

Similes, Metaphors, and Personification

Both **similes** and **metaphors** are forms of comparison that compare words in a sentence. They can be used to make your sentences more interesting. How are **similes** and **metaphors** different?

A **simile** is a word that compares words in a sentence. You can usually tell if a **simile** is present in a sentence when you see the words **as** or **like**.

Don ate his salad **like** a vacuum cleaner.

His arms were weak and felt **like** noodles.

The thunder was as loud **as** fireworks.



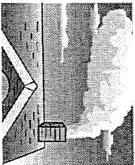
You can see that the underlined words in the sentences above are compared to each other. The words **as** and **like** are bolded to show that a **simile** occurs in this sentence.

Like a simile, a **metaphor** compares words in a sentence; however, instead of saying that one thing is **like** something else, a **metaphor** actually makes one thing become something very different by **renaming** it. A metaphor can sometimes use words like **is**, **are**, or **was** (and other words) to signal that a metaphor is present. However, a metaphor **never** uses the words **like** or **as** to compare.

The smoke **was** cotton balls billowing from the chimney.

You **are** my hero.

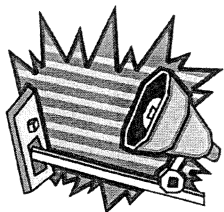
The sun **was** a furnace.



You can see in these examples that the first underlined word is actually renamed by the second underlined word. The bolded words are bolded to show that the second underlined word **is** something else.

A. Below are sentences that contain **similes** and **metaphors**. Underline the two words in each sentence that are being compared.

1. The cat's fur was a blanket of warmth.
2. The lamp was a beacon of sunshine.
3. The fireworks were a lantern in the sky.
4. John slept like a log.
5. Mary was as sweet as pie.
6. George is lightning as he runs the race.
7. Gwen sings like an expert.
8. Mark's voice is velvet.
9. Cindy is a fish when she swims.
10. Tom is like a computer when he does his math.



B. Write on the lines below whether each sentence above is a **simile** or a **metaphor**. Write **S** for **simile** or **M** for **metaphor**.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Similes, Metaphors, and Personification

Personification is the act of giving non-living things human characteristics.

Here is a sample of a short paragraph that uses **personification** to describe a house.

Our house is an old friend of ours. Although he creaks and groans with every gust of wind, he never fails to protect us from the elements. He wraps his arms of bricks and mortar around us and keeps us safe. He's always been a good friend to us and we would never leave him.

A. Underline all words and phrases above that show **personification**.

B. Finish the sentences below with examples of **personification**. Remember to choose a word that would normally be a characteristic or an action of a human. The first one has been done for you.

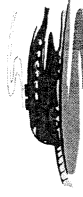
1. The snow **whispered** as it fell to the ground.
2. The baseball bat _____ as Casey hit the ball.
3. The printer _____ out the copies that I printed.
4. The cup _____ an entire jar of tea.
5. The floor _____ as the elephant walked across it.
6. The car _____ as the key was turned.
7. The alarm clock _____ that it was time to get up.
8. The stars _____ at us from the night sky.
9. The chocolate cake was _____ my name.
10. The old refrigerator _____ a sad tune as it ran.



Similes, Metaphors, and Personification

A. Write on each line whether the sentence contains a **simile**, **metaphor**, or **personification**.

1. _____ He is like a rocket on his bike.
2. _____ The fire roared to life.
3. _____ The leaves fell like rain.
4. _____ The glasses danced on the shelf during the earthquake.
5. _____ The clock is the keeper of time.
6. _____ The water called invitingly to the hot children.
7. _____ The rusty door hinge screamed every time the door opened.
8. _____ The wind was like a piercing arrow.
9. _____ The stage was the canvas upon which the play was painted.
10. _____ The train screamed down the tracks.
11. _____ Music is the salve that soothes us.
12. _____ The swing rocked like a baby learning to walk.
13. _____ Fruit is fuel for a healthy body.
14. _____ The fresh apple was crispy like a new dollar bill.
15. _____ Water is the hammer that erodes the rocks.



Hyperbole Worksheet #1

HYPERBOLE EXAMPLE

Friday night I went disco dancing, and when I woke up on Saturday my feet were killing me! Mom ordered me to clean my room – or else. All day long I worked my fingers to the bone getting things together so I'd be free to go out that evening. I was dying to see the new movie at the Center Cinema. When I finished, however, I was so tired I couldn't move.

THINK ABOUT IT

What do the underlined phrases really mean? Can feet kill? Is the desire to see a new movie a symptom of some strange and fatal disease?

Obviously, the author has emphasized certain points by means of exaggeration. A much exaggerated statement is called a *hyperbole*. Hyperboles are attention-getters, but can become clichés if overused.

NOW YOU DO IT

Create some attention getting, original hyperboles in response to the following lines of dialogue.

1. Don't you think the TV is too loud?

The TV is so loud _____.

2. Are you really going to eat the entire hot fudge brownie sundae?

I'm so hungry _____.

3. Look at that incredible amount of snow piled up outside.

The snow is so deep that _____.

4. Do you really want to go to the movies? I mean, don't you have too much homework to do?

I have so much homework _____.

5. Look at that poor old dog. He can hardly walk.

That dog is so old _____.

Alone by Maya Angelou, 1928-2014

Lying, thinking
Last night
How to find my soul a home
Where water is not thirsty
And bread loaf is not stone
I came up with one thing
And I don't believe I'm wrong
That nobody,
But nobody
Can make it out here alone.

Alone, all alone
Nobody, but nobody
Can make it out here alone.

There are some millionaires
With money they can't use
Their wives run round like banshees
Their children sing the blues
They've got expensive doctors
To cure their hearts of stone.
But nobody
No, nobody
Can make it out here alone.

Alone, all alone
Nobody, but nobody
Can make it out here alone.

Now if you listen closely
I'll tell you what I know
Storm clouds are gathering
The wind is gonna blow
The race of man is suffering
And I can hear the moan,
'Cause nobody,
But nobody
Can make it out here alone.

Alone, all alone
Nobody, but nobody
Can make it out here alone.

Yes, you have seen this poem before!
For homework, practice annotating on your own. Identify similes, metaphors, personification, and connotation as you work to identify the meaning of the poem. Remember, connotative words have more than one meaning (literal v. emotional) associated with it.

What is the theme of this poem?

Mood? (Does it change?)

Tone?