

Literary Devices

Writers use various literary devices to communicate to the reader and to make reading more interesting. Below are some common literary devices a writer may use to gain the reader's interest.

alliteration: Repetition of the beginning sound among a group of words

dialogue: The use of speech

flashback: A jump back in time to recall events that happened prior to when the current story is set

hyperbole: The use of exaggeration

imagery: The use of descriptive language to engage the senses of the reader

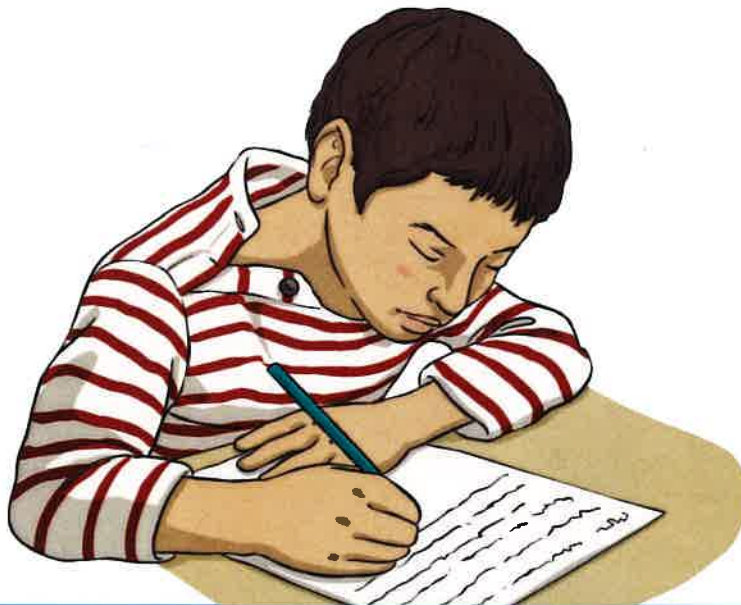
metaphor: The direct comparison of two unlike things, characters, or events

onomatopoeia: The use of a word that, when read aloud, sounds like the noise it describes

personification: Giving an object human feelings or qualities

rhyme: The use of a rhyme scheme to appeal to the reader

simile: A comparison using the words "like" or "as"



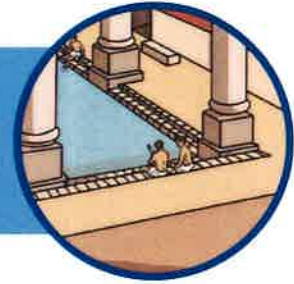
Alliteration



Alliteration is a well-known device in which the author puts together two or more words with the same first letter. The words do not have to be right next to one another. This helps to create a pleasant sound when the words are read and adds to the atmosphere.

Example:

Marble pillars supported **cool**, shaded balconies and **clear, crystalline** pools filled stone basins.



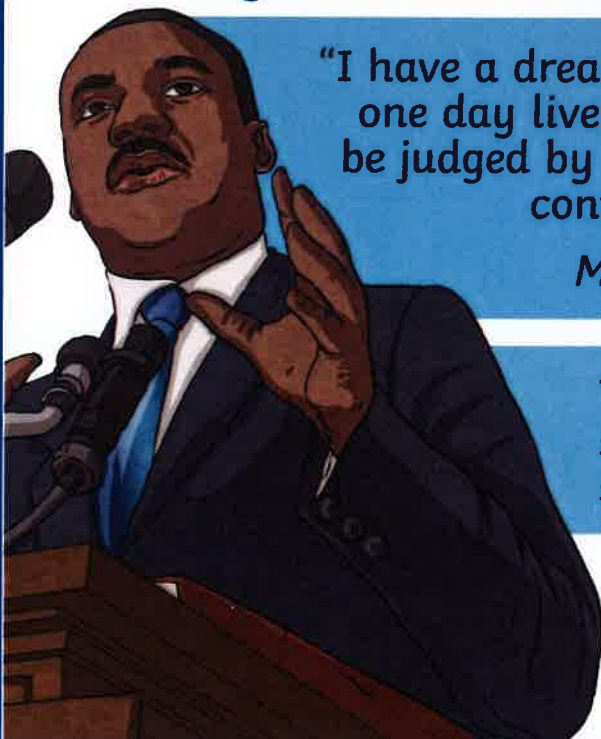
These 'C' sounds are crisp and clean and remind the reader of cold water.

A famous alliterative phrase is:

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

These 'C' sounds are hard and strong and help the speaker to sound determined and confident.



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What Is an Idiom?

Idioms are phrases or sayings which we use in everyday language. These phrases or sayings don't always make sense literally but we can still understand what they mean!

For example:

'To let the cat out of the bag'

This idiom is not really about letting a cat escape from a bag!

It's really about revealing a secret that should have remained a secret.

Here are some other idioms you may or may not have seen or heard before. Can you figure them out?



To have a bee in your bonnet.



To paddle your own canoe.



To put the cart before the horse.



To be a wet blanket.



To be a dog in a manger.

Metaphors



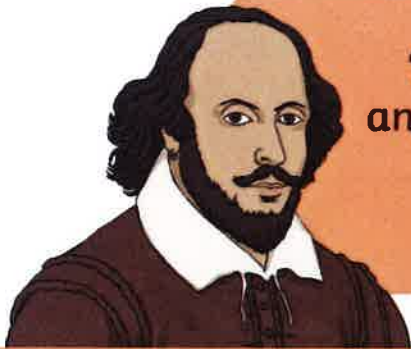
A **metaphor** is a phrase or sentence in which the author creates an image in the reader's mind by saying that a person or object **is** something else.

Key words to use are **was** and **were**.

Example:

The poisoned light dripped off everything it touched.

Some famous metaphors are:



'All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players. They have their exits and their entrances.'

William Shakespeare, 'As You Like It'

'The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor[.]'

Alfred Noyes, 'The Highwayman'



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Onomatopoeia



Onomatopoeia is a common form of figurative language, in which an author creates a sound for the reader by using a word which physically makes the required sound when read.

Example:

The wolf threw him into a dank cell and **clanged** the door shut.



crash

rumble

thump

cackle

slap

knock

click

smash

tap

chirp

roar

drip

bang

whisper

patter

murmur

How many examples of onomatopoeia can you think of?



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Oxymoron



Oxymoron is created by putting together two or more words which don't usually belong together but create an interesting mental image for the reader. They are often words with very different, even opposite, meanings.

Example:

There was a **deafening silence**.



He was **perfectly horrid**.

The chocolate was **awfully tasty**.



A famous example of oxymoron is:



'Parting is such sweet sorrow.'
William Shakespeare, 'Romeo and Juliet'



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Pathetic Fallacy



Pathetic fallacy is everywhere, though you might not notice it often! It happens when a writer makes the weather or setting match the mood of the story. Have you noticed how it is often raining in movies during the saddest moments?

Example:



The inside of the cottage glowed with warmth and bright colours.

Can you match this weather to the most appropriate atmosphere?

sunshine

mystery

mist

anger

heavy rain

happiness

thunderstorm

sadness



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Personification



Personification usually involves an author describing a non-living object with verbs and adjectives that make it seem as though it is alive.

Example:



Fresh rain tapped its fingertips on the roof.

Some well-known examples of personification are:

The trees **whispered** in the wind.



The flames **licked** the sides of the walls.

Even the walls seemed like they were **listening**.



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Similes



A **simile** is a phrase or sentence which **compares** an object or person with something else, to make a description more relatable to the reader.

Key words to use are **like** and **as**.

Example:



The corridor was as dark as night.

Some well-known similes are:



as brave as a lion



as fast as lightning

as sharp as a pencil



like a raging bull

with the speed of a...



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Metaphor

She is a ray of sunshine.

I smell a rat.

He is the light of my life.

A rollercoaster of emotions.

Personification

The snow speaks.

The grass tickled my feet.

The leaves danced on the trees.

The husky corn spoke.

Onomatopoeia

Crash! Splash! Boom!

Pop! Bam! Snap!

Honk! Buzz! Drip!

Swish! Ring! Crackle!

Alliteration

Eric's eagle eats eggs.

Dreary, dismal darkness.

Pretty purple purses.

All apples are alike.

Simile

White as snow.

Quiet as a mouse.

Busy as a bee.

Cute as a kitten.

Idiom

Time flies.

Cat got your tongue?

Broken heart.

Face the music.

Hyperbole

For the millionth time, be quiet!

He's got a brain the size of a pea.

These shoes are killing me.

A snail can go faster than you!

Repetition

"A horse is a horse, of course, of course."

-Mister Ed

"And miles to go before I sleep,

And miles to go before I sleep."

-Robert Frost