

Literary Devices:

Objectification-

Objectification is the act of representing an abstraction as a physical thing.

Example: Perhaps, though, this was only owing to the fact that this "thing" which dubs itself "culture" saw its advantage, for once, in keeping in the background.

Hyperbole-

Hyperbole is an extreme exaggeration used to make a point. It is like the opposite of "understatement." It is from a Greek word meaning "excess." Hyperboles are comparisons, like similes and metaphors, but are extravagant and even ridiculous. They are not meant to be taken literally.

Example:

"I'll love you, dear, I'll love you till China and Africa meet,
And the river jumps over the mountain
And the salmon sing in the street,
I'll love you till the ocean
Is folded and hung up to dry
And the seven stars go squawking
Like geese about the sky.

The entire poem is filled with a series of hyperboles.

They ran like greased lightning. I've told you a million times!

Metonymy:

It is a figure of speech that replaces the name of a thing with the name of something else with which it is closely associated.

Examples of Metonymy in Everyday Life

We use metonymy frequently in our everyday life. For a better understanding, let us observe a few metonymy examples:

England decides to keep check on immigration. (England refers to the government.)

The pen is mightier than the sword. (Pen refers to written words and sword to military force.)

The Oval Office was busy in work. ("The Oval Office" is a metonymy as it stands for people at work in the office.)

Let me give you a hand. (Hand means help.)

Synecdoche:

Synecdoche is a literary device in which a part of something represents the whole or it may use a whole to represent a part.

Synecdoche may also use larger groups to refer to smaller groups or vice versa. It may also call a thing by the name of the material it is made of or it may refer to a thing in a container or packing by the name of that container or packing.

Examples:

The term "coke" is a common synecdoche for all carbonated drinks. (Pepsi being common in India)

The word "bread" refers to food or money as in "Writing is my bread and butter" or "sole breadwinner".

"The western wave was all a-flame.

The day was well was nigh done!
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun”

The “western wave” is a synecdoche as it refers to the sea by the name of one of its parts i.e. wave.

NOTE: Synecdoche examples are often misidentified as metonymy (another literary device). Both may resemble each other to some extent but they are not the same. Synecdoche refers to the whole of a thing by the name of any one of its parts. For example, calling a car “wheels” is a synecdoche because a part of a car “wheels” stands for the whole car. However, in metonymy, the word we use to describe another thing is closely linked to that particular thing, but is not necessarily a part of it. For example, “crown” that refers to power or authority is a metonymy used to replace the word “king” or “queen”.

Analogy:

An analogy is a comparison in which an idea or a thing is compared to another thing that is quite different from it. It aims at explaining that idea or thing by comparing it to something that is familiar.

Metaphors and similes are tools used to draw an analogy. Therefore, analogy is more extensive and elaborate than either a simile or a metaphor. Consider the following example:

“Structure of an atom is like a solar system. Nucleus is the sun and electrons are the planets revolving around their sun.”

Here an atomic structure is compared to a solar system by using “like”. Therefore, it is a simile. Metaphor is used to relate the nucleus to the sun and the electrons to the planets without using words “like” or “as”. Hence, similes and metaphors are employed to develop an analogy.

We use analogy in our everyday conversation. Some common analogy examples are given below:

Life is like a race. The one who keeps running wins the race and the one who stops to catch a breath loses.

Just as a sword is the weapon of a warrior, a pen is the weapon of a writer.

Metaphor:

Metaphor is a figure of speech which makes an implicit, implied or hidden comparison between two things that are unrelated but share some common characteristics. In other words, a resemblance of two contradictory or different objects is made based on a single or some common characteristics.

In simple English, when you portray a person, place, thing, or an action as being something else, even though it is not actually that “something else,” you are speaking metaphorically. “He is the black sheep of the family” is a metaphor because he is not a sheep and is not even black. However, we can use this comparison to describe an association of a black sheep with that person. A black sheep is an unusual animal and typically stays away from the herd, and the person you are describing shares similar characteristics.

Furthermore, a metaphor develops a comparison which is different from a simile i.e. we do not use “like” or “as” to develop a comparison in a metaphor. It actually makes an implicit or hidden comparison and not an explicit one.

My brother was boiling mad. (This implies he was too angry.)

The assignment was a breeze. (This implies that the assignment was not difficult.)

It is going to be clear skies from now on. (This implies that clear skies are not a threat and life is going to be without hardships)

The skies of his future began to darken. (Darkness is a threat; therefore, this implies that the coming times are going to be hard for him.)

Her voice is music to his ears. (This implies that her voice makes him feel happy)

Simile:

This literary device uses the term 'like' for comparison. It is used for explicit comparisons.

Epiphany:

Derived from the Greek word "epiphaneia", epiphany means "appearance" or "manifestation". In literary terms, **an epiphany is that moment in the story where a character achieves realization,** awareness or a feeling of knowledge after which events are seen through the prism of this new light in the story.

James Joyce, the great Irish writer used this term in his writings to indicate a sudden eye-opener regarding the nature of a person or situation. He said that it is the moment in which "the soul of the commonest object ... seems to us radiant, and may be manifested through any chance, word or gesture." He means to say that even insignificant things in our life can suddenly inspire in us an awareness that can change our lives for good.

Example:

Let us consider an epiphany of a smoker:

"I used to smoke a lot. Everyone let me know that it was bad for my health however, I didn't pay any notice. One day I saw my two years of age offspring trying for a used cigarette within an ashtray. Seeing this, abruptly it dawned upon me how terrible smoking was and I stopped smoking."

So, this sudden feeling of knowledge that brings to light what was so far hidden and changes one's life is called epiphany.

Allegory:

Allegory is a figure of speech in which abstract ideas and principles are described in terms of characters, figures and events.

It can be employed in prose and poetry to tell a story with a purpose of teaching an idea and a principle or explaining an idea or a principle. The objective of its use is to preach some kind of a moral lesson.

Example:

Allegory is an archaic term and used specifically in literary works. It is difficult to spot its occurrence in everyday life, although recently, we do find example of allegory in political debates. The declaration of an ex-US president G.W Bush was allegorical when he used the term "Axis of Evil" for three countries and later the term "allies" for those countries that would wage war against the "Axis".

"Animal Farm", written by George Orwell, is an allegory that uses animals on a farm to describe the overthrow of the last of the Russian Tsar Nicholas II and the Communist Revolution of Russia before WW I. The actions of the animals on the farm are used to expose the greed and corruption

of the revolution. It also describes how powerful people can change the ideology of a society. One of the cardinal rules on the farm for the animals is:

“All animals are equal but a few are more equal than others.”

The animals on the farm represent different sections of Russian society after the revolution.

For instance, the pigs represent those who came to power following the revolution; “Mr. Jones” the owner of the farm represents the overthrown Tsar Nicholas II; while “Boxer” the horse, represents the laborer class etc. The use of allegory in the novel allows Orwell to make his position clear about the Russian Revolution and expose its evils.

Imagery:

Imagery means to use figurative language to represent objects, actions and ideas in such a way that it appeals to our physical senses.

Usually it is thought that imagery makes use of particular words that create visual representation of ideas in our minds. The word imagery is associated with mental pictures. However, this idea is but partially correct. Imagery, to be realistic, turns out to be more complex than just a picture. Read the following examples of imagery carefully:

It was dark and dim in the forest. – The words “dark” and “dim” are visual images.

The children were screaming and shouting in the fields. – “Screaming” and “shouting” appeal to our sense of hearing or auditory sense.

He whiffed the aroma of brewed coffee. – “whiff” and “aroma” evoke our sense of smell or olfactory sense.

The girl ran her hands on a soft satin fabric. – The idea of “soft” in this example appeals to our sense of touch or tactile sense.

The fresh and juicy orange is very cold and sweet. – “juicy” and “sweet” when associated with oranges have an effect on our sense of taste or gustatory sense.

Imagery needs the aid of figures of speech like simile, metaphor, personification, onomatopoeia etc. in order to appeal to the bodily senses. Let us analyze how famous poets and writers use imagery in literature.

Paradox:

The term Paradox is from the Greek word “paradoxon” that means contrary to expectations, existing belief or perceived opinion.

It is a statement that appears to be self-contradictory or silly but may include a latent truth. It is also used to illustrate an opinion or statement contrary to accepted traditional ideas. A paradox is often used to make a reader think over an idea in innovative way.

Examples:

Your enemy’s friend is your enemy.

I am nobody.

“What a pity that youth must be wasted on the young.” – George Bernard Shaw

Wise fool

Truth is honey which is bitter.

“I can resist anything but temptation.” – Oscar Wilde

From the above examples of paradox, we can say that paradox creates a humorous effect on the readers because of its ridiculousness.

Anachronism: The reference of things presented outside the timeline. Like if a story or passage mentions something which does not exist in that timeline, that figure of speech is called anachronism.

Parody:

Parody is an imitation of a particular writer, artist or a genre, exaggerating it deliberately to produce a comic effect. The humorous effect in parody is achieved by imitating and overstressing noticeable features of a famous piece of literature, as in caricatures, where certain peculiarities of a person are highlighted to achieve a humorous effect.

We, in our daily life, can employ the above technique to spoof somebody for the sake of fun. For example, you have an Indian person in your classroom and one day, in a gathering of a few friends, you say,

“Will you veddy much bring me a coke please?”

This imitation of an Indian accent is a parody.

Parody examples are often confused as examples of satire. Although parody can be used to develop satire, it differs from satire to a certain extent. Parody mimics a subject directly to produce a comical effect. Satire, on the other hand, makes fun of a subject without a direct imitation. Moreover, satire aims at correcting shortcomings in society by criticizing them

Rhetoric: A simple device which lands emphasis, but is not meant to be answered.

Example: Why can't you leave me alone?

Aphorism:

Aphorism is a statement of truth or opinion expressed in a concise and witty manner. The term is often applied to philosophical, moral and literary principles.

To qualify as an aphorism, it is necessary for a statement to contain a truth revealed in a terse manner. Aphoristic statements are quoted in writings as well as in our daily speech. The fact that they contain a truth gives them a universal acceptance. Scores of philosophers, politicians, writers, artists and sportsman and other individuals are remembered for their famous aphoristic statements.

Aphorisms often come with a pinch of humor, which makes them more appealing to the masses. Proverbs, maxims, adages and clichés are different forms of aphoristic statements that gain prevalence from generation to generation and frequently appear in our day-to-day speech.

Example:

Youth is a blunder; Manhood a struggle; Old age regret. [Benjamin Disraeli]

Pride hath fall. [Proverb]

The man who removes a mountain begins by carrying away small stones. [William Faulkner]

Life's Tragedy is that we get old too soon and wise too late. [Benjamin Franklin]

Yesterday is but today's memory, and tomorrow is today's dream. [Khalil Gibran]

The simplest questions are the hardest to answer. [Northrop Frye]

A proverb is no proverb to you till life has illustrated it. [John Keats]

Words are, of course, the most powerful drug used by mankind. [Rudyard Kipling]