

# St. Andrews Scots Sr. Sec. School

9th Avenue, I.P. Extension, Patparganj, Delhi - 92

Session: 2025-26 - Notes

**Class:X    Subject:English    Notes: Literary/Poetic Devices**

When an author or a poet sits down to write a story or a poem he/she simply doesn't write what happened. Instead, he/she uses a lot of narrative techniques called literary devices that add texture, energy, and excitement to the narrative. They also help grip the reader's imagination and convey information.

While there are hundreds of literary devices at an author's or poet's disposal, only a handful of them are used frequently. Some of the commonly used literary devices are:

➤ **Rhyme Scheme:** The rhyme scheme is the practice of rhyming words placed at the end of the lines in the prose or poetry. It refers to the order in which particular words rhyme.

For example:

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,	(a)
How I wonder what you are.	(a)
Up above the world so high,	(b)
Like a diamond in the sky.	(b)

➤ **Alliteration:** Alliteration is a literary device in which words are used in quick succession and begin with letters belonging to the same sound group. Alliterations are used to add character to the writing and often add an element of 'fun' to the piece. All the tongue twisters are examples of alliteration. For example: She sells seashells on the seashore.

➤ **Anaphora:** Anaphora is when a word or phrase is repeated at the beginning of multiple sentences throughout a piece of writing. It's used to emphasise the repeated phrase and evoke strong feelings in the audience. For example: Every day, every night, in every way, I am getting better and better.

➤ **Enjambment:** Enjambment, in poetry means moving over from one line to another without a terminating punctuation mark. For example:

All to follow my own dear true  
love of a Kangaroo!



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➤ Epithet: An epithet is a literary device that is used as a descriptive device. It is usually used to add to a person or place's regular name and attribute some special quality to the same. For example: Dogs have been such important and constant companions to human beings that they have earned the epithet 'man's best friend'.

➤ Transferred Epithet: A transferred epithet is a figure of speech where a modifier (usually an adjective) qualifies a noun other than the person or thing it is actually describing. For example: I had a wonderful day. The day is not in itself wonderful. The epithet 'wonderful' actually describes the kind of day the speaker experienced.

In simple words a Transferred Epithet is, when an emotion is attributed to a non-living thing. Eg: silent haunches.

➤ Imagery: Imagery helps the reader to visualise Image realistically the author's writings. The usage of metaphors, allusions, descriptive words and similes in order to awaken the readers' sensory perceptions is referred to as imagery. For example: Silence was broken by the peal of piano keys as Shannon began practicing her concerto. Here, auditory imagery breaks silence with the beautiful sound of piano keys.

➤ Metaphor: In a metaphor, one subject is implied to be another so as to draw a comparison between their similarities and shared traits. For example: The snow is a white blanket.

➤ Simile: It is a type of metaphor in which an object, idea, character, action, etc., is compared to another thing using the words 'as' or 'like'. For example: You were as brave as a lion.

➤ Onomatopoeia: The term 'onomatopoeia' refers to words whose very sound is very close to the sound they are meant to depict. For example: slam, splash, bam, babble, warble, gurgle, mumble, and belch.

➤ Oxymoron: It is a significant literary device as it allows the author to use contradictory, contrasting concepts placed together in a manner that actually ends up making sense in a strange, and slightly complex manner. For example: There was a love-hate relationship between the two neighbouring states.

➤ Paradox: A paradox refers to the use of concepts or ideas that are contradictory to one another, yet, when placed together hold significant value on several levels. For example: I can resist anything but temptation.

➤ Personification: It refers to the practice of attaching human traits and characteristics with inanimate objects, phenomena and animals. For example: The wind howled in the night.



➤ Refrain: is a poetic device that repeats, at regular intervals, in different stanzas. For example:

I do see the glory of morning,  
Such a lovely beauty of flowers please me,  
I do see the glory of morning.

➤ Repetition: Repetition is when a word or phrase is written multiple times, usually for the purpose of emphasis. For example: Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow. Oh, woeful, oh woeful, woeful, woeful day!

➤ Rhythm and Rhyme: The concept of 'rhythm and rhyme' refers to a pattern of rhymes that is created by using words that produce the same or similar sounds prose and poetry, creating a musical, gentle effect. For example:

I am a teapot  
Short and stout;  
This is my handle  
And this is my spout.  
When the water's boiling  
Hear me shout;  
Just lift me up  
And pour me out.

➤ Satire: The use of satire in literature refers to the practice of making fun of a human weakness or character flaw in order to correct or better the character that is on the receiving end of the satire. For example: What's the use you learning to do right, when it's troublesome to do right and isn't no trouble to do wrong, and the wages is just the same?

➤ Symbolism: It refers to the use of an object, figure, event, situation, or other idea in a written work to represent something else—typically a broader message or deeper meaning that differs from its literal meaning. For example:

"All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players;  
they have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts,"



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➤ Apostrophe - Apostrophe is a special form of personification; it is a direct address to the dead, to the absent or to a personified idea or object. Hence, it is called 'apostrophe'..

Examples: a. O Friend! I know not where I must go.

b. Frailty, thy name is woman!

c. O Death! Where is thy sting?

➤ Hyperbole or Exaggeration- In hyperbole, a statement is made emphatic by overstatement. But it is not meant to be taken literally.

Examples: a. If the river were dry, I could fill it with tears.

b. She's as old as the hills.

c. I walked a million miles to get here.

d. She can hear a pin drop a mile away.

➤ Pun- A pun is a figure of speech that consists of the use of a word, in such a way, that it is capable of more than one application and is mostly used in humorous sense.

Examples: a. Yes, the leopard changes its spots, whenever it goes from one spot to another.

b. An ambassador is an honest man who lies abroad for the good of his country.

c. Is life worth living? That depends on the liver.

➤ Irony- An irony is a figure of speech in which a statement is made emphatic in mockery by the use of words denoting the opposite of what is really meant.

Examples: a. She speaks of her unlawful sisters as 'the jewels of our father'.

b. I neither palliate nor deny the atrocious crime of being a young woman.

➤ Antithesis- This means the making of a striking opposition or contrast of words or sentiments. This figure of speech is an explicit statement of an implied contrast.

Examples: a. Many are called, but few are chosen.

b. Speech is silver, but silence is golden.

c. He had his jest, and they had his estate, rib sul teultists bovatament

d. Man proposes, God disposes.



➤ Metonymy - It is a figure of speech in which a thing or concept is not called by its own name, but by the name of something intimately associated with that thing or concept.

Examples: a. Crown. (For the power of a king.)

b. The White House. (Referring to the American administration.)

c. Dish. (To refer an entire plate of food.)

d Pen. (For the written word.)

➤ Allusion-The act of alluding is to make indirect reference. It is a literary device, a figure of speech that quickly stimulates different ideas and associations using only a couple of words.

Examples: a. David was being such a scroogel. (Scrooge" is the allusion, and it refers to Charles Dicken's novel, A Christmas Carol. Scrooge was very greedy and unkind, which David was being compared to.)

b. to be as old as Methusalem (allusion on Joseph's grandfather, who was 969 years old according to the Old Testament)

➤ Assonance- Assonance is a figure of speech that is found more often in verse than in prose. It refers to the repetition of vowel sounds to create internal rhyming within phrases or sentences.

Examples: a. "the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain" - The Raven By Edgar Allan Poe

b. "That solitude which suits abstruser musings" - The Princess VII.203 by Alfred Lord Tennyson

➤ Synecdoche- It is a figure of speech in which a part of something is used to represent the whole or the whole of something is used to represent part of it. It is considered to be a special kind of metonymy.

Examples: a. Part of something is used to refer to the whole thing- A hundred head of cattle (using the part head to refer to the whole animal)

b. The whole of a thing is used to represent part of it-

The world treated him badly (using the world to refer to part of the world)

➤ Consonance - is a figure of speech that refers to repeated sounds. Specifically, it's repeated consonant sounds in the middle or at the end of words. (If the repeated sound comes at the beginning of the grouped words, it's called alliteration.)

Examples: Funny bunny, Blossom emble, A stash of cash, Pitter-patter



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