

# Example of essay on historical perspective within lapham

[History](#)



**ASSIGN  
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## **Introduction**

In writing his article 'Figures of Speech', Lewis Lapham creatively uses his historical knowledge of literature, particularly renowned literary figures to lend the essay a historical perspective. This goes a long way in strengthening his article, because the historical references help him to emphasize his message through comparison and illustration. The author severally refers to literary figures such as Mammon, the greed deity and Apollo to provoke the reader to realize how material attachment to old ways has hindered writers from embracing newer, more progressive approaches. It may be seen, therefore, that Lapham's reference to history and use of figures of speech such as metaphors enhances his writing by adding emphasis and clarity to his message. This write-up discusses the extent to which this paper's writer and his colleagues connected the figure of speech, historical reference or literary figure to the main message in Lapham's essay.

## **Colleague's Excerpts**

In the first excerpt, the writer (John Mitchell) highlights how Lapham has used literary figures and historical references to augment his message regarding writers' ability to preserve their thoughts and voices over a long time. Lapham reckons that it is not the medium in which an author's work is stored that preserves their voices, but the power of imagination and thought (Lapham 9). To emphasize this, the author (Lapham) refers to two literary figures, namely Mammon, the deity of greed, and Apollo, the god of rebirth and the sun, and the Grub Street, an ancient England street. This historical

reference serves to emphasize the fact that although the medium does not affect preservation of an author's voices as much as the power of imagination and expression, a writer's attachment to the old media and resistance to change hinders their progress. This way, the colleague clearly connects Lapham's historical perspective in 'Figures of Speech' to the ideas therein.

In the second excerpt, the writer (Richard Priest) shows how Lapham has successfully given his essay a historical perspective by referring to a historical happening. Lapham refers to Garcia (a Cuban general talked about by Elbert Hubbard in a pamphlet to show commitment to accomplish assigned tasks) to show the difference between the expository and the free-flowing backdrop forms of writing (Lapham 7). Richard notes that Lapham, by referring to Garcia, seeks to emphasize the point that writers can creatively outline and verify their point in their essays. The colleague thus relates the effectiveness of Lapham's historical reference to the clarity of the author's essay.

The third excerpt, composed by Micah Nellessen, describes how Lapham uses a metaphor to illustrate the need for writers to compose clear and unreserved pieces of writing to enable their readers to understand the intended message. Lapham refers to a 'herd', which refers to generalized thoughts and doctrines held by a group of people (Lapham 8). In such a herd, people cannot express their dissent for fear of being condemned and seen as social outcasts. However, when one isolates themselves from the herd, their vision is unblocked and they can see afar into the pasture. The author implies that a writer should step away from the herd and compose

enlightening and informative writings which are clear, uninhibited and verifiable. Staying in a herd blocks one's vision, creativity and thought. Micah depicts in her excerpt how Lapham's use of powerful figures of speech has enhanced his essay and helped his readers to understand what his intended message is.

### **The Writer's Excerpt**

The fourth excerpt, composed by the author of this write-up, highlights how Lapham has used his historical knowledge of writers before him to emphasize the need for essayists to stand out of their restrictive cultural settings (Lapham, 7-8). Quoting from renowned poet Archibald MacLeish, Lapham notes that writers and human beings in general should step away from the herd, even if momentarily, and think independently for themselves. This helps Lapham to relay his message that free thinking is essential for writers to write uninhibited essays and share thoughts with their audiences. If a writer is unable to overcome their culture and societal doctrines and beliefs, they are restricted in their thinking and may not be able to write dissenting essays. This fourth excerpt shows the extent to which Lapham's use of historical literary knowledge and figures of speech has enhanced his writing.

### **Conclusion**

Lapham's use of literary figures, historical references and figures of speech has greatly enhanced his essay. Reading and writing about the author's work, one discovers that knowledge in history and literature is useful in composing compelling writings. Referring to influential literary figures and

historical events helps in emphasizing and illustrating a point that a writer seeks to relay to the audience. It is evident from Lapham's essay that he thought critically about his topic before writing and incorporated his historical knowledge. This is a common practice whereby a writer refers to relevant historical events to emphasize their message. All in all, Lapham's is a compelling essay due to his incorporation of a historical perspective and use of figures of speech. Writers should include such writing strategies to enhance their essays.

### **Works Cited**

Lewis, Lapham, C. " Notebook: Figures of Speech". Harper Magazine Nov. 2010. Harper. Web.  
1 April 2013.