**Defining Figurative Language**

Figurative language is language that uses words or expressions with a meaning that is different from the literal interpretation. When a writer uses **literal language,** he or she is simply stating the facts as they are. **Figurative language**, in comparison, uses exaggerations or alterations to make a particular linguistic point.

Figurative language is very common in poetry, but is also used in prose and nonfiction writing as well.

There are many different types of figurative language. For example, it often includes the use of a specific type of word or word meaning:

* **Metaphor:** A metaphor is a comparison made between things which are essentially not alike. One example of a metaphor would be to say, “Nobody invites Edward to parties because he is a wet blanket.”
* **Simile:** A simile is like a metaphor and often uses the words like or as. One example of a simile would be to say, “Jamie runs as fast as the wind.”
* **Personification:** When something that is not human is given human-like qualities, this is known as personification. An example of personification would be to say, “The leaves danced in the wind on the cold October afternoon.”
* **Hyperbole:** Exaggerating, often in a humorous way, to make a particular point is known as hyperbole. One of example of hyperbole would be to say, “My eyes widened at the sight of the mile-high ice cream cones we were having for dessert.”
* **Symbolism:** Symbolism occurs when a noun which has meaning in itself is used to represent something entirely different. One example of symbolism would be to use an image of the American flag to represent patriotism and a love for one’s country.