

Rhetorical & Literary Devices

THE BIG TEN

Rhetorical/Literary Device	Definition	Example
Apostrophe	a technique by which a writer addresses an inanimate object, an idea, or a person who is either dead or absent	"Twinkle, twinkle, little star. How I wonder what you are."
Hyperbole	exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally	I'm so hungry I could eat a horse!
Imagery	visually descriptive or figurative language that appeals to the senses	"Her eyes glittered like a starlit night against the ocean's surface."
Irony	in general, a discrepancy between appearances and reality	A man who is a traffic cop gets his license suspended for unpaid parking tickets.
Metaphor	a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable; comparison without like or as	"He remained <i>the light of my life</i> , being my best friend and the only person that I could trust."
Onomatopoeia	a word that is spelled the way that it sounds	" <i>Boom!</i> the car hit the tree, and all became silent that day."
Paradox	a seemingly absurd or self-contradictory statement or proposition that when investigated or explained may prove to be well founded or true	"At the end of the day, it turns out that <i>it is cruel to be kind.</i> "
Personification	the attribution of a personal nature or human characteristics to something nonhuman	"The leaves <i>danced</i> in the wind that day."
Simile	a figure of speech involving the comparison of one thing with another thing of a different kind, using the words "like," or "as"	"The postal worker moved from house to house, <i>as busy as a bee.</i> "
Symbol	a thing that represents or stands for something else	"The <i>American flag</i> waved proudly that day, representing the freedom that we have come so far to achieve."

Some Additional Devices: **conceit**-an elaborate or extended metaphor or other figure of speech that compares two things that are startlingly different. **metonymy**-a figure of speech in which a person, place, or thing is referred to by something closely associated with it; **synecdoche**-a figure of speech in which a part represents the whole; and **idiom**-an expression that means something different from the literal definitions of its parts.