

Hyperbole

Exaggeration used for emphasis or humour that's not meant to be taken literally.

Chances are you've used hyperbole before when talking to your friends.

What about this?

"OMG she was dying of laughter"

Sound familiar? Then you've used hyperbole.

It's really, really unlikely that someone's going to die of laughter, thankfully, but this hyperbole tells us that the person was laughing really hard.

"I'm so hungry I could eat a horse!"

You probably don't want a horse for tea and you couldn't actually eat a whole one, but using this hyperbole is a more fun expression to use than just "I'm really hungry" - although not much fun for the horse.

Hyperbole is often humorous but not always.

In his poem 'Sounds of the Day', Norman MacCaig uses Hyperbole to emphasise something more serious.

"When the door scraped shut, it was the end of all the sounds there are"

The door scraping shut represents the end of the speaker's relationship, and through the hyperbole, we get a clear sense that to him, nothing will ever be the same again.

It's like all the joy has been stripped from his life.

It really intensifies the impact of the loss he is feeling, like the world has stood still in this moment.

Why don't you try out some hyperbole? Your writing could be out of this world.