

Allegory

A figure of speech in which abstract ideas and principles are described in terms of characters, figures and events.

It can be employed in prose and poetry to tell a story with a purpose of teaching an idea and a principle or explaining an idea or a principle. The objective of its use is to preach some kind of a moral lesson.

An allegory is a complete narrative which involves characters, and events that stand for an abstract idea or an event. A symbol, on the other hand, is an object that stands for another object giving it a particular meaning. For example, Plato in his “Allegory of Cave” tells a story of how some people are ignorant and at the same time, some people “see the light” – stands for an idea and does not tell a story

Example:

Animal Farm, written by George Orwell, is an allegory that uses animals on a farm to describe the overthrow of the last of the Russian Tsar Nicholas II and the Communist Revolution of Russia before WW I. The actions of the animals on the farm are used to expose the greed and corruption of the revolution. It also describes how powerful people can change the ideology of a society. One of the cardinal rules on the farm for the animals is:

“All animals are equal but a few are more equal than others.”

The animals on the farm represent different sections of Russian society after the revolution.

For instance, the pigs represent those who came to power following the revolution; “Mr. Jones” the owner of the farm represents the overthrown Tsar Nicholas II; while “Boxer” the horse, represents the laborer class etc. The use of allegory in the novel allows Orwell to make his position clear about the Russian Revolution and expose its evils

Allusion

A brief and indirect reference to a person, place, thing or idea of historical, cultural, literary or political significance. It does not describe in detail the person or thing to which it refers. It is just a passing comment and the writer expects the reader to possess enough knowledge to spot the allusion and grasp its importance in a text.

Examples:

- Don’t act like a Romeo in front of her.” – “Romeo” is a reference to Shakespeare’s Romeo, a passionate lover of Juliet, in “Romeo and Juliet”.

- The rise in poverty will unlock the Pandora's Box of crimes. – This is an allusion to one of Greek Mythology's origin myth, "Pandora's box".
- "This place is like a Garden of Eden." – This is a biblical allusion to the "garden of God" in the Book of Genesis.
- "Hey! Guess who the new Newton of our school is?" – "Newton", means a genius student, alludes to a famous scientist Isaac Newton.
- "Stop acting like my ex-husband please." – Apart from scholarly allusions we refer to common people and places in our speech.

"We Didn't Start the Fire" – Billy Joel

*Birth control, Ho Chi Minh, Richard Nixon back again
Moonshot, Woodstock, Watergate, punk rock*

*Begin, Reagan, Palestine, Terror on the airline
Ayatollah's in Iran, Russians in Afghanistan*

*Wheel of Fortune, Sally Ride, heavy metal suicide
Foreign debts, homeless Vets, AIDS, Crack, Bernie Goetz*

Even though this song was released in 1989, it was still famous in the 90s. This song has over 115 allusions to different events that had happened in the 15 years prior. This is just a selection of the song that references

"Gangsta' Paradise" – Coolio

*As I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I take a look at my life and realize there's nothing left.
Cause I've been blastin' and laughin' so long that
Even my mama thinks my mind is gone.*

The allusion here is quite easy to spot: the shadow of death alludes to Psalm 23 or the Psalm traditionally read at funerals

Ethos

In rhetoric, ethos represents credibility or an ethical appeal which involves persuasion by the character involved.

It is a means of convincing others of the character or credibility of the persuader. It is natural for us to accept the credibility of people whom we hold in reverence.

In an argument, it is of utmost value for a speaker or a writer to impress upon listeners and readers the idea that is worth listening to. In other words, not only the credibility of a speaker or a writer relies on his or her authority on the subject matter but also on the fact that how much he or she is liked and worthy of respect

- Ethos confirms the credibility of a writer or a speaker and thus they become trustworthy in the eyes of listeners and readers who as a result are persuaded by their arguments.
- Ethos of a speaker or a writer is created largely by the choice of words he or she makes in order to convince listeners or readers.
- Being an expert on the subject matter that a speaker or a writer chooses determines his or her ethos

Examples:

Choice of words can confirm ethos with customers:

“Our expertise in roofing contracting is evidenced not only by our 100 years in the business and our staff of qualified technicians, but in the decades of satisfied customers who have come to expect nothing but the best.”

The advertisers try to build up their credibility with their customers by mentioning the experience they have in the field and the technical expertise of their staff.

“Doctors all over the world recommend this type of treatment.”

People tend to believe the opinions of doctors in the matter of medical treatments.

“John is a forensics and ballistics expert working for the federal government for many years – if anyone’s qualified to determine the murder weapon, it’s him.”

In determining the murder weapon, the basis of ethos of John is his experience of working for the federal government as a forensic and ballistics expert.

Figurative Language

Figurative language is using figures of speech to be more effective, persuasive and impactful. Figures of speech such as metaphors, similes, allusions go beyond the literal meanings of the words to give the readers new insights. On the other hand, alliterations,

imageries, or onomatopoeias are figurative devices that appeal to the senses of the readers.

Its primary function is to force the readers to imagine what a writer wants to express. Though, figurative language is not meant to convey literal meanings, and often it compares one concept with another in order to make the first concept easier to understand, it, however, links the two ideas or concepts with the aim of influencing audience to understand the link even if it does not exist

Hyperbole

Hyperbole, derived from a Greek word meaning “over-casting” is a figure of speech, which involves an exaggeration of ideas for the sake of emphasis.

It is a device that we employ in our day-to-day speech. For instance, when you meet a friend after a long time, you say, “Ages have passed since I last saw you”. You may not have met him for three or four hours or a day, but the use of the word “ages” exaggerates this statement to add emphasis to your wait. Therefore, a hyperbole is an unreal exaggeration to emphasize the real situation.

Examples:

- My grandmother is as old as the hills.
- Your suitcase weighs a ton!
- I’m so hungry I could eat a horse!
- I am dying of shame.
- I am trying to solve a million issues these days.

Juxtaposition

A literary technique in which two or more ideas, places, characters and their actions are placed side by side in a narrative or a poem for the purpose of developing comparisons and contrasts.

In literature, juxtaposition is a useful device for writers to portray their characters in great detail to create suspense and achieve a rhetorical effect. It is a human quality to comprehend one thing easily by comparing it to another. Therefore, a writer can make readers sense “goodness” in a particular character by placing him or her side by side to a character that is predominantly “evil”. Consequently, goodness in one character is highlighted by evil in the other character. Juxtaposition in this case is useful in the development of characters.

Example:

Charles Dickens uses the technique of juxtaposition in the opening line of his novel “A Tale of Two Cities”:

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way...”

In order to give us an idea of the factors responsible for the French Revolution, Dickens uses Juxtaposition throughout the novel in which the have not’s and the haves are put side by side to highlight the presence of severe disparity and discord in the then French society that paved the way for the revolution.

Metaphor

Metaphor is a figure of speech which makes an implicit, implied or hidden comparison between two things that are unrelated but share some common characteristics. In other words, a resemblance of two contradictory or different objects is made based on a single or some common characteristics.

In simple English, when you portray a person, place, thing, or an action as being something else, even though it is not actually that “something else,” you are speaking metaphorically. “He is the black sheep of the family” is a metaphor because he is not a sheep and is not even black. However, we can use this comparison to describe an association of a black sheep with that person. A black sheep is an unusual animal and typically stays away from the herd, and the person you are describing shares similar characteristics.

Furthermore, a metaphor develops a comparison which is different from a simile i.e. we do not use “like” or “as” to develop a comparison in a metaphor. It actually makes an implicit or hidden comparison and not an explicit one.

Most of us think of a metaphor as a device used in songs or poems only, and that it has nothing to do with our everyday life. In fact, all of us in our routine life speak, write and think in metaphors. We cannot avoid them. Metaphors are sometimes constructed through our common language. They are called conventional metaphors. Calling a person a “night owl” or an “early bird” or saying “life is a journey” are common conventional metaphor examples commonly heard and understood by most of us

Examples:

- My brother was boiling mad. (This implies he was too angry.)
- The assignment was a breeze. (This implies that the assignment was not difficult.)
- It is going to be clear skies from now on. (This implies that clear skies are not a threat and life is going to be without hardships)
- The skies of his future began to darken. (Darkness is a threat; therefore, this implies that the coming times are going to be hard for him.)
- Her voice is music to his ears. (This implies that her voice makes him feel happy)

Parallelism

The use of components in a sentence that are grammatically the same; or similar in their construction, sound, meaning or meter. Parallelism examples are found in literary works as well as in ordinary conversations.

This method adds balance and rhythm to sentences giving ideas a smoother flow and thus can be persuasive because of the repetition it employs. For example, “Alice ran into the room, into the garden, and into our hearts.” We see the repetition of a phrase that not only gives the sentence a balance but rhythm and flow as well. This repetition can also occur in similar structured clauses e.g. “Whenever you need me, wherever you need me, I will be there for you.”

Examples:

- Like father, like son.
- The escaped prisoner was wanted dead or alive.
- Easy come, easy go.
- Whether in class, at work or at home, Shasta was always busy.
- Flying is fast, comfortable, and safe.

Pathos

Pathos is a quality of an experience in life or a work of art that stirs up emotions of pity, sympathy and sorrow. Pathos can be expressed through words, pictures or even with gestures of the body.

Pathos is an important tool of persuasion in arguments. Pathos is a method of convincing people with an argument drawn out through an emotional response. Analyzing examples of pathos, one would come to the conclusion that it differs from

other “ingredients of persuasion” namely “Ethos” and “logos”. Ethos means convincing others through the credibility of a persuader, while Logos is a method to convince others by employing logic and reason.

Examples:

For a better understanding of the subject, let us examine a few pathos examples from daily conversations:

- “If we do not leave this place soon, we will end up yelling for help. We do not see anyone to help us here. So, leave this place and live” – the statement evokes emotions of fear.

“Made in America” logo on various products can enhance sales by evoking patriotism among the customers.

- Ads encouraging donations, show small children living in pathetic conditions to evoke pity in people to urge them to donate for the cause.

- Referring to a country as “motherland” stirs up patriotic feelings in individuals living in that country or state.

- A soft instrumental symphony may arouse people emotionally

Sarcasm

Sarcasm is derived from French word sarcasmor and also from a Greek word sarkazein that means “tear flesh” or “grind the teeth”. Somehow, in simple words it means to speak bitterly.

Generally, the literal meaning is different than what the speaker intends to say through sarcasm. Sarcasm is a literary and rhetorical device that is meant to mock with often satirical or ironic remarks with a purpose to amuse and hurt someone or some section of society simultaneously. For instance:

“I didn’t attend the funeral, but I sent a nice letter saying I approved of it.” (Mark Twain)

Types of Sarcasm

Sarcasm often depends upon the voice tone. There are seven types:

- Self-Deprecating Sarcasm*** – This category of sarcasm expresses an overstated sense of inferiority and worthlessness.

•**Brooding Sarcasm** – In this criticism, the speaker utters something polite. However, the tone of his speech has a marked bitterness in it.

•**Deadpan Sarcasm** – It is expressed without emotion or laughter making it difficult for the listener to judge whether the speaker is joking or mocking.

•**Polite Sarcasm** – A speaker is said to have delivered a polite sarcasm when his listeners only get to realize that his kind remark was a sarcastic one after they had given it some thought.

•**Obnoxious Sarcasm** – This kind of sarcasm makes people feel like punching the speaker in the face. It is not very funny and it gets under your skin.

•**Manic Sarcasm** – This type of sarcasm is delivered in an unnatural happy mood that it makes the speaker look like he has gone crazy.

•**Raging Sarcasm** – This kind of sarcasm relies mainly on exaggeration and violent threats.

Satire

Satire is a technique employed by writers to expose and criticize foolishness and corruption of an individual or a society by using humor, irony, exaggeration or ridicule. It intends to improve humanity by criticizing its follies and foibles. A writer in a satire uses fictional characters, which stand for real people, to expose and condemn their corruption.

A writer may point a satire toward a person, a country or even the entire world. Usually, a satire is a comical piece of writing which makes fun of an individual or a society to expose its stupidity and shortcomings. In addition, he hopes that those he criticizes will improve their characters by overcoming their weaknesses.

Examples:

Most political cartoons which we witness every day in newspapers and magazines are examples of satire. These cartoons criticize some recent actions of political figures in a comical way.

Some shows on television are satire examples like “The Daily Show” and “The Colbert Report.” These shows claim to target what they think are stupid political and social viewpoints.

Let us see a sample of Stephen Colbert’s social satire:

“If this is going to be a Christian nation that doesn’t help the poor, either we have to pretend that Jesus was just as selfish as we are, or we’ve got to acknowledge that He commanded us to love the poor and serve the needy without condition and then admit that we just don’t want to do it.”

Rhetorical Question

A rhetorical question is asked just for effect or to lay emphasis on some point discussed when no real answer is expected. A rhetorical question may have an obvious answer but the questioner asks rhetorical questions to lay emphasis to the point. In literature, a rhetorical question is self-evident and used for [style](#) as an impressive persuasive device.

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Broadly speaking, a rhetorical question is asked when the questioner himself knows the answer already or an answer is not actually demanded. So, an answer is not expected from the audience. Such a question is used to emphasize a point or draw the audience’s attention.

Examples:

- “Who knows?”
- “What is wrong with this world?”
- “What is wrong with people?”

Logos

The appeal to logic, means to convince an audience by use of logic or reason.

To use logos would be to cite facts and statistics, historical and literal analogies, and citing certain authorities on a subject. Logos is the Greek word for “word,” however the true definition goes beyond that, and can be most closely described as “the word or that by which the inward thought is expressed.

Logos can be developed by using advanced, theoretical or abstract language, citing facts (very important), using historical and literal analogies, and by constructing logical arguments.

Examples:

- "The data is perfectly clear: this investment has consistently turned a profit year-over-year, even in spite of market declines in other areas."
- "Ladies and gentlemen of the jury: we have not only the fingerprints, the lack of an alibi, a clear motive, and an expressed desire to commit the robbery... We also have video of the suspect breaking in. The case could not be more open and shut."
- "It's a matter of common sense that people deserve to be treated equally. The Constitution calls it 'self-evident.' Why, then, should I have been denied a seat because of my disability?"
- "More than one hundred peer-reviewed studies have been conducted over the past decade, and none of them suggests that this is an effective treatment for hair loss."
- "He has a track record of success with this company, culminating in some of our most acclaimed architecture to date and earning us Firm of the Year nine times in a row."