



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 Hippopotomonstrosesquippedalio phobia

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