

Literary Devices Log

Literary Devices are tools authors use to give meaning to their stories. Of course, we can read any story or novel without knowing what the literary devices are. However, learning and recognizing them enhances our enjoyment. We experience a deeper connection to the story. We feel smart!

Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words. An example from *Despereaux* is found on page 89: “This is a wonderful joke to **play** upon a **prisoner**, to **promise** forgiveness.”

Find and copy an example of alliteration in *Despereaux* below, including the page number where you found it.

Personification is giving human qualities, such as feelings or voices, to something that isn't human. An example from *Despereaux* is on page 56: “The mice seemed to become one angry body with hundreds of tails and thousands of whiskers and one huge, hungry mouth opening and closing and opening and closing...”

Find and copy an example of personification below, including the page number.

Illeism is speaking of oneself in the third person, which sounds odd or old-fashioned. Gregory does this throughout the story. There are three reasons to use illeism:

1. It creates an emotional distance between the character and other characters in the story.
2. It signals authority or power.
3. It shows that the character is eccentric and doesn't fit in with normal society.

We see Gregory use illeism when Roscuro first meets him on page 86: "You smart-alecky rat nib-nib-nibbling on Gregory's rope. Gregory will teach you to mess with his rope."

Write another example of illeism (there are so many!) below, including the page number.

Symbolism is used by authors to convey their underlying ideas behind the action of the story. A symbol is an object, animal, or a tangible thing which is repeated during the story AND represents bigger ideas or feelings.

For example, "light" is itself – energy from the sun which enables our eyes to see things, color, etc. But it is also a big symbol in *The Tale of Despereaux*. Below are three symbols in the story. For each one, explain the bigger idea or feeling behind it.

1. Light
2. Dark
3. Soup

Breaking the Fourth Wall is when a character or narrator of a story speaks directly to us, the readers. It's almost like he/she steps out of the story for a moment to share a special message with us. When this happens, we feel more connected to the story; we're a part of it.

Our narrator in *The Tale of Despereaux* speaks directly to us often. Below is one example from page 134:

“For the first time in her life, reader, Mig hoped.
And hope is like love...a ridiculous, wonderful, powerful thing.”

Find another example of “breaking the fourth wall” and write it below.

Idioms are phrases which mean something different from the actual words used. For example, if someone says, “It’s a piece of cake!”, she means a thing is easy to do, she’s not handing you an *actual* piece of cake. Idioms make sense to native English speakers, but sometimes not to people whose first language isn’t English!

In *The Tale of Despereaux*, we see an idiom on page 152, “And, too, she was not the sharpest knife in the drawer.”

As you read, see if you come across another idiom. If you do, write it below. If not (and I haven’t seen one yet, so maybe there isn’t another one!), use two of these well-known idioms in your own sentences:

- Break the ice
- Hold your horses
- Hit the hay
- Under the weather
- Spill the beans

Repetition is a powerful, nifty literary device. When a writer repeats a word or a phrase, she wants us to sit up and pay attention!

Here is an example from page 160:

“Reader, if you were standing in the dungeon, you would certainly hear all of these disturbing and ominous sounds. /If I were standing in the dungeon, I would hear these sounds. /If we were standing together in the dungeon, we would hear these sounds and we would be very frightened...”

You would hear...I would hear...we would hear... Yes! We would! But Mig doesn't. Think about that, okay?

Write another example of repetition below.

Rhetorical questions are when somebody asks a question but doesn't expect an answer. You've heard rhetorical questions, of course: “Didn't I ask you to pick up your room?” “What were you thinking?” “Did you expect me to do your homework for you?”

When Mom asks rhetorical questions like these, let me tell you – she doesn't want an answer. She wants the problem solved. Right now.

In our story, an example of a rhetorical question is found on page 238: “What have we here?” said the one-eared rat to the spool of thread.

When you find another example of a rhetorical question, write it here, with the page number: