Semantics deal with the interpretation and meaning of words. (It is also a field of study under the umbrella of linguistics.) Semantics help readers discern the difference between literal and figurative meanings.

- **Denotation** refers to the literal meaning of a word.
- **Connotation** refers to all the meanings we give to words beyond their literal meanings.

Parts of Speech with Semantic Relationships
- **Synonyms** are words with similar meanings. They can be denotative (literal) or connotative (figurative).
    - Stroll/Walk (literal)
    - Large/Big (literal)
    - Lazy/Couch potato (figurative)

- **Antonyms** are words with opposite meanings. They can be opposite states of being, opposite sides of one idea or thing, and reversals of one another.
    - single/married (opposite state of being)
    - good/bad (opposite sides of an idea/thing)
    - give/receive (reversal of one another)

- **Homophones** are words that sound the same but have different spellings and meanings.
    - to/two/too
    - their/they're/there
    - flour/flower

- **Homographs** are words that are spelled the same but have different meanings and sounds.
    - wind (to *wind* a clock or blowing in the *wind*)
    - building (the act of *building* something or a *building* in a city)
    - record (to *record* a song or to buy a *record*)

Figurative Language involves using figures of speech to amplify our language, often when comparing one thing to another. Figurative language refers to words and phrases that shift from their literal meanings to symbolic meanings to have a more powerful effect.

- A **metaphor** makes a comparison between two unrelated things by stating <u>that one thing is another</u>.
    - It was raining cats and dogs. (It's not *literally* raining animals.)
    - My brother is a couch potato. (The boy isn't *literally* a vegetable.)
    - The world is your stage. (The world isn't *literally* a stage.)

- A **simile** makes a direct comparison between two unrelated things using *like* or *as*.
    - The baby is *as* cute *as* a button.
    - They found *like* cats and dogs.
    - My bedroom was *like* a junkyard.

- **Hyperbole** is an intentional exaggeration of the truth to emphasize importance or provide comic relief.
    - I'm so hungry I could eat a horse.
    - If he's not careful, the world will come crashing down on him.
    - My backpack weighs a ton.

- An **oxymoron** pairs contradictory words in order to express a new thought or give new meaning.
    - Alone in a crowd
    - A mean smile
    - A whole part
    - Current history

- **Personification** is the applying human attributes or actions to non-human things.
    - Butterflies *danced* around the field.
    - The waves *winked* in the sunlight.
    - The wind *played* hide-and-go-seek among the trees.

*Personification is different from **anthropomorphism**, which is giving animals human traits, abilities, and feelings. (Ex: *The Lion King, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, Zootopia, etc.*)

- An **idiom** is a phrase that's gained popularity in culture and becomes known by most people in a society.
    - "Break a leg!"
    - Taking a cat nap
    - Clean as a whistle
    - The last straw

*A **cliché** is an overused idiom and generally makes for a *weak* figure of speech. Avoid using them.

- **Allusion** refers to a commonly known story, tradition, or other work to make a comparison.
    - He was as happy as a kid on Christmas.
    - It was raining so hard I thought we'd need to build an ark.
    - He was a Scrooge with his money.

- **Onomatopoeia** is a figure of speech in which words, when said, make the sound they describe.
    - Tick tock
    - Woof and meow
    - Achoo

- **Alliteration** repeats the same initial letter, sound, or group of sounds in a series of words. Tongue twisters are a great example of alliteration.
    - Crooks conspire with the crazy king.
    - She sells shells by the seashore.
    - Dan declared that he deserves to debate.

Note: While figurative language can be used in a way to create images in peoples mind (for comparison), **imagery is not figurative language.** Writing with imagery requires vivid and descriptive language to appeal to the reader's senses. Imagery is typically a literal interpretation, which is the key difference. There may be figurative language (such as metaphors or similies) within passages of imagery, but when looking *at the text as a whole*, it's important to know the difference.

> **Example of imagery:** The night was dark and humid, heavy with a scent of rotting vegetation like a potent perfume. Only the whizzing sound of mosquitos could be heard in the otherwise silent swamp.