Use this as a quick reference for figurative language, literary elements, and literary techniques.

**Figurative Language**

**Alliteration** - The repetition of the same initial letter, sound, or group of sounds in a series of words. Alliteration includes tongue twisters.
*Example: She sells seashells by the seashore.*

**Cliché** - A cliché is an expression that has been used so often that it has become common and sometimes boring.
*Examples: Opposites attract. You are what you eat.*

**Hyperbole** - An exaggeration that is so dramatic that no one would believe the statement is true. Tall tales are hyperboles.
*Example: I’m so hungry I could eat a horse.*

**Idiom** - An idiom is an expression that has a meaning apart from the meanings of its individual words. It’s not meant to be taken literally.
*Example: It’s raining cats and dogs.*

**Irony** – Irony is a literary device involving a discrepancy between what is said and what is meant, or between what’s expected to happen and what actually occurs. There are three main types:

- **Dramatic irony** - A situation in which the audience knows something about present or future circumstances that the character does not know.
  *Example: In *Romeo & Juliet*, Romeo thinks Juliet is dead, so he goes to her tomb to kill himself. This is ironic because he doesn’t know, as the audience does, that she is has been given a potion to make her look dead.*

- **Verbal irony** - A contradiction of expectation between what is said and what is meant.
  *Example: In *Romeo & Juliet*, Juliet is upset after being told that her father has promised her hand in marriage to Paris. She states to her mother “...I will not marry yet; and, when I do, I swear it shall be Romeo, whom you know I hate, rather than Paris ...” This is ironic because she is already married to Romeo.*

- **Situational irony** - A contradiction between what might be expected and what actually occurs. It’s often connected to a really negative view of life.
  *Example: Dying of thirst while adrift on a boat in the ocean. There’s water everywhere, but none of it is drinkable.*
Metaphor - The metaphor makes a direct comparison between two unlike things. A simile would say you are like something; a metaphor is more positive - it says you are something.
Example: Her eyes are stars shining in the sky.

Extended Metaphor – In an extended metaphor, the metaphor is carried over many sentences or lines.

Onomatopoeia – The use of a word to describe or imitate a natural sound or the sound made by an object or an action.
Example: snap, crackle, pop.

Oxymoron – When something is described using contradictory terms.
Example: jumbo shrimp; definite maybe; deafening silence.

Personification - A figure of speech in which human characteristics are given to an animal or an object.
Example: My teddy bear gave me a hug.

Pun – A play on words. A pun involves using a word or words that have more than one meaning.
Example: My dog not only has a fur coat, but also pants.

Simile - A simile uses the words “like” or “as” to compare one object or idea with another to suggest they are alike.
Example: She is busy as a bee.