

# Improve Your Writing

There are literary devices you can employ to enhance the readability of your work, such as hyperbole, oxymoron, simile, metaphor, alliteration, onomatopoeia, although you must not fall into the trap of using any of them too often.

## Hyperbole

The use of an exaggerated statement, which is not meant to be taken literally, but to create an effect.

e.g. "Thomas, for the **thousandth** time, fasten your top button!"  
I've had a **million** interruptions this afternoon.

## Oxymoron

The use of (apparently) contradictory terms in conjunction with each other.

e.g. The attack by the lions on the buffalo had a certain **savage beauty**.  
The Prime Minister's statement to the House met with a **thunderous silence**.

## Simile

The comparison of one thing with another of a different kind as an illustration or ornament. Similes normally begin with the words 'like' or 'as'.

e.g. He was tall and lanky, **like a giraffe on stilts**.  
Billy was **as busy as a hyperactive bee**.

## Metaphor

Applying a name or descriptive term or phrase to an object or action to which it isn't literally applicable. (A whole story can be a metaphor for something else!)

e.g. Simon made a **glaring error**.  
The Dauphin ran his cold finger down Justine's **alabaster cheek**.  
'Juliet **is the sun**' (Romeo and Juliet).

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## Alliteration

The occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words. Although much used in poetry, alliteration can also enhance other forms of writing.

e.g. The owl on wings of **s**ilence **s**eeks unwary prey his **s**cions to **s**ustain.  
William **s**tole **s**ilently across the hall and opened the **d**oor to the **d**ark **d**ungeon.

## Onomatopoeia

The formation of a word from the sound associated with an object or occurrence.

e.g. The bacon **sizzled** in the pan.

The chain **screeched** and **clanked** noisily as the anchor was withdrawn.

The campfire **crackled** (*onomatopoeia*) and sparks **blossomed** (*metaphor*) into the sky, **like a Roman candle on the fifth of November** (*simile*).

## Personification

Attributing human feelings and emotions to animals or inanimate objects.

e.g. Jack Frost **paints** his patterns on window panes.

England **mourns** her dead.

Timothy Duckling said to Ollie Rat, "Let's go to the park today."

## Cliches

Over-used phrases -generally widely known- that most people use in their everyday lives. An example might be '**It was raining cats and dogs**'. Only use a cliché if nothing else is as effective in saying what you wish to say.

## Euphemism

Using polite language to refer to something unpleasant or embarrassing.

e.g. We had the dog put to sleep. *Instead of: We had the dog killed.*

He had an upset stomach. *Instead of: He had diarrhoea.*