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Need to analyze Scarlet Letter or To Kill a Mockingbird English class, but fumbling for proper vocabulary and concepts of literary instruments? You came to the right place. In order to successfully interpret and analyze literary texts, you must first have a solid basis in the literary sense and their definitions. In this article, we will help you get acquainted with the most commonly used literary instruments in prose and poetry. We will give you a clear definition of each of the terms we discuss, along with examples of literary elements and the context in which they most often appear (comedy writing, drama or other). However, before we get to the list of literary devices, we have a quick update on what literary instruments are and how understanding them will help analyze literary works. What are literary devices and why should you know them? Literary devices are methods that writers use to create a special and pointed effect in their writing, to convey information, or to help readers understand their writing on a deeper level. Often literary instruments are used in writing to emphasize or clarity. Authors will also use literary devices to allow readers to connect more strongly to the whole story or specific characters or themes. So why is it important to know the different literary instruments and terms? In addition to helping you get good grades in your literary analysis of homework, there are several advantages to knowing the techniques authors usually use. The ability to determine when different literary methods are used helps to understand the motivation of the author's choices. For example, the ability to identify characters in a narration can help you find out why the author might have chosen to insert these focus and what they might suggest based on its approach to certain characters, plot points, and events. In addition, being able to identify literary instruments allows you to understand more clearly the overall meaning or purpose of the written work. For example, let's say that you plan to read (or re-read) Leo, Witch, and Closet CS Lewis. Knowing that this particular book is a religious allegory with references to Christ (represented by the character Aslan) and Jude (represented by Edmund), you will be clearer why Lewis uses a certain language to describe certain characters and why certain events take place the way they do. Finally, literary methods are important to know because they make texts more interesting and fun to read. If you could read a novel without knowing any literary instruments, chances are you can't detect many layers of meaning intertwined in history by different methods. Now that we have passed, why should you spend some time learning literary instruments, let's look at some of the most important elements of literature. List of literary devices: 31. The terms you should know below are a list of literary devices, most of which are often exposed in both prose and poetry. We explain what every literary term is and give an example of how it is used. This list of literary elements is arranged in alphabetical order. Allegory Allegory is a story that is used to provide a more general message about real-life (historical) issues and/or events. This is usually the whole book, novel, game, etc. In history, animals on the farm practice animalism, which is basically Communism. Many of the characters correspond to actual historical figures: the Old Major represents both the founder of Communism, Karl Marx, and the Russian Communist leader Vladimir Lenin; farmer, p. Jones, is the Tsar of Russia; the boar Napoleon refers to Joseph Stalin; and the pig Snowball represents Leon Trotsky. Anaphora Anaphora is a series of words or phrases that all (or almost all) begin with the same sound. These sounds are usually consonants to give more stress to the syllables. You often encounter aerial poetry, the titles of books and poems (for example, Jane Austen is a fan of this installation, just look at Pride and Prejudice and Sense and Sensibility) and tongue bends. Example: Peter Piper chose pickled peppers. In this twister of the tongue, the p sound is repeated at the beginning of all the main words. Ausia Ausia is when the author makes an indirect reference to a figure, location, event or idea originating from outside the text. Many ears refer to previous literary or artistic works. Example: Stop acting so smart – it's not like you're Einstein or something like that. It's a resoil to the famous real-life theoretical physicist Albert Einstein. Anachronism Anachronism occurs when there is a (intentional) error in the text chronology or timeline. It can be a character that appears in a different period than when he actually lived, or a technology that appears before it is invented. Anachronisms are often used for the comedy effect. Example: The King of the Renaissance, who says: It's dope, dude! would be anachronism, because this type of language is very modern and not really from the Renaissance period. Epiphora Epiphora is when a word or phrase is repeated at the beginning of several sentences throughout a writing piece. It is used to emphasize a repetitive phrase and cause strong feelings in the audience. Example: The famous example of anaphora is Winston Churchill's speech We will fight on the beaches. Throughout this speech, he repeats the phrase we will fight, together listing the many places where British troops will continue to fight during World War II. He did this to bring together both soldiers and Britons and give them confidence that they will still win the war. Anthropomorphism Anthropomorphism occurs when something inhuman, such as an animal, a place or a dead object, behaves in a human way. Example: Children's cartoons have many examples of anthropomorphism. For example, Mickey and Minnie Mouse can talk, wear clothes, sing, dance, drive cars and so on. Real mice can not do any of these things, but two mouse characters behave much more like humans than mice. Asyndeton Asyndeton is when a writer leaves connectors (e.g. and, or, but also for) a group of words or phrases to emphasize the meaning of a phrase or sentence. It is often used for languages, because sentences containing asyndeton can have a powerful, memorable rhythm. Example: Abraham Lincoln completes Gettysburg address with phrase... and that power of men, men, for men cannot perish from earth. Leaving certain connectors, he finishes the speech in a more powerful, melodic note. Colloquium Colloquium is the use of informal language and jargon. Authors often use a sense of realism for their characters and dialogue. Forms of collage include words, phrases, and contractions that are not real words (e.g. going on and ain't). Example: Hey, what happened, man? This work of dialogue is an example of collacalism, because it uses the usual everyday words and phrases, namely what happened to man. Epigraph Epigraph is when an author inserts a famous citation, poem, song or other short passage or text at the beginning of a larger text (e.g. book, chapter, etc.). The epigraph is usually written by another writer (with credit) and is used as a way to deliver the most important topics or messages at work. Some literary works, such as Herman Melville's 1851 novel Moby-Dick, include many epigraphs throughout. Example: At the beginning of Ernest Hemingway's book The Sun Also Rises, there is an epigraph composed of a quote from the poet Gertrude Stein, which reads: You are all a lost generation and an excerpt from the Bible. Epistrophe Epistrophe is similar to anaphora, but in this case a repetitive word or phrase appears at the end of successive statements. Like anaphores, it is used to trigger an emotional response from the audience. Example: In Lyndon B. Johnson's speech, the American promise he repeats the word problem epistrophe: There is no problem with negroes. There is no southern problem. There is no problem in the North. There is only an American problem. Hemingway, thinking deeply about what quote to choose for his epigraph. Euphemism Euphemism is when a milder or indirect word or expression is used instead of another word or phrase that is considered harsh, blunt, vulgar or unpleasant. Example: I'm sorry, but he didn't. The phrase did not do it is a more polite and less blunt way of saying that someone has died. Flashback Flashback is a story break that depicts events that have already occurred before or before the time of the narration. This device is often used to give the reader more basic information and information about specific characters, events, plot points, and so on. Example: Most of Emily Brontë's novel Wuthering Heights is from the point of view of housewives Of Nelly Dean as she engages in a conversation with a visitor named Lockwood. In this story, Nelly tells Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff's childhood, the couple's young romances and their tragic demise. Foreshadowing Foreshadowing is when the author implicitly hints at things like dialogue, description, or character actions, what will come later in the story. This device is often used to enter tension for the narrative. Example: Let's say you're reading a fictional account of Amemia Earhart. Before taking her (what we know to be sorry) on a plane ride, a friend tells her: Be safe. You wouldn't want to get lost, or worse. This line would be an example of foreshadowing, because it means that something bad (or worse) will happen to Earhart. Hyperbole Hyperbole is an exaggerated claim that is not meant to be taken literally by the reader. It is often used for comedy effects and/or accent. Example: I'm so hungry to eat a horse. The speaker just won't eat the whole horse (and probably couldn't), but this hyperbole highlights how the starving speaker feels. Images Images Are when the author describes a scene, object or idea that it appeals to our senses (taste, smell, vision, touch or hearing). This device is often used to help the reader clearly visualize parts of the story by creating a strong mental image. Example: Here's an example of images taken from William Wordsworth's famous poem I wandered lonely like a cloud: When everyone immediately saw the crowd, a host of golden daffodils; Near the lake, under the trees, fluttering and dancing in the wind. The irony of irony is when a statement is used to express the opposite meaning, neither is literally expressed by it. There are three types of irony in literature: Verbal Irony: When someone says something but means the opposite (similar to sarcasm). The irony of situations: When something happens, that is the opposite of what was expected or intended to happen. Dramatic irony: When the audience knows about true intentions or results, and the characters are not. Therefore, certain actions and/or events give the audience different values than related characters. Examples: Verbal irony: One example of this type of irony is the cascading of Edgar Allan Poe Amonillado. In this case, the In the story, a man named Montresor plans to get revenge on another man named Fortunato. As they roast, Montresor says, And I, Fortunato-I drink for my long life. This statement is ironic because we readers already know on this subject that Montresor plans to kill Fortunato. The irony of the situations: the girl wakes up late at school and quickly rushes to get there. As soon as she arrives, she realizes it's Saturday and there's no school. Dramatic irony: In William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, Romeo commits suicide to be with Juliet; but the audience (unlike poor Romeo) knows that Juliet is not really dead, just sleeping. Poe was a fan of irony and ravens. The application of the application is a comparison and contrast of two or more different (usually opposite) ideas, characters, objects, etc. This literary device is often used to help create a clearer picture of the characteristics of one object or idea compared to another. Example: One of the most famous examples of literary alignment is the opening passage from Charles Dickens' novel Tale two cities: It was the best times, it was the worst time, it was the age of wisdom, it was an age of stupidity, it was an epoch of faith, it was an epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was a spring of hope. Malapropism Malapropism happens when the wrong word is used instead of a word that has a similar sound. This verbal abuse usually leads to a statement that is both meaningless and humorous; therefore this device is usually used for writing a comedy. Example: I just can't wait to dance flamingo! Here the character accidentally named flamenco (dance type) flamingo (animal). Metaphor/Simile metaphors are when ideas, actions or objects are described from a non-literal point of view. In short, that's when the author compares one thing to another. The two things being described usually have something in common, but are unlike in every other way. Similis is a type of metaphor in which an object, idea, character, action, etc., is compared to another thing, using words like or like. Both metaphors and symmetry are often used in writing for clarity or accent. Examples: What light does the yonder window break? It's the east, and Juliet is the sun. In this verse, Romeo and Juliet Romeo compares Juliet to the sun. However, because Romeo doesn't use words like or like, it's not a simile- just a metaphor. She is just as vicious as a lion. Since this statement uses the word as a way to compare it with a lion, it is simile. Metonym Metonym is when the related word or phrase is replaced by the actual thing to which he refers. This device is usually used for poetic or rhetorical effects. Example: The is more powerful than the sword. This statement, created by Edward Bulwer-Lytton in 1839, contains two examples of metrics: a pen means a written word, and the sword means military force/violence. Mood Mood is a general feeling the writer wants the audience to have. The writer can achieve this by describing, setting, dialog, and word selection. Example: Here's an excerpt from J.R. R. Tolkien's Hobbit: He had a completely round door like a porthole, painted in green, with a shiny yellow brass knob in the middle of the exact. The doors opened on a pipe-shaped hall like a tunnel: a very comfortable smoke-free tunnel, with panel walls, and flooring tiles and carpeting, with polished chairs, and lots and lots of pins hats and coats - a hobbit loved by visitors. In this passage, Tolkien uses a detailed description to create a cozy, comforting mood. From writing you can see that the hobbit houses are well equipped and designed to provide comfort. Onomatopoeia Onomatopoeia is a word (or group of words) that means sound and actually resembles or mimics the sound it means. It is often used for dramatic, realistic or poetic effects. Examples: Buzz, Boom, Chirp, Creak, Sizzle, Zoom, etc. Oxymoron Oxymoron is a combination of two words that together expresses contradictory meaning. This device is often used to emphasize humor, create tension, or illustrate the paradox (see another entry for more information about paradoxes). Examples: Deafening silence, organized chaos, brutal kind, madly logical, etc. Penrose stairs = classic paradox example. Are they going up or down?! The paradox paradox is a statement that seems illogical or contradictory, but can actually be true or plausible after a study. Note that the paradox differs from oxymoron: the paradox is the whole phrase or sentence, and oxymoron is just a combination of two words. Example: Here's a famous paradoxical sentence: This statement is false. If the statement is correct, it is not really wrong (as it suggests). But if it's false, then the statement is true! So this statement is a paradox because it is true and false at the same time. Personification Personification is when an inhuman figure or other abstract concept or element is described as having human-like characteristics or characteristics. (Unlike anthropomorphism, when non-human figures become human-like characters, with personification, the subject/number is simply described as similar to a person.) Personification is used to help the reader create a clearer mental picture of a scene or object. Example: The wind was moaning, beckoning me to come outside. In this example, the wind is an inhuman element that is described as if it were a man (he moans and beckons). Repetition is when a word or written several times, usually to emphasize. It is often used in poetry (and for rhythm purposes). Example: When Lin-Manuel Miranda, who wrote the score for the hit musical Hamilton, gave his speech in 2016. At Tony's, he quoted a poem he wrote that included the following line: And love is love cannot be killed or wiped away. Satire is a genre of writing that criticizes something like a person, behavior, faith, government, or society. Satire often employs irony, humor, and hyperbole to make its point. Example: Onions is a satirical newspaper and digital media company. It uses satire parody of common news features such as opinion columns, editorial cartoons, and click bait headlines. Soliloquy Monologue type, which is often used in dramas, soliloquy is when the character speaks loudly to himself (and the audience), thus revealing his inner thoughts and feelings. Example: Romeo and Juliet. Juliet's speech on the balcony that begins: O Romeo, Romeo! Where's the art you romeo? is soliloquy as she speaks out loud to herself (remember that she doesn't understand Romeo out there listening!). Symbolism Symbolism refers to the use of an object, shape, event, situation or other idea in written work to represent something else – usually a broader or deeper meaning that differs from its literal meaning. Symbolism is called characters and they will often appear several times throughout the text, sometimes changing meaning as the plot progresses. Example: In F. Scott Fitzgerald's 1925 novel, The Great Gatsby Green Light, sitting in front of Gatsby Manor, symbolizes Gatsby's hopes and dreams. Synecdoche Sinecdoche is a literary device in which part of something is used to represent the whole, or vice versa. It's like a meth (see above); however metonym does not represent the whole – just something that relates to the word used. Example: Help me, I need hands! In this case, hands are used to indicate people (basically the whole person). Tone While the mood is what the audience should feel, the tone is the writer or narrator's approach to the topic. A good writer will always want the audience to feel the mood they are trying to induce, but the audience doesn't always agree with the narrator's tone, especially if the narrator is an insensitive character or has attitudes that are different from the reader. Example: Essays disdaining Americans and some of the places they visit as tourists, Rudyard Kipling starts the line, Today I went to Yellowstone Park, and I wish I was dead. If you like Yellowstone and/or national parks, you can't agree with the author's tone in this piece. Time to become your Sherlock Holmes! How to identify and analyze literature 4 Tips For a complete interpretation of literary works, you need to understand a lot about literary instruments in reading texts. Here are our best tips for identifying and analyzing various literary methods: Tip 1: Read carefully and carefully first you need to make sure you read very carefully. Resist the temptation to skim or skip any parts of the text. If you do this, you can skip some of the literary devices you use and will not be able to understand the text accurately. If there are any passages in the work that make you feel particularly emotional, curious, intriguing, or simply interested, check the area again for any literary instruments in the game. It's also a good idea to read all the parts that you think were confusing or that you didn't fully understand about the first reading. This ensures that you have a strong grasp of the passage (and text as a whole) and will be able to analyze properly. Tip 2: Remember general literary terms You won't be able to identify literary elements in texts if you don't know who they are or how they are used, so spend some time memorizing the list of literary elements above. Knowing these (and how they look written) will make it easier for you to identify these methods of different types of written works. Tip 3: Know the author's target audience Knowing what audience the author was going to do his job, you can figure out what types of literary devices might be in the game. For example, if you've tried to analyze a children's book, you'd like to look for devices that are right for your kids, such as repetition and arrhythmics. Tip 4: Write down notes and bookmark key passages and pages This is one of the most important tips to know, especially if you are reading and analyzing English class creations. When you're reading, take notes about working in your notebook or computer. Write down all the passages, paragraphs, conversations, descriptions, etc. that pop up to you or contain a literary device that you could identify. You can also take notes directly into the book if possible (but don't do it if you borrow a book from the library!). I recommend circling keywords and important phrases, as well as playing interesting or especially effective passages and paragraphs. Finally, use sticky notes or after it to mark pages that are of interest to you or contain a certain noticeable literary device. This will help you get back to them later if you need to review some of the paper you're planning to write. What's next? Looking for more detailed research and examples of literary devices? Join us when we immerse ourselves in images, personification, rhetorical devices, tone words and moods and different views in literature, as well as slightly more poetry-specific terms such as and iambic pentameter. Reading The Great Gatsby Class Class even just fun? Then you really want to check out our expert guides on the biggest topics in this classic book, from love and relationships to money and materialism. Have questions about Arthur Miller's Crucible? Read our detailed articles to learn about the most important themes of this game and get a complete descent of all characters. For more information about your favorite literary works, take a look at our collection of high-quality book guides and our guide to the 9 literary elements that appear in each story! 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