

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	
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 full of conflict and tension . 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 quick, darting energy . 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 lets you see and learn about places and lives outside your own . 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 a great deal — more than usual . 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.

