

Poetic Devices





Analogy

Definition: an extended comparison of two unlike things

Example: See how Tupac's poem is an analogy for a someone who has had a tough life, but has struggled (like the rose) to rise above the obstacles and struggles?

“The Rose That Grew From Concrete”

by Tupac Shakur

Did you hear about the rose that grew
from a crack in the concrete?

Proving nature's law is wrong it
learned to walk without having feet.

Funny it seems, but by keeping its dreams,
it learned to breathe fresh air.

Long live the rose that grew from concrete
when no one else ever cared.

Imagery



- **Definition:** description that uses the five senses (smell, taste, touch, hearing, seeing)

“Harlem: A Dream Deferred” by Langston Hughes

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun

Or fester like a sore –
And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over –
Like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
Like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

SIGHT



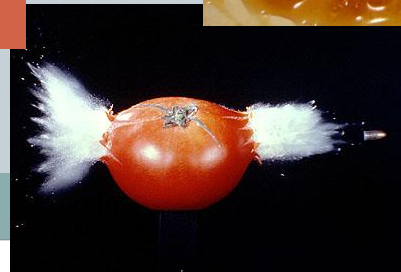
SMELL

TASTE



TOUCH

SOUND





Verbal Irony:

*Statements that have more than one possible meaning or interpretation

*Example: “Are you lucky?!” to a friend who just got a ticket...

Situational Irony:

*Expectations of ending are reversed

*Example: Bill Gates wins a contest. His prize? A new computer!

Dramatic Irony:

*The reader knows more than the characters do

*Example: While we know that Juliet isn't really dead, poor Romeo is not aware of this .



Irony

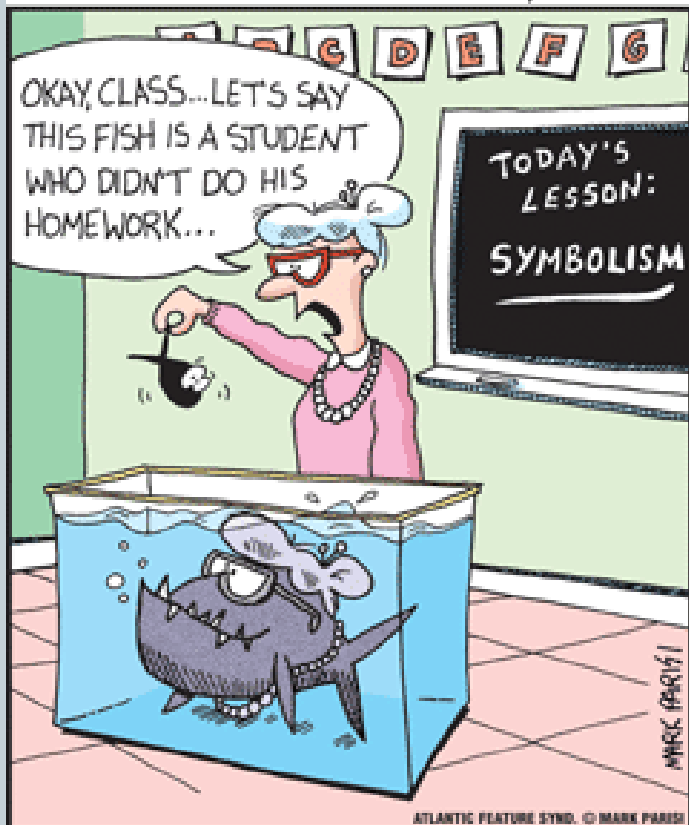
Definition: contrast between what is expected or what appears to be and what actually is

Symbol



- **Definition:** a person, place or object which stands for something else

off the mark .com by Mark Parisi



EXAMPLES:

- “Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one less traveled by.”—from Robert Frost’s “The Road Not Taken”
 - The road is a symbol for choices and paths in life.
- “One more strike and I’m through / Bottom of the ninth, swingin’ for my life”--from Ice Cube’s “Three Strikes You In”
 - Symbol of a baseball game to describe the speaker’s struggles in life.
- “I know why the caged bird beats his wing / Till its blood is red on the cruel bars”--from Paul Laurence Dunbar’s “Sympathy”
 - The caged bird is a symbol for something that is not free.

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Synecdoche

Definition: a figure of speech in which a part is used for the whole

Pronunciation:
si-NEK-di-key

EXAMPLES:

- “All hands on deck.”
 - *Hands* is referring to sailors.
- “We have always remained loyal to the crown.”
 - *Crown* refers to the king/queen/government.
- “Take thy face hence.” --from Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*
 - *Face* refers to the whole person.

Understatement



- **Definition:** the intentional downplaying of a situation's significance (often for ironic or humorous effect)

EXAMPLES:

- “The boat had been ripped apart by the storm and now a dozen hungry sharks began circling the captain. ‘This isn’t great,’ he told his wife.”
 - Obviously, being surrounded by sharks is bad...very bad!
- “I have to have this operation. It isn’t very serious. I have this tiny little tumor on the brain.” - Holden Caulfield in *The Catcher in the Rye*, by J.D. Salinger
 - A tumor is usually a serious physical issue.
- “The grave’s a fine and private place, / But none, I think, do there embrace.” —from Andrew Marvell, “To His Coy Mistress”
 - Not many *embrace* the grave.





ALLUSION

Definition: Reference to another piece of literature, the Bible, mythology, history, art, or music

In the sample, the author includes references to Prince Hamlet, which are allusions to Shakespeare's play, *Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark*.

Excerpt from the Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock by TS Eliot

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;

Am an attendant lord, one that will do

To swell a progress, start a scene or two,

Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,

Deferential, glad to be of use, 115

Politic, cautious, and meticulous;

Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;

At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—

Almost, at times, the Fool.

Check out the above poem for examples of literary allusions from Shakespeare!

See if you recognize more allusions!



Harry Truman, Doris Day, Red China, Johnnie Ray
South Pacific, Walter Winchell, Joe DiMaggio

Joe McCarthy, Richard Nixon, Studebaker, television
North Korea, South Korea, Marilyn Monroe

Rosenbergs, H-Bomb, Sugar Ray, Panmunjom
Brando, "The King and I", and "The Catcher in the Rye"

Eisenhower, vaccine, England's got a new queen
Marciano, Liberace, Santayana goodbye

What kinds of
allusions do you see?
Historical? Literature?
Musical?

Excerpt from Billy Joel's "We Didn't Start the Fire"



SIMILE

Definition: A comparison of two unlike things using “like” or “as”

This example compares elephants and castles 😊



“Like castles on the move, they tread the ground.”

Hyperbole



Definition: an exaggeration

- “You could have knocked me over with a feather”
- “Fired the shot heard round the world”
- “These books weighed a ton.”
- “I’m so hungry, I could eat a horse.”

Metaphor



- Definition: a metaphor is a comparison between two things
- Example: With ice-cold diamonds for eyes,
the shark stared at the diver,
ready to shred him,
with razor-sharp teeth.





PERSONIFICATION

Definition: giving human or animal qualities to inanimate objects



Examples:

The sea roared. (Can the sea talk?)

The waves hammered the ship. (Can the waves hammer?)

Metonymy



- Definition: figure of speech in which a concept or word is substituted for a closely related word.

- Example:

“Every April, I pay Uncle Sam my taxes.”

We pay taxes to the U.S. government, not Uncle Sam. In this example, Uncle Sam has been substituted for the Government.

