



Beginners Introduction to Literature Studies 101



So where do I start?



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CHAPTER

1

Figurative Language

Figurative language is an unrealistic way of writing that makes the reader get a deeper understanding about a work to create an image in their mind.

In simpler words, figurative language is a very important part of writing that enhances your work. In fact a poem/story/speech without figurative language is like having a cake without sugar in it.

An author uses figurative language to make the readers feel and help them get a better picture in their head.

There are **5** types of techniques for figurative language:

- Metaphor/ Simile

Metaphor/Simile is a comparison between two things.

While a simile uses “like” or “as” to compare, metaphor is done without them.

In simpler words, metaphor/simile is linking two things together which makes the reader imagine an image in their mind.

An author uses simile/metaphor to give the reader a feel of what one thing is like, by comparing it to another. This makes the reader understand what the author tries to make them feel and create an image in their mind.

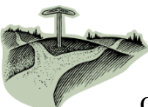
Examples:

Life is like a rollercoaster.



Here, life is being compared to a rollercoaster. When riding a rollercoaster, there are a lot of ups and downs



that make people either scream in fright or sit back and enjoy the ride. Similarly, in life, we have our ups and  downs, but it depends on us whether we choose to hate or enjoy it.

In Romeo and Juliet, Romeo says, “It is the East, and Juliet is the sun”

Here, we see Romeo comparing Juliet to the sun. He means to say Juliet is so fair that she shines bright during night. Therefore, by comparing Juliet to the sun, the audience is acknowledged about Juliet’s beauty.

Try to make one yourself!

- Alliteration

Alliteration is when a chain of words have the same sound. Using alliteration makes the particular part stand out. Therefore an author uses it for drawing the reader’s attention on the specific line. This line probably connects to the main message of the writing.

Examples:



The sun is setting at six’o seven.

In this sentence, 4 words have their first letter staring with ‘s’. This makes them have the same sound.

In I am a Rock, Paul Simon says, “In a deep dark December”

This sentence from I am a Rock has 3 words starting with the letter ‘d’ which give them a similar

Try to make one yourself!

- Sensory Imagery



Sensory Imagery is when words connect with our senses. The five types of sensory imagery are sound, sight, smell, taste and touch.

In simpler words, it is the way an author describes a thing that helps the reader to know what the thing looks, smells, tastes, sounds or feels like.

Authors use sensory imagery to help the readers understand better about an object's feel or image. This gets the reader's imagination bigger.

Examples:



Her perfume smelled like vanilla essence.

Here, sensory imagery of smell is used. Her perfume is described as the smell of vanilla essence. Through the description of her perfume, we know how it smells like.

In Folsom Prison Blues, Johnny Cash says, "I bet there's rich folk eatin' in a fancy dining car. They're prob'ly drinkin' coffee and smokin' big cigars"

Here, Johnny Cash uses sensory imagery of sight. Through the description of what the "rick folk" is doing, we can create an image in our mind of what the scene looks like.



Try to make one yourself!

- Personification

Personification is when non-living things are given human characteristics. In simpler words, personification is when a non-living thing is shown as human. Authors use personification to get more feel in their writing.

Examples:



The sun smiled seeing the kids play.

Here, a sun is told to be smiling seeing the kids play. This personification indicates the innocence of kids. Everyone is happy when the kids are happy.



In Love Sick, Bob Dylan says “the clouds are weeping.”

Here, weeping is a human characteristic that is given to the clouds. His sadness makes him think as if the clouds are weeping along with him.

Try to make one yourself!

- Symbol

A symbol is an object that is used to represent an idea or message. In simpler words, symbols are used to show an object’s deep meaning.

Authors use symbols to share their message to the audience. They Due to these symbols, readers connect different ideas to the story.

Example:



Getting tired of fighting, Jack lifted up his white flag.

Because Jack got tired of fighting, he shows a white flag. Here, the white flag symbolizes surrendering.



“When the girls rode bicycles, their hair streamed out behind them and looked the way hair looks when you float motionless in the bath. I could never help staring at their hair. I had black hair like Tante Rose, only mine was long and braided from the temple down. I remembered what it felt like to have your hair fly out behind you. I wanted to feel the wind in my hair.”

Creating an image of the girls’ hair flying while riding the bicycle, the author symbolizes it to show the freedom they have. However, the speaker’s braided hair show that her freedom that has been tied down, she can’t feel the freedom like they can.

Try to make one yourself!

CHAPTER

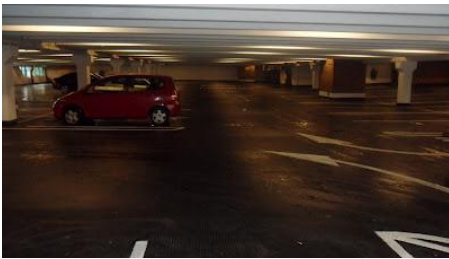
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Setting

Setting is the time and place in which the story takes place. In simpler words, setting is **When and where** the story goes on. The setting helps the reader get a better understanding about the story's plot and its message.

Authors use setting to create mood. Often, while reading the setting of a story/play or seeing the setting in a movie, we automatically get an idea of what the story would be about.

Example:



As he entered the parking lot to get his car, he noticed the place was quite deserted with just him in there.

Reading the description of the setting, we know that it's a thriller story.

In *Long Walk to Forever*, Newt and Catherine “had grown up next door to each other, on the fringe of a city, near fields and woods and orchards, within a sight of a lovely bell tower that belonged to a school of blind.”

Here, the story takes place outside a city, near fields and orchards. This setting gives it a feel of sweet and innocent friendship and love.

Practice:

Try to describe the setting of the place you're currently sitting in.

CHAPTER

3

Characterization

Ways in which an author makes a character alive in the reader's mind. The author uses a character's appearance, dialogue, voice, actions and inner thoughts to portray them.

In simpler words, it is the nature of a person in the story.

An author uses these techniques to create a better understanding about the character for the reader. And because the reader understands the characters, they get involved in the story and feel them.

Examples:

He came storming inside the room, his face red with anger.

Through the description of his action and appearance, he's been characterized as an angry and short-tempered person.



In the Bicycle, Tante Rose is a “tall, thin pale, with thick, black hair”.

Here, Tante Rose is characterized using appearance. Reading the description of Tante Rose's appearance, we get an image of a strict lady.

Practice:

Choose your favourite character from a book or movie.

Write and describe the different ways authors/director characterizes him/her.

CHAPTER

4

Thematic Development

Thematic development is the way an author develops the theme throughout the story. The author does this by bringing together symbols/motifs/imagery in the story.

In simpler words, the author uses symbols, motifs and imagery all through the story, which connect to the theme.

Example:

Don't judge a book by its cover (don't hate/love someone just by their looks).

Beginning: A new kid, Finn, transfers into a new school. He was kind of a grumpy kid and no one seemed to like him. And just like other kids, when Kurt was told to show Finn around the school, he didn't like him as well.

Middle: Kurt's grades seem to drop day by day. When asks for help, no one is there to help him.

End: But when he asks Finn, he happily helps him. They get to know each other and become best friends. Kurt realizes that Finn is not as bad he thought he would be. And then learns a valuable lesson of not judging a book by its cover.

In *Of Mice and Men* has a theme of Unreachable American Dream.

Beginning: Lennie and George are two migrant workers looking for a job to fulfil their American dream. But then they lose their job.

Middle: They go to the bunkhouse for work. However, the boss is suspicious of them and doubts them for every single thing they say. This makes them fear of losing their job and be unable to achieve their American dream.

End: Lennie dies and their American Dream comes to an end.



Theme is the main message the author wants to give reader.

Throughout the story, they look for work, to reach their American Dream. However, every single time there are hints the author gives that show American dream is unreachable.

Practice:

Create your own story based on the theme “never give up”

FINAL TASK:

Now that you have mastered beginner’s literature studies, it is now time for you to create your own piece of writing using the techniques you just learnt.