

Elocution Module 19: Trope 6—Litotes

This module is designed for use in Lesson 11: Comparison Essay—Review and Practice (see chart, Year-at-a-Glance). You should expect to use at least one class period to complete this module.

Getting Ready

To teach this module, you will need to:

Be able to

- Give examples of litotes from everyday life.

Understand

- How and why litotes is effective in writing.

Know

- The difference between litotes and metaphor.
- The tropes we've already studied.

To teach this module, you will need the following materials:

Elocution Worksheet 16: Litotes
Extra examples of litotes from literature

When they complete this module, your students will

Be able to

- Give examples of litotes from everyday life.
- Use litotes in their writing.

Understand

- How and why litotes is effective in writing.

Know

- The difference between litotes and metaphor.
- The difference between litotes and hyperbole, and between litotes and simply lying.

Presenting the Material

Pre-Grammar

Subject matter	Presentation
<p>Goals: Review some of the tropes your students have already learned.</p> <p>Use the questions from Forethought on Elocution Worksheet 16, or come up with your own questions.</p>	<p><i>We've been learning lots of schemes and tropes. The last one we learned was hyperbole.</i></p> <p><i>What tropes have we learned so far? Describe each one.</i></p> <p><i>Why would we use each of them?</i></p> <p><i>Do they all have the same effect? Compare them.</i></p> <p><i>What is hyperbole?</i></p>
<p>Transition to Grammar</p> <p>Make your students aware that they have probably already used litotes in literature.</p> <p>Read an example of litotes from literature, for instance <i>King Lear</i>, II, i. 58.</p>	<p><i>Let's read an example from King Lear:</i></p> <p>Let him fly far, Not in this land shall he remain uncaught.</p> <p><i>Did you notice anything interesting about the way Gloucester made his point? We're going to study this style of speech and how we can use it in our writing.</i></p>

Grammar:

Subject matter	Presentation
<p>Goal: Give your student clear types, or examples, of the trope, litotes.</p>	
<p>Model Use the information in the shaded box under “Sentences to Contemplate” as your model, going through the two-step process described.</p>	<p><i>What is being understated here? Why?</i></p>
<p>First type Now turn to section A under “Sentences to Contemplate.” Read the first sentence.</p>	<p><i>What is the Prophet Jeremiah understating here?</i></p> <p><i>What does he really mean?</i></p> <p><i>What is the effect?</i></p>
<p>Second type Now turn to section A under “Sentences to Contemplate.” Read the second sentence.</p>	<p><i>What does St. Paul understate in this verse?</i></p> <p><i>What does he really mean?</i></p> <p><i>What is the effect?</i></p>
<p>Third type Now turn to section A under “Sentences to Contemplate.” Read the third sentence.</p>	<p><i>What idea does John the Evangelist understate in this passage?</i></p> <p><i>What does he really mean?</i></p> <p><i>What is the effect?</i></p>

<p>Fourth type (and fifth, sixth, etc.)</p> <p>Read the sentences under “Sentences to Contemplate” on Elocution Worksheet 16, section B. If necessary, offer some of your own examples of personification.</p> <p>Ask similar questions to the ones above, having the students tell you what ideas are being understood, and what the real meaning of the passage is.</p>	
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Dialectic:

Subject matter	Presentation
<p>Compare the sentences from “Sentences to Contemplate,” asking the questions under “Comparison.”</p>	<p><i>How is every one of the examples similar?</i></p> <p><i>How is this figure of speech similar to hyperbole? How is it different?</i></p> <p><i>How is this different from just saying something that wasn't true?</i></p> <p><i>What was the purpose of writing in this way, rather than writing it literally (for instance, “the food was good”)?</i></p> <p><i>We call this trope litotes.</i></p>

Rhetoric A: Explanation

Subject matter	Presentation
<p>Student states the concept</p> <p>Instruct your students to complete the explanation section of the worksheet. Then discuss what they wrote.</p> <p>Ask them to describe what litotes is.</p>	<p><i>Complete the Explanation section on the worksheet.</i></p> <p><i>What is litotes?</i></p> <p><i>How can you create litotes in your writing?</i></p>

Rhetoric B: Practice/ Application

Subject matter	Presentation
<p>Students work on their essays by applying this lesson.</p> <p>Practice</p> <p>Direct your students to practice adding litotes to sentences by completing the five sentences under the “Practice” section.</p> <p>Have your students read through their practice essays, adding at least one instance of litotes.</p> <p>Application</p> <p>Instruct your students to edit their current essays by adding at least one instance of litotes to them.</p>	<p><i>Now, turn to the “Practice” section.</i></p> <p><i>The passages do not contain litotes. Rewrite each sentence using litotes correctly.</i></p> <p><i>Now, read through your practice essays. Using the two-step method on the worksheet, add an example of litotes to your essay.</i></p> <p><i>Now edit your current essays by adding at least one instance of litotes to it.</i></p>

Assessment

Read through your students' exercises, making sure they understand the concept and the practice of litotes.

Also, read through your students' essays, making sure they have offered at least two good examples of litotes in their writing.