

Allusion

It is a brief and indirect reference to a person, place, thing or idea of historical, cultural, literary or political significance. It does not describe in detail the person or thing to which it refers. It is just a passing comment and the writer expects the reader to possess enough knowledge to spot the allusion and grasp its importance in a text.

For instance, you make a literary allusion the moment you say, “I do not approve of this *quixotic* idea,” Quixotic means stupid and impractical derived from Cervantes’s “Don Quixote”, a story of a foolish knight and his misadventures.

Allusion Examples in Everyday Speech

The use allusions are not confined to literature alone. Their occurrence is fairly common in our daily speech. Look at some common allusion examples in everyday life:

- “Don’t act like a Romeo in front of her.” – “Romeo” is a reference to Shakespeare’s Romeo, a passionate lover of Juliet, in “Romeo and Juliet”.
- The rise in poverty will unlock the Pandora’s box of crimes. – This is an allusion to one of Greek Mythology’s origin myth, “Pandora’s box”.
- “This place is like a Garden of Eden.” – This is a biblical allusion to the “garden of God” in the Book of Genesis.
- “Hey! Guess who the new Newton of our school is?” – “Newton”, means a genius student, alludes to a famous scientist Isaac Newton.
- “Stop acting like my ex-husband please.” – Apart from scholarly allusions we refer to common people and places in our speech.

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