

Literary Devices

1. Name of Literary Device

1. Definition
2. Example
3. How that example represents the literary device
4. Why would the author use this? Or what does the literary device do?

1. Allegory

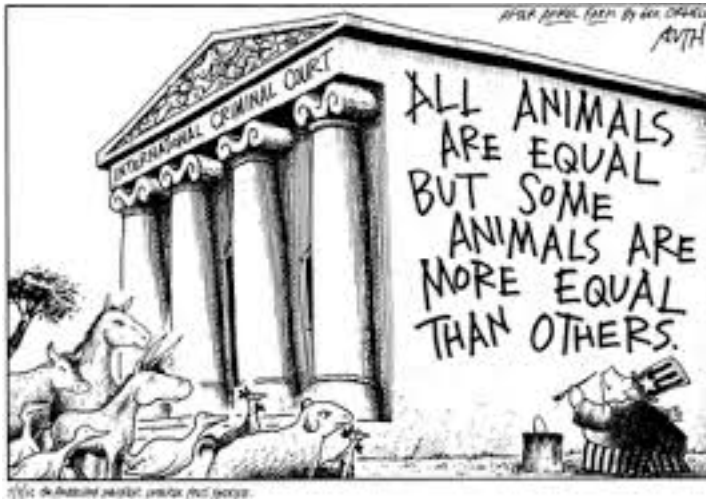
Definition:

An allegory is a **symbolism device where the meaning of a greater, often abstract, concept is conveyed with the aid of a more corporeal object or idea being used as an example**. Usually a rhetoric device, an allegory suggests a meaning via metaphoric examples.

Example:

Faith is like a stony uphill climb: a single stumble might send you sprawling but belief and steadfastness will see you to the very top.

- *Wall-E* - An allegory to save the Earth.



2. Alliteration

Definition:

Alliteration is a literary device where words are used in quick succession and begin with letters belonging to the same sound group. Whether it is the

consonant sound or a specific vowel group, **the alliteration involves creating a repetition of similar sounds in the sentence.** Alliterations are also created when the words all begin with the same letter. Alliterations are used to add character to the writing and often add an element of 'fun' to the piece..

Example:

The Wicked Witch of the West went her own way. (The 'W' sound is highlighted and repeated throughout the sentence.)

3. Allusion

Definition:

An allusion is a figure of speech whereby the author refers to a subject matter such as a place, event, or literary work by way of a passing reference. It is up to the reader to make a connection to the subject being mentioned.

Example:

It's no wonder everyone refers to Mary as another Mother Teresa in the making; she loves to help and care after people everywhere- from the streets to her own friends.

In the example the author uses the mention of Mother Teresa to indicate the sort of qualities that Mary has.

ALLUSION

is a casual reference to a famous historical or literary figure or event.

Examples:

If it doesn't stop raining, I'm going to build an ark.

My sister has so many pets I'm going to call myself Old McDonald.



4. Amplification

Definition:

Amplification refers to a literary practice wherein the writer embellishes the sentence by adding more information to it in order to increase its worth and understandability. When a plain sentence is too abrupt and fails to convey the full implications desired, amplification comes into play when the writer adds more to the structure to give it more meaning.

Example:

Original sentence– The thesis paper was difficult. After amplification– The thesis paper was difficult: it required extensive research, data collection, sample surveys, interviews and a lot of fieldwork.

5. Anagram

Definition:

Anagrams are an extremely popular form of literary device wherein the writer jumbles up parts of the word to create a new word. From the syllables of a phrase to the individual letters of a word, any fraction can be jumbled to create a new form. Anagram is a form of wordplay that allows the writer to infuse mystery and a little interactive fun in the writing so that the reader can decipher the actual word on their own and discover a depth of meaning to the writing.

Example:

An anagram for "debit card" is "bad credit". As you can see, both phrases use the same letters. By mixing the letters a bit of humor is created.

6. Analogy

Definition:

An analogy is a literary device that helps to establish a relationship based on similarities between two concepts or ideas. By using an analogy we can convey a new idea by using the blueprint of an old one as a basis for understanding. With a mental linkage between the two, one can create understanding regarding the new concept in a simple and succinct manner.

Example:

In the same way as one cannot have the rainbow without the rain, one cannot achieve success and riches without hard work.

7. Anastrophe

Definition:

Anastrophe is a form of literary device wherein the order of the noun and the adjective in the sentence is exchanged. In standard parlance and writing the adjective comes before the noun but when one is employing an anastrophe the noun is followed by the adjective. This reversed order creates a dramatic impact and lends weight to the description offered by the adjective.

Example:

He spoke of times past and future, and dreamt of things to be.

Examples of Anastrophe:

1. Excited the children were when Santa entered the room.
2. Patience I lack.
3. A roast is what we will have for dinner.
4. In the night sky shimmered the moon.
5. Into the water dove the boy.

Examples of Anastrophe in Literature

"Strong in the force, you are." Yoda, Star Wars

8. Foreshadowing

Definition:

The literary device foreshadowing refers to the use of indicative word or phrases and hints that set the stage for a story to unfold and give the reader a hint of something that is going to happen without revealing the story or spoiling the suspense. Foreshadowing is used to suggest an upcoming outcome to the story.

Example:

"He had no idea of the disastrous chain of events to follow". In this sentence, while the protagonist is clueless of further developments, the reader learns that something disastrous and problematic is about to happen to/for him.

9. Hyperbole

Definition:

A hyperbole is a literary device wherein the author uses specific words and phrases that exaggerate and overemphasize the basic crux of the statement in order to produce a grander, more noticeable effect. The purpose of hyperbole is to create a larger-than-life effect and overly stress a specific point. Such sentences usually convey an action or sentiment that is generally not practically/ realistically possible or plausible but helps emphasize an emotion.

Example:

“I am so tired I cannot walk another inch” or “I’m so sleepy I might fall asleep standing here”.

10. Anecdote

Definition:

The word anecdote, phonetically pronounced an.ik.doht, means a short verbal accounting of a funny, amusing, interesting event or incident. The story is usually a reminiscence from the teller's life but at best is a related story of fact, as opposed to a contrived work of fiction. The origin of the word anecdote comes from the Greek Byzantine period, A.D. 527 to 565 during the reign of emperor Justinian. In his court, Justinian had a historian named Procopius who was a gifted writer who wrote many witty, amusing and somewhat bawdy accounts of court life. Never intending for these stories to become public he entitled his writings as “Anecdota” which was Greek for unpublished and kept secret. After his secret writings did indeed become public and published, the term anecdote became commonly used for similar accounts.

Example:

Amusing anecdotes many times find their way into wedding receptions, family reunions and any other gathering of people who know each other well. Teachers and educators often tell classrooms of pupils anecdotes about famous people. The anecdotes are not always flattering, but are usually revealing of character and invariably amusing. Here is an example of an anecdote about Winston Churchill:

Winston Churchill was very fond of his pet dog Rufus. He ate in the dining room with the family on a special cloth and was treated with utmost respect. When enjoying movies, Rufus had the best seat in the house; on Winston Churchill's lap. While watching “Oliver Twist,” Churchill put his hands over Rufus' eyes during the scene where Bill Sikes intends to drown his dog. Churchill is believed to have said to Rufus: “don't look now, dear. I'll tell you about it later.”

11. Anthropomorphism

Definition:

Anthropomorphism can be understood to be the act of lending a human quality, emotion or ambition to a non-human object or being. This act of lending a human element to a non-human subject is often employed in order to endear the latter to the readers or audience and increase the level of relativity between the two while also lending character to the subject.

Example:

The raging storm brought with it howling winds and fierce lightning as the residents of the village looked up at the angry skies in alarm.

12. Antithesis

Definition:

An antithesis is used when the writer employs two sentences of contrasting meanings in close proximity to one another. Whether they are words or phrases of the same sentence, an antithesis is used to create a stark contrast using two divergent elements that come together to create one uniform whole. An antithesis plays on the complementary property of opposites to create one vivid picture. The purpose of using an antithesis in literature is to create a balance between opposite qualities and lend a greater insight into the subject.

Example:

When Neil Armstrong walked on the moon it might have been one small step for a man but it was one giant leap for mankind.

13. Aphorism

Definition:

An aphorism is a concise statement that is made in a matter of fact tone to state a principle or an opinion that is generally understood to be a universal truth. Aphorisms are often adages, wise sayings and maxims aimed at imparting sense and wisdom. It is to be noted that aphorisms are usually witty and curt and often have an underlying tone of authority to them.

Example:

Upon seeing the shoddy work done by the employee the boss told him to “either shape up or ship out”.

14. Archetype

Definition:

An archetype is a reference to a concept, a person or an object that has served as a prototype of its kind and is the original idea that has come to be used over and over again. Archetypes are literary devices that employ the use of a famous

concept, person or object to convey a wealth of meaning. Archetypes are immediately identifiable and even though they run the risk of being overused, they are still the best examples of their kind.

Example:

Romeo and Juliet are an archetype of eternal love and a star-crossed love story.

15. Assonance

Definition:

Assonance refers to repetition of sounds produced by vowels within a sentence or phrase. In this regard assonance can be understood to be a kind of alliteration. What sets it apart from alliterations is that it is the repetition of only vowel sounds. Assonance is the opposite of consonance, which implies repetitive usage of consonant sounds.

Example:

“A long song”. (Where the ‘o’ sound is repeated in the last two words of the sentence)

16. Asyndeton

Definition:

Asyndeton refers to a practice in literature whereby the author purposely leaves out conjunctions in the sentence, while maintaining the grammatical accuracy of the phrase. Asyndeton as a literary tool helps in shortening up the implied meaning of the entire phrase and presenting it in a succinct form. This compact version helps in creating an immediate impact whereby the reader is instantly attuned to what the writer is trying to convey. Use of this literary device helps in creating a strong impact and such sentences have greater recall worth since the idea is presented in a nutshell.

Example:

1. Read, Write, Learn.
2. Watch, Absorb, Understand.
3. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.

17. Authorial Intrusion

Definition:

Authorial Intrusion is an interesting literary device wherein the author penning the story, poem or prose steps away from the text and speaks out to the reader. Authorial Intrusion establishes a one to one relationship between the writer and the reader where the latter is no longer a secondary player or an indirect audience to the progress of the story but is the main subject of the author’s attention.

Example:

In many olden novels, especially in suspense novels, the protagonist would move away from the stream of the story and speak out to the reader. This technique was often used to reveal some crucial elements of the story to the reader even though the protagonist might remain mystified within the story for the time being.

18. Bildungsroman

Definition:

This is a very popular form of storytelling whereby the author bases the plot on the overall growth of the central character throughout the timeline of the story. As the story progresses, the subject undergoes noticeable mental, physical, social, emotional, moral, and often spiritual advancement and strengthening before the readers' eyes. It has often been seen that the protagonist begins with views, aims and dreams that are in contrast to the other character's in the story and then fights his or her way through to achieve them.

Example:

Scarlet O'Hara in *Gone With the Wind* experiences immense personal growth as she learns the value of friends and hard work under duress, without compromising her own dreams.

19. Cacophony

Definition:

A cacophony in literature refers to the use of words and phrases that imply strong, harsh sounds within the phrase. These words have jarring and dissonant sounds that create a disturbing, objectionable atmosphere.

Example:

His fingers rapped and pounded the door, and his foot thumped against the yellowing wood.

20. Caesura

Definition:

This literary device involves creating a fracture of sorts within a sentence where the two separate parts are distinguishable from one another yet intrinsically linked to one another. The purpose of using a caesura is to create a dramatic pause, which has a strong impact. The pause helps to add an emotional, often

theatrical touch to the sentence and conveys a depth of sentiment in a short phrase.

Example:

Mozart- oh how your music makes me soar!

“of reeds and stalk-crickets, || fiddling the dank air, lacing his boots with vines, || steering glazed beetles”

21. Characterization

Definition:

Characterization in literature refers the step by step process wherein an author introduces and then describes a character. The character can be described directly by the author or indirectly through the actions, thoughts, and speech of the character.

Example:

Michael Corleone was not jus' a mafiaso, but a family man. A man who walked the knife's edge to preserve his sanity.

22. Chiasmus / Antimetabole

Definition:

Chiasmus is a figure of speech containing two phrases that are parallel but inverted to each other.

Example:

You can take the patriot out of the country but you cannot take the country out of the patriot.

23. Conflict

Definition:

It is a literary device used for expressing a resistance the protagonist of the story finds in achieving his aims or dreams. The conflict is a discord that can have external aggressors or can even arise from within the self. It can occur when the subject is battling his inner discord, at odds with his surroundings or it may be pitted against others in the story.

Example:

John tried hard to convince himself that his Hollywood dreams were worth the struggle but his parents, and his inner voice of reason, failed to agree.

24. Connotation

Definition:

Connotations are the associations people make with words that go beyond the literal or dictionary definition. Many words have connotations that create emotions or feelings in the reader.

Example:

And once again, the autumn leaves were falling.

This phrase uses 'autumn' to signify something coming to an end.

25. Consonance

Definition:

Consonance refers to repetition of sounds in quick succession produced by consonants within a sentence or phrase. The repetitive sound is often found at the end of a word. Consonance is the opposite of assonance, which implies repetitive usage of vowel sounds.

Example:

He struck a streak of bad luck.

26. Denotation

Definition:

Denotation refers to the use of the dictionary definition or literal meaning of a word.

Example:

They built a house.

In the above sentence, house is meant literally as in a building where a family lives. If the word "home" was used instead in the above sentence in place of "house", the meaning would not be so literal as there are many emotions associated with the word "home" beyond simply the structure where people live.

27. Deus ex Machina

Definition:

Deus ex Machina is a rather debatable and often criticized form of literary device. It refers to the incidence where an implausible concept or character is brought into the story in order to make the conflict in the story resolve and to bring about a pleasing solution. The use of Deus ex Machina is not recommended as it is seen to be the mark of a poor plot that the writer needs to resort to random, insupportable and unbelievable twists and turns to reach the end of the story.

Example:

If in a suspense novel the protagonist suddenly finds a solution to his dilemmas because of divine intervention.

28. Diction

Definition:

Diction is the distinctive tone or tenor of an author's writings. Diction is not just a writer's choice of words it can include the mood, attitude, dialect and style of writing. Diction is usually judged with reference to the prevailing standards of proper writing and speech and is seen as the mark of quality of the writing. It is also understood as the selection of certain words or phrases that become peculiar to a writer.

Example:

Certain writers in the modern day and age use archaic terms such as 'thy', 'thee' and 'wherefore' to imbue a Shakespearean mood to their work.

29. Doppelganger

Definition:

The term is derived from the German language and literally translates into 'double walker'. It refers to a character in the story that is actually a counterfeit or a copy of a genuine character. Doppelgangers of the main characters usually bear the ability to impersonate the original but have vastly different spirits and intentions. The doppelganger usually has a different appearance but an earthly soul and supernatural hoodwinking abilities that allow it to fool other unsuspecting characters.

Example:

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

30. Epilogue

Definition:

Epilogues are an inherent part of any story or poem and are essential to the structure of any written form. The epilogue is an important literary tool that acts as the afterword once the last chapter is over. The purpose of an epilogue is to add a little insight to some interesting developments that happen once the major plot is over. Epilogues often act as a teaser trailer to any possible sequels that might be created later. Sometimes the epilogue is used to add a little bit about the life or future of the main characters after the story itself has unfolded and wrapped up. Epilogues can be written in a number of ways: sometimes the same narrative style as adopted in the story is continued while at other times one of the characters might take up the narrative or speak one to one with the audience.

Example:

In a remarkably contemporary moment at the end of The Tempest, Shakespeare's wizard Prospero addresses the audience directly, breaking down

the boundaries of the play. He informs them that the play is over, his powers are gone, and thus his escape from the play's island setting depends on their applause that they, in effect, get to decide his fate.

This serves as a Epilogue for Shakespeare's tragi-comedy *The Tempest*.