Figures of Speech

Study Material by

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**Alliteration**

[Alliteration](http://examples.yourdictionary.com/alliteration-examples.html) is the repetition of the beginning sounds of neighboring words.

Examples include:

* She sells seashells.
* Walter wondered where Winnie was.
* Blue baby bonnets bobbed through the bayou.
* Nick needed new notebooks.
* Fred fried frogs' legs on Friday.

**Anaphora**

[Anaphora](http://examples.yourdictionary.com/anaphora-examples.html) is a technique where several phrases or verses begin with the same word or words.

Examples include:

* I came, I saw, I conquered. - Julius Caesar
* Mad world! Mad kings! Mad composition! - *King John II*, [William Shakespeare](http://quotes.yourdictionary.com/theme/shakespeare)
* It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness. - *A Tale of Two Cities*, [Charles Dickens](http://biography.yourdictionary.com/charles-dickens)
* With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right. - [Abraham Lincoln](http://biography.yourdictionary.com/abraham-lincoln)
* We shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end... we shall never surrender. - [Winston Churchill](http://biography.yourdictionary.com/sir-winston-churchill)

**Assonance**

[Assonance](http://examples.yourdictionary.com/assonance-examples.html) is the repetition of vowel sounds (not just letters) in words that are close together. The sounds don't have to be at the beginning of the word.

Examples include:

* A - For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels named Lenore. (Poe)
* E - Therefore, all seasons shall be sweet to thee. (Coleridge)
* I - From what I've tasted of desire, I hold with those who favor fire. (Frost)
* O - Oh hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn. (Wordsworth)
* U - Uncertain rustling of each purple curtain (Poe)

**Euphemism**

[Euphemism](http://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-euphemism.html) is a mild, indirect, or vague term that often substitutes a harsh, blunt, or offensive term.

Examples include:

* 'A little thin on top' instead of 'going bald.'
* 'Fell of the back of a truck' instead of 'stolen.'
* 'Letting you go' instead of 'firing you.'
* 'Passed away' instead of 'died.'
* 'Economical with the truth' instead of 'liar.'

**Hyperbole**

[Hyperbole](http://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-hyperboles.html) uses exaggeration for emphasis or effect.

Examples include:

* I've told you to stop a thousand times.
* That must have cost a billion dollars.
* I could do this forever.
* She's older than dirt.
* Everybody knows that.

**Irony**

[Irony](http://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-irony.html) occurs when there's a marked contrast between what is said and what is meant, or between appearance and reality.

Examples include:

* "How nice!" she said, when I told her I had to work all weekend. ([Verbal irony](http://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-verbal-irony.html))
* A traffic cop gets suspended for not paying his parking tickets. ([Situational irony](http://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-situational-irony.html))
* The Titanic was said to be unsinkable but sank on its first voyage. (Situational irony)
* Naming a tiny Chihuahua Brutus. (Verbal irony)
* When the audience knows the killer is hiding in a closet in a scary movie, but the actors do not. ([Dramatic irony](http://examples.yourdictionary.com/dramatic-irony-examples.html))

**Metaphor**

A [metaphor](http://examples.yourdictionary.com/metaphor-examples.html) makes a comparison between two unlike things or ideas.

Examples include:

* Heart of stone
* Time is money
* The world is a stage
* She's a night owl
* He's an ogre

**Onomatopoeia**

[Onomatopoeia](http://examples.yourdictionary.com/5-examples-of-onomatopoeia.html) is the term for a word that sounds like what it is describing.

Examples include:

* Whoosh
* Splat
* Buzz
* Click
* Oink

**Oxymoron**

An [oxymoron](http://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-oxymorons.html) is two contradictory terms used together.

Examples include:

* Peace force
* Kosher ham
* Jumbo shrimp
* Sweet sorrow
* Free market

**Personification**

[Personification](http://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-personification.html) gives human qualities to non-living things or ideas.

Examples include:

* The flowers nodded.
* The snowflakes danced.
* The thunder grumbled.
* The fog crept in.
* The wind howled.

**Simile**

A [simile](http://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-similes.html) is a comparison between two unlike things using the words "like" or "as."

Examples include:

* As slippery as an eel
* Like peas in a pod
* As blind as a bat
* Eats like a pig
* As wise as an owl

**Synecdoche**

[Synecdoche](http://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-synecdoche.html) occurs when a part is represented by the whole or, conversely, the whole is represented by the part.

Examples include:

* Wheels - a car
* The police - one policeman
* Plastic - credit cards
* Coke - any cola drink
* Hired hands - workers

**Understatement**

An [understatement](http://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-understatement.html) occurs when something is said to make something appear less important or less serious.

Examples include:

* It's just a scratch - referring to a large dent.
* It's a litttle dry and sandy - referring to the driest desert in the world.
* The weather is cooler today - referring to sub-zero temperatures.
* It was interesting - referring to a bad or difficult experience.
* It stings a bit - referring to a serious wound or injury.

1. [Alliteration](https://www.thoughtco.com/alliteration-definition-1692387): The repetition of an initial consonant sound. **Example:** She sells seashells by the seashore.

2. [Anaphora](https://www.thoughtco.com/anaphora-figure-of-speech-1689092): The repetition of the same word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses or verses. **Example:** Unfortunately, I was in the wrong place at the wrong time on the wrong day.

3. [Antithesis](https://www.thoughtco.com/antithesis-grammar-and-rhetoric-1689108): The [juxtaposition](https://www.thoughtco.com/juxtaposition-composition-term-1691090) of contrasting ideas in balanced phrases. **Example:** As Abraham Lincoln said, "Folks who have no vices have very few virtues."

4. [Apostrophe](https://www.thoughtco.com/apostrophe-figure-of-speech-1689118): Directly addressing a nonexistent person or an inanimate object as though it were a living being. **Example:** "Oh, you stupid car, you never work when I need you to," Bert sighed.

5. [Assonance](https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-assonance-1689142): Identity or similarity in sound between internal vowels in neighboring words. **Example:** How now, brown cow?

6. [Chiasmus](https://www.thoughtco.com/chiasmus-figure-of-speech-1689838): A verbal pattern in which the second half of an expression is balanced against the first but with the parts reversed. **Example:** The famous chef said people should live to eat, not eat to live.

7. [Euphemism](https://www.thoughtco.com/euphemism-words-term-1690680): The substitution of an inoffensive term for one considered offensively explicit.**Example:**"We're teaching our toddler how to go potty," Bob said.

8. [Hyperbole](https://www.thoughtco.com/hyperbole-figure-of-speech-1690941): An extravagant statement; the use of exaggerated terms for the purpose of emphasis or heightened effect. **Example:** I have a ton of things to do when I get home.

9. [Irony](https://www.thoughtco.com/irony-figure-of-speech-1691196): The use of words to convey the opposite of their literal meaning. Also, a statement or situation where the meaning is contradicted by the appearance or presentation of the idea. **Example:** "Oh, I love spending big bucks," said my dad, a notorious penny pincher.

10. [Litotes](https://www.thoughtco.com/litotes-figure-of-speech-1691253): A figure of speech consisting of an understatement in which an affirmative is expressed by negating its opposite. **Example:** A million dollars is no small chunk of change.

11. [Metaphor](https://www.thoughtco.com/metaphor-figure-of-speech-and-thought-1691385): An implied comparison between two dissimilar things that have something in common. **Example:** "All the world's a stage."

12. [Metonymy](https://www.thoughtco.com/metonymy-figures-of-speech-1691388): A figure of speech in which a word or phrase is substituted for another with which it is closely associated; also, the rhetorical strategy of describing something indirectly by referring to things around it. **Example:** "That stuffed suit with the briefcase is a poor excuse for a salesman," the manager said angrily.

13. [Onomatopoeia](https://www.thoughtco.com/onomatopoeia-word-sounds-1691451): The use of words that imitate the sounds associated with the objects or actions they refer to. **Example:** The clap of thunder went bang and scared my poor dog.

14. [Oxymoron](https://www.thoughtco.com/awfully-good-examples-of-oxymorons-1691814): A figure of speech in which incongruous or contradictory terms appear side by side. **Example:** "He popped the jumbo shrimp in his mouth."

15. [Paradox](https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-a-paradox-1691563): A statement that appears to contradict itself. **Example:** "This is the beginning of the end," said Eeyore, always the pessimist.

16. [Personification](https://www.thoughtco.com/personification-figure-of-speech-1691614): A figure of speech in which an inanimate object or abstraction is endowed with human qualities or abilities. **Example:** That kitchen knife will take a bite out of your hand if you don't handle it safely.

17. [Pun](https://www.thoughtco.com/pun-word-play-1691703): ​[A play on words](https://www.thoughtco.com/word-play-definition-1692504), sometimes on different senses of the same word and sometimes on the similar sense or sound of different words. **Example:** Jessie looked up from her breakfast and said, "A boiled egg every morning is hard to beat."

18. [Simile](https://www.thoughtco.com/simile-figure-of-speech-1692098): A stated comparison (usually formed with "like" or "as") between two fundamentally dissimilar things that have certain qualities in common. **Example:** Roberto was white as a sheet after he walked out of the horror movie.

19. [Synecdoche](https://www.thoughtco.com/synecdoche-figure-of-speech-1692172): A figure of speech in which a part is used to represent the whole. **Example:** Tina is learning her ABC's in preschool.

20. [Understatement](https://www.thoughtco.com/understatement-figure-of-speech-1692570): A figure of speech in which a writer or speaker deliberately makes a situation seem less important or serious than it is. **Example:** "You could say Babe Ruth was a decent ballplayer," the reporter said with a wink.

##

1. SIMILE

In simile two unlike things are explicitly compared. For example, “She is like a fairy”. A simile is introduced by words such as *like, so, as etc.*

2. METAPHOR

It is an informal or implied simile in which words *like, as, so* are omitted. For example, “He is like a lion (Simile) “and “He is a lion (metaphor)”. In the following examples, metaphors are underlined.

* She is a star of our family.
* The childhood of the world; the anger of the tempest; the deceitfulness of the riches: wine is a mocker.
* She is now in the sunset of her days.

3. PERSONIFICATION

Personification is an attribution of personal nature, intelligence or character to inanimate objects or abstract notions. For example, in some phrases we use, the furious storm, the thirsty ground, and the pitiless cold. Some other examples are:

* Little sorrows sit and weep. (Boccaccio)

The dish ran away with the spoon. (Blake)

4. METONYMY

Metonymy is meant for a change of name. It is a substitute of the thing names for the thing meant. Following examples will clarify the concept.

* The *pen* is mightier than the *sword*.
* From the *cradle* to the *grave*. = from childhood to death.
* I have never read *Milton*. = the works of Milton.

5. APOSTROPHE

It is a direct address to some inanimate thing or some abstract idea as if it were living person or some absent person as if it were present. Example, “Boy’s mother loved him very much.”

6. HYPERBOLE

Hyperbole is a statement made emphatic by overstatement. For example, “Virtues as the sands of the shore.”

7. SYNECDOCHE

Synecdoche is the understanding of one thing by means of another. Here, a part is used to designate the whole or the whole to designate a part. For example, “I have *the Viceroy*, love *the man*.”, and “*All hands* (crew) at work.”

8. TRANSFERRED EPITHETS

In transferred epithets, the qualifying objective is transferred from a person to a thing as in phrases. For example, “sleepless night”, “sunburn mirth”, and “melodious plain”.

9. EUPHEMISM

By using the euphemism, we speak in agreeable and favorable terms of some person, object or event which is ordinarily considered unpleasant and disagreeable. For example,

* He is telling us a fairy tale. (a lie)
* He has fallen asleep. (he is dead)

10. IRONY OR SARCASM

In this mode of speech, the real meanings of the words used are different from the intended meanings. For example, the child of cobbler has no shoe.

11. PUN

This consists of a play on the various meanings of a word. Its effect is often ludicrous. For example,

* Is life worth living? It depends upon the *liver*.
* Obviously, the constitution is against prostitution and congress is against progress. (*con* means *against* and *pro* means *for*)

12. EPIGRAM

It is a brief pointed saying. It couples words which apparently contradict each other. The language of the epigram is remarkable for its brevity. Examples are as under:

* The child is the father of the man. (Wordsworth)
* Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.
* The art lies in concealing art.
* *Silence* is sometimes more *eloquent* than words.
* *Conspicuous* by its absence.

13. ANTITHESIS

In antithesis, a striking opposition or contrast of words is made in the same sentence in order to secure emphasis. For example,

* To err is human, to forgive divine.
* Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice.

14. OXYMORON

It is a figure of speech which combines two seemingly contradictory or incongruous words for sharp emphasis or effect. For example,

* “darkness visible” (Milton);
* “make haste slowly” (Suetonius)
* “loving hate” (Romeo and Juliet)

15. LITOTES

It is the opposite of hyperbole. Here an affirmative is conveyed by negation of the opposite. For example,

* He is *no dullard*.
* I am *not a little*
* He is *not a bad sort*.

16. INTERROGATION

This is a rhetorical mode of affirming or denying something more strongly than could be done in ordinary language. Examples,

* Who is here so base that would be a bondman?
* Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman?
* Who is here so vile that will not love his country? (Shakespeare)

17. EXCLAMATION

It is used for strong expression of feelings. For examples, O lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud I fall upon the thorns of life; I bleed!

18. CLIMAX

It is an arrangement of a series of ideas in the order of increasing importance. For example, “What a piece of work man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculties! In action, how like an angel!”

19. ANTICLIMAX OR BATHOS

This is the opposite to climax and signifies a ludicrous descent from the higher to the lower.

* A man so various, that he seemed to be. Not one, but all mankind’s epitome; who in the course of one revolving moon; was lawyer, statesman, fiddler, and buffoon.

20. ALLITERATION

The repetition of the same letter or syllable at the beginning of two or more words is called alliteration. For example,

* By **a**pt **A**lliteration’s **a**rtful **a**
* **G**littering through the **g**loomy **g**
* The **f**urrow **f**ollows **f**

21. ONOMATOPOEIA

The formation of a word whose sound is made to suggest or echo the sense as in cuckoo, bang, growl, hiss.

* The moan of doves in immemorial elms and murmur of innumerable bees.
* Rend with the tremendous sound your ears asunder with guns, drum, trumpet, blunderbuss, and thunder.

22. CIRCUMLOCUTION

This consists of expressing some fact or idea in a roundabout way, instead of stating it at once. For example,

* The viewless couriers of the air. =(the wind)
* That statement of his was *purely an effort of imagination*. = (a fiction)

23. TAUTOLOGY OR PLEONASM

Tautology is meant for repeating the same fact or idea in different words. For example, “It is the *privilege* and *birthright* of every man to express his ideas without any fear.”