**Figurative** language is the opposite of **literal** language. Literal language means exactly what it says. Figurative language means something different to (and usually more than) what it says on the surface:

* He ran **fast**. (literal)
* He ran **like the wind**. (figurative)

1. [**Alliteration**](http://grammar.about.com/od/terms/g/alliteration.htm)  
   The repetition of an initial consonant sound.

*Don't delay dawns disarming display. Dusk demands daylight.* - Paul Mccan

*Sara’s seven sisters slept soundly in sand*

1. [**Apostrophe**](http://grammar.about.com/od/ab/g/apostrophe.htm)  
   Breaking off discourse to address some absent person or thing, some abstract quality, an inanimate object, or a nonexistent character.
2. [**Assonance**](http://grammar.about.com/od/ab/g/assonance.htm)  
   Identity or similarity in sound between internal vowels in neighboring words.
3. [**Euphemism**](http://grammar.about.com/od/e/g/euphemismterm.htm)  
   The substitution of an inoffensive term for one considered offensively explicit.

*We have to let you go.* Read: You're fired.

*You're well fed.* Read: You're fat.

1. [**Hyperbole**](http://grammar.about.com/od/fh/g/hyperboleterm.htm)  
   An extravagant statement; the use of exaggerated terms for the purpose of emphasis or heightened effect.

*I'm so busy trying to accomplish ten million things at once.* - I'm trying to accomplish several things at one time.

*Your dog is so ugly, we had to pay the fleas to live on him.* - Here the hyperbole has been used as an insult.

1. [**Irony**](http://grammar.about.com/od/il/g/ironyterm.htm)  
   The use of words to convey the opposite of their literal meaning. A statement or situation where the meaning is contradicted by the appearance or presentation of the idea.

*Bill Gates winning a computer.* - Situational Irony (He is the owner of the world's largest software company.)

*Having a fight with your best friend just before your birthday, and commenting -"Great, this is just what I needed".* - Verbal Irony (It is probably the worst thing that could happen before your birthday.)

*In Romeo and Juliet, when Juliet is drugged, Romeo assumes her to be dead, and kills himself. Upon waking up Juliet finds him dead, and kills herself.* - Dramatic Irony (mainly based on miscommunication and misunderstanding)

1. [**Metaphor**](http://grammar.about.com/od/mo/g/metaphorterm.htm)  
   An implied comparison between two unlike things that actually have something important in common.

*The sofa is fertile soil for a couch potato.*

*But my heart is a lonely hunter that hunts on a lonely hill.* - William Sharp, The Lonely Hunter

Instead of making the comparison side-by-side (like against like) a metaphor is stated together in combination e.g., 'silver moon' means that 'the moon is as bright as silver' - not that it is made of silver.  
Metaphorical language takes many forms:

EXAMPLES:  
Frankie is a tower of strength.  
You’re the CREAM in my coffee.  
How did Dickens describe 'the Law'? The law is an ASS (he did not state: The law is like an ass).  
The EVENING of her life.  
Christ is the BREAD of Life.  
Thy word is a LAMP unto my feet and a LIGHT unto my path.  
SHAKESPEARE: What type of metaphor is the Bard using here? ***There is a TIDE in the affairs of men  
Which TAKEN AT THE FLOOD,  
Leads on to fortune.  
Omitted, ALL THE VOYAGE of our life  
Is bound in SHALLOWS and in miseries.  
On such A FULL SEA ARE WE NOW AFLOAT.***

1. [**Onomatopoeia**](http://grammar.about.com/od/mo/g/onomaterms.htm)  
   The use of words that imitate the sounds associated with the objects or actions they refer to.

*The clatter of utensils.*

*The flutter of birds.*

1. [**Paradox**](http://grammar.about.com/od/pq/g/paradoxterm.htm)  
   A statement that appears to contradict itself.
2. [**Personification**](http://grammar.about.com/od/pq/g/personifterm.htm)  
   A figure of speech in which an inanimate object or abstraction is endowed with human qualities or abilities.
3. [**Simile**](http://grammar.about.com/od/rs/g/simileterm.htm)  
   A stated comparison (usually formed with "like" or "as") between two fundamentally dissimilar things that have certain qualities in common.

*Cause she looks like a flower but she stings like a bee/Like every girl in history.* - Ricky Martin

*George felt as worn out as an old joke that was never very funny in the first place.*

**L I K E:**My love is LIKE a red, red rose.  
Your teeth are LIKE stars (they come out at night!)  
He is LIKE a mad dog.  
She was shaking LIKE a leaf.  
The Assyrians came down LIKE a wolf on the fold.  
A face LIKE a frightened sheep

**AS:**AS brave AS a lion.  
I wandered lonely AS a cloud.  
When SHAKESPEARE wanted to convey the abstract 'quality of mercy', he used a simile:  
*The quality of mercy is not strained, / It droppeth AS the gentle rain from Heaven upon the earth beneath.*

**SIMILIES are usually drawn from HISTORY, LEGEND, or NATURE.**

1. [**Synecdoche**](http://grammar.about.com/od/rs/g/synecdocheterm.htm)  
   A figure of speech in which a part is used to represent the whole (for example, *ABCs* for *alphabet*) or the whole for a part ("*England* won the World Cup in 1966").
2. [**Understatement**](http://grammar.about.com/od/tz/g/understateterm.htm)  
   A figure of speech in which a writer or a speaker deliberately makes a situation seem less important or serious than it is.