

## **25 Literary Devices**

### **1. Simile:**

A simile is a figure of speech in which two essentially dissimilar objects or concepts are expressly compared with one another through the use of “like” or “as.”

#### **Example:**

1. Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving. (Albert Einstein).
2. Fight like cats and dogs.

### **2. Metaphor:**

A metaphor is a figure of speech that makes a comparison between two non-similar things. As a literary device, metaphor creates implicit comparisons without the express use of “like” or “as.”

#### **Example:**

1. My friend is a shining star in my life.
2. Laughter is the best medicine.
3. I smell success in this building.
4. He’s buried in a sea of paperwork.

### **3. Personification:**

A figure of speech in which an idea or thing is given human attributes and/or feelings or is spoken of as if it were human

#### **Example:**

1. The wind whispered through the trees.
2. My alarm yelled at me this morning.
3. I like onions, but they don’t like me.
4. The sign on the door insulted my intelligence.
5. My phone is not cooperating with me today.
6. My computer works very hard.

### **4. Alliteration:**

Literary device that reflects repetition in two or more nearby words of initial consonant sounds

#### **Example:**

1. Silly snakes slither silently.
2. Coca Cola
3. Dunkin' Donuts
4. Polly Pocket
5. Tonka Trucks
6. Mickey Mouse
7. Minnie Mouse
8. Bugs Bunny
9. I feel like making melodies in my heart.
10. Do dare to redefine your life with style.

## **5. Rhyme:**

Rhyme is a literary device, featured particularly in poetry, in which identical or similar concluding syllables in different words are repeated.

### **Example:**

*Shake and shake  
The catsup bottle  
None'll come—  
And then a lot'll.*

*Tyger Tyger, burning bright,  
In the forest of the Night.*

1. Little Miss Muffet sat on her tuffet
2. hickory dickory dock; the mouse ran up the clock
3. Little Jack Horner sat in a corner
4. Sugar and spice and everything nice

## **6. Imagery:**

Imagery is a literary device that refers to the use of figurative language to evoke a sensory experience or create a picture with words for a reader.

### **Example:**

1. The rainbow had bright colors like a box of crayons.
2. The autumn leaves are a blanket on the ground.
3. His words felt like a dagger in my heart.

## **7. Tone:**

Tone is a literary device that reflects the writer's attitude toward the subject matter or audience of a literary work.

### **Example**

*His eye was like the eye of a vulture, the eye of one of those terrible birds that watch and wait while an animal dies, and then fall upon the dead body and pull it to pieces to eat it.*

(The tone of this passage reveals that the narrator fears and is distressed by the old man's eye.)

### **Use of Tone in Sentences:**

1. You are a terrible liar! (**Aggressive tone**)
2. I don't really like the way you talk to me. I'll thank you for your manners. (**Assertive tone**)
3. I'm sorry you lost your ticket. Kindly get off the bus and get another one. (**Non-assertive tone**)

## **8. Allusion:**

An allusion is a reference, typically brief, to a person, place, thing, event, or other literary work with which the reader is presumably familiar.

### **Example**

1. She felt like she had a **golden ticket**. (*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*)
2. That guy is **young, scrappy, and hungry**. (*Hamilton*)
3. Is there an **Einstein** in your physics class? (*Albert Einstein*)
4. I want to sound like **Queen B**. (*Beyoncé*)
5. I'm listening to the **king**. (*Elvis Presley*)

## **9. Paradox:**

A paradox is a statement that appears at first to be opposing, but upon reflection then makes sense.

### **Example**

1. Less is more
2. Do the thing you think you cannot do
3. You're damned if you do and damned if you don't
4. The enemy of my enemy is my friend
5. The beginning of the end
6. If you don't risk anything, you risk everything
7. Earn money by spending it

8. Nobody can make you feel inferior without your consent
9. The Pen is Mightier than the Sword

## **10. Euphemism:**

Euphemism is a figure of speech commonly used to replace a word or phrase that is related to a concept that might make others uncomfortable.

### **Example:**

1. Pre-owned (something used)
2. Put to sleep (euthanize)
3. Between jobs (unemployed)
4. Blowing smoke (lying)
5. Enhanced interrogation (torture)
6. Well-off (rich)
7. Correctional facility (prison)
8. Thin on top (bald)
9. Had one too many (drunk)

## **11. Hyperbole:**

Hyperbole is a figure of speech and literary device that creates heightened effect through deliberate overstatement.

### **Example:**

1. I'm so hungry that I could eat a horse.
2. That purse looks like it cost a million dollars.
3. I'm dying of thirst.
4. That dog is the cutest thing alive.
5. This suitcase weighs a ton.
6. I'm so tired that I could sleep for a week.
7. I'm so tired that I could sleep for a week.
8. When there is no tomorrow (FedEx)
9. When you're here, you're family. (Olive Garden)

## **12. Cliché:**

A cliché is an expression that is trite, worn-out, and overused. As a result, clichés have lost their original vitality, freshness, and significance in expressing meaning.

### **Example:**

1. Her advice is to live and let live.
2. My father always says that it's another day, another dollar.
3. My dog is dumb as a doorknob.
4. He's so unmotivated that he's just sitting like a bump on a log.
5. If you hide the toy it will be out of sight, out of mind.
6. I'm upset about my flat tire, but I guess it is what it is.
7. Before the teacher could assign homework, the class was saved by the bell.

## **13. Juxtaposition:**

Juxtaposition is a literary device that implies comparison or contrast. Writers create juxtaposition by placing two entities side by side to create dramatic or ironic contrast.

### **Example:**

1. Light and darkness
2. Acceptance and isolation
3. Youth and experience
4. Wealth and poverty
5. Beauty and ugliness
6. Virtue and vice
7. Family and outsiders
8. Wisdom and foolishness
9. Familiar and strange

## **14. Motif:**

Motif is an object or idea that repeats itself throughout a literary work.

### **Example:**

1. A repeated reference or visual of shattered glass (*something in life is about to break*)
2. Recurring dishonest characters (*to cue up the discovery of an unfaithful spouse*)

3. A character who constantly misplaces things (*as the loss of someone or something significant is on the horizon*)
4. A blue bird that appears briefly on a windowsill each morning (*because the main character will take off and leave the only home she's known*)

### **15. Oxymoron:**

Oxymoron is a figure of speech pairing two words together that are opposing and/or contradictory.

#### **Example:**

1. Only choice
2. Same difference
3. Friendly fire
4. Virtual reality
5. Controlled chaos
6. Silent scream
7. Terribly good
8. Wise fool
9. Black light
10. Clearly confused
11. Genuine fake

### **16. Oxymoron:**

Symbolism is a literary device that refers to the use of symbols in a literary work. A symbol is something that stands for or suggests something else.

#### **Example:**

1. Rainbow—symbolizes hope and promise
2. Four-leaf clover—symbolizes good luck or fortune
3. Green traffic light—symbolizes “go” or proceed
4. Dollar sign—symbolizes money, earnings, wealth
5. Image of shopping cart—symbolizes online purchases

### **17. Synecdoche:**

Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a part of something is used to signify the whole, or vice-versa. In fact, it's derived from the Greek word synekdoche: “simultaneous meaning.”

#### **Examples:**

1. The White House (*signifies the U.S. president or executive branch*)
2. Wearing heels (*signifies high-heeled shoes*)
3. Green thumb (*signifies person who is good at gardening*)
4. The Pentagon (*signifies U.S. military leaders*)
5. England (*signifies Great Britain*)
6. Boots on the ground (*signifies soldiers*)
7. Paper or plastic (*signifies type of shopping bag*)
8. Stars and stripes (*signifies U.S. flag*)
9. Suits (*signifies people in business*)
10. Wheels (*signifies a vehicle*)
11. Pearly gates (*signifies Heaven*)
12. Behind bars (*signifies being in jail*)

## **18. Satire:**

Satire is a literary device for the artful ridicule of folly or vice as a means of exposing or correcting it.

### **Examples:**

1. The Onion—*American digital media and newspaper company that satirizes everyday news on an international, national, and local level*
2. Family Guy—*animated series that satirizes American middle-class society and conventions*
3. The Colbert Report—*comedy television series that satirized news and late-night talk show programs*
4. Alice in Wonderland—*novel by Lewis Carroll that satirizes the corrupt political and judicial system of Victorian England*
5. Shrek—*movie that satirizes fairy tales*
6. Deadpool—*movie that satirizes super hero genre*
7. Scream—*movie satirizing horror genre*
8. Mr. Robinson—*character played by Eddie Murphy satirizing Mister Rogers and his children's television program.*

## **19. Foreshadowing:**

Foreshadowing is a literary device that writers utilize as a means to indicate or hint to readers something that is to follow or appear later in a story.

### Examples in Story Telling:

1. **Dialogue**, such as “I have a bad feeling about this”
2. **Symbols**, such as blood, certain colors, types of birds, weapons
3. **Weather motifs**, such as storm clouds, wind, rain, clearing skies
4. **Omens**, such as prophecies or broken mirror
5. **Character reactions**, such as apprehension, curiosity, secrecy
6. **Time and/or season**, such as midnight, dawn, spring, winter
7. **Settings**, such as graveyard, battlefield, isolated path, river

### 20. Onomatopoeia:

Onomatopoeia indicates a word that sounds like what it refers to or describes. The letter sounds combined in the word mimic the natural sound of the object or action, such as hiccup.

#### Examples:

1. The **buzzing** bee flew away.
2. The sack fell into the river with a **splash**.
3. The books fell on the table with a **loud thump**.
4. He looked at the **roaring**
5. The **rustling** leaves kept me awake.

### 21. Repetition:

Repetition is a literary device that involves intentionally using a word or phrase for effect, two or more times in a speech or written work.

#### Examples:

1. Time after time
2. Heart to heart
3. Boys will be boys
4. Hand in hand
5. Get ready; get set; go
6. Hour to hour
7. Sorry, not sorry
8. Over and over
9. Home sweet home



10. Smile, smile, smile at your mind as often as possible.
11. Alone, alone at last
12. Now you see me; now you don't

## **22. Allegory:**

Allegory is a narration or description in which events, actions, characters, settings or objects represent specific abstractions or ideas. Allegory generally operates on two levels as a literary device.

### **Examples:**

1. The lion and the mouse
2. The tortoise and the hare
3. The city mouse and the country mouse
4. The fox and the grapes
5. The grasshopper and the ants
6. The wolf in sheep's clothing

## **23. Diction:**

As a literary device, diction refers to the linguistic choices made by a writer to convey an idea or point of view, or tell a story, in an effective way

### **1. Formal Diction:**

Example: The smart teacher talked about space and planets in a serious way, and everyone listened.

### **2. Informal Diction:**

Example: Jake said, "I did really well on the test! It was so cool."

### **3. Colloquial Diction:**

Example: "Come to dinner at my house, and we'll have a great barbecue, like they do in the South!"

### **4. Slang Diction:**

Example: "The concert was amazing! The band's music was really good."

### **5. Abstract Diction:**

Example: Love is like a magical feeling that connects us, even though we can't see it.

### **6. Concrete Diction:**

Example: The red leaves on the tree were crunchy and made noise when I walked on them in the woods.

### **7. Poetic Diction:**

Example: The bright moonlight made the field look silver, telling stories to the flowers that only open at night.

## **24. Flashback:**

A flashback is a device used in stories, films, television episodes, etc., that interrupts the flow of the plot to “show” readers/viewers an event that happened previously.

### **Uses of Flashback:**

- Create suspense in the story
- Illustrate a certain character’s behavior
- Provide context about the setting
- Allow readers to “see” a memory

## **25. Soliloquy:**

A soliloquy is a literary device in the form of a speech or monologue spoken by a single character in a theatrical play or drama.

### **Example 1: Othello (William Shakespeare)**

*I hate the Moor,  
And it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets  
He's done my office. I know not if 't be true,  
But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,  
Will do as if for surety. He holds me well.  
The better shall my purpose work on him.*

### **Example 2: Doctor Faustus (Christopher Marlowe)**

*Ah, Faustus.  
Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,  
And then thou must be damn'd perpetually!  
Stand still, you ever-moving spheres of heaven,  
That time may cease, and midnight never come;  
Fair Nature's eye, rise, rise again, and make  
Perpetual day; or let this hour be but  
A year, a month, a week, a natural day,  
That Faustus may repent and save his soul!*

### **Example 3: The Crucible (Arthur Miller)**

*Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another in my life! Because I lie and sign myself to lies! Because I am not worth the dust on the feet of them that hang! How may I live without my name? I have given you my soul; leave me my name!*