

Living History: the portrayal of real people experiencing past events. Care must be taken to insure that this engaging technique does not become an end in itself, but is used to connect visitor interests to resource meanings.

Example: guided tours of a 1930s era house are given by interpreters pretending to be living in the 1930s.

Made-up words: fancifully devised terms.

Example from *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss:

At the far end of town
Where the Grickle-grass grows
And the wind smells slow-and-sour when it blows
And no birds ever sing except old crows...
Is the Street of the Lifted Lorax.

Map: a representation, usually on a flat surface, of the whole or a part of an area.

Example from Roger Williams National Memorial:

A giant map of southeastern New England as it appeared in the 17th century is used to give school children a sense of how different the area was back then, and serves as a stage on which Roger Williams' travels can be re-enacted. As discussion progresses, tangible objects are placed on the map one at a time by the children. By the end of the program, what was once just a flat piece of canvas with blue and green paint becomes a living map created by the participants to tell the story of America's foremost proponent of religious liberty for all.

Example: in a Civil War park, an interpreter uses a map to show the locations of encampments and troop movements.



The Interpretive Equation:

$$(KR+KA) \times AT = IO$$

Knowledge of the Resource,
plus Knowledge of the Audience,
times the Appropriate Technique,
equals an Interpretive Opportunity.

Metaphor: a comparison implied or stated between two usually unconnected objects (without using the words *like* or *as*). In the first example below, boards=books.

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

Our lumber pile, recruited entirely from the river, is thus not only a collection of personalities, but an anthology of human strivings in upriver farms and forests. The autobiography of an old board is a kind of literature not yet taught on campuses, but any riverbank farm is a library where he who hammers or saws may read at will. Come high water, there is always an accession of new books.

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

When I walk with a camera, I walk from shot to shot, reading the light on a calibrated meter. When I walk without a camera, my own shutter opens, and the moment's light prints on my own silver gut.

When the leaves fall the striptease is over; things stand mute and revealed.



"A newly invented metaphor assists thought by evoking a visual image, while on the other hand a metaphor which is technically dead has in effect reverted to being an ordinary word and can generally be used without loss of vividness. But in between those two classes there is a huge dump of worn-out metaphors which have lost all evocative power and are merely used because they save people the trouble of inventing phrases for themselves." George Orwell

Metonymy: a figure of speech in which a thing, concept, person, or group is represented by something closely associated with it.

Example: referring to a *king* as the *throne*.

Mirroring: adaptation of an interpreter's speaking qualities and body language to reflect the communication style of the audience. This skill might be used to quickly and effectively establish rapport.

Example: a roving interpreter approaches several visitors who are sitting on some benches at dusk. The visitors are laughing and ask the interpreter if the bats swooping past them will get in their hair. The interpreter finds a place on the bench to sit down, observes the bats, and shares in the visitors' delight by imparting some humorous stories about bat and human interactions.

Multiple Points of View: numerous positions from which something is considered or evaluated.

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

Every living thing... pays heed to that call. To the deer it is a reminder of the way of all flesh, to the pine a forecast of midnight scuffles and of blood upon the snow, to the coyote a promise of gleanings to come, to the cowman the threat of red ink at the bank, to the hunter the challenge of fang against bullet.

Public policies for outdoor recreation are controversial. Equally conscientious citizens hold opposite views on what it is and what should be done to conserve its resource-base. Thus the Wilderness Society seeks to exclude roads from the hinterlands, and the Chamber of Commerce to extend them, both in the name of recreation. The game-farmer kills the hawks and the bird-lover protects them in the name of shotgun and field-glass hunting respectively.



One of the implications of the fact that "Resources Possess Meanings" is that each resource means different things to different people.

Music: vocal, instrumental, or mechanical sounds having rhythm, melody, or harmony.

Example: at one stop during a guided tour of the site of an ancient Native American village, the interpreter uses a native instrument to play a traditional tune.

Mythological Reference: an allusion to a traditional story that serves to unfold part of the worldview of a people or explain a practice, belief, or natural phenomenon.

Example by Andea Dunstan—U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

In Greek mythology Medusa, with snakes for hair, can turn a person to stone with just a look.

Narrative: recitation of the details of a story.

Example: an interpreter relates the setting, characters and circumstances of an actual event in a storytelling fashion.

Observation: an act of seeing or sensing through directed careful analytic attention.

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

Usually the red squirrel (*Sciurus Hudsonius*) waked me in the dawn, coursing over the roof and up and down the sides of the house, as if sent out of the woods for this purpose. In the course of the winter I threw out half a bushel of ears of sweet-corn, which had not got ripe, on to the snow crust by my door, and was amused by watching the motions of the various animals which were baited by it. All day long the red squirrels came and went, and afforded me much entertainment by their maneuvers. One would approach at first warily through the shrub-oaks, running over the snow crust by fits and starts like a leaf blown by the wind, now a few paces this way, with wonderful speed and waste of energy, making inconceivable haste with his "trotters," as if it were for a wager, and now as many paces that way, but never getting on more than half a rod at a time; and then suddenly pausing with a ludicrous expression and a gratuitous somerset, as if all the eyes in the universe were fixed on him, - for all the motions of a squirrel, even in the most solitary recesses of the forest, imply spectators as much as those of a dancing girl, -wasting more time in delay and circumspection than would have sufficed to walk the whole distance, -I never saw one walk, -and then suddenly, before you could say Jack Robinson, he would be in the top of a young pitch-pine, winding up his clock and chiding all imaginary spectators, soliloquizing and talking to all the universe at the same time...



Freeman Tilden wrote,
"Interpretation is an art,
which combines many arts,
whether the materials
presented are scientific,
historical, or architectural.
Any art is in some degree
teachable."

Onomatopoeia: a word that imitates the sound it represents.

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

Over my head I heard a sound of beaten air, like a million shook rugs, a muffled **whuff**.

Example by Joy Campbell, *Okefenokee Adventures*:

The rattling trumpet blares of sandhill cranes; the **thwarp thwarp** of their wings vibrate the morning mist as they seek out a landing for their morning meal.

Oxymoron: a combination of contradictory or incongruous words.

Example: synthetic natural gas

Paradox: reveals a kind of truth which at first seems contradictory.

Example from *The Journey Home* by Edward Abbey:

The longest journey begins with a single step, not with the turn of the ignition key.

Parallel: something equal or similar in all essential particulars.

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

My bricks being second-hand ones required to be cleaned with a trowel, so that I learned more than usual of the qualities of bricks and trowels. The mortar on them was fifty years old, and was said to be still growing harder; but this is one of those sayings which men love to repeat whether they are true or not. Such sayings themselves grow harder and adhere more firmly with age, and it would take many blows with a trowel to clean an old wisacre of them.

Period Clothing: garments representing a particular historic stage of culture.

Example: interpreters who are demonstrating frontier skills wear period clothing to add to the historic effect, and to serve as props in themselves.



Freeman Tilden wrote, "The chief aim of Interpretation is not instruction, but provocation."

Personification: giving human qualities to animals or objects.

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

Like many another treaty of restraint, the pre-dawn pact lasts only as long as darkness humbles the arrogant. It would seem as if the sun were responsible for the daily retreat of reticence from the world. At any rate, by the time the mists are white over the lowlands, every rooster is bragging *ad lib*, and every corn shock is pretending to be twice as tall as any corn that ever grew. By sun-up every squirrel is exaggerating some fancied indignity to his person, and every jay proclaiming with false emotion about suppositious dangers to society, at this very moment discovered by him. Distant crows are berating a hypothetical owl, just to tell the world how vigilant crows are, and a pheasant cock, musing perhaps on his philanderings of bygone days, beats the air with his wings and tells the world in raucous warning that he owns this marsh and all the hens in it.

Photograph: a picture or likeness obtained by the process of producing images on a sensitized surface by the action of radiant energy.

Example: an interpreter carries a photograph in her pocket. It shows the park setting 150 years ago, when only a few coconut palms dotted the otherwise treeless island. When visitors inquire about why the *Caussyrina* trees are being burned by resource management, the photograph helps her explain how invasive exotics have altered the landscape.

Poetry: metrical writing that formulates a concentrated imaginative awareness of experience in language chosen and arranged to create a specific emotional response through meaning, sound, and rhythm.

Example from "Autumn" by Emily Dickenson:

The morns are meeker than they were,
The nuts are getting brown;
The berry's cheek is plumper,
The rose is out of town.

The maple wears a gayer scarf,
The field a scarlet gown.
Lest I should be old-fashioned,
I'll put a trinket on.



Some techniques may lend themselves best to creating opportunities for emotional connections, while some might lend themselves to intellectual connections.

Polysyndeton: the repetition of conjunctions between clauses, often slowing the tempo or rhythm.

Example from "After the Storm" by Ernest Hemingway:

I said, "Who killed him?" **and** he said, "I don't know who killed him but he's dead all right," **and** it was dark **and** there was water standing in the street **and** no lights **and** windows broke **and** boats all up in the town **and** trees blown down **and** everything blown **and** I got a skiff **and** went out **and** found my boat where I had her inside Mango Key **and** she was all right only she was full of water.

Prediction: an act of foretelling on the basis of observation, experience, or scientific reason.

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

When I passed the graveyard again on 3 August, the fence had been removed by a road crew, and the Silphium cut. It is easy now to predict the future; for a few years my Silphium will try in vain to rise above the mowing machine and then it will die. With it will die the prairie epoch.

Presentation of Evidence: a descriptive or persuasive account of something that furnishes proof.

Example from nrmsc.usgs.gov/research/glaciers.htm:

Glacier National Park has approximately 50 small glaciers. The glaciers have receded since they were first described in 1901, and tree-ring studies indicate that glacial retreat began about 1850. At that time there were more than 150 glaciers within Glacier National Park.

Problem Solving: finding an answer or explanation for a question or source of perplexity.

Example: an interpreter asks the group how a particular pine tree reproduces, since there are no cones to be found on the ground. The ensuing discussion reveals information about reproduction cycles and the role of wildland fires.

Prop: a physical aid that strengthens or supports an interpretive message.

Example: an interpreter brings a collection of props when visiting a school to talk about the Lewis and Clark expedition. Among the items she brings are a beaver fur, a peace medal, a reproduction journal, and a plug of tobacco.

Proverb: a brief popular epigram or maxim.

Example: African proverb:

A calm sea does not make a skilled sailor.

Pun: the humorous use of a word in such a way as to suggest different meanings.

Example by Gary Bremen, NPS:

The parallel lines along the shoreline of Elliot Key is a result of successive high tides and waves carrying dead grasses mixed with a variety of flotsam and jetsam up onto the shore. It is called the wrack line. See the land hermit crab scurrying along looking for a new shell to move into? He gets his clothes off the wrack!

Puppetry: the use of small-scale figures, usually with a cloth body and a hollow head.

Example: interpreters at Biscayne National Park use a puppet of a polyp on their boat trips to explain how corals work and grow. The puppet looks nothing like what most people think of when they think coral: the shape is bizarre, it is white ("colorless"), soft, and floppy: completely incapable of ripping a hole in the bottom of the ship. They use the puppet to "deconstruct the myth" of what a coral really looks like. Body parts, form and function, zooxanthellae, are all discussed using the polyp puppet.



Sam H. Ham wrote, "Puppets are entertaining, versatile, interactive, a grabber, low-cost, and especially valuable when tough or controversial topics must be dealt with."

Question: a point of debate or a proposition. Questions can be used to focus attention on something of interest, to make comparisons, to make inferences and explore possible conclusions and implications, or to think of solutions to real-world problems and issues. The examples below illustrate **Rhetorical Questions**, which are asked merely for effect with no answer expected.

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

I am glad I shall never be young without wild country to be young in. Of what avail are forty freedoms without a blank spot on the map?

Example by Barry Lopez:

How is one to live a moral and compassionate existence when one finds darkness not only in one's culture but within oneself? There are simply no answers to some of the great pressing questions. You continue to live them out, making your life a worthy expression of leaning into the light.