



Defining Figurative Language

Figurative Language is language used to convey something different from the word's dictionary definition. It transforms the text from something simple and flat to something that is complex and dimensional. Figurative language encompasses many different types of literary techniques and devices.

Definitions and Examples of Figurative Language

Simile: when like or as is used to make a direct comparison of two objects.

- ⇒ **Example:** Cierra is **as** cunning **as** a fox.
- ⇒ **Example:** He had such a long day at work that he slept **like** a log at night.

Metaphor: when a comparison of two unlike objects is made based on common characteristics.

- ⇒ **Example:** **Angry words** cut deeper than a **knife**.
- ⇒ **Example:** The **assignment** was a **breeze**.

Symbol: when something is used to represent an entirely different object or concept.

- ⇒ **Example:** Using the **American flag** to represent **patriotism**.
- ⇒ **Example:** The color **black** represents **evil** and **death**.

Personification: when an inanimate/inhuman object is given human characteristics.

- ⇒ **Example:** The moon's shadow **danced** on the lake.
- ⇒ **Example:** That skyscraper is so tall it seems to be **kissing** the sky.

Onomatopoeia: a word that imitates something's natural sounds.

- ⇒ **Example:** Olivia fell to the ground with a loud **thump**.
- ⇒ **Example:** The bee **buzzed** in my ear.

Hyperbole: using exaggeration to emphasize something or a situation.

- ⇒ **Example:** Taylor has **a million** homework assignments to complete tonight.
- ⇒ **Example:** I am **dying** of embarrassment!

Allusion: an indirect, brief reference to a person, place, or thing of importance that requires the reader to have knowledge of person, or text, being alluded to.

- ⇒ **Example:** The Writing Center is like the **Garden of Eden**.
- ⇒ **Example:** Stop acting like such a **Scrooge**!



Irony: using language or ideas that normally signifies the opposite, often for humor purposes.

⇒ **Example:** The world's **biggest** cat's name was **Tiny**.

⇒ **Example:** The fear of **long** words is called Hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia.

Further Assistance: For more detailed help or if you have questions, visit the Writing Center located in the Lewis University Library or call 815-836-5427.

Sources Consulted: literarydevices.net, grammar.yourdictionary.com