Figurative Language

When a writer or speaker uses figurative language, he is describing something through the use of unusual comparisons. This is often done to make a point, generate interest in the topic, or to make something clearer.

One example of figurative speech is: It was raining cats and dogs. Of course, since cats and dogs were not falling from the sky, this sentence could be rewritten as It was raining very hard.

Read each of the following sentences.
Underline the figurative language in each sentence.
Rewrite the sentence with the same meaning omitting the figurative language.

1. The athlete was as strong as an ox.

2. The children were covered with dirt from head to toe.

3. Susan could run like the wind.

4. The message was as clear as a whistle.

5. Grandmother insisted that the house be spick and span.

6. Mother made enough dinner to feed an army.

7. His feet were as big as a house.

8. Grandfather is as sharp as a tack.

9. That watermelon is as big as a barn.

10. I got home late and my parents snapped my head off.

11. The ball bounced and hit the sky.

12. The ice cream sundae had toppings that were a mile high.
Poetry Quiz

Directions: Read the following examples of figurative language. Identify the poetic device being used. Write the letter of your answer on the line to the right.

1. “He leans to spit his pear. Being gone, it can’t reveal the joy of leaving. But it does.”
   a. simile   b. alliteration   c. onomatopoeia   d. personification
   1______

2. “Chicago is a city that is fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action.”
   a. enjambment   b. metaphor   c. simile   d. onomatopoeia
   2______

3. “We strike straight. We lurk late.”
   a. hyperbole   b. alliteration   c. metaphor   d. personification
   3______

4. “Silver bells!... How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle in the icy air of night.”
   a. simile   b. hyperbole   c. onomatopoeia   d. alliteration
   4______

5. “What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?”
   a. simile   b. rhyme   c. repetition   d. metaphor
   5______

6. “I’d rather take baths with a man-eating shark [then do my homework].”
   a. alliteration   b. personification   c. simile   d. hyperbole
   6______

7. “Poets make pets of pretty words.”
   a. simile   b. metaphor   c. onomatopoeia   d. enjambment
   7______

8. “His fin [is] like a piece of sheet-iron, three corned and with a knife-edge.”
   a. simile   b. metaphor   c. alliteration   d. rhythm
   8______

9. “And I will come again, my love, [even if] it were ten thousand miles.”
   a. personification   b. onomatopoeia   c. hyperbole   d. simile
   9______

10. “...women under the gas lamps luring the farm boys.”
    a. onomatopoeia   b. hyperbole   c. personification   d. alliteration
    10______
Figurative Language

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11. The ball bounced and hit the sky.

12. The ice cream sundae had toppings that were a mile high.
Write the letter of the correct match next to each problem.

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<td>1.</td>
<td>repetition</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>prose</td>
<td>b.</td>
<td>message, point of view and idea of the poem</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>alliteration</td>
<td>c.</td>
<td>reflects its emotional qualities or meanings</td>
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<td>4.</td>
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<td>d.</td>
<td>repeating of the same consonant sound at the beginning of several words</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>dialogue</td>
<td>f.</td>
<td>comparison of two things using like or as</td>
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<td>irony</td>
<td>g.</td>
<td>pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a poem</td>
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<td>conversation between characters</td>
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<td>group of lines that usually develops one idea</td>
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<td>rhyme</td>
<td>l.</td>
<td>pattern of rhymes in a poem</td>
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<td>symbol</td>
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<td>free verse</td>
<td>s.</td>
<td>way the poem is written</td>
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<td>tone</td>
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<td>use of same words over and over to emphasize importance</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>voice</td>
<td>v.</td>
<td>no regular rhyme, rhythm, or form</td>
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<td></td>
<td>rhyme</td>
<td>w.</td>
<td>partial rhyme which has the same internal vowel sounds</td>
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<td>style</td>
<td>x.</td>
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<td>25.</td>
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<td>y.</td>
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26. Mood
What Type of Poem?

1. There was an Old Man of Nantucket
   Who kept all his cash in a bucket.
   His daughter, called Nan,
   Ran away with a man,
   And as for the bucket, Nantucket.
   - Anonymous

2. A Tree
   Strong, Tall Swaying,
   swinging, sighing
   Memories of summer
   An Oak

3. A Star
   Above
   So bright!
   Light the way,
   In twinkling light:
   Red and green bulbs,
   White and yellow lights,
   Be my symbol of thee.
   Praised
   Beloved

4. I am first with five
   Then seven in the middle
   -- Five again to end.
5. No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Then you shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell:
Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it; for I love you so
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot
If thinking on me then should make you woe.
O, if, I say, you look upon this verse
When I perhaps compounded am with clay,
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse.
But let your love even with my life decay,
Lest the wise world should look into your moan
And mock you with me after I am gone.

6. "The Broken-Legg'd Man" by John Mackey Shaw

I saw the other day when I went shopping in the store
A man I hadn't ever, ever seen in there before,
A man whose leg was broken and who leaned upon a crutch-
I asked him very kindly if it hurt him very much.
"Not at all!" said the broken-legg'd man.
I ran around behind him for I thought that I would see
The broken leg all bandaged up and bent back at the knee;
But I didn't see the leg at all, there wasn't any there,
So I asked him very kindly if he had it hid somewhere.
"Not at all!" said the broken-legg'd man.
"Then where," I asked him, "is it? Did a tiger bite it off?
Or did you get your foot wet when you had a nasty cough?
Did someone jump down on your leg when it was very new?
Or did you simply cut it off because you wanted to?"
"Not at all!" said the broken-legg'd man.
"What was it then?" I asked him, and this is what he said:
"I crossed a busy crossing when the traffic light was red;
A big black car came whizzing by and knocked me off my feet."
"Of course you looked both ways," I said, "before you crossed the street."
"Not at all!" said the broken-legg'd man.
"They rushed me to the hospital right quickly, "he went on,
"And when I woke in nice white sheets I saw my leg was gone;
That's why you see me walking now on nothing but a crutch."
"I'm glad," said I, "you told me, and I thank you very much!"
"Not at all!" said the broken-legg'd man.
DENOTATION/CONNOTATION EXERCISES

I. For each pair of words and a phrase, list the one that is positive in the “Positive Connotation” category, the one that is negative in the “Negative Connotation” category, and the phrase that is a more neutral definition for both words in the "Denotation" column.

Which is better? ...or

Is the glass half empty or half full?

Your Choices:

1. gaze, look steadily, stare
2. fragrance, odor, a smell sensed by the olfactory nerve
3. brainwash, persuade, influence one way or another
4. delayed, not on time, tardy
5. somewhat interested, nosy, curious
6. lazily, without haste, leisurely
7. ask of someone, demand, request
8. gathering, a large group, mob
9. slim, skinny, less than average build
10. discuss with others, debate, argue
11. observe, watch, spy
12. a young age, youthful, immature
13. not having a care, irresponsible, carefree,
14. unique, not commonly found, strange
15. find, detect, snoop
16. inexpensive, fairly priced, or cheap
17. isolation, privacy, having an opportunity to be alone
18. assertive, firmly confident, pushy
19. extravagance, generosity, giving much,

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<th>Positive Connotation</th>
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<th>Negative Connotation</th>
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Define denotation: ____________________________________________

Define connotation: ____________________________________________
Exer. 9 Denotation and connotation

For questions 1-4, select the word with the appropriate **positive connotation** to complete the following sentence.

For questions 5-6, select the word with the appropriate **neutral connotation** to complete the following sentence.

For questions 7-10, select the word with the appropriate **denotation** to complete the following sentence.

*This activity contains 10 questions.*

1. Most teachers think that Blanche is a very ________ young woman.
   - determined
   - obstinate
   - tenacious
   - stubborn

2. As the boys played video games, their parents ________ them.
   - scrutinized
   - studied
   - glared at
   - watched

3. My history teacher gives very ________ assignments.
   - taxing
   - demanding
   - challenging
   - perplexing

4. After graduating from college, my best friend has very ________ plans for his future.
   - ambitious
   - ruthless
   - grandiose
5. The teacher's job is not as objective as it may seem at first; in fact, it is quite _________.
   - subjective
   - biased
   - unfair
   - slanted

6. Given the recent _________ college standards, it seems as though anyone can get an advanced degree, nowadays.
   - decline in
   - demise of
   - plunge in
   - plummeting

7. Some of the books we read are full of _________ claims, so they are difficult to absorb in just one reading.
   - compliant
   - complex
   - complicated
   - complicit

8. _________ the course work is rigorous, but the teacher tries to make it accessible.
   - For all interested purposes
   - For all intents and purposes
   - For all intensive purposes
   - For all intense purposes

9. Our professor's false British accent is a humorous _________.
   - affect
Just because you have _________ change in the school system does not mean you will always achieve your desired _________.

- affected/affect
- effected/affect
- effected/effect

Answer choices in this exercise appear in a different order each time the page is loaded.