

What is Figurative Language?

Figurative language, sometimes called figures of speech, includes words or phrases (either spoken or written) that mean something different than the individual words might indicate. Each kind of figurative language has unique characteristics. Use the figurative language posters to learn more about each figure of speech.



Why do people use figures of speech?



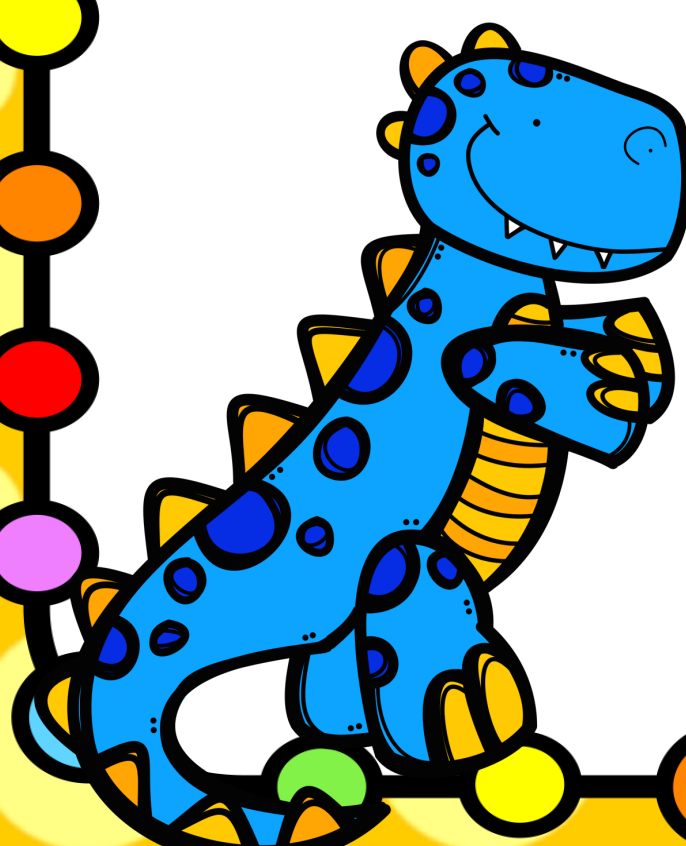
To add depth, special effects, and imagery to the messages that they convey.

Alliteration:

What is alliteration?

Alliteration is the repetition of the first letter (or sound) of each word in a sentence, phrase, or poem.

Example: Voracious volcanoes vibrated the valley very violently.



Dinosaurs
desperately dug
ditches to drive
away dangerous
dragons!

Hyperbole:

A hyperbole is a figure of speech that includes an exaggeration which couldn't possibly happen in real life. Sometimes a hyperbole also compares two things, but the exaggeration distinguishes it from other figures of speech.

I know you've
waited a million light
years to learn about
hyperboles!

A million!

A billion!

A trillion!

A gazillion!



Idiom:

Idioms are expressions that mean something different than the words in the phrase might indicate.

Different idioms mean different things and can't be understood by looking in a dictionary. Learning English spoken idioms can be done by paying attention to context clues where they occur and by learning what they mean.



**Don't
chicken out!**
**Idioms are
fun!**

Onomatopoeia:

Onomatopoeia is a word that originates from a sound. For example, neigh is an onomatopoeia word associated with the noise that horses make, ding-dong is an onomatopoeia word associated with the noise that a door bell makes, and honk is a sound associated with the noise of a car horn.



Personification:

Personification is the act of giving human traits, qualities, or actions to objects, concepts, or animals.

People use personification in their writing to make it come alive! Giving human qualities to objects, concepts, or animals creates an emotional reaction in readers. An emotional reaction will make the reader care about what they are reading. When someone cares about what they are reading, they want to read more.



The stars are smiling and winking at us!



Proverbs and Adages:

What is a proverb?

A proverb is a short, wise saying that offers advice or wisdom about how to make choices or live your life. Proverbs are cultural and have been passed down from generation to generation.

What is an adage?

An adage is also a wise saying about something that is believed to be true in a culture. Sometimes adages also contain a metaphor in their message.

Birds of a feather flock together.

Note: Proverbs and Adages are very similar and are sometimes treated as synonyms.



Similes and Metaphors:

What is a metaphor?

A metaphor is a figure of speech that says one thing is the same as something else.

What is a simile?

A simile is a type of metaphor where two things are compared using the word "like" or "as".

*** Similes and Metaphors are often confused, but there is a difference. A metaphor says that a person, place, or thing is the same as another person, place, or thing. A simile uses a comparison to show a similarity without saying the two things are the same.



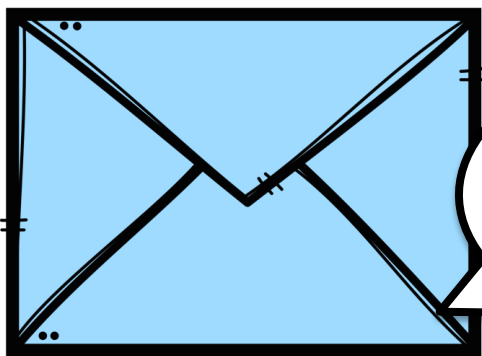
Simile: She is as happy as a clam!

Metaphor: She is a happy clam!

Pun:

What are puns?

Puns involve a humorous play on words (or phrases) that might suggest more than one meaning. Sometimes the words sound alike (or nearly alike) but their varied meaning and context bring humor to the phrase or sentence. In some cases, a figure of speech is included in the phrase, along with a multiple meaning word, to create the pun.



No matter how much you push the envelope, it will always be stationery.

In this example, stationery refers to a category of paper products, but also uses word play with the word stationary, which means *not moving*. Pushing the envelope is a figure of speech which refers to extending the limits of what is possible. In this way, the pun includes the word play with stationery, but also includes an idiom (figure of speech).