

# Figurative Language

**Is the writing that is not meant to be taken literally (or exactly as the words are presented). The language is used to create vivid impressions by setting up comparisons between things that might be dissimilar.**

## Alliteration

Repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words; it is used to create melody, establish mood, call attention to important words, or point out similarities and differences.

Wide-eyed and wondering while we wait for others to waken.

## Allusion

An allusion is a reference, within a literary work, to another work of fiction, a film, a piece of art, or even a real event. An allusion serves as a kind of shorthand, drawing on this outside work to provide greater context or meaning to the situation being written about.

She stood as strong at the Statue of Liberty while holding 50 pound weights above her head.

## Cliché

is a phrase, expression, or idea that has been overused to the point of losing its intended force or novelty, especially when at some time it was considered distinctively forceful or novel. The term is generally used in a negative context.

You can't teach an old dog new tricks.

## Hyperbole

A bold, deliberate overstatement not intended to be taken literally; used as a means of emphasizing the truth of a statement.

She said you crossed that line seven million times!

## Irony

Verbal Irony – is used when an expression is the opposite of the thought in the speaker's mind, thus conveying a meaning that contradicts the literal definition.

Fathers fondly call their little boys "Big Fella" or I may call my hunking 6'6" friend "Tiny."

**Dramatic Irony** – is a literary or theatrical device of having a character utter words which the reader or audience understands to have a different meaning, but which the character himself is aware.

**Situational Irony** – is when a situation occurs which is quite the reverse of what one might have expected.

Two animal rights activists were protesting the cruelty of sending pigs to a slaughterhouse in Bonn. Suddenly the pigs, all two thousand of them, escaped through a broken fence and stampeded, trampling two hapless protesters to death.

## **Metaphor**

A figure of speech in which a comparison is made between two dissimilar things.

The pillow was a cloud when I put my head upon it after a long day.

## **Onomatopoeia**

The use of words that mimic sound; they appeal to our sense of hearing and bring a description to life.

Caarackle!      Vroooooom!

## **Oxymoron**

A figure of speech that combines two normally contradictory terms.

Jumbo shrimp or friendly fire.

## **Personification**

A type of metaphor in which distinct human qualities (e.g. honesty, emotion, volition, etc.) are attributed to an animal, object, or idea.

“nature swept” or “the wind whispered many truths to me.”

## **Pun**

A pun is a play on words: a humorous use of words that involves words or phrases that have more than one possible meaning.

To write with a broken pencil is pointless.

## **Simile**

A figure of speech in which a comparison is expressed by using like, as, than.

A Red, Red Rose  
*By Robert Burns*

O My Luve's like a red, red rose,  
That's newly sprung in June;  
O My Luve's like the melodie  
That's sweetly played in tune.

# **Symbol**

A person, object, situation, or action which stands for something else more abstract.

Flags symbolize a nation; a cross symbolizes Christianity; Uncle Sam symbolizes the United States. In literature, a symbol is expected to hold significance.

# **Understatement**

The presentation of a thing with underemphasis in order to achieve a greater effect.

In Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird*, Atticus makes this comment after Bob Ewell threatens him and spits in his face, "I wish Bob Ewell wouldn't chew tobacco."

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_

# Figurative Language Worksheet

**Directions:** Identify the figurative language example and write the term associated with it in the box provided. You may choose the terms from the word bank.

allegory, alliteration, allusion, apostrophe, cliché, hyperbole, irony, metaphor, onomatopoeia,  
oxymoron, parable, paradox, personification, pun, simile, symbol,

Example	Term
1. <i>Squeak</i>	
2. A narrative that serves as an extended metaphor.	
3. Good grief!	
4. A brief and often simple narrative that illustrates a religious or moral message	
5. Is a discrepancy between what is said and what is meant	
6. There's no place like home	
7. A smiling moon	
8. "You are a tulip."	
9. Happy as the day is long.	
10. "Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage."	
11. "And sings a solitary song that whispers in the wind."	
12. A black cat	
13. "By The Waters of Babylon" contains a reference to Psalm 137 in the Bible.	
14. "I'm older than the hills."	
15. The addressing of a usually absent person	
16. A bicycle cannot stand alone because it is <i>two tired</i> .	

**Answers:**

1. onomatopoeia
2. allegory
3. oxymoron
4. parable
5. irony
6. cliché
7. personification
8. metaphor
9. simile
10. paradox
11. alliteration

12. symbol
13. allusion
14. hyperbole
15. apostrophe
16. pun