

FIGURES OF SPEECH BASED ON OPPOSITE IDEAS

ANTITHESIS

- Antithesis is a figure of speech where opposite ideas are brought together in a sentence for poetic effect.

1. He toiled all **day** and he slept all **night**.

(Contrasting words ‘day’ and ‘night’ are brought together.)

2. Madhu is **disciplined** in her professional life but **disorganised** in her personal life. (Contrasting words ‘disciplined’ and ‘disorganised’ are brought together.)

PARADOX

- Paradox is a statement or a general truth which may sound absurd or illogical, but on deeper analysis, it may make complete sense.
- Paradox is similar to oxymoron because both yoke together contrasting ideas.
- But the former stands for a rule or a truth which is rooted in reality.

1. When it comes to speaking, less is more.

(The statement ‘less is more’ sounds absurd. If one were to analyse it, it means brevity of speech can accomplish more than verbosity.)

2. Child is the father of man.

(The statement sounds illogical if one were to interpret it literally. Figuratively, it means that childhood is an important stage where man imbibes qualities which will become synonymous with his personality in adulthood.)

IRONY

- **Verbal irony** is a figure of speech where the speaker says the exact opposite of what he or she intends.
- Some writers employ verbal irony to indirectly criticize or to taunt.
- **Dramatic irony** is a figure of speech where the spectator or the reader knows more about the outcome of the story than the character in a film, novel or play.
- **Situational irony** is where there is a deviance from what is usually expected from the situation.

1. Suresh is the busiest man I know. Between gambling and sleeping, he barely finds time for work.

(By saying he barely finds time to work, the writer intends to criticise Suresh who is whiling away his time sleeping and gambling.)

2. The most discreet person in the office is Shalini who cannot help discussing sordid details of her private life with anyone who comes her way.

(By calling her 'The most discreet person', the speaker goes on to narrate Shalini's indiscretion.)

CHIASMUS

A chiasmus is a two-part sentence or phrase, where the second part is a mirror image of the first. This does not mean that the second part mirrors the same exact words that appear in the first part—that is a different rhetorical device called antimetabole—but rather that concepts and parts of speech are mirrored.

1. One should eat to live, not live to eat"

2. "All for one and one for all"

3. "They take good care of their trucks, because their trucks take good care of them"

4. "We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us"

