

## Outcome 2

As I stated in my last post, after passing this course, there are several things that your lecturers expect you to be able to do. These skills are what lecturers are referring to when they write about course outcomes. The expected outcomes for ENG2602 are listed on the page of your study guide marked 'v'. This week, to help you understand what you need to do to pass this course, I will be going through your course outcomes and trying to explain them a bit more fully. There are four course outcomes, and I will discuss them one by one.

In my last post, I explained Outcome One. In this post, I will be focussing on Outcome Two.

Your study guide says the following about Outcome Two:

**Outcome 2:** students discuss the use of *figurative language* in a variety of texts. We need to be sure in our minds what figurative language *is*, and what it *does*. Why is it being used?

### What does this mean?

Figurative language is language that does not convey meaning in a straightforward way. It changes the usual meanings of words or sometimes their usual order to achieve a new, different kind of meaning.

What you need to be able to do is:

- distinguish between different kinds of figurative language, such as similes, metaphors, metonymy, alliteration and personification; and
- explain why the figurative language is being used.

You can divide figurative language into tropes and schemes.

### Tropes

Tropes are examples of figurative language in which words are used in a way that shifts their meaning from our ordinary understanding of them to a new, different understanding.

There is a list of tropes that you should understand and learn to recognise and explain in your study guide. This is the list:

? Metaphor

? Simile

? Personification

? Metonymy

? Hyperbole

? Irony

? Oxymoron

? Understatement

(If you would like to get some useful definitions of the types of figurative speech listed above, try going to <https://literarydevices.net/figurative-language/> You can also find some useful examples on this site.)

### **For example:**

If you say ‘the cat sat on the mat’, you are using normal language to convey a straightforward idea: that a furry four-legged animal is sitting on the carpet.

BUT if you say ‘you let the cat out of the bag’, you are using figurative language (in this case, a metaphor) to convey an idea which is not straightforwardly evident in what you have said. You might have mentioned a cat and a bag, but what you mean is that someone has told a secret.

Think about why someone would say ‘you let the cat out of the bag’ instead of ‘you told a secret’. What does the metaphor involving the cat convey that the simple phrase ‘you told a secret’ does not?

If you imagine a cat being let out of a bag, you probably imagine the cat being quite angry. Cats do not like being forced into bags, so the cat would probably be hissing, biting and scratching. Thus, the idea of a cat getting out of a bag conveys how telling a secret that should not be told might lead to people becoming angry and fighting, much like furious cats would do. Understanding this and explaining it is part of the process of *analysing* figurative language which you need to learn.

## Schemes

A scheme is created when words or phrases are shifted from an ordinary pattern into some other, more interesting and striking pattern.

In your study guide, there is a list of schemes that you should understand and learn to recognise and explain. This is the list:

? Repetition

? Anaphora

? Alliteration

? Parallelism

? Antithesis

? Ellipsis

? Parenthesis

(If you would like to get some useful definitions of the types of figurative speech listed above, try going to <https://literarydevices.net/figurative-language/> You can also find some useful examples on this site.)

### **For example:**

Look at this extract from *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger:

It wasn't too bad when the sun was out, but twice--twice-- we were there when it started to rain. It was awful. It rained on his lousy tombstone, and it rained on the grass on his stomach. It rained all over the place.

Usually if a person wanted to say that there was heavy rain, they would just use the last sentence of this extract: 'It rained all over the place'. Here, Salinger repeats the words 'It rained' three times. This is an example of repetition. To analyse it, you should think about what its effect is. Why does Salinger use the repetition? One possible simple answer is that he is trying to emphasize just how miserable the rain

is. Another answer is that repeating the words 'It rained' gives the reader the feeling that he or she is surrounded by rain, and makes the reader feel the speaker's misery. One could also say that repeating the words 'It rained' creates the impression that more and more rain is pouring down, and pounding the dead Andy's body further and further into the ground.

You should also work through pages 45 to 54 in your study guide, as these pages are focused on figurative language.