**Mohamed kheider university of Biskra**

**Faculty of letters and languages**

**English Division**

**Level: 1st Year**

**Module: Literary Texts**

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Elements of Poetry: Figurative Language Devices

Poets use figurative language devices (figures of speech) as tools to say things with additional flair and color. These devices give the reader detailed, vivid, and expressive insight. The most common techniques of figurative languages you can find in poetry are: [Simile](https://literarydevices.net/simile/), [Metaphor](https://literarydevices.net/metaphor/), [Symbolism](https://literarydevices.net/symbolism/), [Synecdoche](https://literarydevices.net/synecdoche/), and [Personification](https://literarydevices.net/personification/),

1. **Simile**

A simile is a [figure of speech](https://literarydevices.net/figure-of-speech/) that makes a [comparison](https://literarydevices.net/comparison/), showing similarities between two different things. Unlike a [metaphor](https://literarydevices.net/metaphor/), a simile draws resemblance with the help of the words “like” or “as.” Therefore, it is a direct comparison which introduces vividness into what we say. Authors and poets utilize simile to convey their sentiments and thoughts through vivid word pictures

Common Examples of Simile:

* Our soldiers are as brave as lions.
* Her cheeks are red like a rose.
* He is as funny as a monkey.
* The water well was as dry as a bone.
* He is as cunning as a fox.
* John is as slow as a snail.

### Example #2: To the Lighthouse (By Virginia Woolf)

* **“… impressions poured in upon her of those two men, and to follow her thought was like following a**[**voice**](https://literarydevices.net/voice/)**which speaks too quickly to be taken down by one’s pencil… “**

**In the above example of simile, Ms. Woolf makes the point that her thoughts are difficult to follow, and cannot be written quickly enough.**

1. **Metaphor**:

A Metaphor is a [figure of speech](https://literarydevices.net/figure-of-speech/) that makes an implicit, implied, or hidden [comparison](https://literarydevices.net/comparison/) between two things that are unrelated, but which share some common characteristics. In other words, a resemblance of two contradictory or different objects is made based on a single or some common characteristics.

Common Speech Examples of Metaphor

* My brother was **boiling mad**. (This implies he was too angry.)
* The assignment was a **breeze**. (This implies that the assignment was not difficult.)
* It is going to be **clear skies** from now on. (This implies that clear skies are not a threat and life is going to be without hardships)
* The skies of his future began to **darken**. (Darkness is a threat; therefore, this implies that the coming times are going to be hard for him.)
* Her [voice](https://literarydevices.net/voice/) is **music to his ears**. (This implies that her voice makes him feel happy)
* He saw the **soul of dust** when passing through the dust storm.
* Chaos is **the breeding ground of order**.
* War is the **mother of all battles**.
* Her dance is **a great**[**poem**](https://literarydevices.net/poem/).

1. **Symbolism**

Symbolism is the use of symbols to signify ideas and qualities, by giving them symbolic meanings that are different from their literal sense.

Example #1: *As you Like It* (By William Shakespeare)

We find symbolic value in Shakespeare’s [famous](https://literarydevices.net/famous/) [monologue](https://literarydevices.net/monologue/) in his [play](https://literarydevices.net/play/) *As you Like It*:

“All the world’s a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players;  
they have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts,”

These lines are symbolic of the fact that men and women, in the course of their lives, perform different roles. “A stage” here symbolizes the world, and “players” is a symbol for human beings.

Common Examples of symbolism:

1. He turned green when found a wallet. (Green color is often associated with greed, jealousy, and monetary affairs.)
2. They dressed in black to the funeral of their friend. (The color black is associated with death.)
3. The yellow boat turned into the channel, to make the tourists happy. The color yellow color is the symbol of deterioration and infidelity, as well as the symbol of freshness and happiness.)
4. He was disappointed when the mirror broke. (Broken mirror is an symbol of separation.)
5. **Synecdoche**

Synecdoche is a literary device in which a part of something represents the whole, or it may use a whole to represent a part. Synecdoche may also use larger groups to refer to smaller groups, or vice versa. It may also call a thing by the name of the material it is made of, or it may refer to a thing in a container or packaging by the name of that container or packing.

Common Examples of Synecdoche:

It is very common to refer to a thing by the name of its parts. Let us look at some of the examples of synecdoche that we often hear in casual conversations:

* The word “bread” refers to food or money, as in “Writing is my bread and butter,” or “He is the sole breadwinner.”
* The [phrase](https://literarydevices.net/phrase/) “gray beard” refers to an old man.
* The word “sails” refers to a whole ship.
* The word “suit” refers to a businessman.
* The word “boots” usually refers to soldiers.
* The term “coke” is a common synecdoche for all carbonated drinks.
* “Pentagon” is a synecdoche when it refers to a few decision makers.
* The word “glasses” refers to spectacles.

### Example #1: The Rime of the Ancient Mariner (By Samuel Taylor Coleridge)

* “The western wave was all a-flame.  
  The day was well was nigh done!  
  Almost upon the western wave  
  Rested the broad bright Sun”

Explanation: The “western wave” is a synecdoche, as it refers to the sea by the name of one of its parts, a wave.

1. **Personification**

Personification is a [figure of speech](https://literarydevices.net/figure-of-speech/) in which a thing – an idea or an [animal](https://animals.net/) – is given human attributes.

1. Look at my car. She is a [beauty](https://literarydevices.net/beauty/), isn’t she?
2. The wind whispered through dry grass.
3. The flowers danced in the gentle breeze.
4. Time and tide wait for none.
5. The fire swallowed the entire forest.

### Example #1: The Green Gables Letters (By L. M. Montgomery)

“I hied me away to the woods — away back into the sun-washed alleys carpeted with fallen gold and glades where the moss is green and vivid yet. The woods are getting ready to sleep — they are not yet asleep but they are disrobing and are having all sorts of little bed-time conferences and whisperings and good-nights.”

Explanation: The lack of activity in the forest has been beautifully personified as the forest getting ready to sleep, busy at bed-time chatting and wishing good-nights, all of which are human customs.

**Practice:**

Which of the following is an example of alliteration? **Explain:**

* + A. My hair is a vast forest
  + B. I sat by the river. I lived by the sea. I died by the lake.
  + C. Pants are like legs
  + D. Dogs dodge digging dandelions

* **2.**[Which of the following is an example of personification?](https://www.proprofs.com/discuss/q/1068629/which-of-the-following-is-an-example-onomatopoeia-662)

Explain :

* + A. The truck winked at me
  + B. The cat was as mad as a tree
  + C. Whisper, slap, smack I hear in the lunch room

* **3.**[Which of the following is an example of metaphor?](https://www.proprofs.com/discuss/q/1442048/which-of-the-following-is-an-example-metaphor-10s6)

[Explain :](https://www.proprofs.com/discuss/q/1442048/which-of-the-following-is-an-example-metaphor-10s6)

* + A. The glasses smiled at me
  + B. Cute cats chase toys
  + c. My life is a dream

* **4.**Which of the following is an example of simile?

**Explain:**

* + A. Hiss, slurp, hush, scream--MOM!
  + B. Hopping hens shop for shoes
  + C. My hand is as cold as snow
  + D. The shirt said, "Wear Me!"

* **5.**Which of the following is an example of metaphor?

**Explain;**

* + A. Talking turtles torture teachers
  + B. I am a cloud
  + C. The dog smiles at me
  + D. Meow, woof, tweet went the animals

* **6.**Which of the following is an example of alliteration?

**Explain**

* + A. The TV laughed at the desk
  + B. Calculating computers catch cats
  + C. Pictures are captured people
  + D. Crash, bang, boom goes the lion

* **7.**[Which of the following is an example of simile?](https://www.proprofs.com/discuss/q/1065916/which-of-the-following-is-an-example-simile-52z)

**Explain :**

* + A. The fluorescent light was the sun during our test.
  + B. As the teacher entered the room she muttered under her breath, "This class is like a three-ring circus!"
  + C Ted was as nervous as a cat with a long tail in a room full of rocking chairs.
  + D. The bar of soap was a slippery eel during the dog’s bat

**EXERCISE2: Tell which poetic device is being used**

1. The leaves danced in the wind.
2. My love is like a red, red rose
3. The sound of water falling in time drip drip drip
4. With a lift of the gun BANG!
5. The **g**rass **g**rew **g**reen in the **g**raveyard.
6. Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!
7. Check out my new wheels