
A metaphor is a figure of speech that is used to make a comparison between two things that aren't alike but do have something in common. Unlike a simile, where two things are compared directly using *like* or *as*, a metaphor's comparison is more indirect, usually made by stating something *is* something else. A metaphor is very expressive; it is not meant to be taken literally. You may have to work a little to find the meaning in a metaphor.

For example, a river and tears aren't very alike. One is a body of water in nature, while the other can be produced by our eyes. They do have one thing in common, though: both are a type of water that flows. A metaphor uses this similarity to help the writer make a point:

- Her tears were a river flowing down her cheeks.

As a river is so much larger than a few tears, the metaphor is a creative way of saying that the person is crying a lot. There are so many tears that they remind the writer of a river.

Metaphors help writers and poets make a point in a more interesting way. They also help the reader see something from a new perspective. By describing tears as a river, for example, the writer found a creative way to describe how great the girl's sadness was and helped the reader see a similarity between tears and a river that they might not have noticed before. This makes reading more fun and interesting.

Animal Metaphors

- The classroom was a zoo.
- The alligator's teeth are white daggers.
- She is a peacock.
- My teacher is a dragon.
- Mary's eyes were fireflies.
- The computers at school are old dinosaurs.
- He is a night owl.
- Maria is a chicken.
- The wind was a howling wolf.
- The ballerina was a swan, gliding across the stage.
- Jamal was a pig at dinner.
- The kids were monkeys on the jungle gym.
- My dad is a road hog.
- The stormy ocean was a raging bull.
- The thunder was a mighty lion.

Nature Metaphors

- The snow is a white blanket.
- He is a shining star.
- Her long hair was a flowing golden river.
- Tom's eyes were ice as he stared at her.
- The children were flowers grown in concrete gardens.
- Kisses are the flowers of affection.
- The falling snowflakes are dancers.
- The calm lake was a mirror.
- You are my sunshine.
- The moon is a white balloon.
- Her tears were a river flowing down her cheeks.
- The road ahead was a ribbon stretching across the desert.
- Donations to the charity were a tsunami.
- The park was a lake after the rain.
- The sun is a golden ball.
- The clouds are balls of cotton.
- The lightning was fireworks in the sky.
- That lawn is a green carpet.
- The stars are sparkling diamonds.
- Ben's temper was a volcano, ready to explode.
- Those best friends are two peas in a pod.

Everyday Life Metaphors

- John's suggestion was just a Band-Aid for the problem.
- The cast on his broken leg was a plaster shackle.
- Laughter is the music of the soul.
- America is a melting pot.
- Her lovely voice was music to his ears.
- The world is a stage.
- My kid's room is a disaster area.
- Life is a rollercoaster.
- Their home was a prison.
- His heart is a cold iron.
- At five o'clock, the interstate is always a parking lot.
- Books are the keys to your imagination.
- Her angry words were bullets to him.
- Your brain is a computer.
- The car was a furnace in the sun.
- Thank you so much, you are an angel.
- My baseball coach is an ogre.
- He is a walking dictionary.
- My big brother is a couch potato.
- The teenager's stomach was a bottomless pit.

Implied Metaphors

While simple metaphors make a direct comparison between two things, saying that one thing *is* the other, not all metaphors are as easy to understand. Implied metaphors don't directly state one of the objects being compared. Instead, they describe one item with the words you would typically use to describe another. For example:

- The girl *stalked* her brother before finally *pouncing on her prey*.

In this case, the girl is being described as something else, but what is it? The word *stalked* and the phrase *pouncing on her prey* give a clue. These words are often used to describe predatory animals, such as a tiger or lion. By describing the girl this way, the writer is making an implied comparison that the girl is like a big cat, without actually coming out and saying it.

Implied metaphors can be difficult to figure out when you're first learning about them since they have to trust their imaginations to understand what the comparison is about. This is a skill that can be learned over time, but it's best for most kids to start with direct metaphors for practice.

