

<p>College of Education</p> <p>Department of English</p> <p>Third Stage (Morning)</p> <p>Lecture 5</p>		<p>Instructor: Dr.Mugdad</p>
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Figures of Speech in Poetry

The meaning of language can be literal or figurative. Literal language states exactly what something is. On the other hand, figurative language creates meaning by comparing one thing to another thing. Poets use figures of speech in their poems. Several types of figures of speech exist for them to choose from. Five common ones are simile, metaphor, personification, and hyperbole,

Simile

A simile compares one thing to another by using the words *like* or *as*. Read Shakespeare’s poem “Sonnet 130.”

Sonnet 130

Author: William Shakespeare

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My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red, than her lips red:
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.

In this sonnet, Shakespeare’s simile in the first line is a contrast where one thing is not *like* or *as* something else. He wrote, “My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun.”

Metaphor

A metaphor compares one to another by saying one thing *is* another. Read Emily Dickinson's poem "Hope Is the Thing with Feathers."

Hope Is the Thing with Feathers

Author: Emily Dickinson

"Hope" is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul
And sings the tune without the words
And never stops at all

Notice that Emily Dickinson compared hope to a bird—the thing with feathers. Because there are bird images throughout the poem, it is called an extended metaphor poem.

Personification

A personification involves giving a non-human, inanimate object the qualities of a person. Robert Frost did that in his poem "Storm Fear."

Storm Fear

Author: Robert Frost

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When the wind works against us in the dark,
And pelts with snow
The lower chamber window on the east,
And whispers with a sort of stifled bark,
The beast,
'Come out! Come out!—

Look specifically at the strong action verbs to find the human traits that are attributed to the wind and storm.

Hyperbole

A hyperbole is an exaggeration of the truth in order to create an effect. Sometimes that's done in a single statement. Other times it can happen with repetition like in Robert Frost's famous poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening." Read the poem aloud. Notice the effect of the last two lines. The reader feels the tiredness of the weary traveler.

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Author: Robert Frost

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Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

Irony is the use of words that mean the opposite of what you really think especially in order to be funny

Irony in poetry is a literary technique that uses discordance, incongruity or a naive speaker to say something other than a poem's literal meaning. There are three basic types of irony used in poetry: verbal irony, **situational irony** and dramatic irony. Poets will use irony for a variety of reasons, including satire or to make a political point.

Verbal irony is a figure of speech in which a speaker says one thing but means another. It comes in several forms and is used to bring humor to a situation

Examples of Verbal Irony from Literature

Example #1: *Romeo & Juliet* (By William Shakespeare)

"Again and again he tried after the tempting morsel, but at last had to give it up, and walked away with his nose in the air, saying: 'I am sure they are sour.'" "

"I will not marry yet; and, when I do, I swear it shall be Romeo, whom you know I hate, rather than Paris."

Juliet does not like the decision of her father to marry with Paris, whom she dislikes and instead adores Romeo. Hence, she makes a decision to marry Romeo and tells her mother about it ironically that whenever she would marry, it would be Romeo – whom she dislikes – and not Paris, thus confusing her mother.

Types of poems

- **Ode**– An ode is a long lyric poem whose subject matter is serious and elevated, and stanzas are very elaborative. John Keats was very famous for writing odes.
- **Epic**– An epic is a long narrative poem that usually has subjects like heroic deeds, divine characters and legends, or the risk of humanity at stake. An epic is therefore known as a heroic poem. John Milton’s ‘Paradise Lost’ and Homer’s ‘Odyssey’ are both epics.
- **Elegy**– An elegy is a lyric poem that mourns the loss of someone or something. The common subjects are death and unrequited love. ‘An Elegy Written in the Country Churchyard’ by Thomas Gray is a particularly famous example of this style.
- **Ballad**– A ballad is a narrative poem that can be sung. It has a musical rhythm and the stanzas are usually quatrains. It is also called a ‘folk song’ and deals with the subject of ordinary people. Ballads are usually dramatic and written in incremental repetition, meaning that a line or stanza is repeated in every stanza adding more detail.