

Figurative Language: Personification and More

Name: _____

Date: _____

Score: _____ / 10



Quick Review

Figurative language says one thing and means another — for an effect. **Personification:** giving HUMAN qualities to non-human things (*The wind whispered*). **Simile:** a comparison using *like* or *as* (*quiet as a mouse*). **Metaphor:** a direct comparison without *like* or *as* (*Time is a thief*). **Hyperbole:** huge exaggeration for effect (*I've told you a million times*). **Idiom:** a phrase whose meaning isn't literal (*break the ice*). Ask three questions: **What kind** of figure is it? **What** does it mean literally? **Why** did the writer choose it?

PRACTICE

Identify the figure of speech, interpret its meaning, or explain its effect.

- Which sentence uses **personification**?
 - The old oak was as tall as a building.
 - The old oak stretched its arms toward the sky and groaned in the wind.
 - The old oak was a giant green umbrella over the lawn.
 - The old oak weighed a thousand tons.
- Read this line from a poem: *The angry storm hurled rain against the windows and shouted across the rooftops all night.*
What is the writer's MOST LIKELY purpose in personifying the storm?
 - to give weather-forecast information.
 - to argue that storms are dangerous to people.
 - to make the line sound funny.
 - to make the storm feel alive and threatening, increasing the suspense.
- Which line is a **metaphor**, not a simile?
 - The athlete ran like a cheetah down the track.
 - The athlete was as fast as a cheetah.
 - The athlete was a cheetah on the track.
 - The athlete moved faster than a cheetah might.
- Read this sentence: *I've been waiting in this line for a thousand years.*
This figure of speech is called —
 - hyperbole.
 - personification.
 - simile.
 - idiom.



5. Read: *The full moon kept a careful eye on the sleeping village.*
What does this personification suggest?
- The moon is reflecting light from the sun.
 - The village is in danger from the moon.
 - The village is being watched over and protected, as if by a kind guardian.
 - The moon is a bright object in the sky tonight.
6. Which sentence uses an **idiom**?
- The detective was as sharp as a blade.
 - Let's hit the books before the test next week.
 - Loneliness pressed against her like a cold wind.
 - The thunder roared three times.
7. Read: *Hope is a small candle in a dark room.*
This metaphor MOST LIKELY suggests that hope —
- is a faint but powerful source of light in difficult times.
 - is dangerous and might start a fire.
 - only matters at night.
 - always lasts forever, no matter what.
8. Read this line: *The leaves danced in the breeze, whispering secrets to the children below.*
Which figure of speech is used MOST CLEARLY in this line?
- simile, because the leaves are compared using *like*.
 - hyperbole, because the leaves are exaggerated.
 - idiom, because *danced in the breeze* is a fixed phrase.
 - personification, because the leaves are given human actions (*danced* and *whispering*).
9. Read: *The morning sun yawned over the mountains, stretching its golden arms across the valley.*
(a) Name the figure of speech the writer uses. (b) Interpret what is actually happening in plain language.
(c) Explain in 1–2 sentences WHY the writer chose this figure of speech — what mood does it create?

10. For each line below, name the figure of speech (simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, or idiom) and explain in one sentence what it really means.
- My backpack weighs a ton today.*
 - The fog crept in on quiet feet.*
 - Don't spill the beans about the surprise party!*



Answer Keys

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| Explanations | |
|--------------|--|
| 1. B | B gives the tree HUMAN actions — <i>stretched its arms</i> and <i>groaned</i> — the heart of personification. A is a simile (<i>as tall as</i>). C is a metaphor (<i>was a giant green umbrella</i>). D is hyperbole (<i>thousand tons</i> is exaggeration). |
| 2. D | Personification often gives non-human things emotion to deepen the mood. By making the storm <i>angry</i> and able to <i>hurl</i> and <i>shout</i> , the writer makes it feel alive and threatening . A reduces the line to a forecast. B is an argument, but a poem creates mood, not arguments. C misreads the tone — the line is tense, not playful. |
| 3. C | A metaphor states that one thing IS another, without <i>like</i> or <i>as</i> . C says the athlete was a cheetah — a direct comparison. A and B are similes (both use <i>like</i> or <i>as</i>). D is a literal comparison that doesn't equate the athlete to the cheetah. |
| 4. A | Hyperbole is huge exaggeration for effect — <i>a thousand years</i> in a line shows impatience, not real time. B requires giving human traits to a non-human thing — there is no non-human <i>thing</i> being personified here. C requires <i>like</i> or <i>as</i> . D would be a fixed phrase with a non-literal meaning (e.g., <i>kicked the bucket</i>). |
| 5. C | Personifying the moon as <i>keeping a careful eye</i> creates a feeling of watchful protection , like a guardian. A answers a science question, not a literary one. B misreads <i>careful eye</i> as a threat instead of a kindness. D states a literal fact about the moon but misses the figure of speech. |
| 6. B | B uses the idiom <i>hit the books</i> , a fixed phrase meaning <i>study hard</i> . The phrase doesn't make literal sense — you don't actually strike the books. A is a simile. C is another simile (with personification of loneliness mixed in). D is personification (thunder is given the human-like action of roaring). |
| 7. A | The metaphor compares hope to a small candle; the candle is modest but it pushes back the dark. So hope is a faint but powerful source of light in difficult times . B reads the candle as a fire hazard, missing the comparison. C takes <i>dark room</i> literally. D contradicts <i>small candle</i> — candles burn down. |
| 8. D | Leaves are doing things only PEOPLE do — dancing and whispering — the signature of personification . A is wrong because no <i>like</i> or <i>as</i> appears. B calls the line exaggeration, but the leaves are not made huge or impossible; they are made HUMAN. C confuses personification with idiom — <i>danced in the breeze</i> is a fresh image, not a fixed expression. |
| 9. | Answer: (a) The writer uses personification: the sun <i>yawns</i> and <i>stretches arms</i>, which are human actions. (b) In plain language, the sun is rising slowly over the mountains and its light is spreading across the valley. (c) The writer's choice gives the morning a gentle, sleepy, peaceful mood — as if nature is waking up softly — which is more vivid and warmer than simply saying <i>the sun rose</i>. |



10. **Answer:** (a) **Hyperbole**. The backpack feels very heavy — but obviously not a literal ton; the exaggeration shows the speaker's frustration with the weight. (b) **Personification**. The fog moved in slowly and silently; giving it *quiet feet* makes the fog feel alive and stealthy. (c) **Idiom**. *Spill the beans* means accidentally share a secret; it has nothing to do with actual beans.



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