

# 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.



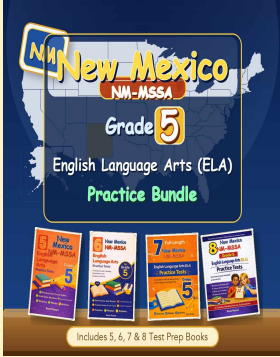
## Answer Keys

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



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