

Essential Literary Devices

Literary devices are techniques that writers use to create a special and pointed effect in their writing, to convey information, or to help readers understand their writing on a deeper level.

Allegory:

Allegory is a literary device used to express large, complex ideas in an approachable manner. Allegory allows writers to create some distance between themselves and the issues they are discussing, especially when those issues are strong critiques of political or societal realities.

Metaphor and Simile : both are techniques used in speech and writing to make comparisons.

- **Metaphors** are when ideas, actions, or objects are described in non-literal terms. The two things being described usually share something in common but are unlike in all other respects.
- **Simile** is to compare two things is compared to another thing using the words "as" or "like."

Juxtaposition:

Juxtaposition is the comparing and contrasting of two or more different (usually opposite) ideas, characters, objects, etc. This literary device is often used to help create a clearer picture of the characteristics of one object or idea by comparing it with those of another.

personification:

Assigning human qualities to a non-human entity or inanimate object in an effort to express a point or idea in a more colorful, imaginative way.

Symbolism:

An object, concept, or word does not have to be limited to a single meaning.

Irony:

Irony is when a statement is used to express an opposite meaning than the one literally expressed by it. There are three types of irony in literature:

- **Verbal irony:** When someone says something but means the opposite (similar to sarcasm).
- **Situational irony:** When something happens that's the opposite of what was expected or intended to happen.
- **Dramatic irony:** When the audience is aware of the true intentions or outcomes, while the characters are not. As a result, certain actions and/or events take on different meanings for the audience than they do for the characters involved.

Imagery:

It occurs when a poet uses descriptive language well, they play to the reader's senses, providing them with sights, tastes, smells, sounds, internal and external feelings, and even deep emotion.

Allusion:

Allusion is when an author makes an indirect reference to a figure, place, event, or idea originating from outside the text. Many allusions make reference to previous works of literature or art.

Flashback:

Occurs when the writer presents events that happened before the time of the current events.

Flashback techniques include: memories, dreams, stories of the past told by characters, an interruption by the author (That is, the author might simply say, "But back in Tom's youth . .")

Foreshadowing:

Foreshadowing is an author's use of hints or clues to suggest events that will occur later in the story.