

FIGURES OF SPEECH – A GUIDE FOR THE BRIGHTER STUDENT

TECHNIQUE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
alliteration	repetition of a sound in successive words	Big Billy Bothwell fae Baillieston
anticlimax	ideas arranged in descending order of importance	Football clubs are getting sponsored by law firms. Rangers have got Ross Harper. Celtic have Joe Beltrami. Motherwell have applied for Legal Aid.
antithesis	ideas balanced and contrasted for emphasis	The rocket scientist roared up in his Aston-Martin; the teacher zipped up on his bike.
antonomasia	name used instead of the class to which the named person belongs	This boy is the Einstein of fifth year.
apostrophe	direct address to somebody or, more often, something	Hello, chips, you look yummy!
climax	build up to a high point	First Scotland, then Europe, then the World!
euphemism	harsh fact expressed gently	He is a stranger to soap.
exclamation	emotional outcry	State ae you!
hyperbole	exaggeration	I ate pure mullions ah chups.
innuendo	subtle hint	Everybody passed the test – even the boys.
litotes	negative statement used to mean very strong positive	She is no beauty. (= She is a boot faced monster.)
meiosis	understatement	He is a bit of a lad. (i.e. He eats Rotweilers raw and barking.)
metaphor	an untruth; one thing is said to be another, but it is not.	School is a prison.
metonymy	name of one object put for another closely associated with it	The suit has spoken!
onomatopoeia	sound echoing sense	Atishooo!
oxymoron	two mutually contradictory words put side by side	bitter sweet Scotland victory military intelligence
paradox	brief pointed statement containing a seeming contradiction	Dieting makes you fat.
personification	abstract noun used as a proper noun	The Flu was walking down the school corridor and sneezing in our faces.
prolepsis	using an adjective as if it was already true, when it is not yet true	You're deid!
pun	a play on words that sound similar but which have distinct meanings	Knock knock! Who's there? Adolf! Adolf who? A dolf ball hid me on the node!
rhetorical question	a question with no answer expected – used as a form of emphasis	Joo hink ma heid buttons up the back?
simile	comparison with <u>as</u> or <u>like</u>	as lonely as a Rangers trophy
syllipsis	condensed sentence	He broke his leg and the world record
synecdoche	part for the whole	Chuck us that ginger, gonny?
transferred epithet	applying adjective to wrong noun	You stupid ball! You missed the goal!
zeugma	condensed sentence which has become nonsensical	The referee had crying eyes and heart.

Footnote: the truly brighter student will immediately notice the figure of speech missing from this list.