

## POETRY - TERMS AND CONCEPTS

SYLLABLE - a word or part of a word, spoken as a unit.

IMAGERY - descriptions and figures of speech that help the mind to form forceful or beautiful pictures.

METAPHOR - figures of speech that do not use the words 'like' or 'as' to make comparisons.

SIMILE - figures of speech that use 'like' or 'as' to make comparisons.

ALLITERATION - repetition of words that have the same beginning sounds.

SYMBOLISM - used in literature to express ideas, feelings, or states of mind, through the use of objects, shapes, words, etc.  
eg. heart=love, cross=religion,  
white=purity/innocence

THEME - topic or subject, meaning

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE - uses a comparison or an exaggeration to make a point.

LITERAL LANGUAGE - meaning exactly what is said.

PERSONIFICATION - giving human qualities or characteristics to something not human.

CLICHE - a time worn expression or idea  
eg. smart as a whip.

ANONYMOUS - author unknown.

IRONY - the intended meaning is the opposite of what was intended, a twist.

STANZA - a group of lines of poetry (usually 4 or more)

METER - the beat

HYPERBOLE - exaggeration for effect  
eg. "waves as high as mountains".

PARODY - a humorous imitation of a serious writing

QUATRAIN - a stanza or poem of 4 lines

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### ALLITERATION

Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds. Alliteration in poetry is pleasing to the ear and emphasizes the words in which it occurs. It can be used to create special effects. In "The Highwayman" Alfred Noyes used the hard "k" sound to suggest the hard sound of a horse's hooves.

Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the dark innyard.

William Wordsworth used alliteration in both of these lines from "Lucy Gray."

And sings a solitary song  
That whistles in the wind.

Write a short serious poem using alliteration.

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If too much alliteration is used, we get a ridiculous sound, as in a tongue-twister.

Example:

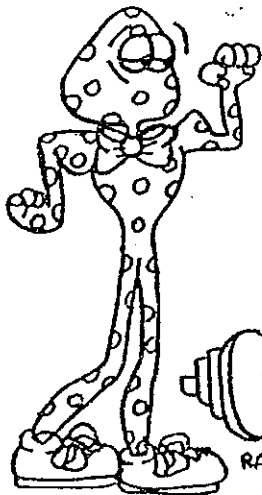
Stuart Stevens rode astride his stallion down the sandy seashore.  
Seeing surfers, sailors, sunbathers, and swimmers, he stopped.  
Stuart stood and stared at the scene.  
Stripping down to his swimsuit, he slipped into the sea.

Now you write a tongue-twister.

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He has built some  
bulging biceps so  
these barbells won't  
be a burden.

HYPERBOLE

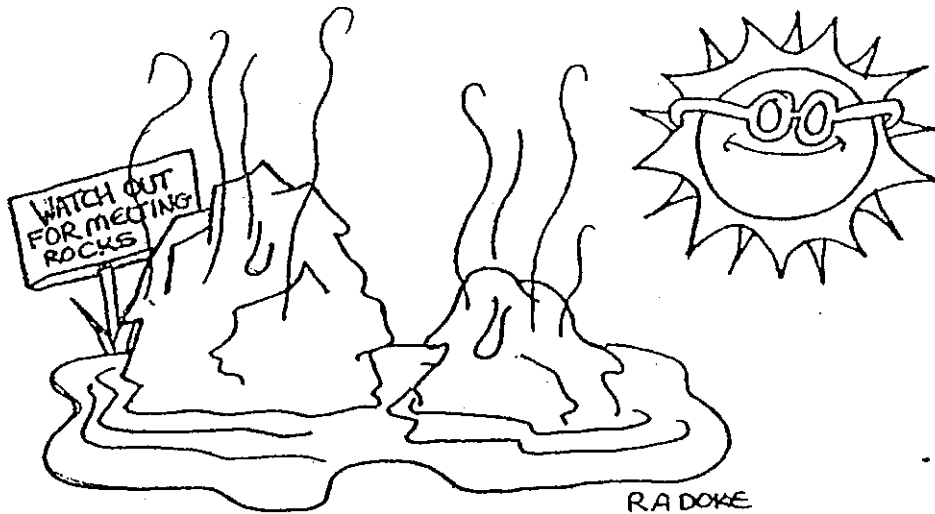
Hyperboles are fun. A hyperbole says more than is true. A hyperbole stretches the truth so far that it is not expected to be taken literally. It is used to emphasize an important point.

I was tickled to death.  
Anger made his blood boil.  
It happens a million times a day.

What two hyperboles did Robert Burns use in these lines?

Till a' the seas go dry, my dear,  
And the rocks melt wi' the sun  
And I will love thee still, my dear,  
While the sands of life do run.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_



Write two hyperboles to complete each of the following lines.

She can run so fast \_\_\_\_\_

I studied so hard \_\_\_\_\_

My lawyer is so smart \_\_\_\_\_

He is so handsome \_\_\_\_\_

## FIND A SIMILE

Read the following poem, then answer the questions.

## THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT

It was four men of Indostan  
To learning much inclined,  
Who went to see the Elephant  
(Though all of them were blind).  
That each by observation  
Might satisfy his mind.

The First approached the Elephant,  
And happening to fall  
Against his broad and sturdy side,  
At once began to bawl:  
"God bless me! but the Elephant  
Is very like a wall!"

The Second reached out his eager hand  
And felt about the knee  
"What most this wondrous beast is like  
Is mighty plain," quoth he;  
"'Tis clear enough the Elephant  
Is very like a tree!"

The Third, who chanced to touch the ear,  
Said: "E'en the blindest man  
Can tell what this resembles most;  
Deny the fact who can.  
This marvel of an Elephant  
Is very like a fan!"

The Fourth no sooner had begun  
About the beast to grope,  
Than seizing on the swinging tail  
That fell within his scope,  
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant  
Is very like a rope!"

And so these men of Indostan  
Disputed loud and long,  
Each in his own opinion  
Exceeding stiff and strong,  
Though each was partly in the right,  
And all were in the wrong!

—John G. Saxe

1. What two things are compared in the first simile? How are they alike?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What two things are compared in the second simile? How are they alike?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What two things are compared in the third simile? How are they alike?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What two things are compared in the fourth simile? How are they alike?  
\_\_\_\_\_

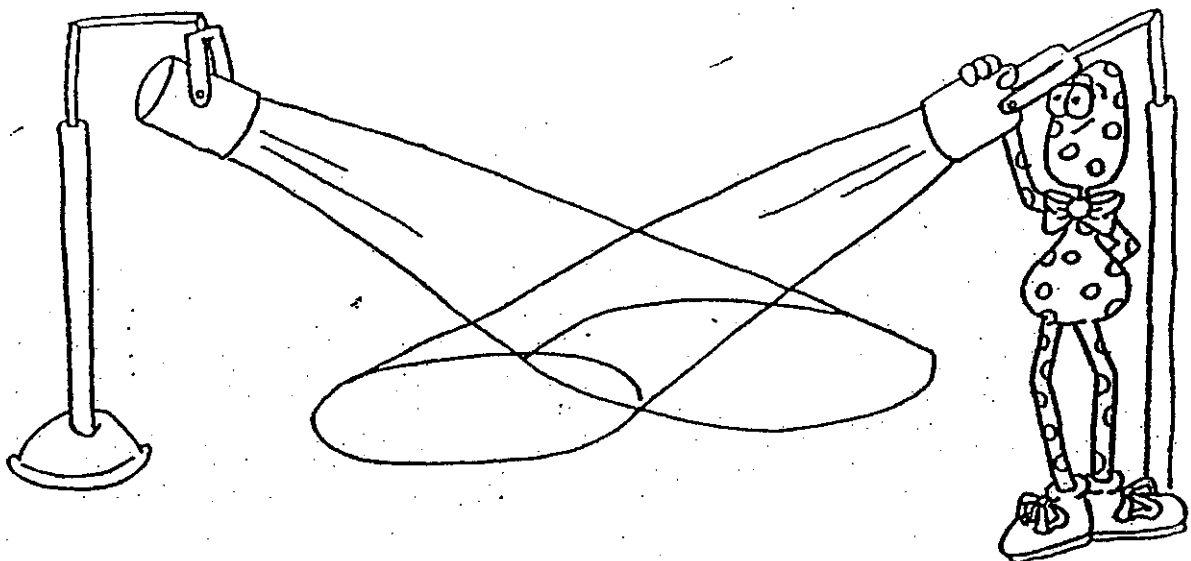
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## FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Figurative language usually uses a comparison or an exaggeration to make a point. Literal language means exactly what it says: "The tack is sharp." Figurative language does not mean exactly what it says: "The student is sharp as a tack." This does not mean the student has a pointed head; it means the student is very smart.

One of the sentences in each of the following pairs contains figurative language, and the other uses literal language. Circle the letter of the sentence containing figurative language. Be prepared to explain the nature of the comparison used in the figurative language.

1. (a) The airliner roared down the main runway.  
(b) The airliner took off from the main runway.
2. (a) The crowd of students melted away when the principal arrived.  
(b) The crowd of students disbanded when the principal arrived.
3. (a) The yellow and brown leaves announced the arrival of fall.  
(b) The leaves turned yellow and brown at the beginning of fall.
4. (a) The wooden bridge creaked under the weight of the heavy truck.  
(b) The wooden bridge groaned in protest under the weight of the heavy truck.
5. (a) The delicate breeze moved the leaves.  
(b) The delicate breeze caressed the leaves.
6. (a) The parent could not stomach the excuse.  
(b) The parent would not accept the excuse.
7. (a) The driving wind punished the plants.  
(b) The driving wind damaged the plants.
8. (a) The drill team leader yelled his instructions.  
(b) The drill team leader barked his instructions.
9. (a) The giant sphinx was placed at the entrance to the pyramids.  
(b) The giant sphinx guards the entrance to the pyramids.
10. (a) The spotlights conquered the darkness of the stage area.  
(b) The spotlights lit the darkness of the stage area.



R.A. DOKE

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

FIND A METAPHOR

DREAMS

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.

-Langston Hughes

1. What is the first metaphor in this poem? What two things are being compared?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the meaning of the metaphor?

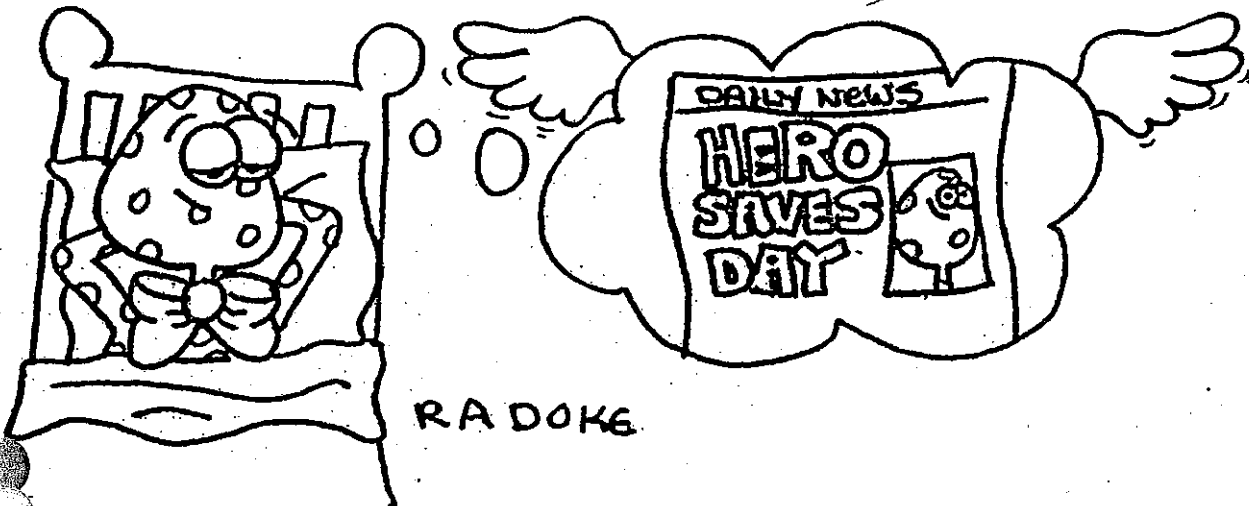
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the second metaphor in this poem? What two things are being compared?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the meaning of this metaphor?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



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SYMBOLISM

Consider the symbolism in the next poem written by Robert Frost:

NOTHING GOLD CAN STAY

Nature's first green is gold,  
Her hardest hue to hold.  
Her early leaf's a flower;  
But only so an hour.

Then leaf subsides to leaf.  
So Eden sank to grief,  
So dawn goes down to day.  
Nothing gold can stay.

The theme of this poem concerns life and growing old.

1. What does "hue" mean? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is the meaning of Nature's "green" being so hard to "hold" or keep?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. With the repetition of the soft "H" sounds in line 2, what poetic device does Frost use? \_\_\_\_\_
4. a) The poem consists of two 4-line sections, each called a \_\_\_\_\_  
b) A 4-line stanza in a poem is called a QUATRAIN.
5. The poem speaks of the beauty in the first "green" or in the flower lasting but only an \_\_\_\_\_ before it subsides or fades. In his last line, "Nothing gold can stay.", Frost makes a symbolic statement about what he feels is a sad part of life. Any ideas what GOLD is symbolic of?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_