

English 9

Poetic Terms

Allusion

A brief reference to a famous literary, mythological, Biblical, historical or popular person or event (presumably familiar).

Example. He led the team like a modern day Moses.

Figurative Language

Figurative language refers to words, and groups of words, that exaggerate or alter the usual meanings of the original words. Figurative language may involve analogy to similar concepts or other contexts, and may involve exaggerations. These alterations result in figures of speech.

Example. Different poetic devices that involve the reader's analysis beyond a literal level use figurative language- such as metaphors, similes, personification, etc.

Hyperbole

A Hyperbole is a boldly exaggerated statement that adds emphasis without intending to be literally true. Hyperbole (also called overstatement) may be used for serious, comic, or ironic effect.

Example. He ate everything in the house. He was as hungry as a horse.

Image

An image is a word, phrase, or figure of speech (especially a simile or a metaphor) that addresses the senses, suggesting mental pictures of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, feelings, or actions. Images offer sensory impressions to the reader and also convey emotions and moods through their verbal pictures, thus creating imagery.

Example. Time is a thief, sneaking up upon us ever so quickly, yet with such stealth we do not expect it to steal our moments. Our minutes, days, years disappear only to be looked back upon as a memory.

Imagery

Imagery is simply descriptive language that evokes sensory experience; it can appeal to any of the five senses. Imagery can be showcased in many forms, such as metaphors and similes.

Example.

- Visual imagery is perhaps the most frequently used form.

The crimson liquid spilled from the neck of the white dove.

- Gustatory imagery represents a taste.

The sweet marinara sauce makes up for the bland sea-shell pasta beneath.

Tumbling through the ocean water after being overtaken by the monstrous wave, I unintentionally took a gulp of the briny, bitter liquid, causing me to cough and gag.

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- Tactile imagery represents touch.

The Play-Doh oozed between Jeremy's fingers.

- Auditory imagery represents a sound.

The bells chimed 2 o'clock.

- Olfactory imagery represents a smell.

His socks, still soaked with sweat from Tuesday's P.E. class, filled the classroom with an aroma akin to that of salty, week-old, rotting fish.

Oxymoron

An oxymoron is a condensed form of paradox in which two contradictory words are used together.

Example. Sweet Sorrow, Original Copy.

Paradox

Paradox is a statement that initially appears to be contradictory but then, on closer inspection, turns out to make sense. To solve the paradox, it is necessary to discover the sense that underlies the statement. Paradox is useful in poetry because it arrests a reader's attention by its seemingly stubborn refusal to make sense.

Example. John Donne ends his sonnet "Death, Be Not Proud" with the paradoxical statement, "Death, thou shalt die."

Symbol; symbolism

A person, object, image, word, or event that evokes a range of additional meaning beyond and usually more abstract than its literal significance. Symbols are educational devices for evoking complex ideas without having to resort to painstaking explanations that would make a story more like an essay than an experience. Conventional symbols have meanings that are widely recognized by a society or culture.

Example. The Christian cross, the Star of David, a swastika, or a nation's flag.

A literary or contextual symbol can be a setting, character, action, object, name, or anything else in a work that maintains its literal significance while suggesting other meanings.

Example. In the short story *The Persian Carpet*, the carpet itself represents the anger and cheated feelings of the main character.

When a symbol is used within a piece of writing, the technique is called Symbolism.

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Theme

Often and best described as a “theme statement,” which is a sentence expressing the central meaning or dominant idea in a literary work. A theme provides a unifying point around which the plot, characters, setting, point of view, symbols, and other elements of a work are organized. It is important not to mistake the theme for the actual subject of the work; the theme refers to the abstract concept that is made concrete through the images, characterization, and action of the text – the deeper meaning.

Example. “Our experiences help shape who we are.”

The above definitions constitute the terms related to poetry that are examinable in English 9.

These definitions were gathered from public domain content at wikipedia.org, dictionary.com, for students in the Saint Thomas Aquinas High School English Department.

Poetic language could be used in any communication resembling poetry in beauty or the evocation of feeling. While these terms will be used in the study of poetry, they could be applied in any written or verbal expression.

The following terms were learned in English 8. They are examinable in English 9.

Alliteration

Metaphor

Onomatopoeia

Personification

Rhyme

Rhyme Scheme

Rhythm

Simile

Speaker