**Literary Devices/Fig. Language--PART 1**

**Literal and Figurative Language**

Literal/ concrete meaning - in a poem or story, what happens exactly, in one sentence if possible. For example:

    Upon my bed  
Lies the bright moonlight  
Like frost upon the earth.  
  
Lifting my eyes,  
I see the bright moon.  
Closing my eyes,  
I see home.         (from *Dragonwings)*

The concrete meaning is this: The narrator is in a strange bed at night and the light of the moon makes him think of home.

abstract meaning - the theme or message of the poem or story. This has to be based on the concrete meaning, and should also take conflicts into consideration.  For example:

In the poem above, the abstract meaning might be:

*Loneliness and homesickness are cold feelings, but we are warmed by our memories of home.*

* literal vs. figurative meaning - relates to the meanings of words and phrases or expressions. For example, "She was all ears" has a figurative meaning (She was listening intently) as well as a literal meaning (Her body was composed of ears or she had a huge set of ears). Lewis Carroll and other authors use and confuse the meanings to create nonsense and humor. In some novels, characters who are literal-minded are a source of ridicule.

**Author's Craft**

In general, this is a way of using words to make imaginative connections in the reader's "inner eye." These connections can be called **images.**As you learn to recognize and appreciate figurative language, your appreciation and ability to actively read good writing will increase. These are the types of figurative language on which we will concentrate this year:

**Metaphor** - the comparison of two unlike things to suggest things which they have in common - for example: *Joe is a lion on the playing field* would compare Joe to a lion in how he moves, his aggression, his animal-like actions, his skill and strength, his leadership.  When you identify a metaphor, you have to dig deeply to find all of the layers of possible meaning.

**Simile** - a comparison of two unlike things using*like* or *as* - for example: ***Sue flits through life like a moth in a room of candles***compares Sue to a delicate, fluttering moth which is drawn to fire and raises an image of both delight and confusion, perhaps also mindlessness and upcoming death or failure.  Like a metaphor, a simile can seem obvious, but it is usually telling you something about a character or setting if you are willing to dig **a little deeper.**

**Personification** - the description of an inanimate (non-living) object as if it were a human being or an animal - for example: *The kite tugged and pulled at the string, longing for the freedom of the skies*gives the kite human actions and a motive for them. In using personification the author asks the reader to identify with the object or character viewing it more deeply than would be possible in a simple description.

**Extended metaphor** - a paragraph or longer of description which builds upon an initial metaphor, often bringing several of the senses (sight, sound, touch, hearing, taste) into play. This is often used by an author seeking to make a point in a setting description or seeking to create a character for the narrator or narrative focus (e.g.: imaginative, naive, fanciful, terrified)

**Hyperbole** - an obvious and **unrealistic** **exaggeration** - for example: *His gaping jaw could hold a flock of the King's fattest sheep*indicates excess and perhaps a fearful or highly imaginative narrative focus. A good way to identify hyperbole is to ask yourself the old tall-tale question**: Just how [tall, wide, hungry, lazy, angry...] was he/she/it?**

**Onomatopoeia** - use of a word which sounds like it means - for example: *plunk, zip, buzz, bong, zap*all have meaning which is reinforced by the sound of the word. Repetition of onomatopoeic words is used by authors to create a mood or tone and to convey sense impressions (e.g. motion, touch, sound)

**Pun** - a word which has several meanings, all of which apply; puns are often based on sound, so homophones and homonyms have to be though of as well - for example: In *Induction I of Taming of the Shrew*the bum Sly states*"I smell"*when testing to see if he is awake; he can smell, but he also does smell. Puns are generally a source of humor, but they can also be cruel or unkind. Lewis Carroll is very fond of puns and uses them to good effect in*Alice.*

**Oxymoron** - a phrase which contains opposite elements or words with opposite meanings, yet which expresses one idea when taken as a whole - for example:  Bottom says in *Midsummer Night's Dream,*"I'll speak in a ***monstrous little*** voice."

**Alone Together  
Silent Scream  
Living Dead  
Taped Live  
Plastic Glasses  
Pretty Ugly  
Working Vacation  
Virtual Reality**

**Bitter Sweet  
Work Party  
Jumbo Shrimp**

**Irony** - There are 3 types of irony which you need to know:

**Situational Irony** - when the reverse of the expected happens or when the person you least expect to do something, does it - for example: It is*ironic* that *Cinderella*gets the prince?

**Dramatic irony** - when the viewer or the reader is aware of a situation of which the character(s) are not aware - for example: In *Romeo and Juliet*the reader knows that Juliet is not really dead, but Romeo does not know this. <!--[endif]-->

**Irony of language** - when a name or description refers to or suggests the opposite of truth - for example: In*Dragonwings*the leader of a fierce brotherhood/gang is called Water Fairy. The irony is not just that the name is inappropriate, but that it was earned in an inappropriate way. Irony of language is often used for humor, but it can also be cruel or sarcastic. The name of the character Lefty, in *Dragonwings,* is as ironic as his situation.

**Coincidence** - something which happens by chance. Authors use coincidence to advance the plot, to create and resolve conflicts, and sometimes just for humor or to startle the reader. <!--[endif]-->

**Alliteration** - The repetition of sound within a line of poetry (or prose).  We will watch for two types of alliteration:

**assonance**- the repetition of vowel sounds (a, e, i, o, u, ou, ea, etc.) - "I wore a fleecy green jacket easy and tall."

**consonance**- is the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words within a line of poetry - "Slanting silver slits of rain."

Practice :

[Gamequarium:  Figurative Language](http://gamequarium.com/figurativelanguage.html)

Related Files

[doc](http://www.myteacherpages.com/webpages/SGoldstein1/files/Literal%20and%20Figurative%20Language,%20Devices.doc) [Literal-Figurative Language, Literary Devices](http://www.myteacherpages.com/webpages/SGoldstein1/files/Literal%20and%20Figurative%20Language,%20Devices.doc) (DOC 42 KB)