

Tropes	Definition	Example
metaphor	the substitution of a word for a word whose meaning is close to the original word	Poor broken glass , I often did behold/ In thy sweet semblance my old age new born...--- <i>The Rape of Lucrece</i> ,1758-59
metonymy	a noun is substituted for a noun in such a way that we substitute the cause of the thing of which we are speaking for the thing itself; this might be done in several ways: substituting the inventor for his invention, the container for the thing contained or vice versa, an author for his work, the sign for the thing signified, the cause for the effect or vice versa	I must comfort the weaker vessel, as doublet and hose ought to show itself courageous to petticoat .--- <i>As You Like It</i> , 2.4.6
synecdoche	substitution of part for whole, genus for species, or vice versa	Was this the face that launched a thousand ships,/ And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?--- <i>Dr. Faustus</i> , 12.80-81
irony	expressing a meaning directly contrary to that suggested by the words	He was no notorious malefactor , but he had been twice on the pillory, and once burnt in the hand for trifling oversights .--- <i>Directions for Speech and Style</i>
metalepsis	a double metonymy in which an effect is represented by a remote cause	Woe worth the mountain that the mast bear/ Which was the first causer of all my care (Medea cursing Jason).--- <i>The Arte of English Poesie</i> , 183
paradox	a seemingly self contradictory statement, which yet is shown to be true	For what the waves could never wash away/ This proper youth has wasted in a day.--- <i>The Arte of English Poesie</i> , 226
oxymoron	a condensed paradox at the level of a phrase	O modest wantons! wanton modesty!--- <i>The Rape of Lucrece</i> , 401
anthymeria	the substitution of one part of speech for another; for instance, an adverb for a noun or a noun for an adverb	Lord Angelo dukes it well.--- <i>Measure for Measure</i> , 3.2.100
litotes	deliberate understatement or denial of the contrary	He is no fool.--- <i>The Arte of English Poesie</i> , 184
hyperbole	exaggerated or extravagant statement used to make a strong impression, but not intended to be taken literally	His legs bestrid the ocean, his rear'd arm/ Crested the world, his voice was propertied/ As all the tuned spheres...--- <i>Antony and Cleopatra</i> , 5.2.82

Metaplastic Figures	Definition	Example
prosthesis	addition of letters to the beginning of a word	I all alone bewEEP my outcast state.---Shakespeare <i>Sonnets</i> , 29
aphaersis	omission of letters from the beginning of a word	Use every man after his desert, and who should ' scape whipping?--- <i>Hamlet</i> , 2.2.561
epenthesis	addition of letters to the middle of a word	Lie blist'ring fore the visitating sun.--- <i>Two Noble Kinsmen</i> , 1.1.146
syncope	omission of letters from the middle of a word	Thou thy worldly task hast done,/ Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages. <i>Cymbeline</i> , 4.2.258
paragoge	addition of letters to the end of a word	I can call spirits from the vasty deep.--- <i>Henry IV, Part I</i> , 3.1.52
apocope	omission of letters from the end of a word	I am Sir Oracle,/ And when I ope my lips let no dog bark!--- <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> , 1.1.93
antisthecon	substitution of a letter or sound for another within a word	Or, ere they meet, in me, O nature, cesse! --- <i>All's Well That Ends Well</i> , 5.3.75
metathesis	transposition of a letter out of its normal order in a word	With liver burning hot. Frevent. --- <i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i> , 2.1.122

Figures of Omission	Definition	Example
ellipsis	omission of a word	And he to England shall along with you.--- <i>Hamlet</i> , 3.3.1
zeugma	an ellipsis of a verb, in which one verb is used to govern several clauses	How Tarquin wronged me, I Collatine.--- <i>The Rape of Lucrece</i> , 819
scesis onomaton	omission of the verb of a sentence	A maid in conversation chaste, in speech mild, in countenance cheerful, in behavior modest ...[etc.]- --- <i>The Garden of Eloquence</i>
anapodoton	omission of a clause	Haply you shall not see me more; or if,/ A mangled Shadow.--- <i>Antony and Cleopatra</i> , 4.2.26.
aposiopesis	stopping a sentence in midcourse so that the statement is unfinished	He said you were, I dare not tell you plaine:/ For words once out, never returne againe.--- <i>The Arte of English Poesie</i> , 139
occupatio	When the orator feigneth and maketh as though he would say nothing in some matter, when, notwithstanding he speaketh most of all, or when he saith something: in saying he will not say it.--- <i>The Garden of Eloquence</i> , 130	I will make no mention of his drunken banquets nightly, and his watching with bawds, dicers, whore masters. I will not name his losses, his luxury, and staining of his honesty.--- <i>The Garden of Eloquence</i> , 131

Figures of Repetition (words)	Definition	Example
epizeuxis	emphatic repetition of a word with no other words between	Reputation, reputation, reputation! O! I have lost my reputation.--- <i>Othello</i> , 2.3.264
polyptoton	repetition of the same word or root in different grammatical functions or forms	Disturb his hours of rest with restless trances,/ Afflict him in his bed with bedrid groans;/ Let there bechance him pitiful mischances ,/ To make him moan but pity not his moans .--- <i>The Rape of Lucrece</i> , 974-977
antanaclasis	repetition of a word, but in two different meanings	Whoever hath her wish, thou has thy Will ,/ And Will to boot, and Will in overplus---Shakespeare <i>Sonnets</i> , 135
anaphora	repetition of a word at the beginning of a clause, line, or sentence	Mad world! Mad kings! Mad composition!--- <i>King John</i> , 2.1.561
epistrophe	repetition of a word at the end of a clause, line, or sentence	I'll have my bond !/ Speak not against my bond !/ I have sworn an oath that I will have my bond .--- <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> , 3.3.4
symploce	repetition of both beginnings and endings	Most true that I must fair Fidessa love,/ Most true that fair Fidessa cannot love./ Most true that I do feel the pains of love,/ Most true that I am captive unto love.--- <i>Fidessa</i> , 62
epanalepsis	repetition of the beginning at the end	Blood hath bought blood , and blows have answer'd blows ;/ Strength match'd with strength , and power confronted power .--- <i>King John</i> , 2.1.329-30
anadiplosis	repetition of the end of a line or clause at the next beginning	For I have loved long, I crave reward / Reward me not unkindly: think on kindness ,/ Kindness becommeth those of high regard / Regard with clemency a poor man's blindness--- <i>Fidessa</i> , 16
gradatio	repeating anadiplosis	My conscience hath a thousand several tongues ,/ And every tongue brings in a several tale ,/ And every tale condemns me for a villain.--- <i>Richard III</i> , 5.3.194
congeries	a heaping together and piling up of many words that have a similar meaning	But now I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd, bound in / To saucy doubts and fears.--- <i>Macbeth</i> , 3.4.24
antimetabole	repetition of words, in successive clauses, in reverse grammatical order; a chiasmus on the level of words (AB; BA)	Thy sea within a puddle's womb is hearsed,/ and not the puddle in thy sea dispersed.--- <i>The Rape of Lucrece</i> , 657-658
pleonasm	the needless repetition of words; a tautology on the level of a phrase	Sober he seemed, and very sagely sad,/ And to the ground his eyes were lowly bent,/ Simple in shew, and voyde of malice bad ...--- <i>The Faerie Queene</i> , Book 1, 1.29

Figures of Repetition (clauses and ideas)	Definition	Example
auxesis	arrangement of clauses or sentences in ascending order of importance	I may, I must, I can, I will, I do/ Leave following that which it is gain to miss.--- <i>Astrophil and Stella</i> , 47
isocolon	repetition of phrases or clauses of equal length and corresponding grammatical structure	I speak Spanish to God, Italian to women, French to men, and German to my horse.---Charles V
tautology	needless repetition of the same idea in different words; pleonasm on the level of a sentence or sentences	If you have a friend, keep your friend, for an old friend is to be preferred before a new friend, this I say to you as your friend.--- <i>The Garden of Eloquence</i> , 49
chiasmus	reversal of grammatical structures or ideas in successive phrases or clauses, which do not necessarily involve a repetition of words	But O, what damned minutes tells he o'er/ Who dotes, yet doubts; suspects, yet strongly loves. --- <i>Othello</i> , 3.3.169
antithesis	repetition of clauses or idea by negation	A bliss in proof; and prov'd, a very woe;/ Before, a joy propos'd; behind a dream.---Shakespeare <i>Sonnets</i> , 129
periphrasis	the replacement of a single word by several which together have the same meaning; a substitution of more words for less	While memory holds a seat/ In this distracted globe...--- <i>Hamlet</i> , 1.4.96

Figures of Unusual Word Order	Definition	Example
anastrophe	arrangement by reversal of ordinary word order, usually confined to the transposition of two words only	Figures pedantical--- <i>Love's Labour's Lost</i> , 5.2.407
hyperbaton	departure from ordinary word order	Yet I'll not shed her blood,/ Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow...--- <i>Othello</i> , 5.2.3
hysteron proteron	reversal of temporal order	My dame that bred me up and bare me in her wombe.--- <i>The Arte of English Poesie</i> , 142
hypallage	a reversal of words which seems to change the sense	Open the day , and see if it be the window .--- <i>The Garden of Eloquence</i>
parenthesis	a word, phrase, or sentence inserted as an aside in a sentence complete by itself	But now my Deere (for so love makes me to call you still)/ That love I say, that lucklesse love, that works me all this ill.--- <i>The Arte of English Poesie</i> , 141

Figures of Thought	Definition	Example
adynaton	the impossibility of expressing oneself adequately to the topic	Words cannot convey how much your letters have delighted me.--- <i>Elementorum rhetorices libri</i> , 44f
aporia	true or feigned doubt or deliberation about an issue	Whether he took them from his fellows more impudently, gave them to an harlot more lasciviously, removed them from the Roman people more wickedly or altered them more presumptuously, I cannot well declare.--- <i>The Garden of Eloquence</i> , 109
correctio	a correction or revision of previous words	Shameful it is--ay, if the fact be known...--- <i>The Rape of Lucrece</i> , 239
prosopopoeia	representing an imaginary or absent person as speaking or acting; attributing life, speech or inanimate qualities to dumb or inanimate objects	With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the skies,/ How silently, and with how wan a face!--- <i>Astrophil and Stella</i> , 31
apostrophe	a diversion of discourse from the topic at hand to addressing some person or thing, either present or absent	Within a month.../ She married--O most wicked speed: to post/ With such dexterity to incestuous sheets...--- <i>Hamlet</i> , 1.2.153

ambiguous, adj., of double meaning

ambigram, n., word or phrase that can be read or viewed in more than one way, or from more than a single vantage point

anagram, n. word or phrase made by arranging in different order the letters of another word or phrase, e.g. eat, tea

analogy, n. agreement or likeness in certain respects

fractal, n. , a mathematically recursive design, continuing on infinitely

homonym, n. word of the same form as another but of a different sense

paragon, n. , model of excellence

paragram, n. pun, play on words

paronym, n. word with the same sound but different spelling and meaning, e.g. mote, moat

palindrome, n. , a word or phrase that reads the same forwards and backwards, such as "Able was I ere I saw Elba" or "A man, a plan, a canal -- Panama"

rebus, n. riddle in which words are represented by pictures standing for the syllables

recursion, n. , pattern repeating back on it self, into infinity.

tessellation, n. , mosaic-like repeating pattern