



# Defining Figurative Language

**Figurative Language** is language used to convey to the reader something different from the word's dictionary definition. It uses exaggerations and alterations of words in order to transform the text from simple to complex and dimensional. Figurative language deals with 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 things.

Example: Cierra is as cunning as a fox.

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

Example: Angry words cut deeper than a knife.

**Symbol:** when something is used to represent an entirely different thing

Example: Using the American flag to represent patriotism.

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

Example: The moon's shadow danced on the lake.

**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.

**Allusion:** an indirect, brief reference to a person, place, or thing of importance that requires the reader to have enough background knowledge to grasp its importance in the text.

Example: The Writing Center is like the Garden of Eden.

**Metonymy:** when the name of something is replaced with the name of something else that is closely associated.

Example: Let me give you a hand. (Hand means help)

Example: The pen is mightier than the sword. (Pen means written words, and sword means military force)

**Irony:** when words are used so that what the author intends by using them is different from what the words actually mean.

Example: My friend named her big dog, Tiny. (Tiny means small, but the dog is physically big)

**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 and grammar.yourdictionary.com