

PREPARE

CONCEPT Figurative language involves words that are used creatively to have meaning beyond their literal use. Speakers and authors use figurative language to communicate more effectively. As students develop an awareness of figurative expressions in day-to-day communication, they improve their listening and reading comprehension.

VOCABULARY figurative language

MATERIALS Lesson reproducibles, drawing materials, highlighters

INSTRUCT

Display and read aloud the question *What is figurative language?* Then, ask students to sit *as still as a statue* for 10 seconds to think about the question before turning to a partner to discuss it together. Give students a few minutes to discuss the question. Then, ask, How did you know not to talk or move when I told you to sit as still as a statue? Record student responses to guide the discussion. Student comments might include the following observations:

- Statues are made of stone and cannot talk or move.
- A person can act like they might be made of stone by staying still, like a statue.

Tell students that *as still as a statue* is an example of figurative language. Explain that people often make comparisons and use words creatively when they communicate. Figurative language can help listeners imagine exactly what a speaker is trying to say.

Define the term:

- **Figurative language is words used creatively that don't mean what they usually mean.**

Refer students to the Anchor Chart to develop understanding:

1. Explain to students that just as figurative language helped them understand a direction in class, it can also help them better understand how people communicate every day. Point out that people often convey feelings or ideas by using exaggeration or making comparisons. Give examples, such as *I'm starving* or *I'm as hungry as a bear* to show how common figurative language is in everyday speech. (Specific types of figurative language, such as simile and metaphor, will be addressed in *Figurative Language: Part B*.)
2. Read the *So, what's in it for me?* section with students. Discuss how figurative language connects speakers and listeners or writers and readers.

PRACTICE

- Discuss the meaning of common figurative expressions, like the Figurative Language Examples included with this lesson. Then, have students create two illustrations: one that shows the literal, or usual, meaning of the individual words, and one that shows the figurative, or intended, meaning of an expression. Once students have completed their illustrations, they should share them with the group.
- Display or distribute Sentence Strips, like the ones included with this lesson. Have students work with a partner to match a basic sentence (*She follows me everywhere*) with one that uses figurative language to describe the same subject (*She is my shadow*). Then, have students compare sentences and explain the effect of using figurative language in each example.

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- Display common classroom objects (e.g., a pencil) and the first few words of a figurative comparison (e.g., *as yellow as _____, as sharp as _____, as useful as _____*). Have students complete each comparison to describe the object presented and then share their ideas (e.g., *as yellow as a school bus*).

ADAPT

SUPPORT

- Guide students through the process of determining the meanings of figurative expressions. Read a sentence (*The boy swims like a fish*) and work together to underline or highlight the things that are being compared (*boy, fish*). Have students explain how the two are similar (*The boy and the fish are both strong swimmers*).
- Adapt the classroom objects activity (Practice section) by providing students with two options for each comparison. For example, if a pencil is displayed, have students choose between *as yellow as a school bus* or *as yellow as a scarf*. Encourage students to choose the language that best helps a listener/reader form a mental picture of what the speaker/author is describing.

EXTEND

- Provide students with a short passage that uses figurative language to describe a character, like the Sample Passage included with this lesson. Have students underline or highlight words used creatively to help readers form a picture in their minds. Then, have students illustrate the character, labeling their drawing with the figurative expressions.
- Have students use figurative language to create a poster that advertises a consumer product. Encourage them to make a comparison between two things or use exaggeration. Provide an example, such as *Gets your teeth as white as snow!* Students can share their finished posters and vote on the most effective or most creative use of figurative language.

CONNECT

- To integrate multimedia, have students choose an image using an approved search engine. Then, provide students with a variety of figurative expressions to use as models to generate their own descriptions of the image. Students should share their images and figurative descriptions.
- At home, have students describe their day to family members or friends using figurative expressions—for example, *The cafeteria was a zoo today* or *I'm drowning in homework*. Support students in advance by brainstorming and recording examples of figurative language in class.

ANCHOR CHART

Figurative Language

Figurative language is words used creatively that don't mean what they usually mean.

simile
a comparison of unlike things using *like* or *as*



metaphor
a comparison of unlike things not using *like* or *as*



Have you ever been shipwrecked and found yourself surrounded by miles and miles of ocean? (Neither have I.) But, if you read about someone who was "clinging to a piece of driftwood like it was the last available ticket to a sold-out concert," you might say to yourself, "Ahhh, I get it now." Or, if your friend tells you that your new hat looks like "a chicken in a sweater vest," you'll know it's probably not a compliment.

That's the thing about figurative language. It connects speakers and listeners or writers and readers. Like a bridge. (See what I did there?)

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE EXAMPLES

1. We skated over the ice. It was as smooth as glass.
2. The hungry baby cried like a fire alarm.
3. The sunlight made the water sparkle like diamonds.
4. Dad has worn that T-shirt for years. It is as old as dirt.
5. Michael loves to read. He's quite a bookworm.
6. It has been raining all week. The yard is a swimming pool.
7. I just ran six miles. My legs are noodles.
8. There was a blanket of snow covering the field.
9. This food is really spicy. It tastes as hot as fire.
10. After my little sister made dinner, the kitchen was a pigsty.

SENTENCE STRIPS



He will not change his mind.

He is angry.

He is always smiling.

He is sad.

He is tired.

His eyelids are as heavy as bricks.

He is as stubborn as a mule.

He is a ray of sunshine.

His heart is broken.

He is as mad as a hornet.

ANSWER KEY

1. *Nothing will change his mind. He is as stubborn as a mule.*
2. *He is angry. He is as mad as a hornet.*
3. *He is always smiling. He is a ray of sunshine.*
4. *He is sad. His heart is broken.*
5. *He is tired. His eyelids are as heavy as bricks.*

SAMPLE PASSAGE

The New Student

Roland “Rowdy” Burns burst into the classroom like a red-haired cannonball. It was his first day at a new school, and he wanted to make a good impression. He sat down and looked around the room like a king greeting his loyal subjects. Then he smiled widely, showing off teeth as yellow as kernels of corn. Suddenly, as if he had been poked with a stick, Rowdy jumped out of his seat. He quickly unzipped his backpack. This let loose a river of candy wrappers. Rowdy laughed like a hyena. He explained, “My stomach is a bottomless pit.” He patted his belly with hands as big as bear paws and laughed again. Finally, Rowdy took out a pencil and settled in like a truck driver ready for a long day on the road. “I’m all ears,” he said.

PREPARE

CONCEPT Figurative language involves words that are used creatively to have meaning beyond their literal use. Authors use figurative language, such as similes and metaphors, to make their writing more powerful. As readers develop an awareness of figurative language, they are better able to comprehend increasingly complex texts.

VOCABULARY figurative language, imagery, metaphor, simile

MATERIALS Lesson reproducibles, drawing materials, highlighters, index cards

INSTRUCT

Provide each student with an index card displaying one of four words: *magnet*, *alarm clock*, *rocket*, or *ice cubes*. Discuss the characteristics of each object. Record student responses to guide the discussion. Student comments might include the following observations:

- A rocket blasts off and is extremely fast.
- Ice cubes are small cold blocks.
- A magnet pulls or attracts things toward it.
- An alarm clock wakes people in the morning and can be loud.

Then, one by one, display and read aloud a series of sentence pairs: *She is the best runner on the team. She's as fast as a _____.* / *I had to wait for the bus in the snowstorm. My ears are like _____.* / *The ice cream dripped onto the sidewalk. It was a _____ for ants.* / *Our dog always wakes us up at six o'clock. He is our _____.* After reading each sentence pair, ask students who have the card that best completes the comparison to hold it up. Discuss how each expression helps students create a picture in their minds of what is being described.

Tell students that when they compare ice cream to a magnet, a dog to an alarm clock, a runner to a rocket, and ears to ice cubes, they are using figurative language. Explain that authors often make comparisons and use words creatively to add layers of meaning and emotion to their writing. Two types of figurative language are **similes** (*She is as fast as a rocket*) and **metaphors** (*It was a magnet for ants*).

Define the terms:

- **Figurative language is words used creatively that don't mean what they usually mean.**
- **Imagery is the use of words to create a picture in the reader's mind.**
- **A simile is a comparison of two unlike things using *like* or *as*.**
- **A metaphor is a comparison of two unlike things not using *like* or *as*.**

Refer students to the Anchor Chart to develop understanding:

1. Have students read aloud the examples of similes (e.g., *as hungry as a wolf*, *like being trapped in a car full of circus clowns*) and metaphors (e.g., *the cafeteria is a zoo*, *that person is a bear*). Discuss how figurative language can help readers imagine exactly what an author is trying to say.
2. Read the *So, what's in it for me?* section with students. Discuss how figurative language connects speakers and listeners or writers and readers.

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PRACTICE

- Have students play Figurative Language Bingo using the included Simile & Metaphor Cards and Bingo Boards. Read aloud one card at a time, working with students to identify the word that completes the given simile or metaphor. For example, the term *pig pen* completes the metaphor in *I need to clean my room. It is a _____.*
- Provide students with a poem, such as the Sample Poem included with this lesson. Read the poem aloud as students follow along on their copies. Then, have students silently reread the poem, underlining or highlighting examples of simile or metaphor. Discuss the examples and their effect on the overall feeling, or mood, of the poem.
- Have students work with a partner to complete a figurative language Scavenger Hunt using a familiar narrative text. Each pair should record examples of simile or metaphor, noting what is being compared in each example. Then, bring students together to discuss how the figurative expressions help them better understand the text.

ADAPT

SUPPORT

- Display or distribute examples of figurative language, like the Similes & Metaphors included with this lesson. Work with students to underline or highlight what is being compared in each example. Think aloud to model using the comparisons to form mental pictures. (*Note: This activity can be used as a warm-up before playing the Bingo game described in the Practice section.*)
- Adapt the Scavenger Hunt activity (Practice section) by providing students with the Sample Passage included with this lesson. Have students work with a partner to identify each example of figurative language and to highlight or underline what is being compared. Then, have student pairs discuss the imagery supported by each figurative expression and illustrate the scene.

EXTEND

- Challenge students to integrate as many similes and metaphors as possible in a short story. Students can use the examples provided in the Figurative Language Bingo activity (Practice section) or generate their own figurative expressions. Then, have students illustrate and share their creative writing.
- Provide students with more complex examples of figurative language, like the Figurative Language Excerpts included with this lesson. Have students note what is being compared in each example. Then, have them illustrate one example. Students can use an approved search engine to find the original narrative or poem and read the excerpted figurative language in context.

CONNECT

- To integrate multimedia, have students use an approved search engine to find an interesting photo. Then, have students describe the photo with figurative language in an audio recording. Display the photos, and play one audio clip at a time. Encourage students to find the corresponding photo.
- At home, have students describe their rooms using similes and metaphors. Back in class, students can trade their descriptions with a partner and create illustrations based on the figurative language.

ANCHOR CHART

Figurative Language

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SIMILE & METAPHOR CARDS



<p>I need to clean my room. It's a _____.</p> <p>1</p>	<p>A truck ran over my hat. Now it's as flat as a _____.</p> <p>7</p>	<p>After the storm, each raindrop sparkled on the grass like a _____.</p> <p>13</p>	<p>The dancer twirled across the stage like a _____.</p> <p>19</p>
<p>Puppies love to chew on things, but each tooth is as sharp as a _____.</p> <p>2</p>	<p>After she had her braces removed, her teeth felt as smooth as _____.</p> <p>8</p>	<p>My baby brother cries as loud as a _____.</p> <p>14</p>	<p>She has been in a bad mood all day. It's like living with a _____.</p> <p>20</p>
<p>I can barely hear him because he is as quiet as a _____.</p> <p>3</p>	<p>My neighbor is so unfriendly. He's as sour as a _____.</p> <p>9</p>	<p>The moon is full tonight. It's floating in the sky like a _____.</p> <p>15</p>	<p>The clouds are white and puffy. They look as soft as _____.</p> <p>21</p>
<p>The car does not have air conditioning. On hot days, it's an _____.</p> <p>4</p>	<p>That big dog loves people. It's as gentle as a _____.</p> <p>10</p>	<p>The traffic at rush hour is terrible. The highway turns into a _____.</p> <p>16</p>	<p>This salsa is the spiciest food I've ever tasted. It's as hot as _____.</p> <p>22</p>
<p>I love hiking with my new backpack. It is as light as a _____.</p> <p>5</p>	<p>I learned so much this year. My brain is a _____.</p> <p>11</p>	<p>The grass on the golf course is a _____.</p> <p>17</p>	<p>My cat sleeps all day. It's as lazy as a _____.</p> <p>23</p>
<p>She waits until after dinner to start her homework. She's a _____.</p> <p>6</p>	<p>I overcooked the hamburger. It tasted as tough as an _____.</p> <p>12</p>	<p>When he saw the giant spider, he turned as white as a _____.</p> <p>18</p>	<p>Our tree house is supported by steel cables. It's as solid as a _____.</p> <p>24</p>

ANSWER KEY

1) pig pen, 2) razor, 3) mouse, 4) oven, 5) feather, 6) night owl, 7) pancake, 8) silk, 9) lemon, 10) lamb, 11) computer, 12) old boot, 13) diamond, 14) fire alarm, 15) white balloon, 16) parking lot, 17) green blanket, 18) sheet, 19) spinning top, 20) thundercloud, 21) cotton, 22) fire, 23) slug, 24) rock

BINGO BOARDS

Board 1


rock	fire alarm	silk	white ballon	computer
razor	diamond	green blanket	thunder cloud	old boot
sheet	pancake		feather	spinning top
parking lot	oven	slug	lemon	lamb
cotton	pig pen	mouse	fire	night owl

Board 2

feather	old boot	spinning top	pancake	razor
silk	pig pen	white balloon	slug	lamb
cotton	lemon		rock	parking lot
oven	sheet	computer	green blanket	night owl
fire alarm	diamond	mouse	thunder cloud	fire

BINGO BOARDS

Board 3

old boot	white balloon	pancake	fire alarm	feather
pig pen	lamb	cotton	slug	thunder cloud
parking lot	night owl		oven	rock
mouse	diamond	fire	green blanket	computer
razor	spinning top	lemon	silk	sheet

Board 4

mouse	lamb	white balloon	razor	lemon
old boot	sheet	silk	parking lot	oven
feather	pig pen		thunder cloud	fire
green blanket	fire alarm	computer	rock	diamond
night owl	slug	cotton	spinning top	pancake

SAMPLE POEM

The piano player dreams of a lily pond.

His fingers dart over the keys
as lightly as dragonflies.

The notes shimmer and glint
like silver minnows.

The music is rippling water,
and splashing fish.

It is floating bubbles
that sparkle like diamonds
in the sunlight.

SIMILES & METAPHORS

1. I need to clean my room. It's a pig pen.
2. The clouds are white and puffy. They look as soft as cotton.
3. I learned so much this year. My brain is a computer.
4. The grass on the golf course is a green blanket.
5. A truck ran over my hat. Now it's as flat as a pancake.
6. The dancer twirled across the stage like a spinning top.
7. My neighbor is so unfriendly. He's as sour as a lemon.
8. My baby brother cries as loud as a fire alarm.
9. The moon is full tonight. It's floating in the sky like a white balloon.
10. This salsa is the spiciest food I've ever tasted. It's as hot as fire.

SAMPLE PASSAGE

Winter

It's winter. The air is as cold as a meat freezer. Deep snow covers the ground. Diamonds of sunlight sparkle in the snow. White shawls drape tree branches. A stream glistens under reaching fingers of ice. Everything is as still as a painting.

The only sound comes from your breathing. The quiet is soothing company. Everyday worries drop away as gently as drifting snowflakes. As you walk, the cold air loses its sharp bite. You soon feel as warm as a cat on a sunny windowsill. Walking through a natural setting is like exploring a dream.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE EXCERPTS

1. She entered with ungainly struggle like some huge awkward chicken, torn, squawking, out of its coop.

(from *The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes*, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle)

2. All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.

(from *As You Like It*, by William Shakespeare)

3. Leaves got up in a coil and hissed,
Blindly struck at my knee and missed.

(from "Bereft," by Robert Frost)

4. The white mist, like a face-cloth to the face,
Clung to the dead earth, and the land was still.

(from *Idylls of the King*, by Alfred, Lord Tennyson)