



Common Literary Devices

Paying attention to the literary devices used in a text can help you better understand the author's **intent**, the work's **theme**, and your own **interpretation** of the text.

Allusion	A reference to a real-world person, place, or thing.
Diction	The word choice used to convey the writer's message, including formal , informal (conversational), slang (new terms, aimed at younger audiences or used to convey younger speakers), and colloquial (everyday language and phrases, can be community specific) language.
Euphemism	An indirect term or phrase for something commonly considered unpleasant or inappropriate. For example, saying <i>in a better place</i> instead of <i>dead</i> .
Foreshadowing	Hints at coming events in the plot. For example, a man notices a gun when visiting someone's home, and later in the story, someone fires it.
Metaphor	A comparison of two things without the words "like" or "as". For example, <i>She is a bright shining star</i> .
Imagery	Vivid, descriptive language that paints a clear image in the reader's mind, or highlights any of the five senses. For example, "A host, of golden daffodils; Beside the lake, beneath the trees, Fluttering and dancing in the breeze." —William Wordsworth
Irony: <i>Verbal Irony</i> <i>Situational Irony</i> <i>Dramatic Irony</i>	There are three types of irony: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When someone says something that is the opposite of what they mean. For example, saying "I love this weather!" during a blizzard.• When the outcome of a situation is different than intended or expected. For example, buying someone flowers and they end up being allergic to them.• When the reader knows something that the character does not. For example, the murderer is hiding in the shed before a character is about to enter.
Juxtaposition	Placing contrasting elements or ideas next to each other. For example, a decaying house next to a brand new house.
Personification	When non-human things are described as having human traits. For example, <i>the sun winked</i> .
Simile	Comparing two things using the words "like" or "as". For example, <i>she walked like a gazelle</i> .
Symbolism	When an object or setting symbolizes a larger theme. For example, the smell of baking bread could symbolize home, or a sense of safety for a character.
Tone	The overall attitude or feeling of a work. For example, <i>Of Mice and Men</i> has a dark and tragic tone.