Poetic Figures 1
THE OMISSION OF CERTAIN WORDS

• **Ellipsis**: “leaving out”
  • omission of words necessary in grammar
  • e.g., _happy the students_ who study hard; _happy their teacher_, too
  • it accelerates the passage
Poetic Figures 1
THE OMISSION OF CERTAIN WORDS

- **Asyndeton:** “no conjunction”
- omission of conjunctions
- e.g., “Come to class, do the reading, study hard: these are the keys to success in college.”
- like bullets, a rapid-fire list creates a strong sense of urgency
Poetic Figures 1
THE OMISSION OF CERTAIN WORDS

• **Aposiopesis:** “silencing off”
• breaking off before the end of a sentence or thought
• e.g., “You think you can just walk in late to class, young man? **Do I** have to remind you that — **why am I** wasting my breath!”
• shows a sudden shift in emotion
• **Hyperbole**: “overthrow”
  • exaggeration and overstatement
  • e.g., “This class is **killing** me! I’d rather **eat nails** than read one more page of this assignment!”
  • shows strong emotion—or in some cases (like ancient epic), grandeur
Poetic Figures 2
EXCESSIVE WORDS

• **Polysyndeton**: “many conjunctions”
  • the use of extra conjunctions
  • e.g., this week I have a paper due, and two books to read, and a lab, and a project, and three tests!
  • each new item adds weight to the speaker’s argument
• **Apostrophe**: “turn away”
• addressing a person or object that is absent or far off
• e.g., “**Gods of the Underworld**, rise and take me now!”
• it shows extreme emotion, often a sense of desperation/helplessness
Poetic Figures 3
ANALOGIES AND COMPARISONS

• **Simile**: “similar (things)”
  • the explicit comparison of two things (“like,” “as”)
  • e.g., “Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee”
  • it calls attention to the comparison itself, and thus the speaker’s use of language and poetry
• **Metaphor:** “be in a changed form”
  • the implicit comparison of two things
  • e.g., “It’s an **oven** in here. My hair is **plastered** to my head, my brain is **addled** and my feet are **on fire**.”
  • focuses on the point being made more than the speaker’s poetic skill
Poetic Figures 3
ANALOGIES AND COMPARISONS

• **Personification**: “putting a mask on something”

• endowing a non-human thing with human qualities

• e.g., *This book* really talks to me. *Time* flew by as I was reading it.

• it humanizes the world at large and makes it seem more accessible
Poetic Figures 4
INCOMPLETE TRUTHS

• **Ironic:** “speaker’s art”
  • a statement which implies the opposite of what it says
  • e.g., “Sure, professor, Gen Ed classes like yours are the reason I came to college! Money means nothing to us young people.”
  • it shows a subordinate’s anger
Poetic Figures 4
INCOMPLETE TRUTHS

• **Oxymoron**: “sharp-blunt”
• juxtaposed opposites
• e.g., *hurry slowly* and *embrace from a distance* that *genuine imitation* of Aphrodite you prefer!
• it leaves a tension (often an absurdity) unresolved
Poetic Figures 4
INCOMPLETE TRUTHS

• **Euphemism**: “nice speech”
• a nice way of referring to something unpleasant
• e.g., the *Eumenides* didn’t *pass away*—they’re just in the *bathroom*
• it cushions a harsh blow or softens a vivid image in the reader’s mind
Poetic Figures 4
INCOMPLETE TRUTHS

• **Synecdoche**: “association”

• using a part of something to represent the whole

• e.g., the *pen* may be mightier than the *sword*, but girls only want a guy with *wheels*!

• it points to the most important part of something