

Rhetorical Device Metaphor & Simile

Source: John Zimmer, <http://mannerofspeaking.org/>

Device: Metaphor

Origin: From the Greek μεταφορά (metaphora), meaning “transfer”.
In plain English: Comparing two things (that are often not alike) by stating that one is the other.

Effect: Metaphors can be used to help an audience understand a new idea by linking it to something that they already know:

When cars were first sold, they were often referred to as “horseless carriages”.

Metaphors can also be used to help an audience see something that is already known in a new light.

Metaphors contain an element of surprise. They catch the audience’s attention and are usually easy to remember.

Notes:

Aristotle said, *“The greatest thing by far is to have mastered the metaphor.”*

1. Simile is similar to metaphor in that it compares two things, but it must contain “like” or “as”; e.g., as hungry as a bear; as sly as a fox; fight like cats and dogs; eat like a pig.
2. In his book, *Style*, F.L. Lucas wrote, “The simile sets two ideas side by side; in the metaphor, they become superimposed.”
3. Why use metaphors? A metaphor can give life and a new perspective to a language that was once ordinary. With the use of creative metaphors, you motivate readers or listeners to think deeper and read more into a word or phrase.

Metaphor Examples:

*“The **eyes** are the **window** to the soul.”* English Proverb

*“A **sea** of **troubles**” or “All the **world's** a **stage**”* (Shakespeare).

*“**Thirty**--the promise of a decade of loneliness, a thinning list of single men to know, a thinning briefcase of enthusiasm, thinning hair.”*

F Scott Fitzgerald (Book: *The Great Gatsby*)

*“Suddenly his **eyes** would become blank, nothing but **two open wounds, two pits of terror.**”*
Elie Wiesel

*“A **lifetime** is a **day.**”*

Dylan Thomas (Poem: *Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night*)

"A **family** is a **nation**."

George Lakoff (Book: Moral Politics)

Simile Example:

"**Authority without wisdom** is like a **heavy ax without an edge**, fitter to bruise than polish."

Anne Bradstreet

Comparison of metaphor and simile:

'The goalkeeper was as solid as a rock' - **simile**

'The goalkeeper was a rock' - **metaphor**

All the world's a stage,

And all the men and women merely players

They have their exits and their entrances; - **metaphor**

The world is like a stage

It is as if people were like actors

they come and go as though they were entering or leaving a stage. - **simile**

"You are the sunshine of my life" - **metaphor**

"Her presence warmed the room like the sun" - **simile**

More metaphors:

"One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a **lonely island of poverty** in the midst of a **vast ocean of material prosperity**.

"But we refuse to believe that **the bank of justice is bankrupt**. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the **great vaults of opportunity** of this nation.

"Now is the time to lift our nation from the **quicksands of racial injustice** to the **solid rock of brotherhood**.

"Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. And some of you have come from areas where your quest — quest for freedom left you battered by the **storms of persecution** and staggered by the **winds of police brutality**.

"With this faith, we will be able to transform the **jangling discords of our nation** into a **beautiful symphony of brotherhood**."

— Martin Luther King, Jr., 28 August 1963

“I would like to make it clear, in parenthesis, that I do not blame my parents for their point of view. There is **an expiry date** on blaming your parents for **steering** you in the wrong direction; **the moment you are old enough to take the wheel**, responsibility lies with you.”

— J.K. Rowling, Harvard Graduation Ceremony, 5 June 2008

Source: www.ereadingworksheets.com:

The detective listened to her tales with a wooden face.

She was fairly certain that life was a fashion show.

The typical teenage boy’s room is a disaster area.

What storms then shook the ocean of my sleep.

The children were roses grown in concrete gardens, beautiful and forlorn.

Kisses are the flowers of love in bloom.

Kathy arrived at the grocery store with an army of children.

Her eyes were fireflies.

I was lost in a sea of nameless faces.

John’s answer to the problem was just a Band-Aid, not a solution.

Katie’s plan to get into college was a house of cards on a crooked table.

The wheels of justice turn slowly.

The job interview was a rope ladder dropped from heaven.

Her hair was a flowing golden river streaming down her shoulders.

The computer in the classroom was an old dinosaur.

The daggers of heat pierced through his black t-shirt.

Let your eyes drink up that milkshake sky.

The clouds sailed across the sky.

You are now in London, that great sea whose ebb and flow at once is deaf and loud,

His fine wit makes such a wound that the knife is lost in it.

Waves of spam emails inundated his inbox.

Love is a guest that comes, unbidden, / But, having come, asserts his right;

Three pines strained darkly, runners in a race unseen by any.

Life: a lighted window and a closed door.

Some days my thoughts are just cocoons hanging from dripping branches in the grey woods of my mind.

Life is a dream in the night, a fear among fears, / A naked runner lost in a storm of spears.