

A **figure of speech** refers to words used with a non-literal meaning.

- ▶ A **euphemism** is a mild or vague expression used in place of an expression that is offensive or harsh; it is used to soften, be polite, or hide.
- ▶ An **oxymoron** is a phrase that includes words that contradict<sub>2</sub> each other; it is used to emphasize something.

Figure of speech	Example	Purpose
<b>Euphemisms</b>	<b>Passed away</b> <b>Senior citizen</b> <b>Military air support</b>	To soften death To be polite about an elder To hide the idea of bombing
<b>Oxymorons</b>	<b>The only choice</b> <b>Disgustingly delicious</b>	To emphasize there is no choice To emphasize how delicious it is

**Non-Examples:**

He died.  
He is older.  
The military called in the bombers.

**Non-Examples:**

This is the clearest choice.  
This is extremely delicious.

**CFU**

Which sentence has an example of a euphemism? How do you know?

- A The poor kids needed more help. B The underprivileged children needed more help.**

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Which sentence has an example of an oxymoron? How do you know?

- A The documents were in random order. B The documents were in alphabetical order.**

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In your own words, what is a euphemism? **“A euphemism is \_\_\_\_\_.”**

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In your own words, what is an oxymoron? **“An oxymoron is \_\_\_\_\_.”**

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1. Read the passage, paying attention to the underlined words.
2. Determine the type of figure of speech. (circle)
3. Interpret the meaning of the euphemism or oxymoron. (write)

The TV news reporter said that the incident in Quebec killed 80 people when the runaway train crashed into the town. This number lost, he said, was more than the body count in a war zone in Iraq. Witnesses said that first responders were clearly confused on what to do, but a few passengers were awfully lucky to have survived. People in town were so shocked they were like walking dead.

Figure of speech	Type	Meaning/Purpose
incident	euphemism oxymoron	
lost	euphemism oxymoron	
body count	euphemism oxymoron	

Figure of speech	Type	Meaning/Purpose
clearly confused	euphemism oxymoron	
awfully lucky	euphemism oxymoron	
walking dead	euphemism oxymoron	

**Read this excerpt. Answer the questions that follows.**

From **Romeo & Juliet** by William Shakespeare **Juliet:**

Sweet, so would I:

Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.

Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow,

That I shall say good night till it be morrow.

**What is the effect of the underlined figure of speech in the text?**

- A** It emphasizes how love gives you something to look forward to, and although it is sad to leave, you anticipate the next meeting.
- B** It summarizes their relationship as being sweet but also full of sadness and nothing to look forward to.
- C** It mirrors the intensity of their feelings as they get to know one another better.
- D** It creates irony because you know they will both Romeo and Juliet will die in the end of the story.

**Explain how you decided on your answer.**

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- 1 Read the passage, paying attention to the underlined words.
- 2 Determine the type of figure of speech. (circle)
- 3 Interpret the meaning of the euphemism or oxymoron. (write)

The peace officers apprehended the panhandler on the street corner. It was a pretty ugly scene that drew a small crowd.

Figure of speech	Type	Meaning/Purpose
peace officers	euphemism oxymoron	
pretty ugly	euphemism oxymoron	



**Writing**

**Write a sentence explaining each figure of speech.**

**Our cat had to be put to sleep.**

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**After the speech, there was a deafening silence.**

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**What did you learn today about interpreting figures of speech such as euphemisms and oxymorons?**

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**Interpret the meaning of underlined euphemisms and oxymorons.**

According to the president, emerging nations have many working class people who are underachievers. The noticeable absence of education also leads to food insecurity and ill health.

Figure of speech	Type	Meaning/Purpose
emerging nations	euphemism oxymoron	
working class	euphemism oxymoron	
underachievers	euphemism oxymoron	
noticeable absence	euphemism oxymoron	

Figure of speech	Type	Meaning/Purpose
food insecurity	euphemism oxymoron	
ill health	euphemism oxymoron	



## Listening

Excerpt from **The Sound of Silence** by Paul Simon

And in the naked light I saw  
 Ten thousand people, maybe more  
 People talking without speaking  
 People hearing without listening  
 People writing songs that voices never share  
 No one dare  
 Disturb the sound of silence

**After listening to the song, read the excerpt. What is the effect of the figure of speech in the title of the song?**

- A** It shows the irony of people talking without speaking, etc.
- B** It summarizes the way people are not communicating.
- C** It emphasizes how even with lots of sound there can still be silence.
- D** It exaggerates to make the point of the text.

**Explain how you decided on your answer.**

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**Interpret the meaning of underlined euphemisms and oxymorons.**

The news report said the latest battle in Iraq resulted in three soldiers who died from friendly fire and 15 civilians as collateral damage. It was a pretty fierce fight that led to enhanced interrogation of key suspects.

Figure of speech	Type	Meaning/Purpose
Friendly fire	euphemism oxymoron	
Collateral damage	euphemism oxymoron	
Pretty fierce	euphemism oxymoron	
Enhanced interrogation	euphemism oxymoron	



## Reading

Read the passage. Then answer the questions about the figures of speech in it.

Adam was under the weather after his trip to the beach. He lost his lunch on the way home, and when asked if he was still indisposed, he gave a sad smile and said that's a definite maybe.

1	Under the weather is an oxymoron that hides intense sickness.	Yes No
2	Lost his lunch is a euphemism for vomiting.	Yes No
3	Sad smile is an oxymoron that emphasizes how unhappy the smile was.	Yes No
4	Definite maybe is a euphemism that is a softer way of saying no.	Yes No
5	Indisposed is a euphemism that softens the idea of sickness.	Yes No

Interpret the meaning of underlined euphemisms and oxymorons.

The disabled child was given a prosthesis for his leg.

Figure of speech	Type	Meaning/Purpose
Disabled child	euphemism oxymoron	
prosthesis	euphemism oxymoron	

Without small talk at a party, you would experience a deafening silence.

Figure of speech	Type	Meaning/Purpose
Small talk	euphemism oxymoron	
Deafening silence	euphemism oxymoron	



## Writing

Write a sentence explaining each figure of speech. Interpret each euphemism by circling its most likely meaning/purpose. Explain why you chose that meaning.

Euphemisms:	Meanings/Purposes:	Explanation:
Administrative assistant	beggar, secretary, engineer	
Put on administrative leave	fire, retire, remove from duty	
Go out of business	fail, lay off, fabricate	
Landfill	victim, problem, garbage dump	
Downsized	killed, fired, crippled	
Went to heaven	died, addicted, jailed	
Panhandler	lawyer, informer, beggar	





**Writing**

**Write a sentence using each euphemism or oxymoron.**

Senior citizen

Recorded  
live

Appear  
invisible

Correctional  
facility

Minor  
miracle

General  
admission

Previously  
owned

Soft rock