

Kinesthesia

Definition of Kinesthesia

Kinesthesia is a type of [imagery](#) that is used as a poetic device. It is a poetic device that gives a feeling of natural, or physical bodily movement or action (like a heartbeat, a pulse, and breathing). It also refers to tension along with the movement.

Since the word kinetic means motion or movement, kinesthetic imagery is the representation of the actions and movements of an object or a [character](#). Famous authors William Shakespeare and William Wordsworth, respectively, wrote the following examples of kinesthesia:

“This sensible **warm motion** to become
A kneaded **clod**; and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice...”

(*Measure for Measure*, by William Shakespeare)

Above, Shakespeare presents the phrases “warm motion,” and “clod” as kinesthetic imagery.

“Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in **sprightly** dance...”

(*I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*, by William Wordsworth)

Classification of Kinesthesia

Kinesthetic imagery is further divided into various [categories](#):

Touch: Like running fingers on silk fabric

Physical movement: Gives feelings of involvement in an activity, like walking on grass

Temperature: For example, it might involve sunlight falling over the body

Feelings: Internal feelings, like being angry, sad, happy, peaceful, and calm.

Examples of Kinesthesia in Literature

Example #1: *A Tale of Two Cities* (By Charles Dickens)

“With a wild rattle and clatter, and an inhuman abandonment of consideration not easy to be understood in these days, the carriage dashed through streets and **swept** round corners, with women screaming before it, and men clutching each other and clutching children out of its way. At last, **swooping** at a street corner by a fountain, one of its wheels came to a **sickening little jolt**, and there was a **loud city** from a number of voices, and the horses **reared and plunged** ...”

In this example, kinesthesia is used as the movements of a carriage that is constantly moving along the streets, and the physical actions of women and children. These movements are shown in bold words.

Example #2: *Meeting At Night* (By Robert Browning)

“The gray sea and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low;
And **startled little waves** that **leap**
In fiery ringlets from their **sleep**,
As I gain the cove with **pushing prow**,
And **quench its speed** i’ the slushy sand.
Then a mile of **warm** sea-scented beach;
Three fields **to cross** till a farm appears;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And blue spurt of a lighted match.

And a [voice](#) less loud, thro' its joys and fears,
Than the **two hearts beating each to each!**"

The [speaker](#)'s descriptions of the physical features of the landscape are good Kinesthesia examples. Kinesthesia is employed in the lines in bold. The speaker is sailing in a boat, which is described as a "pushing prow." There are other words suggesting physical actions, like "speed," "cross," and finally, "two hearts beating."

Example #3: *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* (By W. Wordsworth)

"Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They **stretched** in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance."

Wordsworth describes the beautiful daffodils and their movement as dancing. He explains how they grow, and their physical movement. Kinesthesia is used as in words, such as "stretched," "tossing" their heads, and "dance."

Example #4: *Hyperion* (By John Keats)

"At this, through all his bulk an agony
Crept gradual, from the feet unto the crown,
Like a **lithe serpent vast and muscular**
Making slow way, with **head and neck convulsed**
From **over-strained might...**"

Here, kinesthetic imagery is used as an awareness of the movement and muscle tension. This excerpt is a perfect example of kinesthesia. Keats beautifully describes muscular agony, and feelings of exhaustion.

Function of Kinesthesia

Kinesthesia is used in poetry and [prose](#) to describe the vivid physical actions or movements of characters and objects. It is used as a graphic and vibrant technique of scenes that appeal to the senses of the readers. Besides, it helps the imagination of a reader to envision the scenes and characters in literary works. Kinesthesia could be used in two forms: descriptive and figurative. In addition, writers not only employ kinesthesia for physical movements, they also create images based on the intensity of feelings and depth of meaning.