



DESCRIPTIVE WRITING

Figurative Language



By: Christine Choi

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Metaphor

- ▶ A metaphor is an expression that compares a person or object to something unrelated.
- ▶ The poet transfers the qualities and associations of one subject to another, so that it can be understood in a more distinct and illustrative way.

e.g. Love is a battlefield.



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Extended Metaphor

- ▶ A single metaphor at length. Comprised of usually a few sentences, or a paragraph.

e.g. All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players
They have their exits and
entrances.

(Shakespeare, "As You Like It")



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Simile

- ▶ A simile is a direct comparison between two things that are essentially different using *like* or *as*.

e.g. I tried to be friends with her, but she was as cold as ice.

e.g. Arguing with him was like dueling with hand grenades.



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Personification

- Personification is a kind of metaphor that attributes human characteristics to non-human objects, abstractions, or ideas.

e.g. The wind howled in the night.

e.g. The words appeared to leap off of the paper as she read the story.



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Symbol

- A symbol is usually something concrete – an object, a place, a character, an action – that stands for or suggests something abstract.

e.g. A chain can symbolize both union and imprisonment.

e.g. Roses often symbolize love and romance.



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Alliteration

- Alliteration is a poetic device that involves the repetition of initial consonant sounds to produce a rhythmic, musical effect.

e.g. “burning bright” and “frame thy fearful symmetry” from William Blake’s “Tyger”



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Assonance

- Assonance is the close repetition of middle vowel sounds between different consonant sounds.
- It usually appears within a line of poetry for unity or rhythmic effect.

e.g. cle**ea**n – dre**ea**m

*Do not be misled by spelling! Focus on the sound.

e.g. bre**ea**k – fa**ae**



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Allusion

- An allusion is a passing reference to historical or fictional characters, places, events, or other works that the writer assumes the reader will recognize.

e.g. A literary work may have two protagonists called Adam and Eve; they have two sons who are bitter enemies, etc. This could be considered a **biblical allusion**.



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Hyperbole

- ▶ Hyperbole is a figure of speech that employs exaggeration used for either the serious expression of emotion or comic effects.

e.g., From Shakespeare's "Macbeth":

"Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean from my hand?"



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Onomatopoeia

- Onomatopoeia is the imitation of sounds.
e.g. buzz, clang, vroom, hiss, bang, pop, etc.



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Pun

- A pun is a clever form of wordplay that exploits multiple meanings of a term, or of similar-sounding words.

e.g. From Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice":
Since you are **dear** bought, I will love you **dear**.
(Here, dear means both costly and cherished)



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Repetition

- Repetition is a device used whereby phrases or sentences appear more than once to emphasize or bring an idea into prominence.

e.g. Alone, alone, all all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea.



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