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The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. Imagery refers to the trove of descriptive words and evocative phrases that writers carefully select to stir the five senses. By tapping into sensory details, imagery plants vivid perceptions and sparks concrete ideas to unfold inside the readers imagination. Like an impressionist painting, skillful imagery brushes each scene with dashes of color and texture using the precise perfect words to translate vision into feeling. Powerful imagery renders an immediate sensory experience for readers. With vivid specificity, it helps conjure textures we can nearly reach out and touch, striking visuals that project cinematic scenes, resonant sounds that echo, tantalizing scents wafting right to our nostrils, and tastes so palpable our mouths water. Through the use of imagery, great writers manifest sensations so real and tangibly there we forget words on a page for a moment as fiction comes alive, immersing us within dynamic and nuanced imaginary worlds. Language that appeals to the sense of sight, conjuring images of colors, shapes, and other visual details. Examples: a) The golden hue of a sunset.b) The steep rocky cliffs of a coastline.c) The intricate embroidery on a gown. This type of imagery evokes auditory sensations and sounds for readers to imagine hearing. Examples: a) The scream of a violin.b) The pitter patter of rain on cobblestone streets.c) The baying of hounds in the night. Olfactory imagery taps into the sense of smell, describing scents and odors. Examples: a) The acrid smoke of a snuffed candle.b) The sweet aroma of lilacs in springtime.c) The salty fragrance of an ocean breeze. The language that conveys taste sensations, depicting flavors that readers can almost experience on their tongues. Examples: a) The tangy tartness of a green apple.b) The spice and heat of a simmering curry.c) The smooth sweet creaminess of chocolate ice cream. It creates textural and sensory details that readers can imagine feeling, as if touching the described surfaces, textures, and sensations. Examples: a) The plush velvet nap of an elegant dress.b) The slick smooth surface of a stone.c) The prickly needles of a pinecone.d) The chill bumps on ones arm from an autumn night mist. Example#1 I wandered lonely as a cloudThat floats on high oer vales and hills,When all at once I saw a crowd,A host, of golden daffodils,Beside the lake, beneath the trees,Fluttering and dancing in the breeze. The poet describes himself walking alone and feeling as free and detached as a cloud drifting above the valleys and hills. This creates a dreamy, peaceful mood. Suddenly he comes upon a field full of daffodils dancing in the wind beside a lake and trees. The words golden, fluttering and dancing create vivid sensory images of the bright yellow flowers blowing gently in the breeze. The reader can easily picture them and almost see them moving. So in just a few lines, Wordsworth uses visual imagery to take the readers from the lonely wandering cloud to the lively field of golden daffodils that the poet stumbles upon. The contrast and contrast make a vivid mental picture for the reader slips into the hazy tone of the poem from pensive solitude to surprise joy. Example#2 And the silken, sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtainTrilled me a dittyWith fainter whispers never fell beforePoe sets an ominous mood by focusing on what the narrator hears the soft, whispery sounds of the purple curtains rustling. The alliteration of silken, sad, uncertain makes the reader tune into the hushed sound effects. The curtains thrilling and filling the narrator with unfamiliar fright uses auditory imagery to foreshadow impending doom right before the raven arrives. The readers can imagine the narrator frozen in suspense, listening to those creepy rustling curtains that create fantastic terrors about what will happen next. Poe relies on sound-based imagery not visuals here to convey emotion and make us sense the narrators growing unease through the simple sensory description of curtains blowing in the breeze. The scary mood is built just by focusing intently on menacing sounds and the terror they evoke. Example#3 The touch of earth is soft,And soft as velvet lies the meadow path we walk;He holds my hand and laughs,To feel how soft the grass is. The poet uses tactile imagery, meaning descriptions that appeal to the sense of touch. Phrases like touch of earth is soft and comparing the meadow path to soft as velvet allow us to nearly feel the soft grass and dirt underfoot. Terms like velvet also add a plush, cushy texture we can imagine. The soft sensations continue with the man in the scene laughing and holding the poets hand tightly to share how wonderfully smooth the earth feels beneath their bare feet. The imagery centers on tangible textures the lovers relax in rather than sights or smells. Example#4 And the owls with their monotonous criesWhich are ominous grown to despise,And the loud flapping batsFrom the depths of dim haunted flatsThe stanza uses sounds to create an ominous mood. It mentions the owls monotonous cries. The readers can imagine these repetitive hoots going on and on, becoming annoying and even scary. Connecting the hoots to being ominous and something to despise makes them seem like they are predicting bad things coming. We also hear loud bats flapping their wings as they come out of dim haunted flats. So in addition to the creepy owl sounds, we now have these bats noisily appearing from spooky areas. Between the unsettling hoots and the loud fluttering, the stanza creates an atmosphere of eeriness and unease just through auditory imagery making us listeners picture these unnerving nighttime sounds that suggest frightening things lurking in the darkness. Rather than describing visuals or smells, the poet relies on sound elements to make us imagine were there hearing the ominous noises. Example#5 I taste a liquor never brewedFrom tankards scooped in pearls;Not all the Frankfort BerriesYield such an alcohol! This stanza uses taste imagery to evoke a sensation we cant literally experience. When the poet talks about tasting a liquor never brewed, it enables the readers to imagine some phantom drink that exists beyond physical reality. Instead of describing an actual drink from actual tankards or berries, the taste is intangible -something magically scooped like liquor but not made from real ingredients. Those who tasted alcohol can visualize how this mysterious drink might hit our tongue even though it couldnt be brewed from a known process. The stanza doesnt rely on sight, sound, touch or smell. Rather, taste imagery dominates as we picture this elusive flavor. The act of tasting grounds the people even when the flavor comes from an unearthly pearl tankard rather than a physical one. By activating taste sensations through imagery, the poet transports the readers to new imaginative vistas where they can conceive of sampling flavors beyond ordinary human experience. Example#6 There was a soft and summer windA-blowing from the land of snow,The white and glimmering drifts of heavenBlew down the cold and wintry glow. The stanza describes a wind that mixes together hot and cold. When it talks about a soft and summer wind coming from the land of snow, the readers get this image of a warm summer breeze carrying cold air as if blowing from winter into summer. The white and glimmering drifts of heaven make the cold seem beautiful. But that winter cold clashes with the gentle summer wind. In our minds, we can picture gusts of snow swirling together with drafts of warm air. Using summer and winter imagery together evokes this sensation of impossible hot and cold fused winds. It imagines the feeling of an arctic chill within a heavenly summer breeze opposites mingling. The language takes the readers into a fantasy place where soft warmth transports icy flakes in a way that could never happen in real life. The stanza makes the reader visualize and almost feel this unreal hot, cold, gentle yet snowy wind. The creative imagery constructs an imaginative experience through contrasts. Imagery Examples in Poetry Figurative language refers to words and phrases that go beyond their literal meaning to create vivid sensory images. Examples of figurative language that rely on imagery include metaphors, similes, personification, and descriptive adjectives. Using figurative language is a hallmark way for writers to incorporate imagery into their works. Sensory details refer to descriptive words and phrases that engage the five senses sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. By tapping into sensory details, writers can allow readers to perceive the colors, textures, sounds, scents and flavors being depicted vividly in their imagination. Vivid sensory details are building blocks used to construct strong imagery. Read also: vasaleks / iStock / Getty Images Plus Imagery is used in poetry to help the writing appeal to the senses. Imagery is one of the seven categories of figurative language. Imagery intensifies the impact of the poet's language as he shows us with his words rather than just telling us what he feels. Song lyrics are also full of imagery. This is an excerpt from "Preludes," an imagery poem by T. S. Eliot. This is an excellent example of visual imagery and auditory imagery. You can almost see and hear the horse steaming and stamping and smell the steaks:The winter evening settles downWith smell of steaks in passageways.Six o'clock.The burnt-out ends of smoky days.And now a gusty shower wrapsThe grimy scrapsOf withered leaves about your feetAnd newspapers from vacant lots.The showers beatOn broken blinds and chimney-pots,And at the corner of the streetA lonely cab-horse steams and stamps.And then the lighting of the lamps. Alfred Tennyson was another poet who made great use of visual imagery. See if you can get a clear picture of the summer night he describes in this poem "Summer Night:"Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white:Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk:Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font.The firely wakens: waken thou with me.Now droops the milk-white peacock like a ghost,And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.Now lies the Earth all Dana to the stars,And all thy heart lies open unto me.Now slides the silent meteor on, and leavesA shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.Now folds the lily all her sweetness up, and slips into the bosom of the lake.So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip into my bosom and be lost in me. Next is an excerpt from "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" by William Wordsworth. The first and last stanzas show a progression of the poet's emotions using visual imagery. I wandered lonely as a cloudThat floats on high o'er vales and hills,When all at once I saw a crowd,A host, of golden daffodils;Beside the lake, beneath the trees,Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.For oft, when on my couch I lieIn vacant or in pensive mood,They flash upon that inward eyeWhich is the bliss of solitude;And then my heart with pleasure fills,And dances with the daffodils. This famous poem by Theodore Rotkhe is an excellent example of olfactory and tactile imagery with plenty of visual imagery thrown in for good measure. The effect is powerful.The whiskey on your breath Could make a small boy dizzy;But I hung on like death: Such waltzing was not easy.We romped until the pans Slid from the kitchen shelf;My mother's countenance Could not unfrown itself.The hand that held my wrist Was battered on one knuckle;At every step you missedMy right ear scaped a buckle.You beat time on my head With a palm caked hard by dirt,Then waltzed me off to bed Still clinging to your shirt. "This Is Just to Say" is an amazing example of gustatory imagery or imagery involving taste. Theres more going on beneath the surface of this poem, but the vivid sensory details draws the reader in. In "Man Versus Pepper," Roper vividly describes one man's experience with extra spicy food. One sniff gives a clue of the heat within.First bite feels like swallowing a lighted blow torch.And tears stream from his eyes like a flash floodAs the dying ghost pepper delivers its savage revenge.And finally, "Kissed by Snow" offers a wintry vibe.Standing in darkness with face upturned asFrosty, feathery stars drift down from the skyAnd land like gentle kisses from cold lipsOn my cheeks, my nose, my lips and closed eyes. In addition to the different types of imagery seen in these poetry examples, there are six other devices that a poet uses to make the language of his poems figurative. The reader's senses are heightened, and he will see things the way the poet does. These are the other types of figurative language:Simile - A simile is used to compare two things using the words like and as.Metaphor - A metaphor sounds like a false statement, until you realize the similarities between the two things being compared.Alliteration - In alliteration, the first consonant sound is repeated in several words.Personification - Personification is giving human characteristics to objects, animals, or ideas. Onomatopoeia - Onomatopoeia is the use of words that sound mimic sounds, or sound like what they mean.Hyperbole - Hyperbole is a ridiculous exaggeration that can be funny and makes a point.Imagery helps poetry appeal to the senses as they describe living things or inanimate objects, more so than other categories of figurative language. This makes imagery one of the most powerful ways to write a poem that speaks to your writer. Ultimately, imagery is about sharing perspective. If you describe something vividly, your reader must take the perspective of the speaker in your poem. The sensory details make the audience feel as if they are present in the situation you are sharing, allowing them to deeply feel the emotion you describe as well. Imagery is a literary device that refers to the use of figurative language to evoke a sensory experience or create a picture with words for a reader. By utilizing effective descriptive language and figures of speech, writers appeal to a readers senses of sight, taste, smell, touch, and sound, as well as internal emotion and feelings. Therefore, imagery is not limited to visual representations or mental images, but also includes physical sensations and internal emotions. For example, in his novelThe Scarlet Letter, Nathaniel Hawthorne utilizes imagery as a literary device to create a sensation for the reader as a means of understanding the love felt by the protagonists, Hester Prynne and Dimmesdale. Love, whether newly born or aroused from a desolate slumber, must always create something filling the heart so full of radiance, that it overflows upon the outward world.By using descriptive language in an effective and unique way, Hawthorne evokes feelings and allows the reader an internal emotional response in reaction to his description of love. This image is especially poignant and effective for readers of this novel since Hesters love, in the story, results in darkness, shame, and isolation,the opposite of sunshine and radiance. However, Hawthornes imagery appeals to the readers understanding of love and subsequent empathy for Hesters emotions and actions, despite her transgression of societal norms, morals, and laws.Common Examples of Imagery in Everyday SpeechPeople frequently use imagery as a means of communicating feelings, thoughts, and ideas through descriptive language. Here are some common examples of imagery in everyday speech:The autumn leaves are a blanket on the ground.Her lips tasted as sweet as sugar.His words felt like a dagger in my heart.My head is pounding like a drum.The kittens fur is milky.The siren turned into a whisper as it ended.His coat felt like a velvet curtain.The houses look like frosted cakes in winter.The light under the door looked buttery.I came inside because the house smells like a chocolate brownie.Types of Poetic ImageryFor poetic imagery, there are seven primary types. These types of imagery often feature figures of speech such as similes and metaphors to make comparisons. Overall, poetic imagery provides sensory details to create clear and vibrant descriptions. This appeals to a readers imagination and emotions as well as their senses. Here are the main types of poetic imagery:Visual: appeals to the sense of sight through the description of color, light, size, pattern, etc.Auditory: appeals to the sense of hearing or sound by including melodic sounds, silence, harsh noises, and even onomatopoeia.Gustatory: appeals to the sense of taste by describing whether something is sweet, salty, savory, spicy, or sour.Tactile: appeals to the sense of touch by describing how something physically feels, such as its temperature, texture, or other sensation.Olfactory: appeals to the sense of smell by describing something's fragrance or odor.Kinesthetic: appeals to a readers sense of motion or movement through describing the sensations of moving or the movements of an object.Organic: appeals to and communicates internal sensations, feelings, and emotions, such as fatigue, thirst, fear, love, loneliness, despair, etc.Famous Examples of Imagery in Shakespearean WorksWriters use imagery to create pictures in the minds of readers, often with words and phrases that are uniquely descriptive and emotionally charged to emphasize an idea. William Shakespeares works feature imagery as a literary device for readers and audiences as a means to enhance their experience of his plays. Shakespeares artistic use of language and imagery is considered to be some of the greatest in literature. Here are some famous examples of imagery in Shakespearean works:My bounty is as boundless as the sea, My love as boundless as the sky. Romeo and JulietTheres daggers in mens smiles.MachethSigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,Men were deceivers ever,One foot in sea and one on shore,To one thing constant never,Much Ado About NothingI be waspish, best beware my sting.The Taming of the ShrewGood-night, sweet prince;And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.HamletLovers and madmen have such seething brains,Such shaping fantasies, that apprehendMore than cool reason ever comprehends.A Midsummer Nights DreamWe are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep.The TempestAnd thus I clothe my naked villainyWith odd ends stoln out of holy writ;And seem a saint, when most I play the devil.Romeo IIIBy heaven, me thinks it were an easy leap,To pluck bright honour from the pale-faced moon;Henry IVIf music be the food of love, play on,Give me excess of it; that surfeiting,The appetite may sicken, and so die.The Twelfth NightWriting ImageryWriters use imagery to evoke emotion in readers. In this way, the readers understanding of the poetic subject, setting, plot, characters, etc., is deepened and they have a sense of how to feel about it. Ideally, as a literary device, imagery should enhance a literary work. Unfortunately, some writers try to use this literary device too often, which can lessen the impact of the description and figurative language. For imagery to be effective and significant, whether in poetry or a story, it should add meaning to the literary work. Overuse of imagery can feel tedious for readers and limit their access to and understanding of the writers purpose. Therefore, its essential for writers to balance presenting information in a straightforward manner and using image as a literary device.Difference between Literal Imagery and Figurative ImageryThere is a slight difference in literal and figurative imagery. Literal imagery, as the name applies, is near in meanings and almost the same thing or exactly what the description says. For example, color like the red rose implies the same thing. However, in figurative imagery, a thing is often not what it implies. There is often the use of hyperbole, simile, or metaphors that construct an image that could be different from the actual thing or person. For example, his cries moved the sky is not an example of literal imagery but of figurative imagery as the skies do not move with cries.Tips to Analyze ImageryAnalysis of imagery is often done in poetry and short stories. However, imagery is present in every literary work where description becomes of some significance. Whenever there is a description in a literary work, a reader first analyzes different figures of speech such as metaphors, similes, personifications, images, and hyperbole, etc. There are four major steps in analyzing imagery in a specific description.1. Identify the type of figures of speech, types of images, and their roles in the description.2. Compare and contrast the types of images and their accuracy in the description.3. Compare and contrast the role of the specific figures of speech, their meanings, their roles, and their end product.4. Critique the description and see how it demonstrates its actual meanings in the context and setting. Use of Imagery in SentencesWans sweaty gym clothes left a stale odor in the locker room; so they had to keep the windows open.The tasty, salty broth soothed her sore throat as Simran ate the warm soup.Glittering white, the blanket of snow-covered everything in sight and also blocked the street.The tree bark was rough against the deers skin but it did satisfy its itch.Kids could hear the popping and crackling as their mom dropped the bacon into the frying pan, and soon the salty, greasy smell wafted toward me.Examples of Imagery in LiteratureThough imagery is often associated with poetry, it is an effective literary device in all forms of writing. 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