



Using Language Creatively

Surprising vocabulary, figurative imagery and creative description can win even the toughest audience round by provoking mental images and emotive responses. The techniques included were chosen for their literary qualities and their effectiveness as tools of rhetoric. For a complete list visit <https://literarydevices.net/>. The examples were drawn from well-known literature, famous speeches, and celebrated films.

Technique	Description	Example
Onomatopoeia	A word which imitates the natural sounds of a thing	<i>"She sang with a raspy voice"</i>
Alliteration	Several words, having the same first consonant sound	<i>"I have stood still and stopped the sound of feet"</i>
Repetition	Same words or phrases repeated	<i>"Government of the people, by the people, for the people"</i>
Simile	Makes a direct comparison between two different things, using the words "like" or "as"	<i>"Time can draw out like a blade"</i>
Metaphor	Makes an implied comparison between two unrelated things that share common characteristics	<i>"America has tossed its cap over the wall of space!"</i>
Analogy	Something is compared to something else quite different	<i>"Life is like a box of chocolates... you never know what you're gonna get!"</i>
Hyperbole	An exaggeration of ideas for the sake of emphasis	<i>"Till a' the seas gang dry, dear, and the rocks melt wi' the sun"</i>
Understatement	Make a situation seem less important than it really is	<i>"Houston, we've had a problem"</i>
Metonymy	Replaces the name of a thing with the name of something with which it is associated	<i>"The suits have walked away with our money"</i>
Parallelism	Using parts of a sentence that are grammatically the same; or similar in their construction, sound, or syllabic pattern	<i>"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness"</i>
Antithesis	Two opposite ideas are put together in a sentence to achieve a contrasting effect	<i>"Patience is bitter, but it bears sweet fruit"</i>
Hyperbaton	An inversion in the arrangement of common words	<i>Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country"</i>