

LITERARY DEVICES



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What are literary devices?

- Definition: Narrative techniques that add texture, energy and excitement to the narrative, grip the reader's imagination and convey information.

- ... so... what ARE literary devices?

Look at these examples:

That bag weighs a ton!

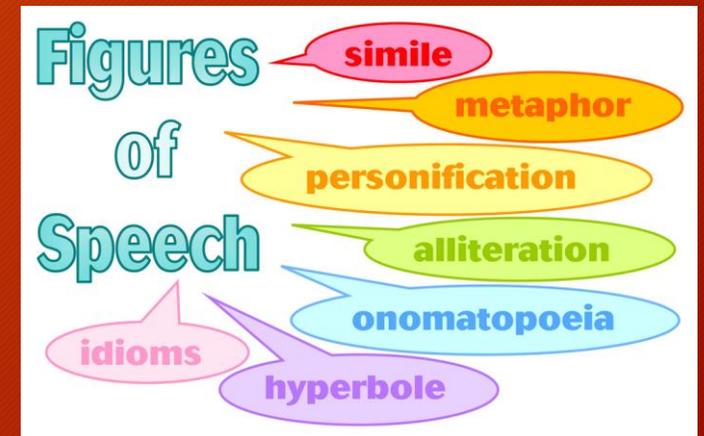
Time is money.



Those sentences have something special. The writer doesn't just say that the bag is very heavy or time is valuable, but uses language in a creative way to attract the readers' attention and sometimes to make something easier to understand. That special way of using language are the **literary devices**.

Types of literary devices

- Some devices concern rhythm, sounds or pronunciation, like the **repetition** or the **couplet**.
- Others refer to how words are used, like **metaphors**, **similes** or **hyperboles**. When a word or phrase has a meaning different from its literal one they are also called **figures of speech**.



Basic literary devices

- **Repetition**: To repeat the same words or phrases a few times to make an idea clearer and more memorable.

*If you think **you can do it, you can do it.***

*“It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know ...*

*I was a child and she was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea,
But we loved with a love that was more than love —
I and my Annabel Lee ...”*

(Annabel Lee, Edgar Allan Poe)

Basic literary devices

- **Couplet**: Two successive rhyming lines in a verse.

*My cat, she likes to chase a mouse,
Especially one that's in the house.*

*Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;
And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind.
(A Midsummer Night's Dream, William Shakespeare)*



Alliteration: A number of words that have the same first consonant sound and occur close together.

*But a better butter makes a batter better.
Sara's seven sisters slept soundly in the sand.*

Basic literary devices

- **Metaphor**: To say one thing is something else (because they share common characteristics)

My brother is the black sheep of the family.

Life is a journey.

Laughter is the best medicine.



- **Simile**: To say one thing is LIKE something else (because they are similar)

He is as cunning as a fox.

At exam time, the student was as busy as a bee.

They fought like cats and dogs.



Basic literary devices

- **Metonymy**: To replace the name of a thing with the name of something else with which it is closely associated.

The pen is mightier than the sword. (Pen = written words, sword = military force.)

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

- **Synecdoche**: A part of something represents the whole, or the whole represents a part.

The world is not treating him well.

He asked for her hand in marriage.

I drank a cup of coffee.



Basic literary devices

- **Personification**: To give a thing, an animal or an idea personal attributes.

The flowers danced in the gentle breeze.

When he sat the test, the words and the ideas fled from his mind.

She heard the last piece of pie calling her name.

My alarm clock yells at me every morning.

- **Irony**: To use words in a way that their intended meaning is different from their actual meaning.

Oh great! Now you have broken my new camera.

The new manager is as friendly as a rattlesnake.

The fear of long words is called “Hippopotomonstrosesquippedalio phobia.”

References

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