

Honors English
Figures of Speech

These are common, prominent figures of speech found in poetry. Rather than spend a great deal of time going over them in class, familiarize yourself with this reference sheet. By the end of the poetry unit, you should have at least one citation for each entry, referring to a poem that contains that figure of speech.

Allusion	Brief, often casual reference to a historical or literary figure, event, object.
Amplification	Bare expressions are emphasized through restatement with additional detail.
Antithesis	Strongly contrasting words, clauses, sentences or ideas- balancing of one term against another for emphasis or effect.
Apostrophe	Someone, something, or a non-existent personage is addressed directly as though present.
Antonomasia	Proper name is substituted for a general class or idea of which it is a representative; substitution of an epithet for a proper name.
Euphemism	Indirect statement is substituted for a direct one to avoid bluntness.
Hyperbole	Conscious exaggeration is used without intent of literal persuasion- used for heightened effect, or comic effect.
Litotes	Form of understatement in which a thing is affirmed or stated by stating the negative of its opposite.
Metaphor	Implied analogy that identifies one object with another and ascribes qualities of one object to another- including emotional or imaginative qualities.
Metonymy	The substitution of an object related to a word for the word itself. "The crown" might stand for "king".
Onomatopoeia	The use of words that suggest their meaning by the sound they make when pronounced.
Personification	Endows animals, ideas, or inanimate objects with human qualities.
Simile	A similarity between two objects is directly expressed.
Symbol	Something which represents itself and stands for something else as well. The sea and the land might be <i>symbolic</i> of eternity.
Synecdoche	A form of metaphor which mentions a part of something to signify the whole, or mentions the whole to signify a part. The part selected to stand for the whole needs to be a significant part, usually directly associated with the whole.
Understatement	A form of irony in which something is intentionally represented as less than it is.