

Metaphor - Theory

REVISE

- ✓ Definition: A metaphor is a figurative language device in which you state that something is something else. Metaphors allow us to expand our descriptions through comparisons, helping readers to understand an image more clearly. It is an example of figurative language, which means that it should not be taken literally. We can use metaphors in descriptive, narrative or persuasive writing.

Example 1:

Mrs Burgess was a wise old owl; everyone turned to her for advice.

Explanation:

This metaphor compares Mrs Burgess, a woman, to an owl. Mrs Burgess is not literally an owl, but as owls are typically associated with wisdom and knowledge. This metaphor suggests that she is intelligent and dependable.

Example 2:

On Black Friday, the shopping centre became a manic, brutal battlefield.

Explanation:

In this metaphor, the shopping centre has been compared to a battlefield to emphasise the chaos that ensues on Black Friday during the sales. It suggests that the shoppers were fighting with each other over the best deals, creating a very tense scene.

Example 3:

Be careful of love; it is a prickly thorn.

Explanation:

This metaphor is based on a similar quote from Shakespeare's famous play, *Romeo and Juliet*. Here, love is being compared to a 'thorn' to suggest that it can be very sharp and painful in some situations.

Example 4:

During the storm, thunder's rolling drums echoed over the land.

Explanation:

In this metaphor, the noise of the thunder is being compared to 'drums'. We know that the noise of thunder is not literally made with drums, but this comparison emphasises its deep, loud sound.

Example 5:

Alex's famous caramel hot chocolate was heaven.

Explanation:

In this metaphor, the taste of Alex's caramel hot chocolate is compared to 'heaven', which indicates that it is very delicious.

PRACTICE

1 Which of these is the correct definition of a metaphor?

- A. A comparison using 'like' or 'as'
- B. Two contrasting words used together
- C. A word that reflects the sound that it describes
- D. A comparison saying that something is something else
- E. Repeated letters or sounds at the beginning of neighbouring words

Mark Scheme

Hints	A metaphor is a direct comparison.
Answer	D - A comparison saying that something is something else
Answer Explanation	Option A refers to a simile. Option B refers to an oxymoron. Option C refers to onomatopoeia, and Option E refers to alliteration. Only Option D describes a <i>metaphor</i> .



2

Cloze

Please write your paragraph here (not individual sentences) with 5 fill-in-the-blanks. Please label the blanks as i, ii, iii, iv and v.

It was a very bright day. The sun was a golden **i)** _____ in the sky, and its heat was a blazing **ii)** _____. I was sweating profusely, and my forehead was a **iii)** _____. Dry and parched, the grass was a **iv)** _____. Above me, the sky was a **v)** _____ of pure blue, with not a cloud in sight.

Please write your paragraph here (not individual sentences) with 5 fill-in-the-blanks. Please label the blanks as i, ii, iii, iv and v.

- A. Blanket
- B. Furnace
- C. Desert
- D. Penny
- E. Waterfall

Mark Scheme

i)

Hints	Look for a word that would describe the round gold sun in the sky.
Answer	D - Penny
Answer Explanation	This metaphor compares the sun to a 'golden penny' to show its perfect roundness. It also shows that the sun is bright and alone in the sky.



ii)

Hints	Look for a word that relates to extreme heat.
Answer	B - Furnace
Answer Explanation	This metaphor compares the sun's heat to a furnace; this indicates its intense and overwhelming heat.

iii)

Hints	Look for a word that relates to pouring water.
Answer	E - Waterfall
Answer Explanation	This metaphor compares the speaker's sweaty forehead to a vast and powerful waterfall. This indicates how soaked they were.

iv)

Hints	Look for a word that relates to something very dry.
Answer	C - Desert
Answer Explanation	This metaphor compares the grass to a desert to show how dry and arid it has become, as a result of the sun's heat.

v)

Hints	Look for a word that relates to a large flat surface.
Answer	A - Blanket
Answer Explanation	This metaphor compares the sky to a blanket to show that it is one vast uninterrupted expanse of blue.



3

Select the word that completes each metaphor.

Column 1		Column 2
i. The snow was	A	of gold
ii. He has a heart	B	than a knife
iii. The insult cut deeper	C	in a china shop
iv. She was a bull	D	a white sheet
v. The kind woman was	E	an angel

Mark Scheme

Column 1		Column 2
i. The snow was	A	of gold
ii. He has a heart	B	than a knife
iii. The insult cut deeper	C	in a china shop
iv. She was a bull	D	a white sheet
v. The kind woman was	E	an angel

i)

Hints	Look for a phrase that relates to a pure and untouched layer of snow.
Answer	D - a white sheet
Answer Explanation	This metaphor compares 'snow' to a 'white sheet' to emphasise its smooth, untouched appearance.

ii)

Hints	Look for a phrase that relates to a precious metal.
Answer	A - of gold
Answer Explanation	This metaphor compares the man's heart to 'gold', which is a precious metal, to suggest that he is very kind and loving.

iii)

Hints	Look for a phrase that relates to something very sharp.
Answer	B - than a knife
Answer Explanation	This metaphor compares the insult to a 'knife' to show that it was very hurtful and painful to experience.



iv)

Hints	Look for a phrase that relates to something very delicate and fragile.
Answer	C - in a china shop
Answer Explanation	This metaphor, ' <i>a bull in a china shop</i> ', means that the woman was very clumsy, and her presence could create a lot of destruction.

v)

Hints	Look for a phrase that relates to a heavenly being.
Answer	E - an angel
Answer Explanation	Just like the metaphor ' <i>heart of gold</i> ', comparing the woman to an ' <i>angel</i> ' suggests that she is very kind and loving.



4

Scenario-based

Use the picture as inspiration for three metaphors. Write three sentences. One has been done for you.

i

A veil of silence fell over the library.

iii



ii

iv



Mark Scheme

<p>Model Answer</p>	<p>i) → <u>A heavy silence fell</u> over the library. → The books were <u>doorways into new worlds.</u> → The library was <u>a portal of knowledge.</u></p> <p>ii) → The ladders were <u>stairways to heaven.</u> → The wooden floors were <u>polished mirrors.</u> → The books <u>held the key to the past.</u></p> <p>iii) → The readers were <u>spellbound by the stories.</u> → Each story was <u>pure gold.</u> → The polished floor was <u>a slippery ice-rink.</u></p> <p>iv) → A quiet atmosphere <u>hung in the air.</u> → Readers were <u>led down unknown paths</u> with each new book. → <u>An intricate spider's web</u> of twisted wire framed the balcony.</p>
---------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



5

Rapid Fire

1. Complete the metaphor:

Her wit was _____ -sharp.

2. Is the following statement true or false?

Metaphors always give inanimate objects human characteristics.

3. Complete the metaphor:

Her voice was _____ to my ears.

4. Is the following statement true or false?

Metaphors can only be used in descriptive writing.

5. Does the following sentence contain a metaphor?

The burden of stress was as heavy as a rock.

6. Complete the well-known metaphor:

She is the _____ of my eye.

7. Does the following sentence contain a metaphor?

I was a frozen statue as I waited for my cue to go on stage.

8. Complete the well-known metaphor:

I was so nervous; I had _____ in my stomach.

9. Is the following statement true or false?

Metaphors state that something is something else.

10. Is the following statement true or false?

Metaphors are literal.



Mark Scheme

i)

Hints	Think of something sharp that could be compared to the mind of a very witty person.
Answer	Accept any word that completes the metaphor appropriately, such as 'razor' or 'knife'.
Answer Explanation	Students need to pick something which creates a comparison between the person's fast mind and something sharp.

ii)

Hints	Metaphors are used to say that something is something else.
Answer	False
Answer Explanation	This is false; the definition refers to personification. Personification is a type of metaphor, as it compares non-human objects to humans, but this definition is false. Metaphors do not have to only give human characteristics to objects.

iii)

Hints	Think of the well-known metaphor used to describe a voice that you enjoy hearing.
Answer	Music
Answer Explanation	This is a common metaphor; if we enjoy the sound of someone's voice, we can describe it as 'music' to show that we love it.



iv)

Hints	What types of writing can feature metaphors?
Answer	False
Answer Explanation	Metaphors are a very versatile technique which can be used in descriptive, narrative and persuasive writing.

v)

Hints	Is the statement directly comparing something to something else, without using 'like' or 'as'?
Answer	No
Answer Explanation	This sentence contains a simile, as it uses the word 'as'.

vi)

Hints	Which common metaphor can be used to suggest that someone is especially important to you?
Answer	Apple
Answer Explanation	The phrase ' the apple of my eye ' is a common metaphor that is used to indicate affection or adoration for someone.



vii)

Hints	Is the statement directly comparing something to something else, without using 'like' or 'as'?
Answer	Yes
Answer Explanation	The metaphor here is ' I was a frozen statue '. The speaker is being directly compared to a statue to show how terrified they were.

viii)

Hints	What common phrase indicates nerves?
Answer	Butterflies
Answer Explanation	To have ' butterflies in your stomach ' is a common metaphor used to describe feelings of anxiety. It is a metaphor because one cannot literally have butterflies in the stomach, but the sensation of nervousness can feel this way.



ix)

Hints	Metaphors are comparative. They do not use 'like' or 'as'.
Answer	True
Answer Explanation	This is the correct definition of a metaphor.

x)

Hints	Consider metaphors that you've been studying; are they literal or figurative?
Answer	False
Answer Explanation	Metaphors are always figurative. Like similes, they are used to build on descriptions by using comparative images to help readers visualise descriptions more clearly.