

Figurative Language

Term	Definition	Examples
Analogy	Compares two different things by <i>explaining</i> points they have in common; used to help clarify a concept or make a topic easier to understand *Analogy is similar to metaphor and simile, but will <i>describe</i> similarities (often more than one) in detail– rather than just state or identify a similarity.	<i>War is like a football game. It is won by strategically going through, around, or over the opposing team’s battle lines.</i> <i>A good book is a friend. It provides entertainment and insight. It keeps you company and helps you feel connected to others.</i>
Metaphor	Compares two unlike things by stating that one thing <i>is</i> the other *Does <i>not</i> use the words “like” or “as”	<i>War is a game of strategy.</i> <i>A good book is a friend.</i> <i>Carrie was a wall, bouncing every volleyball back over the net.</i>
Simile	Compares two unlike things by stating that one thing <i>is similar</i> to the other and by using the words “like” or “as”	<i>War is like a football game.</i> <i>A good book is like a friend.</i> <i>The snow is like a blanket covering the lawn.</i>
Hyperbole	An exaggerated statement used to make a point; often humorous	<i>My date last night was the most beautiful girl in the world.</i>
Idiom	Peculiar expressions or sayings that are common to native speakers of a particular language	<i>Grandma kicked the bucket.</i> <i>You can’t teach an old dog new tricks.</i>
Imagery	Use of words that describe the five senses to create a mental picture of something	<i>The crunch of the orange and yellow leaves alerted us to his approach.</i>
Onomatopoeia	Use of words that sound like what they describe	<i>Hum, gurgle, hiss, rustle</i> <i>The fire crackled and the popcorn popped.</i>
Personification	Giving human traits (qualities, feelings, action, or characteristics) to non-living objects (things, colors, qualities, or ideas)	<i>The pig sang his favorite song and popped bubbles as he soaked in the tub.</i>
Symbolism	Something concrete that stands for something else, such as an idea or emotion	<i>He was filled with pride at the sight of the American flag.</i>

Sources:

Buehl, D. *Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning*. International Reading Association (2001).
 Burke, J., Klemp, R. *Reader’s Handbook: Student Guide for Reading and Learning*. Great Source/Houghton Mifflin (2002)
Rhetorical Devices for English Majors. http://www-pub.naz.edu:9000/~csick4/english_site/figlanguage.html