

## Teaching Plan & Guideline for Chapter 4

<b>Content:</b>	Interpreting Figurative Language Types of figurative language & exemplifications Symbol Simile Metaphor Personification Overstatement or hyperbole Understatement or litotes Metonymy and synecdoche Onomatopoeia & alliteration Allusions Practice exercises Summing up Review test Tests References
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### Objectives:

- To provide experience that will result in students' ability to:
1. recognize types of figurative language and be able to interpret their meanings.
  2. decide what things are being compared.
  3. think of the qualities that are characteristic of the figurative language.
  4. decide which of these qualities is appropriate to the context in which the figurative language is used.
  5. figure out why the writer has made the comparison.

### Teaching Procedures & Activities

1. Review the skills in the previous chapters and give examples from Supplementary Material for Teaching
2. Divide students into equal groups then have them study the handouts.
3. Brainstorm by discussion, infer, conclude, predict, generalize and present the comparison in the selection to find its meaning.
4. Students conclude the topic of this chapter with all the guidance needed from teachers in order to figure out each figurative language.
5. Do assignments in the Supplementary Material for Teaching and Test.

## Teaching Materials

1. Supplementary Material for Teaching
2. Handouts
3. Reading materials, i.e. news articles, features, ads, etc.
4. Evaluation form.

## Evaluation

1. Observation of students as they critically discuss and react to a selection while figuring out meanings.
2. Exercises, materials assigned to evaluate students' figurative language interpretation skills.

## CHAPTER 4

### INTERPRETING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

In this chapter you'll learn about interpreting **figures of speech** or **figurative language** - language that compares-paints a picture in people's mind. **They are different names for the same thing.** (Elder, 2004, p.294) People frequently use figurative expressions every day of their lives. We do not always realize we are using it. We "boil with anger" or an idea "dawns on us," "The years roll by," and the election is a "landslide victory."

These examples are colorful and imaginative. Literal language, in contrast, relies on the straight-forward, dictionary definition of words. Naturally we use literal language more than we do figurative language to express ourselves clearly and directly. However, when we wish to color our ideas and add interesting depth to our views, we depend on figurative language.

When you say something that appears on the surface to mean one thing but has to be interpreted correctly in order to be understood, to make language clearer, more interesting, and more vivid or to achieve some other specific effect you use expressions that are not literally true. You are using figurative language. You make comparisons in speaking and in writing. For example, when you say "My backpack feels like a bag of rocks!" you've painted a vivid picture of how heavy your backpack feels. Or "If the phone rings one more time tonight, I'll scream!" you are using figurative language. You do not mean you'll actually scream if the phone rings again; you mean that you are annoyed and frustrated at hearing it ring so often.

It is raining cats and dogs. This sentence gives you a feeling or sense of the real thing: "It's raining very hard."

The fog comes on little cat feet. Carl Sandburg's famous line gives already used you a feeling or sense of how the fog comes in.

**Figures of speech** are *non-literal ways of saying things; that is, the words have to be interpreted in order to understand the intended meaning.* (Elder, 2004, p.292)

Figurative language is language which departs from the straightforward use of words. It creates a special effect, clarifies an idea, and makes writing more colorful and forceful. Figurative language adds an extra dimension to writing, giving plain writing richness and depth.

(Giroux, & Williston, 1974, p.10)

Writers use figurative language for the same reason that we use it in everyday conversation: to convey ideas in a clear, colorful, and forceful manner. For example, in a newspaper, we read that the President cleared away the "red tape" on the new legislation. In a magazine article, we read about a dam under construction at the "mouth" of the Amazon River. In a novel, we read about a character who is "inching" his way to safety." These examples of figurative language are only a few of the many types found in literature.

Figurative language encourages the reader to bridge gaps between ideas, fill in details, make associations, and form mental pictures. All of these uses of the imagination are highly satisfying, for there is great enjoyment in understanding what has not been spelled out for us.

Figurative language is a means of clarifying unclear and unfamiliar ideas. It makes the abstract real. For example, when D.H. Lawrence

describes a bat as “a black glove thrown up at the light and falling back,” he is painting a figurative word picture which makes the bat real.

Figurative language adds emotional impact to writing. When W.H. Auden writes, “I’ll love you dear, I’ll love you/Till China and Africa meet,” he shows much more emotion than if he had written, “I will love you, dear, for a long time.” Thus, through figurative language, writers express emotion and viewpoint.

Every figure of speech is created in a different way, has its own unique appearance, and is used for special purposes. It is not important for you to recognize each figure of speech, but you should be able to understand and appreciate them in your reading.

### **Types of Figurative Language & Exemplifications**

Here we will discuss only the ten most common figurative languages.

(Giroux, 1974, p.14-23)

#### **1. Symbol**

One of the most common figures of speech is the symbol. A symbol is a concrete object used to represent an abstract idea; in other words, something which stands for something else. The cross, for example, is the symbol of Christianity. The flag is the symbol of a country. And the wedding ring is a symbol of marriage.

In literature some symbols have been used so often that they have become accepted by writers universally. The sea, for example, is generally accepted as a symbol of life. A flower or a butterfly is usually a symbol of delicate and fragile beauty. A rock is the symbol of strength and permanency.

## 2. Simile

Similes (and metaphors) are comparisons which use symbols. A simile is a comparison which uses “like,” “as,” or “than.” If you have ever described someone as being “slow as molasses,” or “faster than lightning,” you have used similes. Molasses is accepted as a symbol for slow movement and lightning represents speed.

The simile is the most common figure of speech used. In fact, we depend on similes so much that they become worn-out very quickly. Similes like “cold as ice,” “busy as a bee,” and “soft as silk” have lost their effectiveness. Creative writers try to create similes which are fresh and appropriate.

A simile expresses an idea by comparing two things that are unlike in most respects but are alike in a certain way. The words *like* or *as* are always used in a simile. For example, in the sentence *The dew glittered like jewels*, dew and jewels are two different things, but the idea is that dew sparkles with flashes of many colors just as jewels do.

In the expression, “Jill swims like a fish,” the grace and ease of Jill’s movements are compared to the movements of a fish. Literally, it would be impossible for Jill to swim like a fish because she is human. In a literal sense, then, the comparison is ridiculous and just not true. However, in a figurative sense, the comparison is meaningful and effective, allowing the reader to see Jill’s movements clearly.

Not every expression with “like,” “as,” or “than” is automatically a simile, however. “Jack looks like an athlete” is not a simile because Jack is too similar to an athlete for effective comparison. But “Jack runs like a

gazelle” is a simile because two different things are being compared with one similarity between them-speed.

### Examples:

“The old man’s skin was as thin as tissue paper” and

“Molly’s cooking tastes like prison camp food.”

In the first example, the old man’s skin is being compared with tissue paper, meaning that his skin was extremely thin like tissue paper, it was translucent (you could see the color and contours of the veins through it).

In the second example, Molly’s cooking and prison camp food are being compared. Prison camp food is terrible, so the intended meaning is that Molly’s cooking is awful.

“The tree bent in the wind *like an old man praying.*” (A tree is compared to an old man at prayer.)

“The moon looked *as white as a skull.* (The moon’s color is being compared to the color of a skull.)

To help you to become familiar with similes in literature, several examples are given below.

### From poetry:

O my love’s like a red, red rose.

How brilliant and mirthful the light of her eye,  
Like a star glowing out from the blue of the sky.

### From prose:

The canyon lay waiting for them like a monster, its jaws ready to snap shut on them.

The doctors were working with their sleeves up to their shoulders and were red as butchers.

.....and the insects nodding upon their perches, crooned like old women.

### 3. Metaphor

Unlike the simile which depends on “like,” “as,” or “than,” the metaphor is a direct comparison which does not require special key words.

Metaphors, then, are stronger than similes because the objects or persons

compared *are* the same. The thing is described as though it were something else. We speak of the eyes of a potato, the hands of a clock, pearly teeth, iron will, and so on. We call a person a peach, a rat, or a dog. In each case a word usually reserved for one thing is applied to something else. And in each case the meaning of the word is shifted.

Metaphors are a natural outgrowth of speech, but like similes, metaphors, too, are over-used. Authors attempt to create fresh metaphors which give power and excitement to their ideas. For example, when Thomas Wolfe writes that “Fire drives a thorn of memory in the heart,” he is comparing the vividness of fire to the sharpness of a thorn. The mention of “heart” stirs the emotions and intensifies the image.

The word “ribbon” becomes part of a metaphor in “a thin ribbon of smoke.” The smoke has the appearance of a ribbon and creates a perfect visual image.

Not all direct comparisons are metaphors. Saying that a man is a hero is not a metaphor, but saying that he is a lion when fighting is a metaphor because the man is associated with a symbol of unusual strength and bravery. Thus, authors try to make their metaphors perceptive and appealing.

The following examples of metaphors may help you understand this figure of speech:

**Example:**

“The attorney’s eyes were laser beams.” The attorney’s eyes and laser beams are being compared. In what way could eyes and laser beams be alike? They could be very intense and penetrating. The meaning is that the attorney had very intense, penetrating eyes, eyes that narrowed and focused hard on anyone the attorney was looking or staring at.

“His *blackberry* eyes darted nervously. (The eyes are being compared to blackberries so that you can see the eyes as small and black)



“A brown, withered *leaf of a hand* fluttered gently on her lap and then lifted up to wipe a tear away. (The hand is being compared to a leaf to suggest frailty and the approaching end of life.)

“In the eyes of the law,” he said, “you are innocent until proven guilty.”

“He drove through Yonkers to a group of garden apartments that was only one of a number of mushroom growths in what had recently been open land.

“The stars were little hard chips of light.”

#### 4. Personification

Sometimes an object or animal is described as if it were human. This is called personification. Notice the word “person” in personification. In the sentence, “The sun smiled down on the band of weary travelers,” the sun is personified because it is a nonliving thing made to seem alive. Of course, the sun cannot smile, but figuratively, it can be interpreted to mean warmth, comfort, and pleasure.

In the sentence, “The car coughed and died,” the car is made to seem alive. The car is described as though it were a sick animal.

#### Examples:

“Before I knew it, my credit card leaped out of my wallet and bought a CD player. “The credit card is talked about as if it were a person: a credit card cannot on its own leap out of a wallet and make a purchase. The point the person is making is that he or she was unable to resist buying the CD player, that he or she didn’t have any control over making the purchase.

“The sun *yawned* through the trees.” (The sun is compared to a person yawning.)

“An idea *spoke* within him, *racing* through his mind. “(The idea has the quality of a living human thing; it speaks and races.)

Personifying nonliving things gives them reality and emphasis and helps the reader to form clear mental pictures. We say that money talks, the

wind whistles through the trees, and the ocean roars. These expressions make writing more interesting.

Things which make sounds cannot all be considered cases of personification. For example, “the old stairs creaked as we climbed up,” is not personification because stairs can creak. On the other hand, “the stairs strained and groaned under our weight,” is personification since only living things can strain and groan.

The following are examples of personification:

“The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth to me from the ground.”

“Our monuments lean wearily, and our gravestones bow their heads discouraged.”

#### **5. Overstatement or Hyperbole or Exaggeration**

Overstatement, or hyperbole, is exaggeration in language. Overstatement is so common that we have come to expect it as a natural part of colorful speech and writing.

In conversation we use expressions like, “I’m starved,” or “I’ll die if I don’t pass this exam,” or “I have a million things to do.”

#### **Examples:**

“My high school English teacher had eyes in the back of her head” and “I’m so exhausted that I could sleep for a week!” in the first example, The exaggeration is “had eyes in the back of her head.” The meaning is that the teacher seemed to see *everything* that went on in the classroom. The exaggeration in the second example is “sleep for a week.” The point the person wants to get across is how *extremely* tired he or she is

He roared *with the force of a thousand lions*. (The force of his roar is exaggerated by being compared to the roars of lions.)

We are exaggerating for the sake of emphasis, to be more forceful and dramatic.

Like all figures of speech, overstatement may be used in a variety of ways. It may create humor or seriousness, stimulate the imagination or restrain it. Evoke sympathy or despair, and so on.

When Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote his famous lines, "Here once the embattled farmer stood/ And fired the shot heard round the world," he was trying to stir the pride and patriotism of his countrymen. Literally, of course, a shot could not be heard around the world, and Emerson did not expect his readers to accept his statement as fact. An overstatement must not be confused with a lie which distorts the truth for the purpose of tricking and deceiving.

Like other figures of speech, overstatement is found in all types of writing, except scientific reports where literal language must be used.

## **6. Understatement or Litotes or Meiosis**

Understatement or meiosis (my-o-sis) is the opposite of overstatement, but interestingly enough, it is used for the same purpose: to capture the reader's attention and to give ideas color and emphasis. Understatement uses language which is opposite to what is expected or less than expected. The success of understatement lies in the reader's ability to fill in the truth. The language in understatement is deliberately gentler, milder, or weaker than the situation calls for.

For example, we might read that a reception given to a foreign diplomat was "anything but friendly." A careful reader is quick to interpret the understatement, "anything but friendly" to mean "cool," "unfriendly," or even "hostile." Such an understatement is effective for its unexpectedness.

The American humorist Artemus Ward once said that a man who holds his hand for half an hour in a lighted fire will experience “a sensation of excessive and disagreeable warmth.” The statement is a good example of understating the truth in language which is much less forceful than the action suggests.

## 7. Metonymy and Synecdoche

Metonymy and synecdoche, is the substitution of one word for another. Over a period of time two things sometimes become so closely related that we use the name of one for the other, or the name of a part of something is used to represent the whole thing. For example, we read, “Washington is hopeful for an early settlement in the war.” “ Washington” is a substitute word or change-of-name for “U.S. Government.” Here the writer is using a place name to represent a body of people. In the same sense, we refer to “Moscow” instead of “the Soviet government.” Construction workers are called “hard-hats.”

### Example:

“We have always been loyal to the crown.” In which crown refers to the monarch (king or queen) and “Wall street did not like the president’s new economic plan,” in which Wall Street represents the financial and business community (and meaning that stock prices dropped because brokerage firms and investors did not have confidence in the president’s plan).

The *captain* commanded one hundred *hands*. This means the captain commanded one hundred people.

The *college* requires these courses. College here means the people in charge of the college.

The lawyers were waiting for a decision from the *bench*. *Bench* here means the judge in charge of the law court. He sits on the bench.

The farmer sold twenty *head* of cattle. The farmer sold all of each cow.

At a cattle sale, buyers refer to “head.” Head is part of the cow and is used to represent the whole cow.

We frequently hear such expressions as “The press attended the meeting” (press = reporters) and “The pen is mightier than the sword” (pen = reason, sword = physical strength). Most recently the word “wheels” has been accepted as the slang change-of name for car.

## 8. Onomatopoeia and Alliteration

Two figures of speech which are based on the sounds of words are onomatopoeia and alliteration. Onomatopoeia, expresses the sounds made by the thing described. Examples are “buzz,” “crunch,” “tinkle,” “gurgle,” “sizzle,” “hiss,” “splash,” and “crash,” to mention a few. From Edgar Allan Poe we have the lines “Hear the....Silver bells!/ How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,/ In the icy air of night.” Onomatopoeia and alliteration are like fine spices: used sparingly they add flavor and depth to writing.

The poetic statement, “Beat! Beat! Drums-blow! Bugles! Blow!” is an example of sound-words, and it is also a good example of alliteration. Alliteration is the repetition of the first letters or sounds in words. This figure of speech is used to create special effects or establish a particular mood or feeling. The following are examples of alliteration:

The sweet of *bitter bark* and *burning clove*.

Forest's *ferny floor*.

The slow sea rises and the sheer cliff crumbles.

## 9. Allusions

Allusions express comparisons by referring to an incident in history, a quotation from the Bible, a quotation from literature, a geographical location, or a current event. A character in a story, for example, might say that another character is older than Methuselah. Since

Methuselah was a Biblical figure who supposedly lived more than 900 years, the character, in a figurative sense, appears to be more than 900 years old. Notice that this example of allusion is also a weak simile and a strong overstatement. Figures of speech do mix together often, and trying to distinguish among them serves no real purpose. It is more important to be able to recognize the differences between literal and figurative language.

### Sample Exercise

Kino lay as rigid as a tree limb. He barely breathed. And his eyes went to the place where he had swept over his tracks. Even the sweeping might be a message to the trackers. He knew these inland hunters. In a country where there is little game they managed to live because of their ability to hunt, and they were hunting him. They scuttled over the ground like animals and found a sign and crouched over it while the horseman waited.

The trackers whined a little, like excited dogs on a warming trail. Kino slowly drew his big knife to his hand and made it ready. He knew what he must do.

1. This paragraph can be considered an example of
  - a. poetry.
  - b. fiction.
  - c. nonfiction.
  - d. argumentation.
2. Which one of the following sentences contains a simile?
  - a. Kino lay as rigid as a tree limb.
  - b. He knew these inland hunters.
  - c. He knew what he must do.
  - d. Kino slowly drew his big knife to his hand and made it ready.
3. In this selection the author seems concerned with
  - a. developing characters who are really animals.
  - b. establishing setting and mood.
  - c. describing the actions of the hunters.
  - d. blending characters, setting, and action.
4. Underline the sentence which clearly suggests Kino's future actions.

### Answers and Explanations

1. The best answer to the first question is *b*, the selection is an example of fiction. Since fiction deals with people, places, and events, *b* has to be the answer.

Answer *a*, *c*, and *d* are wrong for these reasons:

Answer *a*: Poetry requires a particular set-up very different from the paragraph form of this selection.

Answer *c*: A story of this type cannot be classified as non-fiction because it is not a realistic recording of an actual event.

Answer *d*: Argumentation deals with ideas, views, and attitudes; this selection deals with people, places, and events.

2. The best answer to the second question is *a*, "Kino lay as rigid as a tree limb." Kino's position on the ground is being compared to the fixed position of a tree limb. This answer is the only one with "as" which is a key word in a simile.

Answers *b*, *c*, and *d* are wrong for these reasons:

Answers *b*, *c*, and *d*: None of these sentences contains "like," "as," or "than" which would be necessary for a simile. Also nothing is being compared in these sentences.

3. The best answer to the third question is *d*, the author seems to be most concerned with blending action, character, and setting. Kino and the trackers are characters; Kino's escape and the tracker's pursuit is action; and expressions like "inland," and "country where there is little game" establish setting. More subtle clues like sweeping over his tracks and scuttling over the ground also help to establish setting.

Answers *a*, *b*, and *c* are wrong for these reasons:

Answer *a*: Characters are introduced but they are not really developed. We know very little about them by the time we finish reading the selection.

Answer *b*: Setting and mood are established to some degree, but this answer is incomplete compared to answer *d* which is more complete.

Answer *c*: This answer is correct but incomplete.

4. The best answer to the fourth question is "Kino slowly drew his big knife to his hand and made it ready." An answer which is acceptable but not as good is, "He knew what he must do."

## Practice Exercises

### Practice A

Read the four incomplete sentences and the phrases to their right in each group below. Write the numeral of the sentence beside the phrase that best completes each comparison.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. The children swarmed into the school cafeteria like _____ .                     | _____ a. the frosting on a wedding cake     |
| 2. The garden had a covering of snow as thick as _____ .                           | _____ b. a gray winter day                  |
| 3. The girls in their pretty summer dresses looked like _____ .                    | _____ c. a flock of hungry, chirping birds  |
| 4. The room was as dreary as _____ .   | _____ d. butterflies fluttering in a garden |
| 5. Bill's mother said she thought the rock music sounded like _____ .              | _____ e. snow drifting down before dawn     |
| 6. The sound of the gypsy violins was as soothing as _____ .                       | _____ f. freight trains hitting head-on     |
| 7. The cloud formations filling the sky looked very much like _____ .              | _____ g. puffs of cotton                    |
| 8. She entered the room as silently as _____ .                                     | _____ h. the ripple of waves on the shore   |
| 9. They bounced their conversation back and forth like _____ .                     | _____ i. a squeaky hinge on a rusty gate    |
| 10. The campers' lunch disappeared as quickly as _____ .                           | _____ j. air from a punctured balloon       |
| 11. As the speaker's voice grated on and on, it sounded more and more like _____ . | _____ k. a cardinal on a white fence post   |
| 12. His necktie was as bright as _____   | _____ l. a ping-pong ball                   |



## Practice B

Read the two poems below in which a river is described as if it were a snake, and a highway is described as if it were a thread.

### The River

The river is a slender snake  
That slithers down the mountain side  
And slides across the valley,  
Looking for a place to hide.

### The Highway

The highway is a long, white thread that loops  
Around the mountains, weaves through the fabric  
Of small towns, and unwinds in the city,  
Where it snarls and ties up all traffic.

Read each group of four sentences below and the words above them. In each sentence something is described as if it were one of the things named above that group. Write the letter identifying the thing being compared in the space provided. Then underline the word in the sentence that is compared to it. The first one is done for you.

a. rubber      b. soldiers      c. flagpoles      d. sheep      e. car

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. A flock of fleecy white clouds was grazing along the horizon.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2. The trees waved their red and orange banners to signal that fall had arrived.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Dandelions in yellow helmets marched across their captured hillsides.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 4. She served fried scallops that had the texture of the insides of old golf balls.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 5. The young boy's voice shifted gears when he started to speak.

a. guitar      b. caged animal      c. automobile      d. prison      e. wall

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Winter had imprisoned them and barred the windows with icicles.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 7. The gusty wind strummed a tune on the clotheslines.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 8. The baseball coach paced up and down, alternately roaring and growling.

a. pioneer      b. airplane squadron      c. wall      d. feathers

- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The drone of hornets dive-bombing a mud puddle didn't disturb the old dog's nap.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 10. With his pen the author blazed a trail of ideas for other minds to follow.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 11. A snowstorm is just a pillow fight between winter and the world.

\_\_\_\_\_ 12. They built a friendship with bricks of common interests, cementing it with kindness.

When a person uses stronger words than are necessary to express an idea, he is using exaggeration. For example, instead of saying "I am hungry," he might say, "I am starving!" Authors often use exaggeration to emphasize ideas or to provide humor.

### Practice C

Read the following story and look for exaggerations. Then answer the questions at the bottom of the page.

#### Moon Rocks

A science class at Forestville School recently took a bus trip to see a display of the first rocks brought back from the moon. Mr. Jenner, the science teacher, told the pupils to take notes about the things that seemed most important to them on the trip. When the class returned from the excursion, a lively discussion was held.

**Don**, who wants to become a mechanic, said, "The bus is so sold and rickety, I thought it would collapse into a little heap of worn-out gears and rusty bolts any minute. That unreliable rattletrap is not worth a nickel!"

The class clown is **Tom**, and nobody expected him to make a solemn speech. However, Tom surprised everyone by saying, "I kept thinking of how many centuries mankind has dreamed of flying to the moon, and now, suddenly, a regular, ordinary man lands on the moon and picks up a rock and brings it back to earth. Every time I think about it, I feel like crying an ocean of tears."

When **Peggy** described the trip, she said, "I've never seen so many people in my life. There were a million people standing in line to see the rocks. It was so hot the temperature must have been at least 150 degrees in the shade.

The most serious science student in the class is **Chuck**. He had not seemed to notice anything except the moon rocks. In his report he said, "I was so overcome when I saw the rocks I felt like my feet were rooted in the ground and that I could never pull them up and walk away. I could have stayed there looking at the rocks forever."

1. Which student exaggerated the temperature?\_\_\_\_\_How was the heat described?\_\_\_\_\_
2. Which student felt very sad?\_\_\_\_\_What words were used to show this feeling?\_\_\_\_\_Is this an exaggeration?\_\_\_\_\_Why or why not?\_\_\_\_\_

3. Which student exaggerated the condition of the bus? \_\_\_\_\_ How was the value of the bus described? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which student thought of nothing except the moon rocks? \_\_\_\_\_ What words were used to exaggerate this student's reactions? \_\_\_\_\_

**Irony** implies a meaning quite different from what is actually said. In fact, an ironic statement may mean the opposite of what is said. For example, a person who sees rain pouring down might say, "Looks like we are getting a drop or two of rain." This statement contains irony because both he and the person to whom he speaks know that it is raining considerably more than one or two drops.

Writers often use irony. In its lightest form irony is considered to be humorous.

### Practice D

Read each statement below. If you think the sentence implies something quite different from what is actually stated, place a check on the line.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The builder was so clever he didn't omit a single mistake in the new house.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Even though we had the heaviest rain of the year, our basement didn't flood.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Over the Labor Day weekend, the park was crowded with picnickers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Showing his usual sunny, cheerful disposition, Joe snarled at everyone he met.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. As fast as we raked the leaves into piles, the wind scattered them all over again.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The minute the policeman heard the wail of the siren, he stopped all traffic.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. After trying hard all season, switch hitter Will Adams finally broke the record for the most strike-outs in one year.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Sarah is such a good nurse that her patients are always grateful.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I'm sure Aunt Martha would listen politely to anyone who could get a word in edgewise.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The November day was so mild we all carried our coats as we walked home from school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Dan is so well coordinated he looks like an elephant crossing a rocky stream.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Our team seems determined to keep its string of glorious defeats unbroken.

## Practice E

Read each sentence. On the line at the left, write *S* if the sentence contains a simile or *M* if the sentence has a metaphor.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The cherry blossoms floated down like feathers from a huge pillow.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The train was a one-eyed dragon that roared at little towns and made them tremble.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The droplets of water blossomed into a bouquet of ice crystals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The classroom was as quiet as a downtown business district on Sunday morning.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The poodle turned one somersault after another like a circus clown.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Scissors of fog snipped off the distant edges of the world and left it just my size.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. When Mr. Nelson wears his round eyeglasses, he looks like a wise old owl.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The snow-capped mountain was a marshmallow sundae.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Fred's well-polished shoes gleamed like black mirrors.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The stars were diamonds twinkling in the black velvet night sky.

Read each statement. Decide whether it is an exaggeration or irony. Write *E* for exaggeration or *I* for irony on the line beside each sentence.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. My oldest sister has more lipsticks than anyone else in the whole world.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. These scissors are as sharp as the brim on an old felt hat.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Now that the car is fixed, it would probably work fine if only it would start.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. If Tim keeps putting on weight, we'll have to start calling him Skinny.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Mother said, "I must have ironed at least a thousand shirts yesterday."

## Practice F

Each of the following sentences contains figurative language in which one thing is compared to something else. Some of the sentences show the comparisons clearly by the use of the words *like* and *as*; in other sentences the comparisons are not so directly stated. After you read each sentence circle the letter of the things being compared in the sentence.

1. There's a woodpecker in these trees that sounds like a jackhammer.
  - a) woods-sounds
  - b) woodpecker-jackhammer
  - c) woods-jackhammer
2. When the bell sounded, the students poured down the staircase and out the doors like water bursting from a dam and spilling down a valley
  - a) students-water
  - b) bell-staircase
  - c) students-dam
2. For a half hour almost every night, Ben and his son play on the rug like two puppies.
  - a) Ben-his son
  - b) Ben and son-two puppies
  - c) puppies-rug
3. Larry is such a stock-car racing fan that you can almost hear gears shift when he walks away and tires squeal as he turns the corner.
  - a) gears-tires
  - b) Larry-driver
  - c) Larry-race car

### Practice G

Each of the following sentences uses a figurative comparison. Decide what is similar about the things being compared, and then circle the letter of your choice.

1. Every day he brings a lunch pail to work that is full of more surprises than a 4th-of-July picnic basket.
  - a) Both are pretty enough to be shown off.
  - b) Both are full of unexpected things to eat.
  - c) Both are made for a special occasion.
2. When he is criticized or attacked he hisses, draws his head back, and shows his fangs.
  - a) Both can be dangerous.
  - b) Both run from their enemies.
  - c) Both shield themselves against attack.
3. Duncan's sideburns puff out like copper scouring pads stuck on each side of his face.
  - a) Both can be used for cleaning pots and pans.
  - b) Both have been nicely trimmed.
  - c) Both are round, reddish, and coarse.
4. In the courtroom with a client, Angela is a lioness protecting her cub.
  - a) Both can be gentle and fierce
  - b) Both have children or offspring.
  - c) Both talk softly but forcefully.

## Practice H

Read the following poem and then answer the questions about its use of figurative language.

### Motor Cars

From a city window, 'way up high,  
I like to watch the cars go by.  
They look like burnished beetles, black,  
That leave a little muddy track  
Behind them as they slowly crawl.  
Sometimes they do not move a tall  
But huddle close with hum and drone  
As though they feared to be alone.  
They grope their way through fog and night  
With the golden feelers of their light.

1. What is the main reason the cars, as seen from a high window, are compared to beetles?
  - a) The cars seem as small as beetles.
  - b) The cars are black like beetles.
  - c) The cars are shaped like beetles.
  
2. Why are the "beetles" described as "burnished" (*or polished*) in the third line?  

---
  
3. In what way are beetles similar to cars in what they leave behind them?  

---
  
4. When the cars are described as beetles which "huddle close" and are afraid to be alone, what is probably actually happening?
  - a) They are moving down the street in a long line.
  - b) They park along the curbs, and will not move.
  - c) They bunch up together when they stop at intersections.
  
5. What are the "golden feelers" mentioned in the last line?
  - a) Radio antennas.
  - b) Yellow center lines.
  - c) Headlight beams.

## Practice I

Choose a phrase from the list that most vividly completes these sentences with an expression of personification.

### *Phrase List:*

Crept softly, straining, impatiently, opened, devour, wept huge tears, refused, felt naked, smiled, angry, spat fire, thirsty, begged, panting.

1. The rain clouds \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ locomotives slowly climbed the hill.
3. The stalled car \_\_\_\_\_ to move.
4. The fog \_\_\_\_\_ along the ground.
5. The tunnel \_\_\_\_\_ its mouth to \_\_\_\_\_ the cars.
6. The \_\_\_\_\_ cars waited \_\_\_\_\_ for the light to change.
7. The \_\_\_\_\_ land \_\_\_\_\_ for water.
8. The trees \_\_\_\_\_ without their leaves.
9. The warm spring sun \_\_\_\_\_ at us.
10. The \_\_\_\_\_ volcano \_\_\_\_\_ .

## Practice J

Choose a phrase from the list most vividly completes a simile in these sentences.

### *Phrase List:*

a glowing orange ball; a frayed brown cord; a gorged buzzard; a rocky road; a light in the night; a seal; a waterfall; a swift birds; a telegraph; a tall bride.

1. The huge 747 lumbered toward its takeoff like \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Her tears flowed like \_\_\_\_\_
3. The woodpecker's pecking sounded like \_\_\_\_\_  
tapping out a message.
4. From the airplane, the dirt road looked like \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. My math course is like \_\_\_\_\_

6. The doe is like \_\_\_\_\_ in flight.
7. The answer illuminated the subject like \_\_\_\_\_
8. He looked like \_\_\_\_\_ with his whiskers drooping from his upper lip.
9. The sun rose like \_\_\_\_\_ in the east.
10. The white poplar tree looked like \_\_\_\_\_ .

### Practice K

Choose a phrase from the list that most vividly completes a metaphor in these sentences.

#### *Phrase List:*

A crewcut; a ghost, confetti; a lamb; hot potatoes; razor-sharp; living pincushions; a wolf; a smoking volcano; twisted pretzels.

1. My father's whiskers are \_\_\_\_\_
2. The cars in the accident became \_\_\_\_\_
3. He is \_\_\_\_\_ when it comes to girls.
4. He has lost so much weight that he is merely \_\_\_\_\_ of his former self.
5. Jane is \_\_\_\_\_ to allow you to get away with so much.
6. Our overheated car became \_\_\_\_\_
7. Controversial issues are \_\_\_\_\_ that most politicians try to avoid.
8. Her \_\_\_\_\_ tongue lashed out at all who defied her.
9. The farmer gave his grain field \_\_\_\_\_
10. The snow was \_\_\_\_\_ falling from the sky.

### Practice L

For these ten lines, taken from famous poems, underline the figure of speech and then state what kind it is.

1. Her face is a garden of delight. (Thomas Campion)  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Her brows like bended bows do stand. (Thomas Campion)  
\_\_\_\_\_



3. The Moon doth with delight look round her when the heavens are bare.  
(William Wordsworth)  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. I wandered lonely as a cloud. (William Wordsworth)  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. The daffodils are tossing their heads in sprightly dance. (William Wordsworth)  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. The sea bares her bosom to the moon. (William Wordsworth)  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls. (Lord Tennyson)  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. There's no frigate like a book to take us lands away. (Emily Dickinson)  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. The sun is laid to sleep. (Ben Jonson)  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. The stars threw down their spears and watered heaven with their tears.  
(William Blake)  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Practice M

Figure out the meaning of each phrase in italics. Check to see if that meaning makes sense in the sentence. Then, write it in the space given.

**Example** That sentence is *as clear as mud*.

Meaning: *not clear at all*

She talked *a mile a minute*.

Meaning: *very fast*

1. When he finally gets going, Jack is a *streak of lightning*.  
Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Mary was so late that George was really *climbing the wall* by the time she finally got home.  
Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

3. I found the fifty-two pounds of books you left for me to carry. **Your kindness really moves me.**

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

4. When you take that course, plan to study **thirty hours a day.**

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

5. The wind **howled angrily** around the house all night.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

6. When the **White House** called, the ambassador went at once.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

7. George was **rather pleased** when he won the new car in the contest.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Man does not live by **bread alone.**

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Lee was **as sharp as a tack** this morning. He answered every question as soon as it was asked.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

10. If you are not happy with the service, go talk to **City Hall.**

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

11. The river **ate away** the bank.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Keep overeating like that and pretty soon you'll **weigh a thousand pounds.**

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

13. After she heard the good news, she was grinning **like a mule eating briars.**

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

14. The captain was in charge of **one hundred horses.**

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

15. Joe **cried a little** when he lost the thousand dollars.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

16. I was wrong and I'm ready to **eat crow** when I see them.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

17. You can depend on Mary; she's **a rock** when trouble comes.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

18. **Your wit is only exceeded by your charm and good looks.**

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

19. The driver let the *pit* know that he was stopping for repairs on the next lap.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

20. With *friends like you*, who needs enemies?

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

21. He *is the army*.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

22. He's so *hardheaded* that he won't listen to anyone.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

23. *Research says* that these methods are best.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

24. Right this minute, I could drink *a barrel of water* without stopping.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

25. Alice came in *gently, like a May breeze*.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

26. You came in thirty-seven minutes after the fifty-minute class started. You were a *bit late*.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

27. Little Susie is *a picture of loveliness* in her new dress.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

### Practice N

1. *Understanding Figurative Language* Each of the following sentences from a professional writer makes a comparison. Explain in your own words what the comparison means. Tell also why you think the writer makes such a comparison.

1.1 "The past is a bucket of ashes." – Carl Sandburg

1.2 "Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,

And then is heard no more....." – William Shakespeare

1.3 "When Duty whispers low, Thou must,

The youth replies, I can." – Ralph Waldo Emerson

1.4. "A wicked whisper came and made my heart as dry as dust."

– S.T. Coleridge

1.5. "I wandered lonely as a cloud

That floats on high o'er vales and hills." - William Wordsworth

2. *Common Figurative Expressions*: The figurative language in the following sentences appears often in our own talk and conversation. On a separate sheet of paper explain the meaning of the figurative expressions that appear in italics.

2.1 He's only *building castles in the air*.

2.2 That man really *bugs* me!

2.3 Marie told us about the *hair-raising* experience.

2.4 When everyone laughed at my answer I was sure the teacher *had set a trap for me*.

2.5 He's been working *like a horse* for years.

3. *Figurative Language in Poetry* In the lines of poetry below explain the meaning of each figurative expression in italics. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

3.1 "*As a white candle*

*In a holy place*

So is the beauty  
Of an aged face"

-Joseph Campbell

3.2. "*My father's eyes are the colors of sky,*  
Clear blue or gray as rain."

-Frances Frost

3.3. "*Love Walked alone*  
*The rocks cut her tender feet*  
*And the brambles tore her fair limbs.*"

-Stephen Crane

3.4. "Look *like the innocent flower*  
But *be the serpent under it!*"

-William Shakespeare

3.5. "*Morning is a little lass*

*Her gay head yellow-curved*  
*Who jumps a rope of knotted flowers*  
Across the waking world."

-Frances Frost

## Summing Up

Being able to deal with figurative language helps you get more meaning out of what you read. It helps you go beyond the facts to get the feeling or sense of what the writer is trying to show. It also makes reading more interesting and fun for you. However figurative language can confuse you if you try to use some of the real (literal) meanings. Some figurative language is more difficult to figure out.

“Figures of speech” and “figurative language” are different names for the same thing. It is language that carries a different meaning from the literal or “real” meaning of the words. We use figurative language for special effects: to show the sense or feeling of a situation, to add interest, variety, beauty, humor, and so on.

Understanding the *meaning* of a figure of speech is more important than identifying the *type* of figure of speech.

## Understanding Figurative Language.

To recognize figurative language, see if the author does any of the following:

1. Does she use language that would not make good sense if taken literally?
2. Does she make a direct comparison?
3. Does she say that one thing is something else?
4. Does she exaggerate the comparison?

To understand figurative language, do the following:

1. Decide what things are being compared.
2. Think of the qualities that are characteristic of the figurative language.
3. Decide which of these qualities is appropriate to the context in which the figurative language is used.

## Review Test

### Remembering the essential information from the chapter

You now know that *figures of speech* are non-literal ways of saying things, and that the words have to be interpreted in order for you to understand the author's meaning. Take a minute and try to write out from memory what each of these figures of speech is. Review them first, of course. Writing the definitions in your own words will help you remember them. After you have written the definition, give an example that you have made up.

#### Simile

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*Example:* \_\_\_\_\_

#### Metaphor

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*Example:* \_\_\_\_\_

#### Hyperbole

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*Example:* \_\_\_\_\_

#### Personification

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*Example:* \_\_\_\_\_

Metonymy

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*Example:* \_\_\_\_\_

Understatement

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*Example:* \_\_\_\_\_

Symbol

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*Example:* \_\_\_\_\_

Allusion

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*Example:* \_\_\_\_\_

Onomatopoeia

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*Example:* \_\_\_\_\_

Alliteration

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*Example:* \_\_\_\_\_

## Test

As you read this passage from the novel *The Survivor*, notice the use of figurative language. Then answer the following questions.

- A. An old man and a boy stood on the high dunes overlooking the sea, which was dark violet-blue and feathered white where the wind kissed it. No boat was out. Below, the beach lay golden yellow in the late-afternoon light. A horseman trotting his mount splashed through the shallows. The hoofmarks were brief silver coins.
- B. There were other figures on the beach making the most of summer's end, and the old man smiled to see them there, his family. The boy beside him was his favorite grandchild. Moses Ullman was seventy years old. He had found much pleasure in growing old. The years had been good and full of adventure. They had turned him from a rather ugly, awkward youth with a diving nose, so fiercely hooked that it might have chopped wood, into an old gentleman with a splendid snowstorm of silver-white hair. Lines of ugliness had come to rest in lines of strength and peace. He still had his strength: strong bony wrists, hands twisted and knotted, the nails yellow and thick as sea shells. His digestion was perfect. He could eat anything.
- C. "Do you know, David," he said to his grandson, "I never stare off at the horizon without seeing it signal to me." He stood for a moment, hand on hip, shading his eyes like an old sea captain aboard ship. Still no sail, no trace of smoke to spoil the perfect curve of water.
- D. "It's a marvelous view," David agreed. He wanted to talk, but he preferred to feel himself part of the whole summer scene rather than just a spectator.
- E. The old man was carried away. "Yes, you can see what I mean. It's the permanence of the ocean. A view like this-you can look at it forever. Feel it. Smell it. The cradle of life. Life began there in the sea." At the edge of the tide his family played: son and daughter-in-law, three of their children. He smiled again but added, "It makes me sad somehow."
1. As described in paragraph A, how rough or calm is the sea?
    - a) It was calm and smooth.
    - b) It had small, white-tipped waves.
    - c) It had huge, dark waves.
  2. Why are the hoofmarks called "brief silver coins" at the end of the same paragraph?
    - a) The water that collected in the round hoofmarks reflected silvery light, but the waves quickly washed the hoofmarks away.



- b) The horseshoes left traces of metal in the sand that reflected the light.
  - c) Sand blew into the hoofmarks and quickly filled them up, so that they were no longer visible.
3. What is the shape of Moses Ullman's nose, as described in paragraph B?
- a) It curves upward at the tip.
  - b) It is round and fat.
  - c) It curves downward.
4. What tool for cutting does it suggest?
- a) It is long and thin like a knife.
  - b) It had jagged edges like a saw.
  - c) It is curved and sharp like the edge of an ax.
5. As described in the same paragraph, what is Moses Ullman's hair like?
- a) It is cut short and neat.
  - b) It is combed flat against his head.
  - c) It is rather wild and unruly.
6. How are Moses Ullman's fingernails similar to sea shells, as described in the same paragraph?
- a) In color and thickness.
  - b) In size and toughness
  - c) In hardness and shape
7. What do you think Moses Ullman means when he says in paragraph C that the horizon "signals" to him?
- a) Ships on the horizon send him messages in Morse code.
  - b) The horizon of the sea seems to call him to adventure.
  - c) He can see smoke signals rising from the opposite shore.
8. In the same paragraph, what does the description of Moses as an "old sea captain" suggest about him?
- a) He used to be the captain of a ship
  - b) He seems familiar with the sea.
  - c) He seems used to ordering people about.
9. Why might the ocean be called the "cradle of life" in paragraph E?
- a) People in a boat are rocked as if they were in a cradle.
  - b) It is where life first began to develop.
  - c) It is where all life goes to rest.

## Test

### Read the following and answer the questions

“The storm whirled and played, tore apart the drifts and piled them up again, took a pillar of snow in its arms and danced out into the plain, lifted one flake up to the clouds and chased another down into the ditch.” (for 1 and 2)

1. What thing is made to seem alive in the sentence?

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2. Does the storm seem playful, frightening, or dignified?

---

“The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window panes...” (for 3)

3. What has the writer compared fog to?

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“The canyon lay waiting for them like a monster, its jaws ready to snap shut on them” (for 4 and 5)

4. Does the writer want you to feel pain, fear, happiness, or peace?

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5. What is spoken of as if it were alive?

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“The hubcap raced down the street, turned the corner abruptly just as Pete lurched for it, and then winked wickedly before it disappeared under the wheels of a bus. (for 6 and 7)

6. What lifeless thing is treated as if it were alive?

---

7. Did Pete probably feel amused, annoyed, or grateful?

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“The wind is very tired.....” (for 8)

8. What might happen to a sailing vessel in a “tired” wind?

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“He put his shoulder against the door, and his long black body slanted like a ramrod. He pushed.” (Langston Hughes, “On the Road”)

9. What kind of figurative language is being used?

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10. What is being described?

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11. What can you infer about the door?

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“The wind was lifting his coattails and tossing his white hair about in tufts, like those of the bunch grass she had known as a girl in the Dakotas.” (Jessamyn West, “Love, Death, and the Ladies’ Drill Team”)

12. What kind of figurative language is being used?

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13. What is being described?

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14. What is the image the author wants you to see?

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“.....she lay back among the whispering blue flowers.” (Tennessee Williams, “The Field of Blue Children”)

15. What image does this line create in your head?

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Directions: If you think the quote is an example of figurative language, place an E in the blank provided. If you think a statement is meant literally, place an L in the blank.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. “The year was 2081, and everybody was finally equal.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. “His thoughts fled in panic, like bandits from a burglar alarm.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. “They were burdened with sashweights and bags of birdshot, and their faces were masked so that no one...would feel like something the cat drug in.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. “Sounded like somebody hitting a milk bottle with a ball peen hammer.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. “He began to think glimmeringly about his abnormal son who was now in jail, about Harrison, but a twenty-one-gun salute in his head stopped that.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. “The minute people start cheating on laws, what do you think happens to society?”
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. “Instead of a little ear radio for a mental handicap, he wore a tremendous pair of earphones, and spectacles with thick wavy lenses.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. “.....Harrison looked like a walking junk yard.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. “He jumped again, as though dancing to the tune of an earthquake.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. “Harrison’s scrap-iron handicaps crashed to the floor.”

Directions: In the space provided, write S for simile or M for metaphor in the blanks in front of each phrase or sentence below:

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The flames, like a form of wildlife, crept as a lion creeps on its belly toward its prey.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Like a surfer, he sat as though he were waiting for that wave of the day.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. She painted her nails a funny orange, like the tip of a hot soldering iron.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The pen is mightier than the sword.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. With his rattlesnake reach, he grabbed the cookie and ran.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. From the burning look in his eye, I knew he was angry with me.

3. Each underlined sentence contains a comparison. Choose the one correct answer for each question.

3.1 The wind howled and shrieked like a creature in torment

What things are being compared?

- a) the wind and an animal in pain;
- b) torture and the force of a strong wind;
- c) a dog and some other kind of animal;
- d) pain and frightening noises.

What likeness is being emphasized?

- a) both are being tortured;
- b) both make piercing noises;
- c) both are alive
- d) both are cold and miserable.

3.2 When the lawyer arrived, the vultures flew into the library to hear him read the will.

What things are being compared?

- a) the lawyers and the heirs;
- b) the heirs and the dead person;
- c) the lawyers and the vultures;
- d) the heirs and the vultures.

What likeness is being emphasized?

- a) both listen to the reading of the will;
- b) both wish to benefit from a death;
- c) both rush to the library;
- d) both want a part of the estate.

1. With Mr. Stahl as chairman, this committee won accomplish much; it's like an aircraft carrier powered by an outboard motor.

What things are being compared?

- a) an aircraft carrier and a small boat;
- b) the committee with its chairman and a large ship with a small motor;
- c) the committee and a poor chairman;
- d) the aircraft carrier and the outboard motor.

## Test

The practice exercises that follow will provide an opportunity for you to become more skillful at understanding figurative language.

In each of the following statements there is a figurative expression. Decide for each one, from among the choices given (1) what things are being compared and (2) what likeness is being emphasized. Circle the letter to the left of the answer you choose. The first one is done for you.

1. Some people are like echoes. They always seem to have the last word.  
What things are being compared?
- Some people and the last word
  - Some people and echoes
  - Some people and their habits
  - Echoes and the last word

- What likeness is being emphasized?
- Echoes are the last sound heard.
  - Echoes are loud.
  - Echoes seem to speak back to you.
  - People's voices have a hollow sound.

In this expression, some people are being compared to echoes. The appropriate characteristic of an echo is that whenever one hears an echo it is the last sound to be heard. This, the expression suggests, is like some people, who insist on making the final statement in a discussion or an argument. Thus (b) and (a) are the correct answer.

2. The pile of papers on his desk was acting like rising bread dough.  
What things are being compared?
- Papers and rising bread dough
  - Papers and his desk
  - His desk and bread dough
  - His papers and bread

- What likeness is being emphasized?
- They are both getting higher.
  - They are both soft.
  - Both of them can be pressed down.
  - Both of them can be seen and watched.

3. A sixteen-year-old human tape recording kept the phone occupied for one full hour.

What things are being compared?

- a. A sixteen-year-old person and a tape recording
- b. A sixteen-year-old person and a phone
- c. A phone and a tape recording
- d. A sixteen-year-old person and a full hour

What likeness is being emphasized?

- a. Time passes by and they both grow older.
- b. Both go on for a long time without interruption.
- c. Both are unbreakable.
- d. Both waste time.

4. The speech of the famous lecturer was Joe's sleeping pill.

What things are being compared?

- a. The speech and the lecturer
- b. The speech and Joe
- c. The lecturer and Joe
- d. The speech and a sleeping pill

What likeness is being emphasized?

- a. Both can be boring (can put you to sleep).
- b. Both can be interesting.
- c. Both are informative.
- d. Both have an effect on people.

5. During vacation the school was a ghost town.

What things are being compared?

- a. Vacation and the school building
- b. Vacation and a ghost town
- c. The school building and students
- d. The school building and a ghost town

What likeness is being emphasized?

- a. Both are learning situations.
- b. Both need care and understanding.
- c. Both are fun situations.
- d. Both are quiet and deserted.

In each of the following statements, there is a figurative expression. Decide for each one (1) what things are being compared; (2) which of the qualities of the figurative language is appropriate to the context in which the figurative language is being used; (3) the meaning of the figurative language. Write your answers in the space provided.

6. His *snow-capped head* indicated that he was *in the winter of his life*.

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In the first expression, the hair on the man's head is being compared to something that has snow at its top (probably a mountain). The appropriate characteristics are whiteness and being at the top. The figurative expression refers to white hair. In the second expression winter is being compared to the man's age. The appropriate characteristic is that winter comes at the end of the year (after the most productive months). The figurative expression refers to the man's latter years, thus old age.

7. He knew that they were after him. He tried to run, but his feet *felt like lead*.

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8. After a hard day's work, Joe was *a burned-out candle*.

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9. Her money was the *medicine that brought the failing business back to health*.

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10. His mother's protection was a *high wall* between her son and the world.

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11. The heavy snows turned a usually bustling town into a *ghostly graveyard*.

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12. To a thirsty man lost on the desert, a pint of water is a *gallon of champagne*.

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