Painting Feelings with Similes and More

Teacher		**Class**	Year 7
Subject	English	**Topic**	Similes, metaphors and personification
Date		**Room**	
Lesson length	60 minutes	**Country**	United Kingdom

Students learn how similes, metaphors and personification present feeling. They spot the devices and explain the mood they create.

Curriculum links

- knowing how language, including figurative language, vocabulary choice, grammar, text structure and organisational features, presents meaning

Learning objectives

- Students will identify simile, metaphor and personification in short extracts.
- Students will explain how figurative language presents meaning and feeling.
- Students will choose vocabulary to create a clear feeling for the reader.

Success criteria

- I can name the device used in a line.
- I can explain the picture and feeling it gives.
- I can improve a line to make the feeling stronger.

What students already know

Ask: What does 'my bag is heavy' tell us, and what extra does 'my bag weighs a tonne' add? Listen for plain truth versus picture and feeling.

Key words

simile	a comparison that uses like or as to show likeness, as in A is like B [2]
metaphor	saying one thing is another thing to give strong feeling, as in A is B [2]
personification	giving human actions or feelings to a thing that is not human [2]
figurative language	words used past their plain meanings to make pictures and stir feelings [3]
literal language	using words with their plain, exact, agreed meanings [3]
vocabulary choice	the words a writer picks to shape what readers picture and feel

Materials

- Slide presentation Slides 1-12
- Video clip 1 Simile, metaphor, personification and hyperbole (0:00-4:48) on Slide 6
- three short extracts on strips
- highlighters
- mini-whiteboards and board pens

Before the lesson

- Load Slides 1-12 and test Video clip 1 (0:00-4:48) on Slide 6 for sound and picture
- Print three short extracts on strips, one set per group of three, plus a spare set
- Put highlighters, mini-whiteboards and board pens out on tables

- books or paper and pens
- Write the vote lines from Slide 11 on the board as back-up

Lesson outline

0–8 min **Starter** 8 min · Whole class

Recall literal and figurative difference and hook interest in feeling.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 2: When is 'my bag weighs a tonne' better than 'my bag is heavy'?
2. Say the hook: Same grey morning. Three writers. One says the wind was loud. One says the wind argued with the windows. Which morning would you rather read about, and why?
3. Talk through the two bag sentences with the class, explaining literal uses plain meanings and figurative stretches past them [3].
4. Run think, pair, share for 2 minutes on what extra picture or feeling the tonne version adds.

STUDENTS DO

1. Think for 30 seconds about the two bag sentences on Slide 2.
2. Discuss with a partner what picture or feeling the tonne version adds.
3. Hold up mini-whiteboards marked L for literal and F for figurative when teacher reads two new lines.

Say: Same grey morning. Three writers. One says the wind was loud. One says the wind argued with the windows. Which morning would you rather read about, and why? Tell your partner what extra picture you get when we do not just tell the plain truth.

Worked example: My bag is heavy = literal, just telling the truth. My bag weighs a tonne = figurative, it cannot really weigh a tonne, but the stretch shows the writer feels weighed down and tired.

Ask: Which sentence uses words exactly for their direct meanings? (My bag is heavy, it just tells the plain truth.) · What extra does 'weighs a tonne' give the reader? (A picture of a huge load and a feeling of being tired or fed up.)

Check understanding: Use mini-whiteboards to label two new lines as literal or figurative. If many mix them, repeat the test: could it really be true, or is it a picture?

Support: Give sentence starters: It is literal because it really... / It is figurative because it pictures... **Stretch:** Ask students to add what response the figurative line wants, such as sympathy or amusement.

Use: Slide 2

8–18 min **Teaching** 10 min · Whole class

Teach simile, metaphor and personification and their clue words.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 3 and read the fact that simile, metaphor and personification are three of eight types [1].
2. Explain that writers stretch words past plain meanings to stir feelings and pictures [3].
3. Show Slide 4 cards and teach the tests: simile shows likeness as A is like B, metaphor asserts identity as A is B [2].
4. Teach personification as attaching a human aspect to a nonhuman thing [2], using Slide 4 examples.

STUDENTS DO

1. Listen, repeat the clue words like, as, is and human action.
2. Copy a three-row table with heading, clue and example.
3. Chorally label two oral examples using the A is like B or A is B test [2].

Say: A simile compares using like or as. A metaphor says one thing is another thing, using is or was. Personification gives a non-human thing a human action, like watching or arguing. All three try to change how the reader feels, not just what they see.

Worked example: Step 1 brave as a lion has as, so simile, likeness as A is like B. Step 2 he is a rock has is, so metaphor, A is B, he is not really stone but feels strong. Step 3 fog watching is personification, fog cannot really watch.

Ask: How do you know brave as a lion is a simile? (It uses as to compare, it shows likeness as A is like B.) · Why is he is a rock a metaphor, not a simile? (It says he is a rock with no like or as, it asserts A is B.) · What makes the fog watching personification? (Watching is a human action given to a nonhuman thing.)

Check understanding: Cold-call with thumbs for simile, flat hands together for metaphor, waving hands for personification. Reteach any mixed pair with clue words underlined.

Support: Keep the three Slide 4 examples on the board with like, as and is underlined in colour. **Stretch:** Ask students to turn brave as a lion into a metaphor and say how the feeling gets stronger.

Use: Slides 3–4

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18–30 min **Guided practice** 12 min · Whole class

Practise spotting devices together and linking them to feeling.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 5 mystery: The fog sat watching the playground. Ask what the fog is doing.
2. Play Video clip 1 (0:00-4:48) on Slide 6, asking pupils to listen for like, as and is.
3. Pause twice to label one line together and name the feeling it creates.
4. Show Slide 7 bullets to sum up how each device changes meaning.

STUDENTS DO

1. Watch the video and jot clue words heard for each example.
2. Solve the fog mystery with a partner using the human-action test.
3. Join in labelling three oral lines about rain, homework and a mobile phone.

Say: Watch and listen for the clue words like, as and is. Notice how each picture changes feeling. After the video we will solve the fog mystery and sort three lines together.

Worked example: The fog sat watching the playground. Step 1: Can fog sit and watch? No. Step 2: Sitting and watching are human actions. Step 3: Personification, attaching a human aspect to a nonhuman thing [2], it feels watchful and creepy.

Ask: The rain danced on the roof. Which device and how do you know? (Personification, rain cannot dance, dancing is human.) · Homework was a mountain. Simile or metaphor, and what feeling? (Metaphor, says A is B with no like, feels huge and worrying.)

Check understanding: Hinge question on mini-whiteboards: She runs like the wind - simile, metaphor or personification? If split, replay that part of the explanation and stress like.

Support: Leave Slide 7 bullets on show with one short example next to each type. **Stretch:** Ask volunteers to explain their choice using the A is like B or A is B test [2].

Use: Slides 5–7, Video clip 1 (0:00–4:48)

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30–50 min **Main activity** 20 min · Groups

Explain how figurative language presents meaning and feeling in groups.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 10: Figurative language paints feelings, not just pictures. Give each group three strips and highlighters.
2. Read the three extracts aloud: 1. The wind argued with the windows all break time. It rattled the glass and refused to go quiet. 2. The empty corridor at lunch was like a desert. Our steps sounded loud and lonely. 3. My homework bag was a brick on my shoulder. It dragged me down the stairs.
3. Model Extract 1: highlight argued and refused, label personification, think aloud about angry, restless mood.
4. Set groups to highlight, label simile, metaphor or personification, and agree one sentence on what each makes the reader picture or feel.

STUDENTS DO

1. In threes, read each strip, highlight the image words and label the device.
2. Discuss what mood each writer creates and choose three mood words.
3. Present one highlighted line, name the type, and explain in one sentence what it makes the reader picture or feel.

Say: You have three short extracts. Highlight the words that give the picture. Decide if it is a simile, metaphor or personification. Then agree one sentence: what does it make the reader picture or feel? Pick your clearest one to present.

Worked example: Extract 2: The empty corridor at lunch was like a desert. Like shows simile, likeness as A is like B [2]. Desert pictures empty, hot, silent. Feeling is lonely because no friends are there, lunch feels too quiet.

Ask: How does the writer make the wind feel angry, not just loud? (Gives it human actions argued and refused, personification makes it seem cross.) · Why does like a desert feel lonelier than just empty? (It compares the corridor to a desert, reader pictures no people and hears loud steps.) · What does was a brick present that heavy does not? (Metaphor says bag is a brick, feels hard, dragging and tiring.)

Check understanding: Each group presents one line with label and feeling sentence. Listen for type plus picture and feeling. If feeling is missing, prompt: what would a reader feel here?

Support: Give a choice of three mood words per extract to pick from, with sentence starters for the explanation. **Stretch:** Ask students to suggest a different image for the same line that would change the mood from cheerful to gloomy, keeping the same type.

Use: Slide 10

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50–60 min **Plenary** 10 min · Whole class

Check who can identify devices and explain the feeling they paint.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 11 vote: Which paints the loneliest feeling? Empty corridor like a desert, Empty corridor was a desert, Empty corridor sighed for friends.
2. Take a vote, then ask two pupils to justify using vocabulary choice and feeling.
3. Show Slide 12 quiz to label She runs like the wind and The homework stared at me.
4. Link back to success lines and set homework.

STUDENTS DO

1. Vote, then justify choice with device name and feeling.
2. Answer the two quiz lines on mini-whiteboards.
3. Self-tick success lines: name device, explain picture and feeling.

Say: Vote for the loneliest corridor. There is no single right answer, but you must explain your choice. Tell me the device and what feeling the vocabulary paints for the reader.

Worked example: Empty corridor sighed for friends = personification, sighed is human. It paints sadness, the room misses people, lonelier than just saying empty.

Ask: Why might sighed for friends feel lonelier than like a desert? (It gives the corridor human sadness, paints missing friends, not just empty space.) · The homework stared at me. Which device and what feeling? (Personification, homework cannot stare, feels guilty or nervous.)

Check understanding: Exit mini-whiteboard quiz on two Slide 12 lines. If errors, point back to like test and human-action test before leaving.

Support: Allow pupils to copy the three Slide 11 lines and underline like, was and sighed before voting.
Stretch: Ask pupils to reorder the three corridor lines from least to most lonely and explain how order changes mood.

Use: Slides 11–12

Common mistakes

Mistake	How to spot it	How to fix it
Mixing simile and metaphor, calling every comparison a simile	Pupil labels He is a rock as simile despite no like or as	Use the test: likeness as A is like B needs like or as, identity as A is B uses is or was [2].
Thinking personification is just any description of a thing	Pupil labels The cold corridor as personification	Check for human action: it must attach a human aspect to a nonhuman thing [2], like sighed, argued, stared.
Taking figurative lines literally	Pupil says bag really weighs a tonne or homework really stares	Ask: could it really be true? Figurative deviates from plain meanings to create effect [3].

Support

- Give a choice of three mood words per extract to pick from, with sentence starters for the explanation
- Keep clue words like, as, is and human verbs highlighted on the board

Stretch

- Ask students to suggest a different image for the same line that would change the mood from cheerful to gloomy, keeping the same type

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- Offer a writing frame with the everyday subject filled in so pupils only add the image

- Ask students to turn a simile into a metaphor and explain how the meaning gets stronger
- Ask students to reorder lines for best effect and explain how order changes mood

For the LSE or teaching assistant

Sit with the focus group during the main activity. Help highlight the image words first, then prompt device with clue cards and scribe the feeling sentence if needed.

Check for understanding

Question	Answer
The classroom buzzed like a beehive. Simile, metaphor or personification?	Simile, uses like to compare.
The test was a monster waiting at my desk. Which device and what feeling?	Metaphor, A is B, paints fear, test feels scary and big.
The radiator groaned and refused to warm up. Which device and what does it present?	Personification, human actions groaned and refused, presents grumpy, tired mood.

Homework

Write three lines about a rainy evening, one simile, one metaphor and one personification, and underline the clue words.

Sources

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