Common Examples of Literary Devices in Literature

Figurative Language http://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-figurative-language.html

There are many types of figurative language. Some include the use of a specific type of word or word meaning such as:

Simile

A simile compares two things using the words “like” and “as.” Examples include:

- busy as a bee
- clean as a whistle
- brave as a lion
- stand out like a sore thumb
- they fought like cats and dogs

Metaphor

When you use a metaphor, you make a statement that doesn’t make sense literally, like “time is a thief.” It only makes sense when the similarities between the two things become apparent or someone understands the connection.

Examples include:

- the world is my oyster
- time is money
- he has a heart of stone
- America is a melting pot
- you are my sunshine

Personification

Personification gives human characteristics to inanimate objects, animals, or ideas. This can really affect the way the reader imagines things. This is used in children’s books, poetry, and fictional literature. Examples include:

- opportunity knocked on the door
- the sun greeted me this morning
- the vines wove their fingers together to form a braid
- the sun played hide and seek with the clouds

Hyperbole

Hyperbole is an outrageous exaggeration that emphasizes a point, and can be ridiculous or funny. Hyperboles can be added to fiction to add color and depth to a character. Examples are:

- You snore louder than a freight train.
- I had to walk 15 miles to school in the snow, uphill.
- You could have knocked me over with a feather.

Symbolism

Symbolism occurs when a word which has meaning in itself but is used to represent something entirely different. Examples are:

- Using an image of the American flag to represent patriotism and a love for one's country.
- Using an apple pie to represent an American lifestyle.
- Using an apple to represent education.

Alliteration

Alliteration is the easiest of the examples of figurative language to spot. It is a repetition of the first consonant sounds in several words. Some good examples are:

- wide-eyed and wondering while we wait for others to waken
- Betty bought butter but the butter was bitter, so Betty bought better butter to make the bitter butter better.

Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia is the use of words that sound like their meaning, or mimic sounds. They add a level of fun and reality to writing. Here are some examples:

- the burning wood hissed and crackled
- the words: beep, whirr, click, whoosh, swish, zap, zing, ping, clang, bong, hum, boom, munch, gobble, crunch, pow, smash, wham, quack, meow, oink, and tweet.

Idiom

An idion is an expression that has a meaning that is only known to a particular group of people. For example:

- Kick the bucket
- Raining cats and dogs
- Whistling Dixie

Regardless of the type of word used, figurative language can make you look at the world differently; it can heighten your senses and help you feel like you are having the same experience as the author.

Literary Elements http://literary-devices.com/ and http://www.storyboardthat.com/articles/education/literature/types-of-irony

Allusion: 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.

Foreshadowing: 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.

Irony:

- **Verbal**: The use of words to mean something different than what the person actually means or says they mean.
- **Situational**: The difference between what is expected to happen and actuality.
- **Dramatic**: When the audience is more aware of what is happening than the characters.

Motif: The literary device 'motif' is any element, subject, idea or concept that occurs often in body of literature or appears frequently in other stories. Motifs are usually noticeable and play a significant role in defining the nature of the story, the course of events and the very fabric of the literary piece.
Example:

In many famed fairytales, the motif of a 'handsome prince' falling in love with a 'damsel in distress' and the two being bothered by a wicked step mother, evil witch or beast and finally conquering all to live 'happily ever after' is a common motif.

Another common motif is the simple, pretty peasant girl or girl from a modest background in fairytales discovering that she is actually a royal or noble by the end of the tale.