LITERARY DEVICES

**Alliteration:** The repetition of initial consonant sounds used especially in poetry to emphasize and link words as well as to create pleasing, musical sounds. Example—the fair breeze blew, the white foam flew.

**Allusion:** A reference to a well-known person, place, event, literary work, or work of art to enrich the reading experience by adding meaning.

**Characterization:** Techniques a writer uses to create and develop a character by what:

• he/she does or says,

• other characters say about him/her, or how they react to him/her

• the author reveals directly or through a narrator.

**Dialect:** Speech that reflects pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar typical of a geographical region.

**Flashback:** Interruption of the chronological (time) order to present something that occurred before the beginning of the story.

**Figurative Language:** Language that has meaning beyond the literal meaning; also known as “figures of speech.”

• Simile: comparison of two things using the words “like” or “as,” e.g. “Her smile was as cold as ice.”

• Metaphor comparison of two things essentially different but with some commonalities; does not use “like” or “as,” e.g. “Her smile was ice.”

• Hyperbole: a purposeful exaggeration for emphasis or humor.

• Personification: human qualities attributed to an animal, object, or idea, e.g. “The wind exhaled.”

**Free Verse:** Poetry that does not conform to a regular meter or rhyme scheme. Poets who write in free verse try to reproduce the natural rhythms of spoken language.

**Foreshadowing:** Important hints that an author drops to prepare the reader for what is to come, and help the reader anticipate the outcome.

**Imagery:** Words or phrases that appeal to the reader’s senses.

**Humor:** The quality of a literary or informative work that makes the character and/or situations seem funny, amusing, or ludicrous.

**Irony:** A technique that involves surprising, interesting, or amusing contradictions or contrasts. Verbal irony occurs when words are used to suggest the opposite of their usual meaning. An irony of situation is when an event occurs that directly contradicts expectations.

There are three types of irony:

* **Verbal irony:** use of words to mean something different from what a person actually says. Example: “I can’t wait to read the seven-hundred-page report.”
* **Situational irony**: occurs when the exact opposite of what is meant to happen, happens. Example: Man buys a gun to protect himself and then gets shot with the same gun.
* **Dramatic irony:** It occurs when the audience is aware of something that the characters in the story are not aware of. Example: A detective is on the hunt for a murderer when the criminal he is searching for is his partner.

**Onomatopoeia:** The use of words that imitate sounds. Examples would be hiss, buzz, swish, and crunch.

**Point of View:** Perspective from which the story is told.

* **First-person:** narrator is a character in the story; uses “I,” “we,” etc.
* **Third-person:** narrator outside the story; uses “he,” “she,” “they” • Third-person limited: narrator tells only what one character perceives
* **Third-person omniscient:** narrator can see into the minds of all characters.

**Satire:** Writing that comments humorously on human flaws, ideas, social customs, or institutions in order to change them.

**Style:** The distinctive way that a writer uses language including such factors as word choice, sentence length, arrangement, and complexity, and the use of figurative language and imagery.

**Suspense:** A feeling of excitement, curiosity, or expectation about what will happen.

**Symbol:** Person, place, or thing that represents something beyond itself, most often something concrete or tangible that represents an abstract idea.