

# Figurative Language Terms Glossary

Many of these terms are used in short stories, poetry, novels, and cartoons. Study their definitions so they become more easily recognisable to you.

---

**Alliteration:** The repetition of beginning sounds, or letters in words, within a sentence.

The wise woman welcomed her guests.

The beautiful bouquet blossomed in the bright sun.

**Cliché:** An overused phrase or expression.

Time heals all wounds.

Every cloud has its silver lining.

**Hyperbole:** An exaggeration that goes beyond the truth.

I'll die if I don't make the team.

I've read that book a million times.

**Idiom:** A coded message that has a special meaning. Most idioms have a cultural understanding.

The new car cost an arm and a leg.

Please don't beat around the bush.

**Irony:** A means of expression where there is a difference between what is expected and what really happens. There are three variations, **Dramatic Irony**, **Situational Irony**, and **Verbal Irony**.

"Water, water, everywhere, / Nor any drop to drink."

Monsters in Monster's Inc., whose job it is to scare children, are constantly afraid of the children.

**Metaphor:** A comparison of two unlike things without using "like" or "as."

Her eyes were deep pools of water.

The cast on his leg was a plaster shackle holding him back.

**Onomatopoeia:** The use of words to imitate natural sounds.

Buzz, splash, fizz, pop

Growl, giggle, grunt, murmur

**Oxymoron:** A phrase that combines two seemingly contradictory elements.

Pretty ugly

Seriously funny

**Personification:** A description of non-human objects or ideas using human characteristics.

The wind whispered through the dry leaves.

The night wrapped her arms around the forest and lulled it to sleep.

**Pun:** A play on words with similar sounds, or a play on one word with multiple meanings.

The wedding was so emotional that even the cake was in tiers.

She had a photographic memory but never developed it.

**Sarcasm:** A form of irony, but used in a way intending to mock, hurt, or ridicule someone or something.

One person gives a foolish idea and the other says, "What a *great* idea! I wish I thought of that."

"The trouble with her is that she lacks the power of conversation but not the power of speech."

**Simile:** A comparison of two unlike things using "like" or "as."

His hair was as white as the frost on the ground.

The painter's hands flitted like a hummingbird across the canvas.

**Symbolism:** An object, person, action, or situation used to represent something different from its literal sense. They are usually universal; however, their meanings may change depending on context.

A white dove is a symbol for peace.

An apple as a symbol for knowledge and education.

A chain may represent unity in one context, but imprisonment in another.

A red rose, or red colour, symbolises love or romance. Red may also stand for anger or war.