

# Language Devices and Syntax Notes

**Diction:** Word Choice

Determined by the speaker/writer's audience, purpose, occasion

**Euphemism:** Pleasant sounding word or phrase used to replace a blunt or harsh term (i.e. a trash collector might be called a sanitation engineer, or a window washer might be referred to as a transparent wall maintenance officer)

**Cliché:** A common phrase that has lost meaning through continual use (i.e. a needle in a haystack)

**Imagery:** Using sensory images (sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell) to help the audience understand the topic

## Figurative Language

**Simile:** Comparing two similar things using like or as ("Day after day, day after day, / we stuck, nor breath nor motion; / As idle as a painted ship / upon a painted ocean")

**Metaphor:** an implied comparison of two similar things ("The fog comes on little cat feet")

**Personification:** giving human characteristics to a nonhuman object ("open unlidged eye of golden day"; "sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines"; "the wind whistled through the dancing leaves")

**Hyperbole:** deliberate exaggeration

**Oxymoron:** verbal paradox (pairing two opposite words to form a new meaning: jumbo shrimp, civil war, sweet sorrow)

**Tone:** the attitude of the speaker/writer toward the subject or audience  
Determine tone through diction

**Analogy:** comparing a familiar subject to an unfamiliar one (Dwight Eisenhower compared the spread of communism to toppling dominoes because his audience didn't understand how one country falling to communism would affect any others)

**Allusion:** a reference to an event, person, or text in a piece of writing or speech (i.e. "My brother was King Midas, hoarding all his junk and polishing it until it shined")

-Biblical allusions

-historical allusions

**Syntax:** arrangement or order of words in a sentence

**Parallel syntax** (a.k.a. parallelism or parallel structure): repetition of a pattern of words, phrases, clauses

-adds poetic beauty, emphasizes the word or idea repeated

-"As Caesar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honour him; but, as he was ambitious, I slew him."

**Anaphora:** the repetition of words at the beginning of 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." Winston Churchill

**Chiasmus:** two key words reversed in the repetition, forming an "x"

Example: "Ask not what your **country** can do for **you**,

Ask what **you** can do for your **country**."