

Cumulative effect: summing or integrating overall data or values designed to produce a distinctive or desired impression.

Example: the overall effect of a written article about desert plants may prompt feelings of awe or respect in the reader, even though those words were never stated in the piece.

Dance: a series of rhythmic or patterned bodily movement.

Example: at the site of a historic colonial village, an interpreter leads the audience through the steps of a historic dance. He uses the customs of the dance to illustrate the culture's values of order, formality, and gender roles.

Deconstructing a Myth: disproving a generally accepted idea.

Example from "Of Fear and Choices" by Andrea Dunstan, U.S. FWS:

For most people snakes are about fear.

That reaction is not inherent. Studies have shown that, when approached with a snake, very young children are not afraid—just curious. So where does the fear come from? Scientists maintain it is a learned response. As we grow, we are taught many things. Our first impressions come from home and family. How many times have I heard the phrase "the only good snake is a dead snake"? Throughout our lives we are bombarded with negative images of snakes. The serpent in the Garden of Eden is not only sneaky and tempting but is also blamed for the fall of mankind. In Greek mythology Medusa, with snakes for hair, can turn a person to stone with just a look. And Hollywood is a master at making the quiet and secretive critters vindictive hunters of man.

Amazingly, more people are struck every year by lightning than bitten by venomous snakes. Of the poisonous snakebites recorded each year, 90% occur when the person is trying to kill or harass the snake.

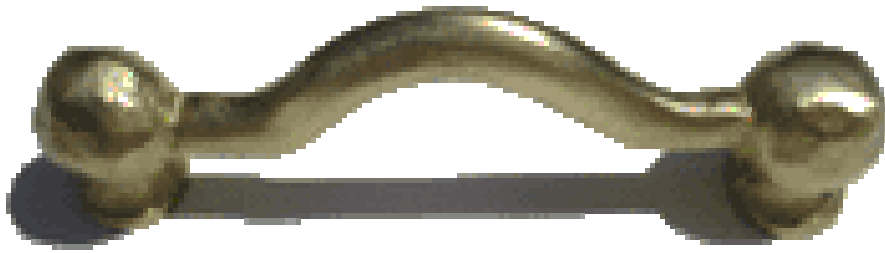
Definition: a statement of the meaning of a word or word group.

Example from *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* by Annie Dillard:

In a dry wind like this, snow and ice can pass directly into the air as a gas without first having melted to water. This process is called sublimation...

Example by Bob Audretsch, NPS:

Ecologists define a relict as an organism "of an earlier time surviving in an environment that has undergone considerable change."



Because people learn in different ways and on multiple levels, using a variety of techniques is more effective than using just one or two over and over again.

Demonstration: proving or making clear by showing evidence, illustration, or example.

Example: Colonial settlers used leather for clothing such as moccasins, as well as equipment like pouches and cartridge boxes. Interpreters at a Revolutionary War site demonstrate the tanning and preparing of hides.

Description: discourse intended to give a mental image of something experienced.

Example from *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* by Annie Dillard:

I have just learned to see praying mantis egg cases. Suddenly I see them everywhere; a tan oval of light catches my eye, or I notice a blob of thickness in a patch of slender weeds. It is over an inch long and shaped like a bell, or like the northern hemisphere of an egg cut through its equator. The full length of one of its long sides is affixed to a twig; the side that catches the light is perfectly flat. It has a dead straw, deadweed color, and a curious brittle texture, hard as varnish, but pitted minutely, like frozen foam.

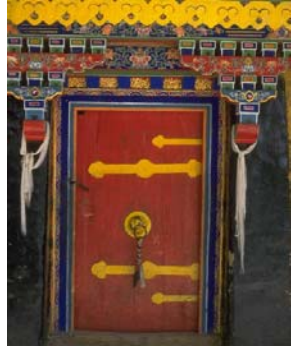
Dialog: a conversation between two or more persons.

Example from "The Gun Talk" by David Larsen, NPS:

In my mind, the father often says, "Son, you have lost the meaning of 1776. I was a craftsman. I spent eight years of my life working as an apprentice to gain the knowledge and skill needed to make an entire weapon with hand tools. I owned those tools. If I did not like the way I was being treated in the factory, I could move away and set up a gun shop anywhere. I had freedom. I controlled my own destiny. I was proud.

But you son. In your wildest dreams you will never own the machines it takes to make a rifle now. The day the men who own those machines decide they no longer need you, you will be lost. You have become a slave to those machines—not a free man."

The son responds, "But I'm making more money than you ever could. My home is made of brick with smooth plaster walls. The house we lived in was log and washed away in the last flood. My house has carpet and my daughters go to school. I own books and buy newspapers. You could only afford to buy us things we had to have to stay alive. No Father, I understand what 1776 was about and the money that flows out of that gun factory and into my pocket buys more freedom than you ever dreamed of."



Care must be taken to insure that techniques do not become an end in themselves; it is possible for them to be distracting. Visitors may be discouraged from seeking out resource meanings because they are so overwhelmed by the techniques.

Discussion: A discussion refers to the consideration of a question in an open and usually informal debate.

Example: an interpreter leads students in a discussion about the value of having natural areas set aside in various climate regions.

Drama: A story, usually involving conflicts and emotions.

Example: an interpreter describes a dialog between several people that expresses their opposing beliefs.

Euphony: soothing, pleasant sounds.

Example by Joy Campbell, *Okefenokee Adventures*:

Soft subtle top-knots of yellow-eyed grass
Lemon carpets of marsh golden glow...

Exaggerated Size Scale: to enlarge or reduce beyond the normal dimensions.

Example from *Environmental Interpretation* by Sam H. Ham:

If we were small enough to actually walk inside of a wasp's nest, you'd be amazed at what you'd see.

Exaggerated Time Scale: to accelerate or retard the rate of the passage of time.

Example from *Environmental Interpretation* by Sam H. Ham:

If time were speeded up so that a thousand years went by every second, you'd be able to stand right here and watch continental drift for yourself.

Examples: items, facts, incidents, or aspects that are representative of a group or type.

Example from *Environmental Interpretation* by Sam H. Ham:

These orchids are a good example of a plant that grows on other plants.

Exclamation: a sharp or sudden utterance; vehement expression of a passionate, strong, or sudden emotion.

Example by Edward Abbey:

For myself I hold no preferences among flowers, so long as they are wild, free, spontaneous. **Bricks to all greenhouses!**
Black thumb and cutworm to the potted plant!

Explanation: to show the reason for or cause of.

Example from "Life After Death?" by Michele Simmons, NPS:

The life of a totem pole begins with a particularly difficult form of change—death. In order to carve a pole, a tree, usually a cedar, must be felled. Southeast Alaska cultures hold that objects in the natural world have a spirit of their own. Consequently, the taking of the life of a tree must be accomplished with the utmost respect. Ceremonial protocol is followed before the tree is cut. Songs are sung with dignity, speeches are made praising and thanking the tree for its sacrifice, and dances are performed in its honor. Only then is the tree cut.

Flashback: a literary or presentation device in which an earlier event is inserted into the normal chronological order of a narrative.

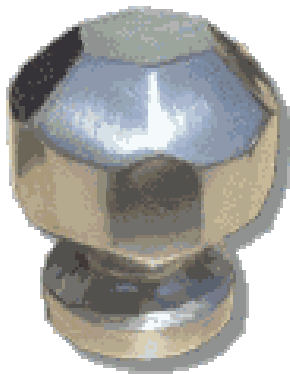
Example: in the program "Gifts From the Sea" described below under "foreshadow", photographs of a refugee raft are shown to the audience. On the side of the boat is painted "Los rapidos de Minas," or "The fast ones from Minas", with Minas being a small town on the north coast of Cuba where the raft presumably set out from. After a discussion of conditions that might be encountered in crossing the Florida Straits, the talk turns again to tangible items brought in by the sea (the topic with which the program began.) One item discussed is a religious tract recounting the story of a fishing voyage which had set out from Minas in 1620.

Foreshadow: to present an indication or a suggestion of beforehand; to presage.

Example: at Biscayne National Park, Gary Bremen presents a talk called "Gifts From the Sea". The tangible items that wash onto the beach, such as sea shells, drift seeds and international trash, foreshadow the more intangible meanings revealed later in the program. Ideas are added to the list of "gifts" (such as a dried swim bladder from a fish representing the idea behind a scuba vest), as well as universal concepts (such as the freedom that many in South Florida have received from the sea, including rafters from Cuba.)

Framing: intentionally structuring an opportunity for the audience to experience visual, auditory, or other sensory experience of the resource.

Example: an interpreter gives a guided tour of a prison. At one point he asks the visitors to be silent for one minute, in order to listen to the sounds of slamming cell doors, footsteps overhead, and other sounds magnified by the building's acoustics.



Interpretation is a dynamic activity. To "allow the resource to speak for itself" does not count toward interpretation.

Game: a physical or mental competition conducted according to rules.

Example from Biscayne National Park's Dante Fascell Visitor Center:

"The Adventures of Charlotte"

Carpet squares with numbers pinned to them become a giant game board on the lawn. A roll of the giant die determines how many spaces a player may move, and the numbers on the squares correspond to pages in a booklet full of excerpts taken from a memoir of a woman who lived on one of the park's islands during the depression. The treasures she finds while beach combing become keys to jumping ahead a few spaces, while her adventures with rum-runners, alien smugglers and other ne'er-do-wells send her packing backwards.



Bill Lewis wrote, "Friendly competition stimulates learning."

Gathering: drawing ideas together from a group of people.

Example: an interpreter introduces a wilderness film by asking each audience member to write one line about what wilderness means to him on an index card. The interpreter collects the cards, and during the film arranges them into a "poem". When the film concludes the sentences are read back to the audience in the form of prose.

General to Specific: moving from a characteristic of the majority to a particular individual, situation, or relation.

Example by Andrea Medeiros, USFWS:

These people don't have the grocery stores many other Americans find conveniently located near their home. They harvest their food from the River and surrounding lands. They are living a subsistence life style.

In one village on the Yukon, a man rises early in the morning to check the family's fishnets. He is checking two nets this summer because his parents are no longer able to haul the fish laden nets to shore.

Gestures: the use of motions of the limbs or body as a means of expression. Gestures are used to emphasize thoughts and emotions, and to give direction.

Example: an interpreter opens his hands palms upward when presenting an idea to the audience, turns them downward in a slicing movement to condemn another idea, and makes a fist to illustrate determination.



**Good gestures
are directly
associated
with an idea
or image.**

Historical Reference: an allusion to past events.

Example from *Walden and Other Writings* by Henry David Thoreau:

Already, as appears from the records, "At a General Court held at Boston in New England, the 7th of the first month, 1643-4." - "Wassamequin, Nashoonon, Kutchamaquin, Massaconomet, and Squaw Sachem, did voluntarily submit themselves" to the English; and among other things did "promise to be willing from time to time to be instructed in the knowledge of God." Being asked "Not to do any unnecessary work on the Sabbath day, especially within the gates of Christian town," they answered, "It is easy for them; they have not much to do on any day, and they can well take their rest on that day."

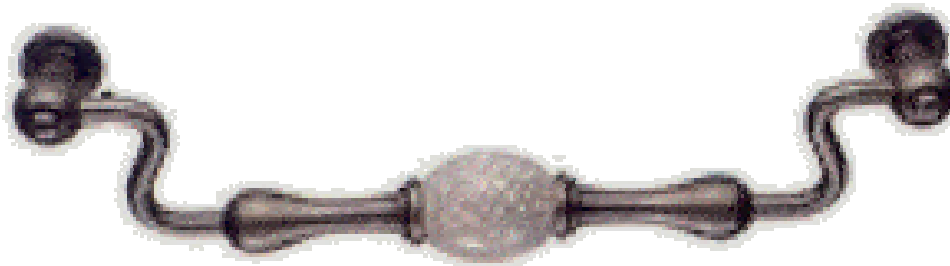
Hook: a device for catching, holding, or pulling.

Example by Kathy Reshetiloff, USFWS: (opening line)

"Nurse, get a CBC and Chem Screen. I think this patient has been poisoned."

Example by Melinda Day, NPS: (opening line)

Perched on an international border, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia changed between northern and southern armies nine times during the Civil War.



**When placed at the
beginning of a piece,
a hook offers a bit
of bait,
and serves to lure
the reader further
into the piece.**

Humor: that quality which appeals to a sense of the ludicrous or absurdly incongruous.

Example from *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* by Annie Dillard:

One entomologist says that walking sticks, along with monarch butterflies, are able to feign death - although I don't know how you could determine if a walking stick was feigning death or twigginess.

Example: an interpreter talking about communication among pioneers on his park's islands says "they didn't have eMail, or faxes back then. In fact, the easiest method of communication over semi-long distances was the shell phone." He then pulls out a conch shell with its end sawed off, and blows a loud, clear note that echoes across the water.

Hyperbole: exaggeration or overstatement.

Example from *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee:

People moved slowly then. There was no hurry, for there was nowhere to go, nothing to buy and no money to buy it with, nothing to see outside the boundaries of Maycomb County.

Icebreaker: an activity that serves to establish a positive and productive rapport between the interpreter and members of the audience.

Example: at the beginning of a program about 19th century railroads and canals, the interpreter asks the audience to separate themselves into groups that reflect the mode of transportation they used to arrive at the park: railroad, plane, motor home, or boat. Insight gained by the activity serves as a starting point for the talk, and promotes camaraderie and interaction among the audience members.

Illustration: a picture or diagram that helps make something clear.

Example: during a guided tour among the ruins of an ancient village, an interpreter shows the audience a drawing of what the village may have looked like in its heyday.



**Meanings are
more
important
than
information.**

Image: a word or phrase that appeals directly to the reader's taste, touch, hearing, sight, or smell.

Example from *Walden and Other Writings* by Henry David Thoreau:

I have discerned a matchless and indescribable light blue, such as watered or changeable silks and sword blades suggest, more cerulean than the sky itself, alternating with the original dark green on the opposite sides of the waves, which last appeared but muddy by comparison. It is a vitreous greenish blue, as I remember it, like those patches of the winter sky seen through cloud vistas in the west before sundown.

Example by Bob Audretsch, NPS:

Yet each gentle breeze brought the very slightest rustle of aspen leaves - nature's most gentle snare drum. A more sturdy gust of wind left the gully filled with the sound of applause.

Imagination: the act of forming a mental image of something not present to the senses or never before wholly perceived in reality.

Example from *Lost Woods: The Discovered Writing of Rachel Carson*:

We are going to pretend we live on the bottom of an ocean—an ocean of air in which clouds are adrift- just as sponges and coral and spidery crabs inhabit the floor of the ocean water. But it will not be hard to pretend that, for in fact that is just what we do. In relation to the air ocean, we are exactly like deep-sea fishes, with all the weight of tons of air pressing down upon our bodies.

Example by Tess Shatzer, NPS:

Imagine a courtyard full of people all rushing to their machines, answering the call of the bell. The very size of the buildings, reaching one hundred feet into the sky, and the clock towering over the millyard with its clanging bell - imposing reminders of the drastic change from Farm to Factory.

Inclusion: embracing the readers or audience members as part of a larger group.

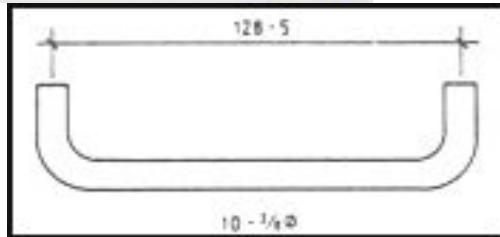
Example by Andrea Dunstan, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

For most people snakes are about fear.

Information: knowledge obtained from investigation, study, or instruction; intelligence, news; facts, data.

Example from *The Birders Handbook*:

Whether eggs in a single clutch will hatch simultaneously or sequentially over an extended period of time is determined by the onset of incubation.



Freeman Tilden wrote,
"Information, as such, is not Interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information."

Insight: apprehending the inner nature of things.

Example from "Nature" by Ralph Waldo Emerson:

Nature always wears the colors of the spirit. To a man laboring under a calamity, the heat of his own fire hath sadness in it. Then, there is a kind of contempt of the landscape felt by him who has just lost by death a dear friend. The sky is less grand as it shuts down over less worth in the population.

Instruction: to impart knowledge in a systematic manner.

Example: an interpreter shows visitors how to snorkel safely and with minimum impact to the ecosystem, while having fun and fully experiencing the unique environment.

Irony: an attribute of statements in which the meaning is different - or more complicated - than it seems. A subtle form of sarcasm, verbal irony is a rhetorical device in which the speaker either severely understates his point or means the opposite of what he says.

Example from *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* by Annie Dillard:

Slugs, of all creatures, hibernate...

Joke: a brief narrative with a climactic humorous twist.

Example: living on earth is expensive, but it does include a free trip around the sun.

Juxtaposition: the act of placing two or more things side by side.

Example: contrasting elements of a visual design or a narrative are arranged in a way that accentuates the tension between them.

Labeling: classifying people (or kinds of people) in either a positive, negative or neutral way.

Example from *Environmental Interpretation* by Sam H. Ham:

Positive labels: People who understand the value of a forest know that...

If you're the kind of person who cares about wildlife, then you probably...

Choosy mothers choose Jif!

Negative labels: The worst criminals are the ones who commit crimes against nature.

If you don't care about protecting endangered species, then you probably don't believe that...

Neutral labels: People who live in the Northwest...

We Oregonians...

Layout: the arrangement or design of visual or 3-dimensional media.

Example: when creating a site bulletin, an interpreter arranges the textboxes and graphic elements so that they work together to produce a clear and engaging whole.

Lecture: a formal discourse given for instruction depending heavily upon oral techniques.

Example: an interpreter at a marine park delivers a lecture to members of a local marina at their annual meeting. The interpreter stands behind a podium and uses notes written on index cards to insure that the lecture remains organized, and that all the key points are covered.



**Remember that
"The Audience
Seeks Something of
Value for
Themselves".**

List: a simple series of words.

Example from *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There* by Aldo Leopold:

When one pine shows a short year but his neighbors do not, you may safely interpolate some purely local or individual adversity: a fire scar, a gnawing meadowmouse, a windburn, or some local bottleneck in that dark laboratory we call the soil.

Listening: to hear with thoughtful attention.

Example: during an informal contact, a visitor shares his memories of visiting the park as a child. The interpreter is receptive to the visitor's information, refraining from dominating the conversation.