

Figurative language and sound devices

WP p72

Metaphor is a comparison of one subject with another on one common point of interest, without the use of “as” or “like”.

EXAMPLES:

Time is a thief

He is the apple of my eye

Sea of grief

The light of my life

Broken heart

It's raining men

Fade of to sleep

Stench of failure

Feel blue

Rollercoaster of emotions

A simile is a figure of speech that directly compares two different things and always contains the words “as” and “like”.

EXAMPLES:

Life is like a box of chocolates

Cute as a kitten

As blind as a bat

As black as coal

AS busy as a bee

As snug as a bug in a rug

As agile as a monkey

As happy as a horse fly on a cow pie

As fierce as a lion

As playful as a puppy

Personification is any attribution of human characteristics to animals, non-living things, objects or abstract ideas.

EXAMPLES:

The stars danced playfully in the moonlit sky

The run down house appeared depressed

The first rays of morning tiptoed through the meadow

Her life passed by her

Time creeps up on you

The fire ran wild

My life came screeching to a halt

The popcorn leapt out of the bowl

The news took me by surprise

The evil tree was lurking in the shadows

Hyperbole is the use of exaggeration as a rhetorical device or figure of speech. It aims to create humour or to emphasise a point.

EXAMPLES:

He is older than the hills

Her brain is the size of a pea

He's got tons of money

I had a ton of homework

They ran like greased lightning

He is as skinny as a toothpick

This car goes faster than the speed of light

I am so hungry I could eat a horse

I have bazillion things to do

That joke is so old, the last time I heard it I was riding on a dinosaur

A rhetorical question is a figure of speech in the form of a question that is asked in order to make a point and without the expectation of a reply.

Examples:

Are you crazy?

Am I talking to walls?

Is the sky blue?

Are you kidding?

Why do I even bother?

The butler did it, or did he?

Are you sure?

Who let the dogs out?

Are you kids still awake?

What business is it of yours?

Satire is a tool writers or storytellers use to critique or point out a flaw in society, an institution or individual.

EXAMPLES:

Gulliver's travels

Shrek

The cat in the hat

Horton hears a who

The three little pigs

The adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Irony implies the opposite of what is said. The intention is for the opposite to be understood. It is the tone which tempers or conveys meaning.

Examples:

"I **can't wait** for my detention on Friday afternoon."

Walking into the empty cinema, the woman exclaimed, "**Fortunately, we booked!**"

"Mother will be happy to hear what you **have done now**"

"**Nice weather!**" when it is raining

"How's Einstein this morning?"

"Of course I believe you," when said in a sarcastic manner."

"I've been down so long it looks like up to me"

A Paradox is a seemingly absurd or contradictory statement which, when analysed, is found to be true. The opposites are not next to each other, but are found in the same sentence.

EXAMPLES:

"You will kill him with your kindness"

"She is only happy when she has something to worry about"

"You can save money by spending it"

"The beginning of the end"

"Drowning in the fountain of eternal life"

"Deep down, you're really shallow"

"I can resist anything but temptation"

"Nobody goes to that restaurant because it is too crowded"

"A rich man is no richer than a poor man"

"Be cruel to be kind"

Antithesis compares and contradicts ideas or statements within a sentence.

EXAMPLES:

Don't underestimate him; he's a **mouse** in stature, a **lion** in strength

The **internet** is a master of technology and a **thief** of time

Many are called, but few are **chosen**

We must learn to live together as **brothers** or perish together as **fools**

Give every man thy **ear**, but few thy **voice**

Patience is **bitter**, but it has a sweet **fruit**

We look for **light**, but all is **darkness** for **brightness**, but we walk in deep **shadows**

Speech is silver, but **silence** is gold

You're **easy** on the eyes, **hard** on the heart

One **small** step for a man, one **giant** leap for all mankind

An oxymoron places two seemingly contradictory words next to each other. On analysis, these words evoke a powerful image.

EXAMPLES:

Clearly confused

Jumbo shrimp

Walking dead

Pretty ugly

Big baby

Heavy diet

True myth

Naturally strange

Sweet agony

Liquid food

Repetition is the act or process or an instance of repeating or being repeated

Humpty Dumpty

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall;
All the King's horses and all the King's men
Couldn't put Humpty together again

Rain

The rain is falling all around
It falls on field and tree,
It rains on the umbrellas here,
And on the ships at sea.

I'm nobody! Who are You?

I'm nobody! Who are you?
Are you nobody too?
Then there's a pair of us-don't tell!
They'd banish us you know.

How dreary to be somebody!
how public, like a frog.
To tell your name livelong day
To an admiring bog!

Parallelism is similarity of structures in a pair or series of related words, phrases, or clauses

EXAMPLES:

Jack hopes to visit his parents and see his old friends when he goes home.

She advised me to find some new friends and forget about the event.

This wealthy car collector owns three pastel Cadillac, two gold Rolls Royce, and ten assorted Mercedes.

I have always sought but seldom obtained a parking space near the door

Our neighbours have moved and have sold their house.

My brother walks or rides his bike to work.

The class is not only fun but also helpful.

As he didn't understand and because he refused to try, they let him go.

Since it was easy to use and because it was cheap, it sold very well.

Alice is not only strong but also fast.

A pun is a clever play of words, alike in sound but different in meaning. The double meaning is used to convey humour.

EXAMPLES:

Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana

Did you hear about the optometrist who fell into a lens grinder and made a spectacle of himself?

Doctors tell us there are over seven million people who are overweight. These, of course, are only round figures.

Old electricians never die, they just lose contact.

I went to the butchers the other day and I bet him R50 that he couldn't reach the meat off the top shelf. He said, "No, the steaks are too high"

This duck walks into a bar and orders a beer. "Four bucks," says the bartender. "Put it on my bill."

Old owls never die, they just don't give a hoot.

I went to a seafood disco rave last week and pulled a mussel.

I was on an elevator the other day, and the operator kept calling me "son". I said, "Why do you call me 'son'? You're not my father." He said, "I brought you up, didn't I?"

Which president was least guilty? Lincoln. He is in a cent.

Ambiguity is the presence of two or more possible meanings in a single passage.

EXAMPLES:

I can't tell you how much I enjoyed meeting your husband.

We saw her duck.

I can't recommend this book too highly

Euphemism is the substitution of an inoffensive term (such as "passed away") for one considered offensively explicit ("died"). From the Greek, "use of good words"

EXAMPLES:

Passed away instead of died

Correctional facility instead of jail

Departed instead of died

Differently-abled instead of handicapped or disabled

Fell off the back of a truck instead of stolen

Negative patient outcome instead of dead

Relocation centre instead of prison camp

Collateral damage instead of accidental deaths

An idiom is a rendition of a combination of words that have a figurative meaning.

EXAMPLES:

She is pulling my leg.

He took me to the cleaners.

When will you drop them a line?

You should keep an eye out for that.

I can't keep my head above water.

The early bird gets the worm.

Break a leg

Onomatopoeia is the use of words (such as *hiss* or *murmur*) that imitate the sounds associated with the objects or actions they refer to.

EXAMPLES:

"*Chug, chug, chug. Puff, puff, puff. Ding-dong, ding-dong.* The little train rumbled over the tracks."

"*Brrrrrrriiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiinng!* An alarm clock clanged in the dark and silent room."

"I'm getting married in the morning! *Ding dong!* the bells are gonna chime."

Alliteration is the repetition of an initial consonant sound.

EXAMPLES:

"You'll never put a better bit of butter on your knife."

"A lot of alliteration from anxious anchors placed in powerful posts!"

"I watched the bare brown back of the prisoner marching in front of me."

"Pompey Pipped at the Post as Pippo Pounces"

"The soul selects her own society."

Alice's aunt ate apples and acorns around August.

Becky's beagle barked and bayed, becoming bothersome for Billy.

Carries cat clawed her couch, creating chaos.

Dan's dog dove deep in the dam, drinking dirty water as he dove.

Eric's eagle eats eggs, enjoying each episode of eating.

Fred's friends fried Fritos for Friday's food.

Garry's giraffe gobbled gooseberry's greedily, getting good at grabbing goodies.