

- **Auditory (sound) image:** *The clackety-clack of the wheels on the track and steamy hiss of the engine made the sound of the Lincoln funeral train even more poignant.*
- **Tactile (touch) image:** *The weight of her father's strong arm around her shoulder comforted the mourning child.*
- **Gustatory (taste) image:** *The tang of the grapefruit slice made her mouth pucker.*
- **Olfactory (smell) image:** *The baking bread in the oven welcomed with its yeasty sweetness that filled the kitchen.*

Allusions are specific references to other texts or scenes outside the text that build readers' associations and deepen their understanding of the text. Sometimes these are clichés:

Everybody has a cross to bear.

No matter what religious background you come from, you probably recognize that sentence as an allusion to the Biblical story of Jesus on his way to crucifixion. It tells you something about what the writer thinks about the burdens people carry. A writer might make an allusion to another text:

"Ay, there's the rub."

The phrase is from Hamlet's famous "To be, or not to be" soliloquy in Shakespeare's play, and you recognize that the writer wants to suggest some kind of quandary or dilemma in using the phrase.

Figures of Rhetoric: Schemes and Tropes

To convey purpose and affect readers through the features of a text, writers almost always use **figures of rhetoric**, whether they do so consciously or not. Readers who analyze texts well recognize these figures and explain how the writer uses them in communicating and persuading.

People have been teaching and learning about the figures since ancient Greece and Rome, where rhetoric was first studied. Classical rhetoricians divided the figures into two broad categories: *schemes* and *tropes*. The definitions are simple:

- A **scheme** is any artful, that is, deliberate, variation from typical arrangements of words and sentences. For example, the following passage from Winston Churchill's famous Dunkirk speech during World War II is an example of the scheme of *anaphora*, the deliberate repetition of words, phrases, or clauses as the beginning of successive sentences:

We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing-grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills.

- A **trope** is any artful variation from the typical expressions of ideas or words. For example, this sentence contains an example of the trope of *metonymy*, in which a range of meanings and associations are packed into one word or phrase:

The top brass inspected the troops in the field.

In ancient Rome, and later in the European Middle Ages and Renaissance, scholars developed substantial lists of figures, categorizing them under these two general labels, and school children had to learn the definitions and find examples of the figures in literary works and public discourse. It would not have been unusual for a grammar school student in Renaissance England to be given a list of three hundred or so names of schemes and tropes and to be required to memorize the definitions and produce an example of any one of them on demand! Students undertook this task not simply to memorize or even to learn how to vary their own expression. Their lessons in schemes and tropes taught them something crucial about language, that a different way of *saying* something about the world was also a different way of *seeing* something about the world. In other words, classical instruction taught that using figurative language to express ideas helped to clarify and sharpen a person's thinking—not a bad lesson for students even today.

You don't have to memorize three hundred definitions to recognize and analyze the figures. (There are many excellent handbooks and Internet sites that list figures of rhetoric. One particularly helpful resource is Professor Gideon Burton's web site at Brigham Young University called *Silva Rhetoricae*, literally "the forest of rhetoric.") But you can learn to recognize schemes and tropes when you read them by how they work and their effect on readers. What follows are a few schemes and tropes in common use.

Schemes Involving Balance When a passage, a paragraph, or even a sentence has two or more similar ideas, a good writer will often express those ideas in the same grammatical form: words balance words, phrases balance phrases, clauses balance clauses. The writer is using parallel constructions to affect and balance readers' responses.

Abraham Lincoln was a master at creating parallel structure. His most famous work, the brief but eloquent Gettysburg Address, is a tour de force of parallelism. Here is its final paragraph. Notice how Lincoln both begins and ends this paragraph with a parallel structure:

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Three parallel, balanced clauses

Three parallel, balanced verbs

Three famous parallel phrases