

Figurative Language

Figurative language refers to the use of words or phrases to convey a meaning that is different from the literal meaning. Unfamiliar figurative language may make it hard for a reader to fully understand a text.

Component	Explanation
Metaphor	A figure of speech that makes an implicit, implied, or hidden comparison between two things that are unrelated, but which share some common characteristics. Authors use metaphors to appeal to a reader's senses and allow them to build a deeper understanding or view of what is happening.
Personification	A figure of speech in which a thing, either an idea or an animal, is given human attributes. Authors use personification to build a deeper layer of meaning and understanding of events and ideas.
Simile	A figure of speech that makes a comparison between two different things. Similes are often direct comparisons and use "like" or "as." Authors use similes to appeal to a reader's senses and personal experiences, making it easier for readers to understand ideas that may be complex.
Irony	<p>Irony signals a difference between the appearance of things and how they really are.</p> <p><i>Dramatic Irony</i> is when readers know significant information that key characters do not. Dramatic irony is used to create fear and suspense, to build sympathy for a character, or to add humor.</p> <p><i>Situational Irony</i> is when an expected outcome is directly contradicted. Situational irony is used to emphasize a particular theme or to create an unexpected twist.</p> <p><i>Verbal Irony</i> is when the intended meaning of a statement is the exact opposite of what is said. Verbal irony is used to develop insight into a particular character.</p>
Satire	Satires are comical pieces of writing that focus on making fun of an individual or society, drawing attention to their stupidity or shortcomings. Satires include fictional characters and ideas that may represent real people, countries, or the world.
Allusion	An allusion is a brief and often indirect reference to a person, place, thing or idea of historical, cultural, literary or political significance. Authors assume that a reader has enough knowledge to notice the allusion and understand its importance. Allusions are often used to develop characters or situations.

Symbolism	Symbolism is the use of symbols to represent ideas and qualities. Objects, actions, words or events can carry symbolic value. Symbolism is often used to add additional layers to a piece of work, allowing an author to develop a literal level of meaning and a symbolic level of meaning.
Puns	A pun is a play on words that involves using a word that suggests two or more meanings, or using similar sounding words with different meanings. Authors use puns to add a sense of humor to a work or to reveal more about a particular character.
Allegory	An allegory is a story that uses characters, figures and events to explain an abstract idea or principle. Authors often use allegory to express their moral or political points of view.
Hyperbole	A hyperbole is an unreal exaggeration used to add emphasis to a situation.
Paradox	A paradox is a statement that appears to be self-contradictory or silly, but has some level of truth. Authors use paradoxes to illustrate an opinion or statement that may be contrary to traditional ideas.
Oxymoron	An oxymoron is a figure of speech in which two opposite ideas are joined to create an effect. Oxymorons provide a dramatic effect, but often do not make literal sense.
Idiom	A group of words that has a figurative, non-literal meaning. The meaning is not easily deducible from the individual words.

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Literary Devices and Text Complexity

- *Low Complexity:* Language is mostly explicit and relies on literal interpretations. Limited use of symbolism, metaphors or poetic language that allude to unstated concepts.
- *Moderate Complexity:* Includes more sophisticated figurative language. Text includes some supports to guide a reader's correct interpretation of any nonliteral language. Understanding figurative language is important for grasping key elements of the text.
- *High Complexity:* Understanding figurative language is necessary in order to fully understand the text. Uses more sophisticated figurative language (irony and satire, allusions, archaic or less familiar symbolism). Reader has to interpret meanings with no support.