

Allusions

INDIRECT REFERENCES, USUALLY LITERARY,
HISTORICAL, POLITICAL, OR CULTURAL

EXAMPLES

Ayn Rand's 1957 novel *Atlas Shrugged* alludes to Greek mythology. Someone's "Waterloo" is a defeat, indirectly referring to Napoleon's military defeat in 1815. Comedian Dennis Miller's "ex machina" routine alludes to a common plot device in stage plays.

IMPORTANCE

Allusions enrich the meaning of a text by connecting it with the web of associations the references contain. It's similar to how overtones enrich a musical sound.

DIFFICULTY

Texts rich in allusion make reading comprehension more difficult because a reader needs to understand the references in order to fully understand the text. This is why some novels are so demanding. A good example is *Finnegan's Wake* by James Joyce.

ALLUSIONS ARE PROBABLY THE ROLLS
ROYCE OF LINGUISTIC DEVICES.