

RHETORICAL TERMS IN ENGLISH
LANGUAGE-B.A -I (HONS.)

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Metaphor

- *Metaphors, also known as direct comparisons, are one of the most common literary devices. A metaphor is a statement in which two objects, often unrelated, are compared to each other.*
 - *E.g “This tree is the God of the forest.”*

Explanation

The tree is not a god—it is, in fact, a tree. However, by stating that the tree is the god, the reader is given the image of something strong, large, and immovable.

Additionally, using “god” to describe the tree, rather than a word like “giant” or “gargantuan,” makes the tree feel like a spiritual centre of the forest.

**On the contrary, if the writer chose to describe the tree as “the large, spiritual centre of the forest,” the reader won’t understand the full importance of the tree’s size and scope.*

Simile

- *Similes, also known as indirect comparisons, are similar in construction to metaphors, but they imply a different meaning. Like metaphors, two unrelated objects are being compared to each other. Unlike a metaphor, the comparison relies on the words “like” or “as.”*
 - *Eg. This tree is like the God of the forest.*
Or
 - *This tree acts as the God of the forest.*

Personification

- *Personification is exactly what it sounds like: giving human attributes to nonhuman objects. Also known as anthropomorphism, personification is a powerful way to foster empathy in your readers.*
 - *Personification (using sight): The car ran a marathon down the highway.*
 - *Personification (using sound): The car coughed, hacked, and spluttered.*
 - *Personification (using touch): The car was smooth as a baby's bottom.*
 - *Personification (using taste): The car tasted the bitter asphalt.*
 - *Personification (using smell): The car needed a cold shower.*
 - *Personification (using mental events): The car remembered its first owner fondly.*

Hyperbole

- *You know that one friend who describes things very dramatically? They're probably speaking in hyperboles. Hyperbole is just a dramatic word for being over-dramatic—which sounds a little hyperbolic, don't you think?*
 - *Basically, hyperbole refers to any sort of exaggerated description or statement.*

E.g I've been waiting a billion years for this

- *I'm so hungry I could eat a horse*
 - *I feel like a million bucks*
 - *You are the king of the kitchen*

Juxtaposition

- *Juxtaposition refers to the placement of contrasting ideas next to each other, often to produce an ironic or thought-provoking effect. Writers use juxtaposition in both poetry and prose, though this common literary device looks slightly different within each realm of literature.*
- *In poetry, juxtaposition is used to build tension or highlight an important contrast.*
 - *Eg. The poem “A Juxtaposition” by Kenneth Burke, juxtaposes nation & individual, treble & bass, and loudness & silence.*

Onomatopoeia

- *Flash! Bang! Wham! An onomatopoeia is a word that sounds like the noise it describes. Conveying both a playfulness of language and a serious representation of everyday sounds, onomatopoeias draw the reader into the sensations of the story itself.*
- *E.g “murmur,” “gargle,” and “rumble,” “click,” and “vroom.”*
 - *The banjo **tickles** and **titters** too awful.
The cartoonists **weep** in their beer.*
 - *Wind wooshes whistling through the leaves*

Paradox

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- *A paradox is a juxtaposition of contrasting ideas that, while seemingly impossible, actually reveals a deeper truth. Paradoxes are powerful tools for deconstructing binaries and challenging the reader's beliefs.*
 - *Eg. A simple paradox example comes to us from Ancient Rome.*
 - *I hate and I love. Why I do this, perhaps you ask, I know not, but I feel it happening and I am tortured.*
 - *“Catulus 85”*
 - *“To be natural is such a very difficult pose to keep up.”*
Oscar Wilde

Assonance

- *Assonance adds an abundance of attractive accents to all your assertions. That's assonance—the practice repeating the same vowel sound in multiple words in a phrase or sentence, often at the beginning of a word, to add emphasis or musicality to a work.*
- *Eg. Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers (repetition of the short e and long i sounds)*
- *Sally sells sea shells beside the sea shore (repetition of the short e and long e sounds)*

Alliteration

- *Alliteration is similar, repeating the same consonant sound in multiple words in a phrase or sentence, often at the beginning of a word, to add emphasis or musicality to a work.*

- *E.g*

- *“From forth the fatal loins of these two foes;
A pair of star-cross’d lovers take their life.”*

Romeo and Juliet

Repetition of the sounds ‘f’ and ‘l’ in ‘from forth...fatal...foes,’ and ‘loins...lovers...life.’

References

1. A Glossary of Literary Terms

By M.H Abrams, Geoffrey Galt Harpham