

A ROSE IS A ROSE

Student/Class Goal
Although familiar with figurative language, students should be able to recognize these elements in poems, songs or creative writings when found on the GED test.

Outcome *(lesson objective)*
Define simile, metaphor and personification by identifying examples of figurative language in selected poems or examples as a class and individually.

Time Frame
3-4 days

Standard *Read with Understanding*

NRS EFL 3-5

Purpose	Benchmarks	Word Knowledge	Benchmarks	Comprehension	Benchmarks
Purpose for reading	3.1, 4.1, 5.1	Decoding skills	3.3, 4.3, 5.3	Strategy use	3.11, 4.11, 5.11
Select text		Word parts		Text structural elements	
		Context clues	3.5, 4.5, 5.5	Genres	4.13
		Reference materials		Literary analysis	
		Word relationships		Drawing conclusions	3.15, 4.15, 5.15
		Content vocabulary		Making connections	3.16, 4.16, 5.16
		Figurative language	3.9, 4.9, 5.9		
		Fluency			

Materials

Figurative Language Overhead

Simile Poems: *The Daffodils* Wordsworth, *The Weakness* Derricotte

Metaphor Poems: *Dreams* Hughes, *You Begin* Atwood, *Blood* Shihab Nye

Simile/Metaphor Poems: *Birches* Frost

Personification Poems: *Two Sunflowers Move in the Yellow Room* Blake, *The Train* Dickinson, *Wind and Window Flower* Frost

Poetry Sort Examples

Learner Prior Knowledge

Ask students to finish the following phrases - Life is like... Love is like... A baby is like...

These phrases are good examples of similes that poets use in poems. A typical response might be *Life is like a box of chocolates* and students will add *because you never know what you're about to get*. Students will have a basic understanding of similes, metaphors, and personification but may confuse their meanings.

Instructional Activities

Step 1 - What is a simile? Similes appear in every genre from poetry to prose, epics to essays. Writers use similes to bring their literary imagery to life. Similes compare one thing or idea to another, utilizing *as* or *like* to set off the comparison.

TEACHER NOTE Encourage students to write these figurative language definitions in their notebooks under poetry notes. Prepare an overhead with the figurative language definitions – use as needed.

Step 2 - Have students read William Wordsworth's poem *The Daffodils*. Ask students to identify an example of a simile in this poem. They may identify the poem's opening lines:

I wandered lonely as a cloud

That floats on high o'er vales and hills

Ask students the following questions about this simile example from Wordsworth's poem.

- What is this simile referring to in this poem?
- How is this different than saying "I wandered alone"?
- How is this description different than saying that the person was lonely?
- Is this an effective simile and why?

Have students read Toi Derricotte's poem *The Weakness*. Ask students to identify an example of a simile in this poem. They may identify the poem's opening lines:

*through clenched teeth, her eyes
bright as a dog's
cornered in the light.*

Ask students the following questions about this simile example from Derricotte's poem.

- What is this simile referring to in this poem?
- How is this different than saying "her eyes shined"?
- How is this description different than saying that the person's grandmother had a dog's shining eyes?
- Is this an effective simile and why?

Students should begin thinking about similes in these poems by first finding the subject that is being represented and compared (i.e., loneliness in Wordsworth's poem), then concentrating on the ideas and qualities brought to mind. Is Wordsworth's lonely cloud an example of sad or contented loneliness? What does the flash of a cornered dog's eyes bring to mind in Derricotte's poem? What emotions come to mind in the context of these poems?

Continue searching for additional similes in Derricotte's poem:

*She had been
solid as a tree,
a fur around her neck, a
light-skinned matron whose car was parked*

How does this simile compare and contrast with the earlier description of her eyes flashing like a cornered animal? Why did the author use past perfect tense in this line?

Near the end of the poem, point out the simile contained in these lines:

*When my legs gave out, my grandmother
dragged me up and held me like God
holds saints by the
roots of the hair.*

What does this simile mean? How do these similes build on the theme of the poem? How do they convey the feeling of the person and her grandmother? How does the title fit?

TEACHER NOTE Students can look at additional poetry on their own and try to identify similes.

Step 3 - Write similes for each of the following ideas or concepts.

Rambunctious, Brightness, Steady, Stubbornness, Sad, Pleasure, Industrious, Complexity, Warmth, Fulfillment

The topics can be used as the subject being represented by the simile, or as the representation of another subject.

EX: Paleness – She was as pale as the ash left behind in the fireplace.

Students can present their similes to the class. Discuss the effectiveness of the similes, explaining why and how they felt each simile was or was not successful.

Step 4 - What is a metaphor? Metaphors utilize the image of one subject as if it were analogous to another, seemingly unrelated subject. A key component being that a metaphor combines rather than compares the two objects.

Step 5 - Have students read Langston Hughes' poem *Dreams*. Ask students to identify a metaphor in the poem. The poem contains structurally simple metaphors which follow the formula *A is B*. These can be found in both stanzas:

*Life is a broken-winged bird
Life is a barren field*

Lead students through the metaphors contained in this short poem. Ask them to think about the following questions:

- What is this metaphor referring to in this poem?

- How do these metaphors work in relation to the poem's title, *Dreams*?
- How is this description different from saying simply that when dreams are unfulfilled life is difficult?
- How is it different from saying that a life without dreams is like a broken-winged bird? Would using a simile rather than a metaphor weaken Hughes' poem?
- Can you describe how or why this metaphor works?
- Is this an effective metaphor and why?

Have students read Margaret Atwood's poem *You Begin*. Ask students to identify a metaphor in the poem:
Your hand is a warm stone I hold between two words.

Discuss these questions

- What is this metaphor referring to in this poem?
- How is this description different from saying simply that the hand is warm?
- Is it different than saying the hand is like a warm stone?
- Describe how and why the metaphor works
- Is this an effective metaphor and why?

Discuss the structure of the entire poem. The poem models the development of language and how metaphor helps us deal with increasingly abstract concepts. Read stanza four to the group and discuss how it moves from concrete to abstract. What does the cloud in the simile represent? What does the warm stone signify? Is it only the child's hand?

Many metaphors do **not** follow the A is B structure, but students should look for examples where one subject is being represented by another. In Naomi Shihab Nye's poem *Blood*, one subject is substituted for another, seemingly dissimilar, subject (newspaper headlines about her father's homeland for an agent with the power to clot or stop blood from flowing):
Today the headlines clot in my blood.

Continue the discussion using the same questions following each poem.

TEACHER NOTE Students can look at additional poetry on their own and try to identify metaphors.

Step 6 - Write metaphors for each of the following ideas or concepts.

Loneliness, Largeness, Jubilation, Clarity, Repugnance, Anger, Confusion, Excitement, Contentment, Optimism

The topics can be used as the subject being represented by the metaphor, or as the representation of another subject.

EX: Smallness – She was the spider, unnoticed by all, spinning her web among the endless, towering redwoods.

Students can present their metaphors to the class. Discuss the effectiveness of the metaphors, explaining why and how they felt each metaphor was or was not successful.

TEACHER NOTE Rather than doing similes and metaphors on two separate days; if time is an issue, use Robert Frost's poem, *Birches* to cover similes and metaphors together. Discussion should focus on finding and analyzing similes and metaphors throughout the poem, providing description differences and explaining effectiveness.

Step 7 - What is personification? Assigning human qualities, feelings, action, or characteristics to inanimate (non-living) objects. *The window winked at me.* The verb, *wink*, is a human action. A window is an inanimate object.

Step 8 - Choose 2 or 3 poems, such as William Blake's poem *Two Sunflowers Move in the Yellow Room*, *The Train* by Emily Dickinson or *Wind and Window Flower* by Robert Frost for students to read aloud or silently. Ask them to identify an example of personification in this poem.

Step 9 - Write a poem about nature. Choose a word from List A, then a word from List B and write this word next to the word from List A.

List A	List B
sun	tells
moon	shows

stars	reminds
sea	teaches
stone	listens
night	remembers
mountain	brings
dawn	looks
morning	dances
	dreams
	guides
	takes

Then expand your words into a sentence. Write on one subject, or describe other objects in nature. Select favorite lines to put together in a poem.

Step 10 - Do a Poetry Sort with the group as an informal assessment to evaluate recognition of terms and their examples. Choose as many selections from each category as needed. Write on note cards and give each group an assortment of the three types of figurative language. Group will sort by either simile, metaphor or personification.

Assessment/Evidence *(based on outcome)*

Instructor will observe and make notes during the discussions about correct usage of terms.
Written similes, metaphors and personification for various word or concepts.
Poetry Sort

Teacher Reflection/Lesson Evaluation

Not yet completed.

Next Steps

Journalists use similes and metaphors in their writing. Have students read articles from the daily newspaper and highlight similes or metaphors. Discuss how figurative language helps “paint pictures” in reading selections.

LEARNING EXTENSION Have students pair into groups of two to create a poster that illustrates similes, metaphors or personification and give examples of each. Be sure students use figurative language that is part of the poems discussed during class. Collages work well for this activity.

Technology Integration

Academy of American Poets <http://www.poets.org/>

Purposeful/Transparent

The teacher is very explicit and systematic in how she walks through the questions posed about each poem as students examine simile, metaphor and personification.

Contextual

Students need to be able to recognize figurative language – specifically similes, metaphors and personification – in everyday print and especially find these elements in songs and poems that appear on the GED test.

Building Expertise

Most students have had some experience with figurative language, but are often confused. This lesson builds on their prior knowledge and gives them practice in identifying each element.

Figurative language is a tool authors use to help the reader visualize what is happening in a story or poem. Some common types of figurative language are simile, metaphor, personification, alliteration, onomatopoeia, idiom, and puns.

Simile Figure of speech in which the subject is compared to another subject - two dissimilar objects that have something in common use the words *like* or *as*.



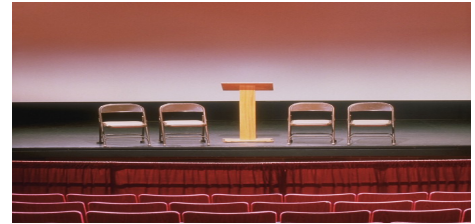
Examples

The snow was like a blanket
Waves crashing on the ocean look like knives
Sadness falls inside me like the rain
I wondered lonely as a cloud

Metaphor Figure of speech in which the two objects are not compared, but treated as identical two unlike things that have something in common without the use of like or as. States that one thing is something else.

Examples

The snow was a blanket over the earth
Fog comes in on little cat's feet
April is my girlfriend's face
All the world's a stage



Personification Assigning human qualities, feelings, action, or characteristics to inanimate (nonhuman) objects.



Examples

father time
whispering trees
babbling brook

The Daffodils

by William Wordsworth

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A Poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed--and gazed--but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

The Weakness

by Toi Derricotte

That time my grandmother dragged me
through the perfume aisles at Saks, she held me up
by my arm, hissing, "Stand up,"
through clenched teeth, her eyes
bright as a dog's
cornered in the light.
She said it over and over,
as if she were Jesus,
and I were dead. She had been
solid as a tree,
a fur around her neck, a
light-skinned matron whose car was parked, who walked
on swirling
marble and passed through
brass openings--in 1945.
There was not even a black
elevator operator at Saks.
The saleswoman had brought velvet
leggings to lace me in, and cooed,
as if in service of all grandmothers.
My grandmother had smiled, but not
hungrily, not like my mother
who hated them, but wanted to please,
and they had smiled back, as if
they were wearing wooden collars.
When my legs gave out, my grandmother
dragged me up and held me like God
holds saints by the
roots of the hair. I begged her
to believe I couldn't help it. Stumbling,
her face white
with sweat, she pushed me through the crowd, rushing
away from those eyes
that saw through
her clothes, under
her skin, all the way down
to the transparent
genes confessing.

Dreams

by Langston Hughes

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

You Begin

by Margaret Atwood

You begin this way:
this is your hand,
this is your eye,
that is a fish, blue and flat
on the paper, almost
the shape of an eye.
This is your mouth, this is an O
or a moon, whichever
you like. This is yellow.

Outside the window
is the rain, green
because it is summer, and beyond that
the trees and then the world,
which is round and has only
the colors of these nine crayons.

This is the world, which is fuller
and more difficult to learn than I have said.
You are right to smudge it that way
with the red and then
the orange: the world burns.

Once you have learned these words
you will learn that there are more
words than you can ever learn.
The word hand floats above your hand
like a small cloud over a lake.
The word hand anchors
your hand to this table,
your hand is a warm stone
I hold between two words.

This is your hand, these are my hands, this is the world,
which is round but not flat and has more colors
than we can see.

It begins, it has an end,
this is what you will
come back to, this is your hand.

Blood

by Naomi Shihab Nye

"A true Arab knows how to catch a fly in his hands,"
my father would say. And he'd prove it,
cupping the buzzer instantly
while the host with the swatter stared.

In the spring our palms peeled like snakes.
True Arabs believed watermelon could heal fifty ways.
I changed these to fit the occasion.

Years before, a girl knocked,
wanted to see the Arab.
I said we didn't have one.
After that, my father told me who he was,
"Shihab"--"shooting star"--
a good name, borrowed from the sky.
Once I said, "When we die, we give it back?"
He said that's what a true Arab would say.

Today the headlines clot in my blood.
A little Palestinian dangles a truck on the front page.
Homeless fig, this tragedy with a terrible root
is too big for us. What flag can we wave?
I wave the flag of stone and seed,
table mat stitched in blue.

I call my father, we talk around the news.
It is too much for him,
neither of his two languages can reach it.
I drive into the country to find sheep, cows,
to plead with the air:
Who calls anyone civilized?
Where can the crying heart graze?
What does a true Arab do now?

Birches

by Robert Frost

When I see birches bend to left and right
Across the lines of straighter darker trees,
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay
As ice-storms do. Often you must have seen them
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain. They click upon themselves
As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.
Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells
Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust--
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.
They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,
And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed
So low for long, they never right themselves:
You may see their trunks arching in the woods
Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground
Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair
Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.
But I was going to say when Truth broke in
With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm
I should prefer to have some boy bend them
As he went out and in to fetch the cows--
Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
Whose only play was what he found himself,
Summer or winter, and could play alone.
One by one he subdued his father's trees
By riding them down over and over again
Until he took the stiffness out of them,
And not one but hung limp, not one was left
For him to conquer. He learned all there was
To learn about not launching out too soon
And so not carrying the tree away
Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise
To the top branches, climbing carefully
With the same pains you use to fill a cup
Up to the brim, and even above the brim.
Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,
Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.
So was I once myself a swinger of birches.
And so I dream of going back to be.
It's when I'm weary of considerations,
And life is too much like a pathless wood
Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig's having lashed across it open.
I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.
May no fate willfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:
I don't know where it's likely to go better.
I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,
And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
But dipped its top and set me down again.
That would be good both going and coming back.
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

Two Sunflowers Move in the Yellow Room

by William Blake

"Ah, William, we're weary of weather,"
said the sunflowers, shining with dew.
"Our traveling habits have tired us.
Can you give us a room with a view?"

They arranged themselves at the window
and counted the steps of the sun,
and they both took root in the carpet
where the topaz tortoises run.

The Train

by Emily Dickinson

I like to see it lap the miles,
And lick the valleys up,
And stop to feed itself at tanks;
And then, prodigious, step

Around a pile of mountains,
And, supercilious, peer
In shanties by the sides of roads;
And there a quarry pare

To fit its sides, and crawl between,
Complaining all the while
In horrid, hooting stanza;
Then chase itself down hill

And neigh like Boanerges;
Then, punctual as a start its own,
Stop-docile and omnipotent-
A stable door.

Wind and Window Flower

by Robert Frost

Lovers, forget your love,
And list to the love of these,
She a window flower,
And he a winter breeze.
When the frosty window veil
Was melted down at noon,
And the caged yellow bird
Hung over her in tune,
He marked her through the pane,
He could not help but mark,
And only passed her by,
To come again at dark.
He was a winter wind,
Concerned with ice and snow,
Dead weeds and unmated birds,
And little of love could know.
But he sighed upon the sill,
He gave the sash a shake,
As witness all within
Who lay that night awake.
Perchance he half prevailed
To win her for the flight
From the firelit looking-glass
And warm stove-window light.
But the flower leaned aside
And thought of naught to say,
And morning found the breeze
A hundred miles away.

Poetry Sort

Choose as many selections from each category as needed. Write on note cards and give each group an assortment of the three types of figurative language. Group will sort by either simile, metaphor or personification.

Similes

- guiltless forever, like a tree —[Robert Browning](#)
- idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean —[Samuel Taylor Coleridge](#)
- as good as gold —[Charles Dickens](#)
- Yellow butterflies flickered along the shade like flecks of sun —[William Faulkner](#)
- woo the moon like the tide —[Vladimir Mayakovsky](#)
- jubilant as a flag unfurled —[Dorothy Parker](#)
- happy as pigs in mud — [David Eddings](#)
- You are as subtle as a brick to the small of my back - [Brand New & Taking Back Sunday](#)
- Put your arms around me like a circle 'round the sun - [Will Shade \(Memphis Jug Band\)](#)
- My heart is like an open highway - [Jon Bon Jovi](#)
- like a June Bug in December - [Jason Jones](#)
- It's been [a hard day's night](#), and I've been working like a dog - [The Beatles](#)
- He started howlin' like a monsoon wind - [Bruce Springsteen](#)
- A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle - [U2](#)
- free as a bird - [Lynard Skynard](#)
- busy as a bee
- clear as a bell
- cold as ice
- cute as a button
- dry as a bone
- dead as a doornail
- dumb as a post
- easy as pie
- as fast as lightning
- fit as a fiddle
- happy as a clam
- high as a kite
- larger than life
- light as a feather
- mad as hell
- plain as day
- proud as a peacock
- as loyal as a dog
- quick as a wink
- right as rain
- sharper than a tack
- sick as a dog
- smooth as silk
- snug as a bug in a rug
- solid as a rock
- tough as nails
- white as snow

Metaphors

- He stepped up to the plate and grabbed the bull by the horns.
- to grasp a concept
- to break the ice
- a pair of ragged claws
- You are my sun.
- The couch is the autobahn of the living room.
- That throws some light on the question.
- He has the wild stag's foot.
- Shut your trap!
- my winged thought
- Cool it
- Lacking funding, the team decided to abandon the project.
- They carried out their agenda.
- This joke is aging quickly.
- Don't be such an airhead!
- It's anarchy on the freeway today!
- A play based on a poorly written book by G. G. Falderal.
- the point being
- the benchmark 30-year T-bill
- a legally binding contract
- boiling landscape
- They had a spiritual bond between them.
- The band bleated out their own brand of country music.
- breaking news
- bucking for a raise
- bursting with flavor
- caged emotions
- She led the campaign for student housing.
- An electron chooses the path of least resistance.
- Their philosophies would eventually collide.
- I'm comfortable with my decision.
- The clouds are just determined to ruin our picnic!
- That gymnast is a diamond in the rough.
- She sought a new direction in her life.
- They were about to disembark on a journey of the soul.
- cell division
- He was a drifter, working odd jobs.
- I'm dying to meet her.
- freedom of expression
- That new worker is pretty green.
- to harness the power of the sun
- ideas in motion
- a moving speech
- political platform
- The guy is a rock.
- He secreted the fact that he was a Republican.
- a stable economy
- a steady rhythm
- steer clear of that topic
- stubborn stains
- A transitional government is in effect.
- We'll travel down that road (of conversation) another time.
- political fallout from the scandal
- unfolding the road map to peace
- a tidal wave of generosity

- a fusion of technology and personality
- New Orleans became filled with a toxic gumbo.
- The Gulf Coast is a catcher's mitt for hurricanes.
- I've got a thousand songs in my iPod.
- The housing bubble has burst.
- a storm of controversy

Personification

- The computer meowed.
- The apple died.
- The Kitchen sang.
- The pencil flew out of my hand.
- The tree jumped into the road in front of my car.
- With an evil scowl, the storm cloud thundered its disapproval.
- sitting careless on a granary floor
- drowsed with the fume of poppies
- slave to fate
- US defends sale of ports company to Arab nation.
- Microsoft embarrassed one final time over SP2.
- blind justice
- The ancient car groaned into third gear.
- The cloud scattered rain throughout the city.
- The tropical storm slept for two days.
- The wind sang her mournful song through the falling leaves.
- The video camera observed the whole scene.
- The strawberries seemed to sing, "Eat me first!"
- The rain kissed my cheek as it fell.
- The daffodils nodded their yellow heads at the walkers.
- The water beckoned invitingly to the hot swimmers.
- The snow whispered as it fell to the ground during the early morning hours.
- The china danced on the shelves during the earthquake.