

# 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. Dennis Miller's "Dennis ex machina" comedy routine alludes to a common plot device in stage plays.

## IMPORTANCE

Allusions enrich the meaning of a text by connecting it with all the 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 *Finnegans Wake* by James Joyce.

**ALLUSIONS ARE PROBABLY THE ROLLS ROYCE OF LINGUISTIC DEVICES.**