

Allusion - An indirect reference to something (usually a literary text, although it can be other things commonly known, such as plays, songs, historical events) with which the reader is supposed to be familiar.

Anecdote - A brief recounting of a relevant episode. Anecdotes are often inserted into fictional or non-fictional texts as a way of developing a point or injecting humor.

Analogy- explains one thing in terms of another to highlight the ways in which they are alike.

Amplification- repeats a word or expression for emphasis, often using additional adjectives to clarify the meaning. "Love, real love, takes time" is an example of amplification because the author is using the phrase "real love" to distinguish his feelings from love that is mere infatuation.

Allegory - A story, fictional or non-fictional, in which characters, things, and events represent qualities or concepts. The interaction of these characters, things, and events are meant to reveal an abstraction or a truth.

Comic relief – when a humorous scene is inserted into a serious story, in order to lighten the mood somewhat. The “gatekeeper scene” in *Macbeth* is an example of comic relief.

Diction - Word choice, particularly as an element of style. Different types of words have significant effects on meaning. An essay written in academic diction would be much less colorful, but perhaps more precise than street slang.

Colloquial - Ordinary or familiar type of conversation. A “**colloquialism**” is a common or familiar type of saying, similar to an **adage** or an **aphorism**.

Connotation - Rather than the dictionary definition (denotation), the associations suggested by a word. Implied meaning rather than the literal meaning.

Euphemism - A more agreeable or less offensive substitute for generally unpleasant words or concepts. Sometimes they are used for political correctness. “*Physically challenged,*” in place of “*crippled.*”

Figurative Language - “Figurative Language” is the opposite of “Literal Language.” Literal language is writing that makes complete sense when you take it at face value. “Figurative Language” is the opposite: writing that is *not* meant to be taken literally.

Analogy - An analogy is a comparison of one pair of variables to a parallel set of variables. When a writer uses an analogy, he or she argues that the relationship between

the first pair of variables is the same as the relationship between the second pair of variables. “*America is to the world as the hippo is to the jungle.*” Similes and metaphors are sometimes also analogies.

Hyperbole: Exaggeration. “*My mother will kill me if I am late.*”

Idiom: A common, often used expression that doesn’t make sense if you take it literally. “*I got chewed out by my coach.*”

Metaphor: Making an *implied* comparison, not using “like,” “as,” or other such words. “*My feet are popsicles.*” An **extended metaphor** is when the metaphor is continued later in the written work. If I continued to call my feet “my popsicles” in later paragraphs, that would be an extended metaphor. A particularly elaborate extended metaphor is called using **conceit**.

Metonymy – Replacing an actual word or idea, with a related word or concept. “*Relations between London and Washington have been strained,*” does not literally mean relations between the two cities, but between the leaders of The United States and England. Metonymy is often used with body parts: “*I could not understand his tongue,*” means his language or his speech.

Synecdoche – A kind of metonymy when a whole is represented by naming one of its parts, or vice versa. “*The cattle rancher owned 500 head.*” “*Check out my new wheels.*”

Simile: Using words such as “like” or “as” to make a *direct* comparison between two very different things. “*My feet are so cold they feel like popsicles.*”

Personification: Giving human-like qualities to something that is not human. “*The tired old truck groaned as it inched up the hill.*”

Imagery - Word or words that create a picture in the reader's mind. Usually, this involves the five senses. Authors often use the imagery in conjunction with metaphors, similes, or figures of speech.

Irony - When the opposite of what you expect to happen does.

Invective – A long, emotionally violent, an attack using strong, abusive language.

Parallelism – (Also known as **parallel structure** or **balanced sentences**.) Sentence construction which places equal grammatical constructions near each other, or repeats identical grammatical patterns.

Rhetorical Question - Question not asked for information but for effect. “*The angry parent asked the child, ‘Are you finished interrupting me?’*” In this case, the parent does not expect a reply, but simply wants to draw the child’s attention to the rudeness of interrupting.