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Oxymoron and Paradox

An oxymoron is a fairly simple poetry concept or figure of speech where two words that contradict each other form an entire phrase. The two words that are combined are opposites of each other and are used to create more emphasis or bring more attention to a certain scene, subject, or character. Other purposes of an oxymoron could be adding more of a dramatic effect, to reveal a deeper meaning, be creative when describing something, plus it may help incorporate irony into a piece of literature. It may even be used to confuse a reader and allow them to think about the meaning of the writing. Not only can we find oxymorons in different styles of writing, but it may also be used in movie titles and people use it in everyday conversations all the time. There are so many examples of oxymorons used in the English language that people often don’t realize they’re using them.

Some examples:

Here are some simple examples listed where opposite words are literally taken and formulated into one phrase to create an oxymoron:

1. Pretty ugly – People use that in conversations with one another all the time and the word “pretty” and “ugly” are two words that are vastly opposite to one another.
2. Original copy – This phrase is also used in daily conversations and people often don’t realize it’s a common oxymoron example. This phrase has the word “original,” and “copy” turned into a phrase, which as usual are contradicting words.
3. Baby giant – This is an excellent example of an oxymoron because it uses the word “baby” and “giant,” which are complete opposite meanings of one another. A baby is small while a giant is very large, so both of these two words are put together they form an oxymoron.

A paradox is a poetry concept which is a situation or statement that appears contradictory and goes against common sense but contains an element of truth. A paradox reveals a deeper meaning or a hidden truth through a contradiction; this truth is often unexpected. Paradoxes are useful in poetry because they make the reader think and convey an idea in an interesting way that the reader must reflect on to understand. Paradoxes allow us to think about things in a different way and think more deeply about concepts; they also catch our attention and make us invested in understanding what they mean. Paradoxes do not seem to follow the rules of logic, so they make the reader reconsider what they already know. The word paradox comes from the Greek words “para” which means contrary to and “doxa” which means opinion, so a paradox means something that is contrary to common opinion or logic.

Some examples:

1. If you don’t risk anything, you risk everything. – On the surface this appears illogical because the meaning behind the concepts is contradictory, but it has a deeper meaning which is that if you don’t try anything because you are afraid, you will never achieve anything and will miss out on good things, therefore risking your happiness.
2. If I know one thing, it’s that I know nothing. - It seems illogical to know nothing and know something since they are ideas that contradict each other, but the hidden truth is recognizing how little we know in the grand scheme of things.
3. Save money by spending it. - These are opposite actions, but it contains truth because in terms of economics, money can be saved in the long run through making investments.