Tropes
(Stylistic Devices)

1. **Metaphor** (from the Greek "transfer") is a trope that directly compares seemingly unrelated subjects. It is a figure of speech that compares two or more things not using like or as. In the simplest case, this takes the form:

   X - is - Y

   Examples of metaphor:

   „All the world's a stage,
   And all the men and women merely players;
   They have their exits and their entrances;” (William Shakespeare, As You Like It)

2. **Metonymy** is a figure of speech in which a thing or concept is not called by its own name, but by the name of something intimately associated with that thing or concept.

   Examples:

   Crown. (For the power of a king.)
   The White House. (Referring to the American administration.)
   Dish. (To refer an entire plate of food.)
   The Pentagon. (For the Department of Defense and the offices of the U.S. Armed Forces.)
   Pen. (For the written word.)
   Sword - (For military force.)
   Hollywood. (For US Cinema.)
   Hand. (For help.)

3. **Personification** is a figure of speech in which human characteristics are attributed to an abstract quality, animal, or inanimate object.

   Examples

   Notice the use of personification in William Blake's poem below:

   Two Sunflowers Move in the Yellow Room.
"Ah, William, we're weary of weather,"
said the sunflowers, shining with dew.
"Our traveling habits have tired us.
Can you give us a room with a view?"

They arranged themselves at the window
and counted the steps of the sun,
and they both took root in the carpet
where the topaz tortoises run. (William Blake)

4. A **simile** is a figure of speech comparing two different things, often introduced
   with the word "like" or "as". It takes the form of:

   X is (not) like Y

   X is (not) as Y

   X is (not) similar to Y

   Examples of simile:

   He fights like a lion.

   He swims as fast as a fish.

   He slithers like a snake.

   "My dad was a mechanic by trade when he was in the Army / When he got the tools
   out, he was like a surgeon."

5. **Synecdoche** is a figure of speech in which a part of something is used to
   represent the whole or the whole of something is used to represent part of it. It is
   considered to be a special kind of metonymy.

   Types and examples of synecdoche

   Part of something is used to refer to the whole thing -
   A hundred head of cattle (using the part head to refer to the whole animal)

   The whole of a thing is used to represent part of it -
   The world treated him badly (using the world to refer to part of the world)

   A specific class of thing is used to refer to a larger, more general class -
   A bug (used to refer to any kind of insect or arachnid, even if it is not a true bug)

   A general class of thing is used to refer to a smaller, more specific class -
   The good book (referring to the Bible or the Qur’an)
A material is used to refer to an object composed of that material -
Glasses or steel (referring to spectacles or sword)

A container is used to refer to its contents -
A barrel (referring to a barrel of oil)

6. **Alliteration** is the repetition of initial sounds in neighbouring words. Alliteration draws attention to the phrase and is often used for emphasis. The initial consonant sound is usually repeated in two neighbouring words although sometimes the repetition occurs also in words that are not neighbours.

Examples:

sweet smell of success,
a dime a dozen,
bigger and better,
jump for joy

share a continent but not a country

7. **Apostrophe** is an exclamatory rhetorical figure of speech, when a speaker or writer breaks off and directs speech to an imaginary person or abstract quality or idea.

“Hello darkness, my old friend
I’ve come to talk with you again.” (Paul Simon, “The Sounds of Silence”)

8. **Ellipsis** (or elliptical construction) is the omission of a word or words. It refers to constructions in which words are left out of a sentence but the sentence can still be understood.

Ellipsis helps us avoid a lot of redundancy. In fact there is a lot of redundancy in language and it can be surprising how much can be left out without losing much meaning, particularly when there are contextual clues as to the real meaning.

Some examples of ellipsis are listed below:

Lacy can do something about the problem, but I don’t know what (she can do.)

She can help with the housework; Nancy can (help with the housework), too.

9. **Irony** is a figure of speech in which there is a contradiction of expectation between what is said what is really meant. It is characterized by an incongruity, a contrast, between reality and appearance. There are three types of irony: verbal, dramatic and situational.
Types of irony

**Verbal irony:**
It is a contrast between what is said and what is meant.

**Dramatic irony:**
It occurs when the audience or the reader knows more than the character about events. In other words, what the character thinks is true is incongruous with what the audience knows.

**Situational irony:**
This refers to the contrast between the actual result of a situation and what was intended or expected to happen.

Examples of irony

His argument was as clear as mud.

The two identical twins were arguing. One of them told the other: "You're ugly"

10. An **oxymoron** is a figure of speech that combines incongruous or contradictory terms. The plural is oxymorons or oxymora.

Examples:

An oxymoron can be made of an adjective and a noun:

Dark light

Deafening silence

Living dead

Oxymoron can also be a combination of a noun and a verb.

The silence whistles

11. A **pun** involves a word play which suggests two or more meanings, by exploiting multiple meanings of words, or of similar-sounding words, for an intended humorous or rhetorical effect. Puns are constructions used in jokes and idioms whose usage and meaning are entirely local to a particular language and its culture. To be understood, puns require a large vocabulary.

Examples:

These are examples of puns:

"Atheism is a non-prophet institution"

The word "prophet" is put in place of its homophone "profit", altering the common phrase "non-profit institution".
"Question: Why do we still have troops in Germany?
Answer: To keep the Russians in Czech" - Joke.
This joke relies on the aural ambiguity of the homophones "check" and "Czech"