

Origin: Roman history. Cleopatra was the beautiful Queen of ancient Egypt. Julius Caesar and Mark Anthony, both beguiled by the beauty and charm of Cleopatra, offered her military assistance to preserve her throne from the rival claim of her brother, which exerted a profound influence on the history of the ancient world.

Use of the allusion : “If the nose of Cleopatra had been shorter, the whole face of the earth would have been changed.” (in Blaise Pascal’s *Thoughts [Pensées]*)

Example 2

Allusion: kick against the pricks

Meaning: to resist or protest against prevailing opinion or conditions

Origin: From the Bible: Saul is struck by a bright light while on the road to Damascus and addressed by Christ himself: “And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.” (*Act 9:5*)

Use of the allusion : “Paul was laid up with an attack of bronchitis. He did not mind much. What happened happened, and it was no good kicking against the pricks.” (by D. H. Lawrence in *Sons and Lovers*)

3. Quotes about Allusions

- 1) To borrow and to steal: “One of the surest of tests is the way in which a poet borrows. Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different. The good poet welds his theft into a whole of feeling which is unique, utterly different from that from which it was torn; the bad poets throws it into something which has no cohesion. A good poet will usually borrow from authors remote in time, or alien in language, or diverse in interest.” (T. S. Eliot)
- 2) The link between the new and the old: “A little bit of one story joins onto an idea from another, and hey presto, ... not old tales but new ones. Nothing comes from nothing.” (Salman Rushdie)
- 3) Allusion and creation: “There is no creation without tradition; the ‘new’ is an inflection on a preceding form; novelty is always a variation on the past.” (Carlos Fuentes)
- 4) Implicitness of allusions: “An **allusion** which is explained no longer has the charm of allusion. ... In divulging the mystery, you withdraw its virtue.” (Jean Paulhan)
- 5) Failure and effectiveness of an allusion: “When they fail, **allusions** leave us exposed: either enmeshed in inelegant, patronizing explanations or cast adrift with insufficient provisions on the murky seas of a childlike half-understanding. Failed allusions produce feelings of betrayal on all sides because they reveal mistaken assumptions about shared frames of reference and like-mindedness. ...Unlike most tricks, the allusion triumphs only when people know precisely how it is done.” (Elizabeth D. Samet)
- 6) Allusions and plagiarism: “Postmodernist ideas about intertextuality and quotation have complicated the simplistic ideas about plagiarism which were in Destrý-Schole’s day. I myself