outcome and order of the story. There is another kind of plot in literature as well; it refers to the conflict or clash occurring as a part of the story. The conflict usually follows 3 regular formats: a) characters in conflict with one another b) characters in conflict with their surroundings and c) characters in conflict with themselves.

Example:

Many date movies follow a similar simple plot. Boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy wins girl back in the end.

Plot - what happens in a story, told in a sequenced, chronological order

Example: Samantha received a new skateboard for her birthday. A week later, however, she lost it. She looked everywhere but couldn't find it. Then one day...

plot	<p>the action or sequence of related events that make up a story, consisting of five basic elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exposition – the opening of a short story up to the point that the conflict is introduced to the reader • rising action – the chain of events in which the conflicts intensify • climax – the point of highest interest; point at which the reader makes his greatest emotional response; the point in the story in which rising action is about to turn into falling action • falling action – takes place after the climax when the action begins to wind down or conflicts begin to lessen • resolution – tells how the story conflict is resolved and ties up loose ends from the story
poetry	<p>the expression of traditionally rhythmic compositions (sometimes rhymed, expressing ideas, experiences, or emotions) in a style more concentrated, imaginative, and powerful than that of ordinary speech or prose; generally categorized into specific forms based on purpose (e.g., elegies, ballads, parodies) and/or meter or rhyme scheme (e.g., sonnets, limericks, cinquains, free verse, haikus)</p>
point of view	<p>the perspective from which the story is told:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first person – the narrator is a character who tells the story as he or she experienced, saw, heard, and understood it; identified by the first person pronouns I or we • third person omniscient – the narrator is all-knowing, with the ability to see into the minds of more than one character • third person limited - the narrator has the ability to see into the mind of only one character

Point of View

Definition:

In literature, the ‘point of view’ is a literary device that depicts the manner in which a story is narrated/ depicted and who it is that tells the story. Simply put, the point of view determines the angle and perception of the story unfolding, and thus influences the tone in which the story takes place. The point of view is instrumental in manipulating the reader’s understanding of the narrative. In a way, the point of view can allow or withhold the reader [access](#) into the greater reaches of the story. Two of the most common point of view techniques are the first person, wherein the story is told by the narrator from his/ her standpoint and the third person wherein the narrator does not figure in the events of the story and tells the story by referring to all characters and places in the third person with third person pronouns and proper nouns.

Example:

In the popular Lord of the Rings book series, the stories are narrated in the third person and all happenings are described from an “outside the story” point of view. Contrastingly, in the popular teen book series, Princess Diaries, the story is told in the first person, by the protagonist herself.

The **point of view** is the perspective of the story



"That rotten wolf tried to eat us!!!!"



"I was framed! I just wanted to borrow a cup of sugar!"



Point of View - the perspective from which a story is seen or told; there are three main forms:

First Person: (**I** and **me** are used; the narrator is actually a part of the story)

I woke up first, alarmed that I had slept too late and missed my chance. A look at my brother's bed told me he was still asleep, snuggled up under the covers.

Third Person: (he and she are used; the narrator simply helps tell the story, and lets all character speak for themselves)

Pete woke up first. A look at his brother's bed told him that Sam was still asleep, snuggled up under the covers.

prefix

a linguistic unit added to the beginning of a word which changes its meaning (i.e., re-, mis-, un-)

Portmanteau

Definition:

In literature, this device refers to the practice of joining together two or more words in order to create an entirely new word. This is often done in order to create a name or word for something by combining the individual characteristics of 2 or more other words.

Example:

1. The word “smog” is a portmanteau that was built combining “fog” and “smoke” and “smog” has the properties of both fog and smoke.
2. Liger= Lion + Tiger= A hybrid of the two feline species, possessing characteristics of both.

primary source	an original source that informs directly, not through another person’s explanation or interpretation (e.g., firsthand reports, diaries, letters, journals, original documents)
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Primary Source

- › Autobiographies
 - › Diaries
 - › Documents
 - › Eyewitness accounts
 - › Film footage
 - › Laws
 - › Letters
 - › Video recordings of actual event
 - › Minutes to meetings
 - › E-mail messages
 - › Blog postings
 - › Coins
 - › Novels
 - › Objects from the time
 - › Photographs
 - › Poems, art, music
 - › Speeches
 - › Interviews
 - › Manuscripts
 - › Newspaper articles written at the time of event
 - › Maps
 - › Podcasts
 - › Voice mail messages
 - › Paintings
- 

Prologue

Definition:

A prologue can be understood to be a sort of introduction to a story that usually sets the tone for the story and acts as a bit of a backgrounder or a “sneak peek” into the story. Prologues are typically a narrative ‘spoken’ by one of the characters and not from the part of the author.

Example:

1. "The origin of this story is..."
2. "It all began one day when..."

Protagonist

The **protagonist** is the “good guy”



Puns

Definition:

Puns are a very popular literary device wherein a word is used in a manner to suggest two or more possible meanings. This is generally done to the effect of creating humor or irony or wryness. Puns can also refer to words that suggest meanings of similar-sounding words. The trick is to make the reader have an “ah!” moment and discover 2 or more meanings.

Example:


Santa’s helpers are known as subordinate Clauses.

PUN (also called PARANOMASIA)

A **pun** is a play on words wherein one word is used to convey two meanings at the same time. Puns are often intended for a humorous or rhetorical effect.

Examples of Puns:

- *I met this girl in internet café, but we did not click.*
- *The failure of the largest manufacturer of baby’s toys was enough to rattle the entire industry.*



Pun example

Pun - a humorous use of a word or phrase that has more than one meaning (or two similarly spelled words that sound alike)

Examples: “If you really want to keep warm, try bear skin,” said the trapper.

“But won’t I be really cold in my bare skin?” asked the boy.

Why is it easy for an elephant to travel?

He can carry his own trunk.

Repetition - the author purposely repeats words or phrases; the author is trying to create rhythm or suspense, or is trying to really emphasize a certain idea.

Example: It was all gone. Burned to ashes. He had no clothing, no blankets, no bow, no hatchet, no map. It was all gone.

repetition	repeating a word, phrase, sentence, or the like for impact and effect
rhyme	identical or very similar recurring final sounds in words within, or more frequently, at the ends of lines of verse
rhythm	a pattern of repeated cadence or accent in speech or text

Rhyme Scheme

Definition:

The rhyme scheme is the practice of rhyming words placed at the end of the lines in the prose/ poetry. Rhyme scheme refers to the order in which particular words rhyme. If the alternate words rhyme, it is an “a-b-a-b” rhyme scheme, which means “a” is the rhyme for the lines 1 and 3 and “b” is the rhyme affected in the lines 2 and 4.

Example:

Roses are red (a)

Violets are blue (b)

Beautiful they all may be (c)

But I love you (b)

The above is an “a-b-c-b” rhyme scheme.

Rhythm & Rhyme

Definition:

The concept of 'rhythm and rhyme' refers to a pattern of rhymes that is created by using words that produce the same, or similar sounds. Rhythm and rhyme together refer to the recurrence of similar sounds in prose and poetry, creating a musical, gentle effect.

Example:

"I am a teapot

Short and stout;

This is my handle

And this is my spout.

When the water's boiling

Hear me shout;

Just lift me up

And pour me out"

root	in a complex word, the meaningful base form after all affixes are removed
<hr/>	
root word	meaningful base form after all affixes are removed
<hr/>	
satire	a literary technique that combines a critical attitude with humor, often with the intent of correcting or changing the subject of the satire

Satire

Definition:

The use of satire in literature refers to the practice of making fun of a human weakness or character flaw. The use of satire is often inclusive of a need or decision of correcting or bettering the character that is on the receiving end of the satire. In general, even though satire might be humorous and may "make fun", its purpose is not to entertain and amuse but actually to derive a reaction of contempt from the reader.

secondary source	a source that contains information others have gathered and interpreted; indirect or secondhand information (e.g., newspaper and magazine accounts, encyclopedia articles, research studies, web sites, documentaries)
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Secondary Source

- ▶ History
Textbooks
 - ▶ Encyclopedias
(Print/Online)
 - ▶ Biographies
 - ▶ Reference Books
 - ▶ Non-Fiction
History Books
 - ▶ Editorials
 - ▶ Journal Articles
- 

Setting

Definition:

In literature, the word 'setting' is used to identify and establish the time, place and mood of the events of the story. It basically helps in establishing where and when and under what circumstances the story is taking place.

Example:

In the first installment of the Harry Potter series, a large part of the book takes place at the protagonist, Harry's, aunt's and uncle's place, living in the "muggle" (non-magical) world with the "muggle" folks, and Harry is unaware of his magical capabilities and blood. This setting establishes the background that Harry has a non-magical childhood with other "muggle" people and has no clue about his special powers or his parents and is raised much like, actually worse than, regular people, till his 11th birthday.

sequencing	the arrangement or ordering of subject matter to aid understanding:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• developmental

-
- chronological
 - easy to difficult (difficult to easy)
 - part to whole (whole to part)
-

setting the time of day or year; historical period, place, situation



Simile

Definition:

Similes are one of the most commonly used literary devices; referring to the practice of drawing [parallels](#) or comparisons between two unrelated and dissimilar things, people, beings, places and concepts. By using similes a greater degree of meaning and understanding is attached to an otherwise simple sentence. The reader is able to better understand the sentiment the author wishes to convey. Similes are marked by the use of the words 'as' or 'such as' or 'like'.

Example:

He is like a mouse in front of the teacher.

SIMILE

A **simile** is a figure of speech that compares two unlike quantities by employing the words “like”, “as”, or “than”.

Examples of Similes:

- *She swims like a dolphin*
- *She danced as gracefully as a swan*
- *He kicks like mule*



Simile - a comparison between two unlike things, using **like**, **as**, or **than** in the comparison

Example: the leaf spun to the ground like a descending helicopter;
more nervous than a long-tailed cat in a room full of rocking chairs;
he was as mad as a hornet

Simile

- Figure of speech that makes a comparison between two seemingly unlike things by using a connective word—like, as, than, or resembles
- “My love is like a red, red rose.”
-Robert Burns
- “And the sudden flurries of snow-birds, Like brown leaves whirling by.” –James Russell Lowell



soliloquy

lines in a drama in which a character reveals his or her thoughts to the audience, but not to the other characters, by speaking as if to himself or herself

Spoonerism

Definition:

Spoonerism refers to the practice of interchanging the first letters of some words in order to create new words or even to create nonsensical words in order to create a humorous setting. While they are often unintentional and known as a “slip of the tongue”, in literature they are welcomed as witty word-play.

Example:

The phrase “flesh and blood” being spoken as a character as “blesh and flood” in urgency and heightened emotion.

Stanza

Definition:

The term stanza refers to a single, related chunk of lines in poetry. It basically refers to one unit or group of lines, which forms one particular faction in poetry. The most basic kind of stanza is usually 4 lines per group, with the simplest rhyme scheme “a-b-a-b” being followed.

Example:

“The greedy paddy cat,

Chased after the mice;

She got so round and fat,

But it tasted so nice

Suspense

Definition:

Suspense is the intense feeling that an audience goes through while waiting for the outcome of certain events. It basically leaves the reader holding their breath and wanting more information. The amount of intensity in a suspenseful moment is why it is hard to put a book down. Without suspense, a reader would lose interest quickly in any story because there is nothing that is making the reader ask, “What’s going to happen^{next}?” In writing, there has to be a series of events that leads to a climax that captivates the audience and makes them tense and anxious to know what is going to happen.

Example:

Suspense continued:

A cliffhanger is a great way to create suspense. You remember when you were a kid and very excited to watch those Saturday morning shows. You can probably recall the feeling you had at the pit of your stomach when, after about 25 minutes and lots of commercials, you were hoping to find out what happened to your favorite character. However, you didn't get to find out. Instead they would make the "Tune In Next Week" announcement and you already knew that you would be there. Same time, same place. Suspense is a powerful literary tool because, if done correctly, you know your audience will be back for more and more.

Symbol

Definition:

A symbol is literary device that contains several layers of meaning, often concealed at first sight, and is representative of several other aspects/ concepts/ traits than those that are visible in the literal translation alone. Symbol is using an object or action that means something more than its literal meaning.

Example:

The phrase "a new dawn" does not talk only about the actual beginning of a new day but also signifies a new start, a fresh chance to begin and the end of a previous tiring time.

symbol (SIM-buhl): An object, setting, event, animal, or person that on one level is itself, but that has another meaning as well. For example, the American flag is really a piece of fabric with stars and stripes on it, but it also represents the United States and ideals like freedom, patriotism, and pride. In a story or play, rain could be a symbol; the rain would really be rain, but it might also represent an idea like sadness or leaving the past behind. *Symbolize* means "to be a symbol of."

SYMBOLISM

is using an object or action that means something more than its literal meaning.

Examples:

Pink symbolizes the fight against breast cancer.

The Statue of Liberty symbolizes freedom.



Synecdoche

Definition:

A synecdoche is a literary device that uses a part of something to refer to the whole. It is somewhat rhetorical in nature, where the entire object is represented by way of a fraction of it or a fraction of the object is symbolized by the full.

Example:

“Weary feet in the walk of life”, does not refer to the feet actually being tired or painful; it is symbolic of a long, hard struggle through the journey of life and feeling low, tired, unoptimistic and ‘the walk of life’ does not represent an actual path or distance covered, instead refers to the entire sequence of life events that has made the person tired.

synonym

one of two or more words that have a highly similar meaning (e.g., *grip* and *grasp*)

Syntax

Definition:

Syntax in literature refers to the actual way in which words and sentences are placed together in the writing. Usually in the English language the syntax should follow a pattern of subject-verb-object agreement but sometimes authors play around with this to achieve a lyrical, rhythmic, rhetoric or questioning effect. It is not related to the act of choosing specific words or even the meaning of each word or the overall meanings conveyed by the sentences.

Example:

The sentence "The man drives the car" would follow normal syntax in the English language. By changing the syntax to "The car drives the man", the sentence becomes awkward.

text features	components that support and clarify text (e.g., illustrations, titles, topic sentences, key words)
theme	the underlying idea or statement that the author is trying to convey

Theme

Definition:

The theme of any literary work is the base topic or focus that acts as a foundation for the entire literary piece. The theme links all aspects of the literary work with one another and is basically the main subject. The theme can be an enduring pattern or motif throughout the literary work, occurring in a complex, long winding manner or it can be short and succinct and provide a certain insight into the story.

Example:

The main theme in the play Romeo and Juliet was love with smaller themes of sacrifice, tragedy, struggle, [hardship](#), devotion and so on.

Theme - the meaning of a story, what it reveals about human nature; plot is what happens in the story, while theme is what it means

Example: Plot: young soldier fights his first battle

Theme: war is useless; fighting solves nothing

Tone

Definition:

The tone of a literary work is the perspective or attitude that the author adopts with regards to a specific character, place or development. Tone can portray a variety of emotions ranging from solemn, grave, and critical to witty, wry and humorous. Tone helps the reader ascertain the writer's feelings towards a particular topic and this in turn influences the reader's understanding of the story.

Example:

In her Harry Potter series, author J.K. Rowling has taken an extremely positive, inspiring and uplifting tone towards the idea of love and devotion.

Tone - the author's attitude toward a subject, revealed by choice of words and details

Example: The girl cast a lonely thin shadow on the gray brick wall, as her classmates tumbled merrily in the brightly flowered fields beyond the school.
(the author feels sorry for the girl who isn't playing with the other children)

tone

the overall feeling or effect created by a writer's use of words (e.g., playful, serious, bitter, angry, sarcastic)

Tragedy

Definition:

In literature, the concept of tragedy refer to a series of unfortunate events by which one or more of the literary characters in the story undergo several misfortunes, which finally culminate into a disaster of 'epic proportions'. Tragedy is generally built up in 5 stages: a) happy times b) the introduction of a problem c) the problem worsens to a crisis/ dilemma d) the characters are unable to prevent the problem from taking over e) the problem results in some catastrophic, grave ending, which is the tragedy culminated.

Example:

In the [play](#) Julius Caesar, the lead character is an ambitious, fearless and power hungry king who ignores all the signs and does not heed the advice of the well-meaning: finally being killed by his own best friend and advisor Brutus. This moment has been immortalized by the phrase "Eu tu Brutus?", wherein Caesar realizes that he has finally been defeated, and that too through betrayal.

Understatement

Definition:

This literary device refers to the practice of drawing attention to a fact that is already obvious and noticeable. Understating a fact is usually done by way of sarcasm, irony, wryness or any other form of dry humor. Understating something is akin to exaggerating its obviousness as a means of humor.

Example:

The phrase, "Oh! I wonder if he could get any later; I am free all day long". Said in a sarcastic tone it indicates that the speaker obviously means the opposite of the literal meaning.

Verisimilitude

Definition:

Verisimilitude is an interesting literary device wherein the quality of seeming truthfulness or verity is ascribed to a person, notion, concept, statement or event. The quality of the stated seeming to be true and correct and accurate is referred to as verisimilitude.

Example:

The bestseller 'Diary of Anne Frank' lent verisimilitude to the suffering of the Jewish people during the Holocaust.

Verse

Definition:

The literary term 'verse' is used to refer to any single, lone line of a poetry composition. A metrical writing line is known as verse. The word can however, also refer to a stanza or any other part of the poetry.

Example:

A single line or stanza in poetry would be an example of verse.