

Literary Devices

Shakespeare used literary devices to elevate his language and express his thoughts more richly. Here is mostly a review of terms you know. By the end of this unit, you should be able to identify these devices and be able to spot them in Shakespeare's work. You will also use many of these in your final adaptation performances.

Figurative Language:

- **Allusions**- an expression or story designed to call something to mind without mentioning it explicitly. An indirect reference.
- **Similes**- comparing two things using "like" or "as"
 - o Ex: "Your face, my Thane, is as a book where men may read strange matters"
- **Metaphors**- comparing two things not using "like" or "as"
 - o Ex: "I have begun to plant thee, and will labor to make thee full of growing"
- **Personification**- giving an inanimate object human characteristics
 - o Ex: "If chance will have me King, why, chance may crown me"
- **Symbol**- a part of the story that is used to represent a larger theme or idea.
 - o Ex. Birds= flight, escape; Water = baptism, rebirth, cleanliness

Alliteration- the beginning sound of each word is repeated several times. A poetic device.

- o Ex: "but now I am cabined, cribbed, confined, bound in to saucy doubts and fears."

Iambic Pentameter- a meter of poetry in which one line contains 5 stressed syllables, each preceded by an unstressed syllable.

Blank Verse- poetry written in regular metrical but unrhymed lines

Soliloquy- a speech that a character makes while alone on stage, to reveal his or her inner thoughts to the audience

Aside- a remark the character makes in an undertone to the audience or another character, but other characters on stage do not hear.

Foreshadowing- a warning or indication of future events in the story.

Dramatic Irony- the contrast created when the audience knows more about a situation than a character knows.

Tragic Hero- a protagonist who comes to ruin because of an error in judgment or a weakness in character—a **tragic flaw**.