

Grade Nine Poetry

Metaphor Game

Definitions are constructed by saying that something belongs to a particular class of things, but with a difference from all other things in the class. Class, and difference.

Example: A cow is an animal (class) that gives milk and meat for human consumption (difference - from other animals).

Try defining some of the following. Indicate to what class of things each belongs, and what might be a distinguishing feature.

flower hockey bread VCR "mega"

Metaphor

In the following statements, what thing is being defined? With what class of things is it identified? What special difference is identified?

- a) My love is a red red rose
 That's newly sprung in June.
- b) The world is a drum that beats dead
- c) These faces are petals on a wet black bough.

Games to play: constructing metaphors.

Board Play

List a bunch of words associated with malls.

Open poetry books.

For each one of things listed, you come up with something on a page of poetry that could stand as a (bizarre) class.

Example: A teacher is a winter wind that....

Lists

On left side of page, list winter things.

On right side of page, list foods.

Write definitions (metaphors) for things in list one, using things in list two as the class.

Elaborating on Metaphors

Metaphors are certainly not always expressed in the formula, "An x is a y that is...". They occur in many graceful ways. Can you spot the things being defined in new ways in the statements below?

- a) The lord is my shepherd
- b) Cats wait in a lump / jump in a streak
- c) A cat condenses. He pulls in his tail to go under bridges.
- d) Cats sleep fat. They spread comfort between them.
- e) Her shoulders stooped with the weight of work and years.
- f) All day the cars moaned and shrieked / Hollered and bellowed and wept.
- g) When the earth is restless, miners die.
- h) Eleanor Rigby...waits by the window...wearing a face that she keeps in the jar by the door.

Simile and Metaphor

Both similes and metaphors are comparisons. Similes, though, are weaker in force. When two things are compared in a simile, the comparison is usually signalled with the words "like" or "as." (Example: He was as dumb as an ox.) In metaphor, one of the things in the comparison can be implied. It's there, but you don't see it so outright.

In the following statements, you can see the tightening of a simile into a metaphor.

My legs felt like granite. (simile)
My granite-like legs....(still a simile)
My granite legs. (now a metaphor)

What things are compared in the following metaphors? Can you turn them into statements that resemble the simile? In other words, can you re-write them so that they say that one thing is "like" or "as" another? The first one is done for you.

- a) He planted himself in front of the truck.
(He stood like a tree in front of the truck.)
- b) She was hit by waves of nausea.
- c) The night is pierced with stars.
- d) He sowed dissent in the ranks of his classmates.
- e) The sun dropped into the river.
- f) The old woman gathered her strength for the long walk.

Extended Metaphors

FOLD THIS PAPER IN HALF
SO THAT YOU CAN ONLY

READ THE BOX ON THE LEFT.

Sometimes a writer will
make a comparison work over
a stretch of writing (extend it)
because it has more than a
single possibility.

Read the description below
of a person learning to ride
a bike. Put a piece of paper
beside it, and try to write a
poem about living with someone
you care about *as though it were*
like riding a bike for the first
time.

Learning to ride a bike
is tough. It doesn't stay
upright. And the bike is
heavy when it falls.

You have to have
momentum. It's impossible
when standing still. Press
hard on the pedals. Scary.
You have to go even though
you know you are going to
crash.

No control. Front wheel
operates like spaghetti.
Handlebars in the stomach.
Dad's hold on the seat
reassures - and also throws
me off balance.

Then up. Free. Like
flying. Scary. the big
fall is just seconds away.
Look for a safe place to
land.

When you are finished, check the
poem written in the box on the
right side of the page.

Being with you
I remember
my first bike ride.

It's the momentum
that counts. We
keep going
keep going
keep going

because around the
bend are terrible
bruises.

If we stood
still a moment,
we'd
fall -

Or would we be so
practised we could
stop on our tandem

forever.

And never
touch ground?

