

# Interpreting Figurative Language: Similes and Metaphors

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Score: \_\_\_\_\_ / 10



## Quick Review

A **simile** compares two things using *like* or *as* (*The lake was as smooth as glass.*). A **metaphor** compares two things by saying one **IS** the other (*The lake was a sheet of glass.*). Both reveal a quality the two things share. Watch out: not every *like* is a simile, and don't confuse a simile with **personification** (giving human traits to a non-human thing) or **hyperbole** (huge exaggeration).

## PRACTICE

For each sentence, identify the type of figurative language or interpret what the figure of speech means.

- Which sentence is a SIMILE?
  - The wind whispered through the trees.
  - Her smile was as warm as the morning sun.
  - He has told that story a million times.
  - Time is a thief.
- Which sentence is a METAPHOR?
  - My brother is a walking encyclopedia.
  - My brother knows as many facts as an encyclopedia.
  - My brother is like an encyclopedia.
  - My brother carries an encyclopedia.
- What does this metaphor most likely mean?

*After hours of arguing, the meeting room was a battlefield.*

  - The room had real weapons in it.
  - The room was being used for a war game.
  - The meeting was full of conflict and tension.
  - The room was being cleaned up after a fight.
- What does this simile most likely mean?

*The toddler darted around the playground like a hummingbird.*

  - The toddler made high-pitched noises.
  - The toddler had wings.
  - The toddler was tired.
  - The toddler moved with quick, darting energy.



5. Which sentence contains figurative language (NOT literal)?
- A. Her words were a soft blanket of comfort.
  - B. Her words were spoken in a quiet voice.
  - C. She spoke quietly in the library.
  - D. She used only short sentences.
6. What does this metaphor most likely mean?  
*Reading is a window to other worlds.*
- A. Books are made of glass.
  - B. Reading lets you see and learn about places and lives outside your own.
  - C. Books should be kept by the window for good light.
  - D. Reading happens best in the morning.
7. Which sentence uses a SIMILE about being scared?
- A. I was scared when I saw the spider.
  - B. I felt my heart pounding loudly in my chest.
  - C. I jumped a mile when the door slammed.
  - D. I was as nervous as a long-tailed cat in a room full of rocking chairs.
8. What does this hyperbole most likely mean?  
*I have a ton of homework tonight.*
- A. The homework weighs exactly 2,000 pounds.
  - B. The homework is too heavy to carry.
  - C. The student has a great deal of homework — more than usual.
  - D. The student has been carrying weights.
9. Which sentence is a METAPHOR (not a simile)?
- A. The classroom was as quiet as a library.
  - B. The new student was a ray of sunshine in our class.
  - C. The hallway sounded like a stampede.
  - D. The teacher walked as quickly as she could.
10. Which sentence uses PERSONIFICATION (not simile or metaphor)?
- A. The leaves danced in the autumn breeze.
  - B. The leaves are as red as fire.
  - C. The leaves are tiny flames in the trees.
  - D. The leaves fell from the branches.



## Answer Keys

- 1  A  B  C  D
- 2  A  B  C  D
- 3  A  B  C  D
- 4  A  B  C  D
- 5  A  B  C  D


- 6  A  B  C  D
- 7  A  B  C  D
- 8  A  B  C  D
- 9  A  B  C  D
- 10  A  B  C  D

### Explanations

1. B	B uses <i>as warm as</i> — a comparison with <i>as</i> = simile. A gives the wind the human action of whispering = personification. C wildly exaggerates = hyperbole. D says one thing IS another = metaphor.
2. A	A says <i>my brother IS a walking encyclopedia</i> — direct comparison without <i>like/as</i> = metaphor. B and C use <i>as</i> and <i>like</i> = similes. D is literal.
3. C	A battlefield is a place of conflict; calling the meeting room a battlefield says the meeting was <b>full of conflict and tension</b> . A reads the metaphor literally; B invents a game; D guesses about cleanup that isn't in the sentence.
4. D	A hummingbird darts in quick, sudden movements; the simile says the toddler moved the same way — with <b>quick, darting energy</b> . A focuses on sound; B reads the simile literally; C is the opposite.
5. A	A calls words a <i>soft blanket of comfort</i> — words aren't really blankets, so this is a metaphor. B, C, and D are all literal descriptions.
6. B	A window lets you see beyond where you are; the metaphor says reading <b>lets you see and learn about places and lives outside your own</b> . A is literal; C and D twist the metaphor into something physical.
7. D	D uses <i>as nervous as</i> — comparison with <i>as</i> = simile. A is literal; B is literal physical description; C is hyperbole (you can't really jump a mile).
8. C	Hyperbole exaggerates for effect; <i>a ton of homework</i> means <b>a great deal — more than usual</b> . A and B read the exaggeration literally; D is unrelated.
9. B	B says one thing IS another ( <i>was a ray of sunshine</i> ) without <i>like</i> or <i>as</i> = metaphor. A and C use <i>as quiet as</i> and <i>like</i> = similes. D is literal.
10. A	A gives the leaves a human action ( <i>danced</i> ) = personification. B is a simile ( <i>as red as</i> ); C is a metaphor ( <i>are tiny flames</i> ); D is literal.



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