

# Literary Devices:

Interesting when you read, useful when you write!



# **Allegory:**

A story in which the characters represent abstract qualities or ideas.

For example, in westerns, the sheriff represents the good, and the outlaw represents evil.

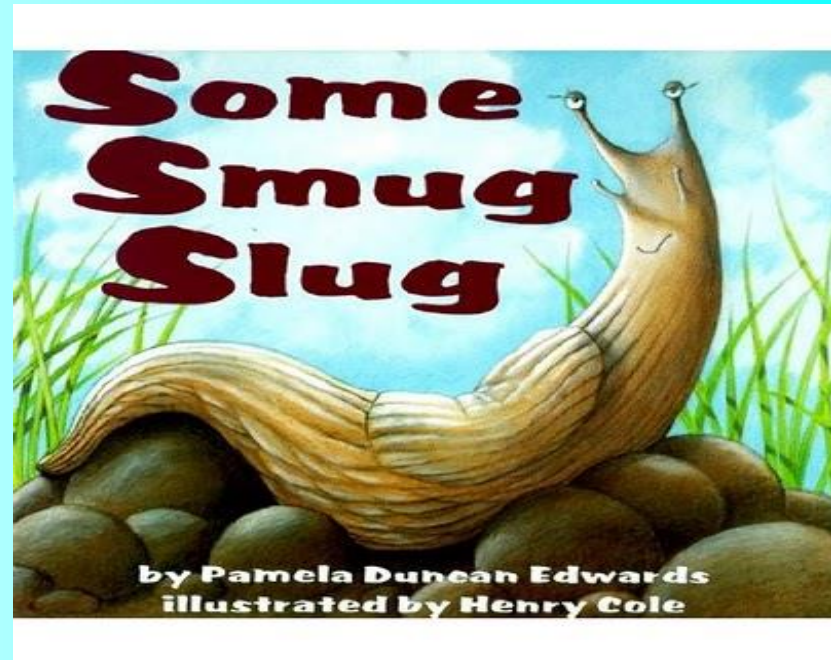
# ALLITERATION

is the repetition of the same consonant sound in words occurring near one another.

*Examples:*

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.

Sally sells seashells by the seashore.



# ALLUSION

is a casual reference to a famous historical or literary figure or event.

## *Examples:*

If it doesn't stop raining, I'm going to build an ark.

My sister has so many pets I'm going to call myself Old McDonald.



# **Archetype:**

A character who represents a certain type of person. For example, Daniel Boone is an archetype of the early American frontiersman.

# Assonance:

The repetition of vowel sounds

Example:

*Duys wane away.*

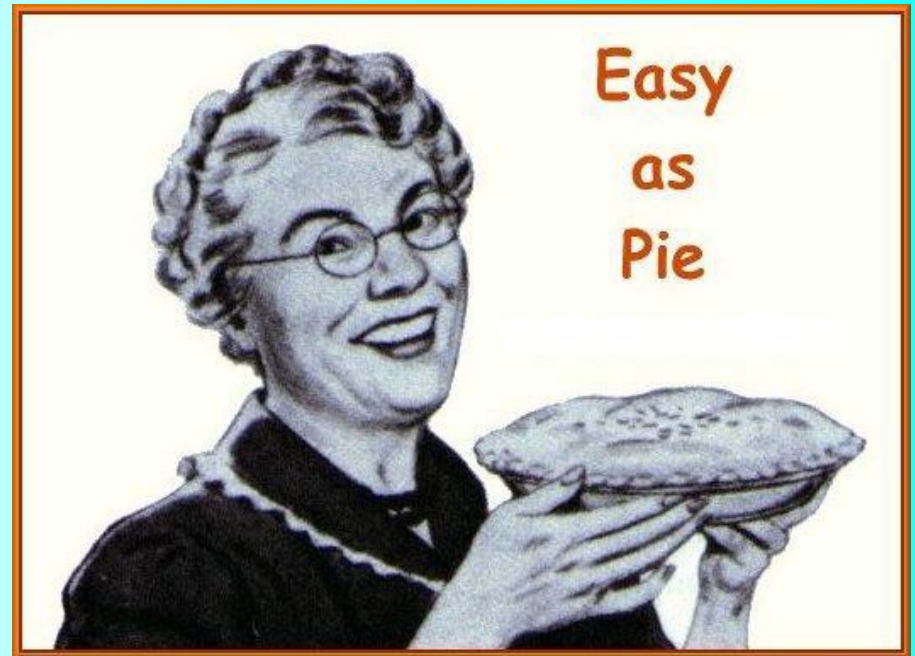
*Easily enamored with English*

# CLICHÉ

is an expression that has lost its power or originality from overuse.

## *Examples:*

talking a mile a minute  
quiet as a mouse  
easy as pie



# **Figurative Language:**

Language that does not mean exactly what it says. For example, you can call someone who is very angry “steaming.” Unless steam was actually coming out of your ears, you were using figurative language.



# **Foreshadowing:**

A technique in which an author gives clues about something that will happen later in the story.

# EUPHEMISM

is a polite word or phrase used in place of one that may be too direct, unpleasant, or embarrassing.

## *Examples:*

pass away = die

vertically challenged = short

tooted = farted

let go = fired

pre-owned = used



# HYPERBOLE

is an obvious exaggeration or  
overstatement.

*Examples:*

I'm so hungry I could eat a horse!

A blue square containing white text. The text reads "HYPERBOLE IS THE BEST THING EVER!". The word "THE" is written in a smaller, cursive font and is enclosed within a circular emblem that resembles a horse's head. The words "HYPERBOLE IS" are in a serif font, "BEST" is in a larger, bold serif font, and "THING EVER!" is in a smaller serif font.

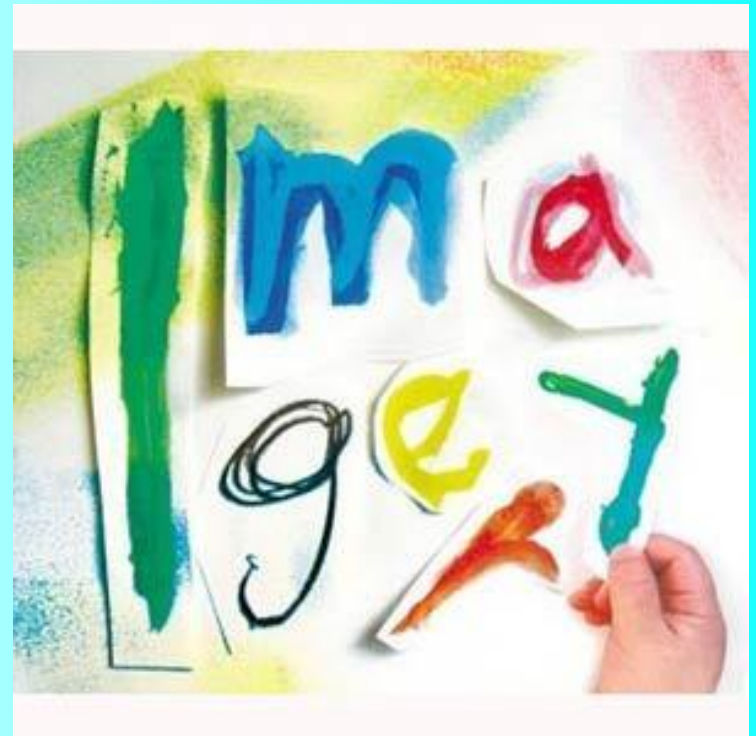
# IMAGERY

is when a writer invokes the five  
senses.

## *Examples:*

The smell reminded him of rotting tomatoes.

The fence was uneven, like baby teeth growing awkwardly in. (also a simile!)



# **Irony:**

Language that conveys a certain ideas by saying just the opposite.

# IDIOM

is an expression with a meaning different from the literal meaning of the words.

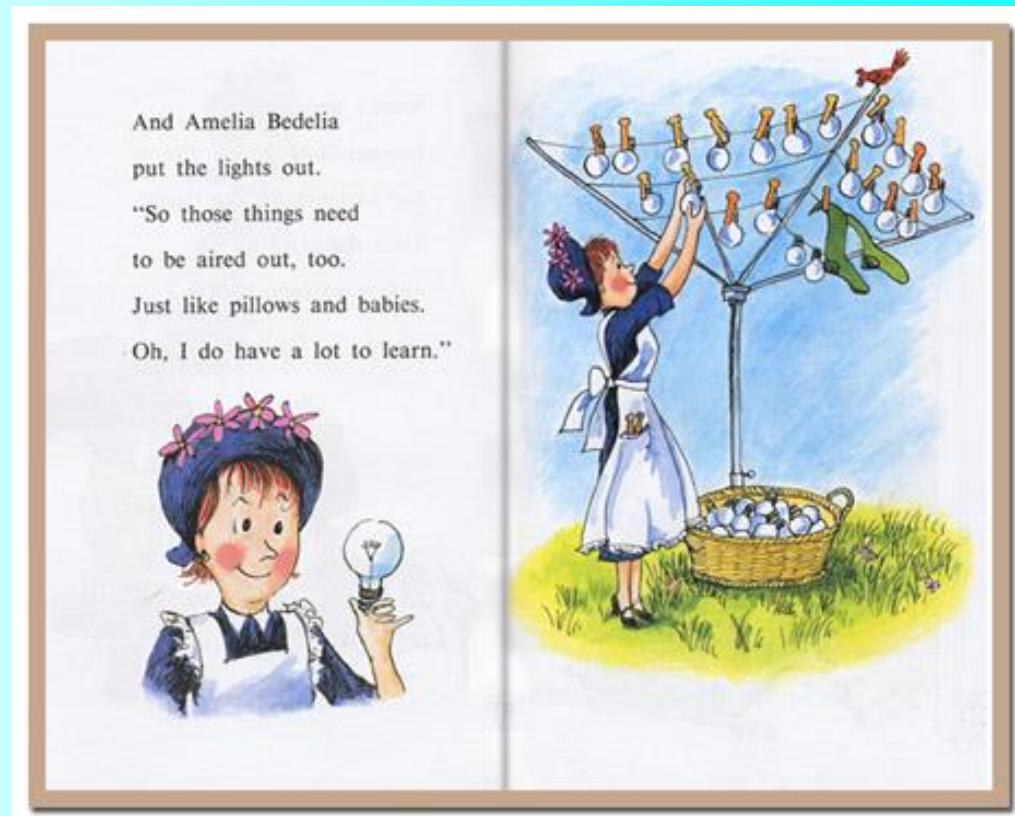
## *Examples:*

I got cold feet before my speech =  
I was scared

my boss gave me the green light =  
my boss said yes

draw the curtains =  
close the curtains

put the lights out =  
turn off the lights



# LITERAL LANGUAGE

Language that means exactly what it says.

## *Examples:*

It was dark and cold.

She was beautiful; everyone loved her

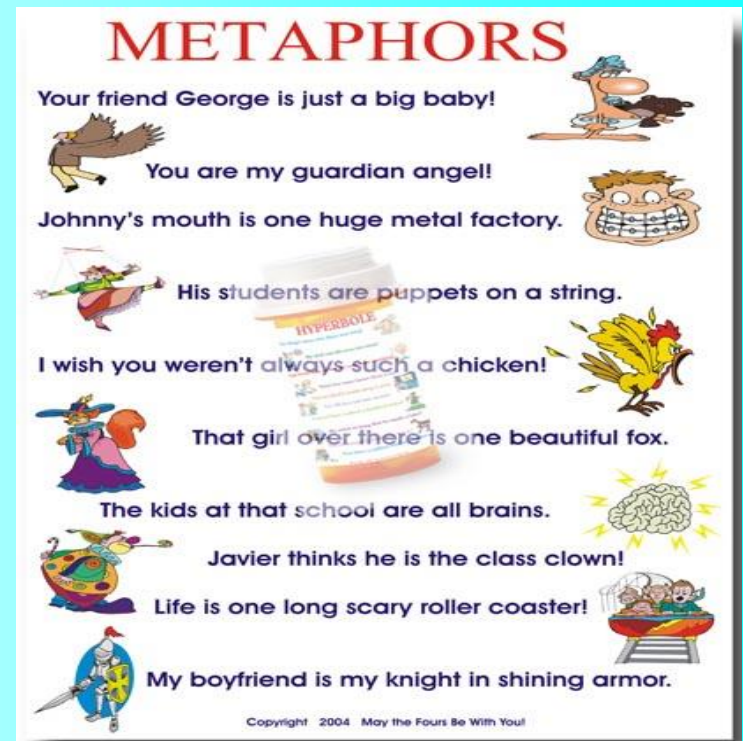
# METAPHOR

is a comparison of two unlike things without using the words “like” or “as”.

## *Examples:*

He was a statue, waiting to hear the news.

She was a mother hen, trying to take care of everyone around her.





# **Mood:**

The emotional atmosphere of a given piece of writing.

# **Motif:**

A theme or pattern that recurs  
in a work.

# **Monologue:**

A long speech by one character in a play or story.

# ONOMATOPOEIA

is a word that imitates the sound it represents.

*Examples:*

crunch

zap

tick-tock

whoosh



# OXYMORON

two opposite terms.

*Examples:*

a peaceful war

a generous cheapskate

dark sunshine



# **Parody:**

A humorous, exaggerated imitation of another work.

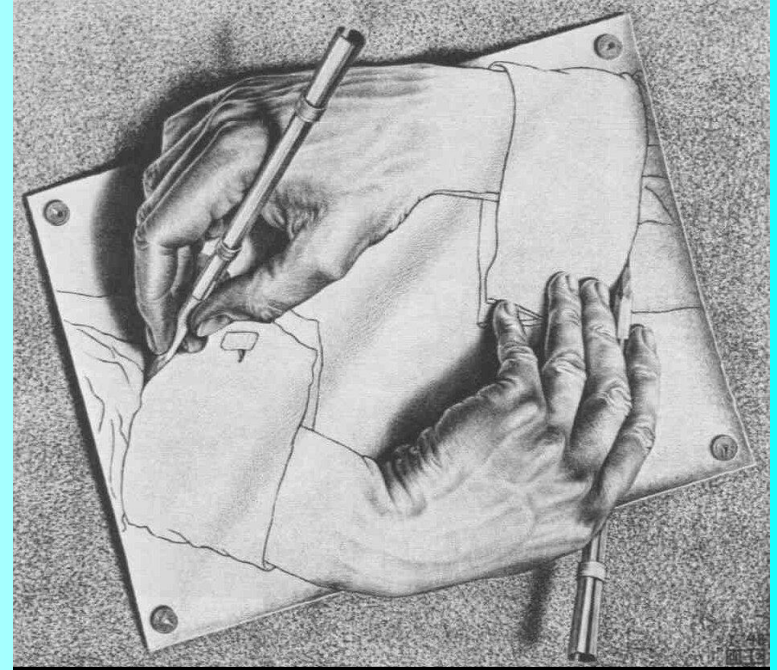
# PARADOX

reveals something true which at first seems contradictory.

## *Examples:*

He was a brave coward.

When you win all the time, you lose.



# PERSONIFICATION

is when a writer gives human qualities to animals or objects.

## *Examples:*

My car drank the gasoline in one gulp.

The cat laughed.

The newspaper headline glared at me.





# PUN

is a humorous play on words, often involving double meanings

## *Examples:*

When a clock is hungry it goes back four seconds.

A man stole a case of soap from the corner store. He made a clean getaway.



# **Sarcasm:**

Language that conveys a certain idea by saying just the opposite such as if it's raining outside and you say, "My what a beautiful day."

# **Satire:**

A work that makes fun of something or someone.

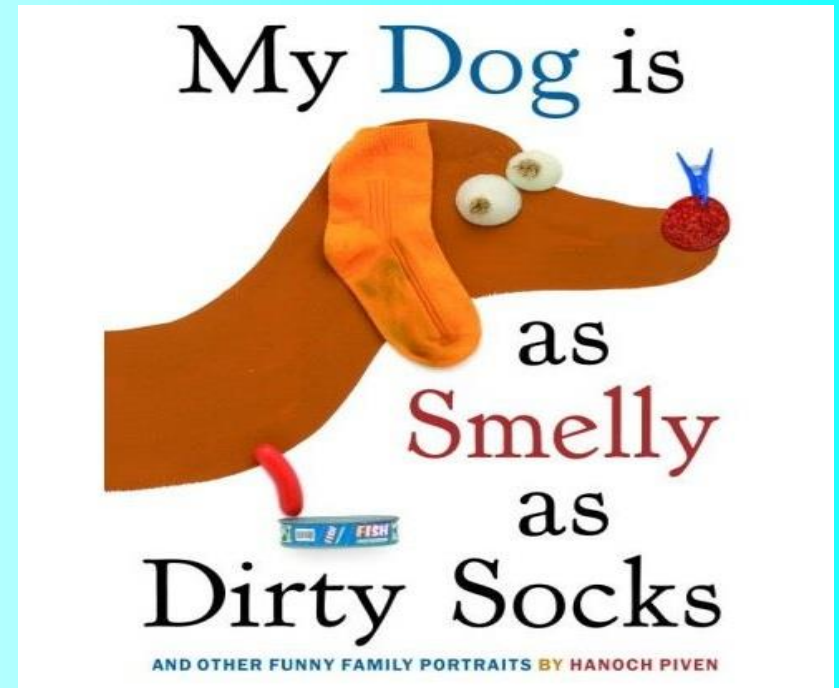
# SIMILE

is an expression comparing one thing to another using the words “like” or “as”.

*Examples:*

He ran like a cat, lightly and quietly.

Her blue mood passed as quickly as an afternoon rain shower.



# **Soliloquy:**

A monologue in which a character expresses his or her thoughts to the audience and does not intend the other characters to hear them.

# **Suspense:**

A feeling of excitement,  
curiosity, or expectation about  
what will happen



# **Tone:**

The author's attitude toward his or her subject. For example, a tone could be pessimistic, optimistic, or angry.



# Two goals:

- Identify
- Use

