

Lesson Plan Title: Metaphor

Concept / Topic To Teach: Use of metaphor in poetry writing.

Standards Addressed: California State Board of Education, English Language Arts, 1997*

General Goal(s): To teach student the use and application of metaphor in literature through applied practice in a student composition.

Specific Objectives: Use of metaphor in student writing. Students learn to make connections between unrelated ideas and events while learning how to perceive those objects and events beyond the things and actions we understand them to be.

Required Materials: Poems

“Hope is the thing with feathers” Emily Dickinson

“The mountain sat upon the plain” Emily Dickinson

++ further sample poems below

Sharp Pencil and Composition Paper

Time: One Hour

Anticipatory Set (Lead-In): Discussion of word “metaphor.”

Explain how the word metaphor comes from the Latin *metaphora* which means to carry over. A metaphor “carries over” the idea of one thing to another.

Ask students if they know any other words that begin with meta (metamorphosis = meta: among, with after + morpho: form). Discuss how an insect changes form. Explain how a poet uses words to change the form of meaning.

Step-By-Step Procedures:

Format: Example poems, discussion. Group participation. Individual writing.
Reading and brief discussion of the example poems (appropriate to grade level).

Read aloud to class or display on overhead projector the poems by Dickinson. Ask students to explain what the poems are about. Encourage any responses.

Point out that in the poem “Hope” the metaphor is that “hope is a bird.” Discuss context, where it lives, and what hope brings to the soul. Point out that in the poem “Mountain” the metaphor is that a “mountain is a king.” Discuss how the king’s subjects are the seasons of the year and that he is grandfather of the days.

Tell them a brief history of the author: an American poet, born in Massachusetts who lived in a family with strong community ties. Living a mostly introverted and reclusive life, she attended Amherst Academy for seven years as a youth, before returning to live with her family. She was known to wear white clothing, and was considered an eccentric who was reluctant to greet guests and even leave her room. Her friendships were carried out through letters. A prolific private poet, Dickinson published fewer than a dozen of her nearly eighteen hundred poems in her lifetime

Ask the class to mention their favorite things and write these on the board. (pizza, carrot, baseball, hat) Words must be single nouns, not participles (skateboarding).

Write list of student responses (SINGLE NOUNS) on board in a second column.

	horse star ocean tree bicycle		
--	---	--	--

Now ask students to list ten favorite activities on the board. ("Swimming, kicking a ball, eating lunch") and ask specifically for strong action verbs.

Write list of student responses (SINGLE verbs) on board in third column.

	horse star ocean tree bicycle	Run dance ride swim sing	
--	---	--	--

Tell them that they are going to make a metaphor of a part of their body (appropriate). Hand, heart, eyes, hair, tongue, facial parts work best.

Tell them that you are going to make a metaphor of your hand.

Write the word hand in the first column.

hand	horse star ocean tree bicycle	run dance ride swim sing	
------	---	--	--

Now combine words into a sentence using the word IS.

My hand is a horse running ...

Ask class where it is running.

Write responses in right column on board in fourth column.

hand	horse star ocean tree bicycle	run dance ride swim sing	by the ocean in a storm with a lost rider beneath a star to my friend's house
------	---	--------------------------------------	---

Combine all phrases to make complete sentence.

My hand is a horse running by the ocean.

As for student participation. Ask them to select any group of words to make a sentence, e.g.:

My hand is a star with a lost rider.

My hand is a tree singing to my friend's house.

My hand is a bicycle in a storm.

Reward good responses. Encourage oral participation with rewards. Encourage them to be funny, quirky and unusual.

Ask any student who gives a very good oral response to write his response on his paper. Move on when he begins to write.

Once five or six students have responded orally (and written down their lines), ask them to use their oral response as the first line of a poem. Ask them to complete writing by giving details explaining what, when, where, how, and why.

What is the size of the hand? How fast is it riding? When does it ride? Where is it going? Why is it going there?

Encourage other members of the class (hands raised) to help complete a good response by the initial oral responder.

Ask students to include feelings in the poem (love, joy, anger, hope, sorrow, happiness.)

Write words for emotions to the right of the columns on the board for them to see.

Ask students to write their oral response at the top of a blank sheet of paper (with name and date on top).

Tell them this is their first line of the poem.

First line is critical. A student must have a good first line to feel confident with and begin writing. If a student has written several good first lines, ask him to pick one sentence he likes the best and do a free-write based upon that line.

Tell them they can complete the poem in any manner they wish (as appropriate).

They must give detailed phrases and descriptions. (what, when, where, how, why).

Ask them to explain further what happens when: My hand is a star with a lost rider?

How did it get lost?

Where was it going?

Who is it afraid of?

Who does your hand love?

Your hand is angry, at whom?

Give entire class a SILENT writing time of ten minutes.

As you circle room, read the student writing-in-progress. Encourage and ask for further details. Instruct those with first lines to begin writing.

End silent writing time.

Ask for VOLUNTEERS to come to front and share writing. Do not force anyone to share if he does not feel comfortable.

Ask author at front of class to ask class to raise hands to tell his response to the poem to the author (What do you like about the poem?) Encourage all responses to author. Give author at front the opportunity to pick students with raised hands.

Plan For Independent Practice: Ask students to revise and complete poems.

Closure (Reflect Anticipatory Set): Ask class what they have learned about metaphor. Ask class to illustrate poems with drawings.

Assessment Based On Objectives: Did student compare two unrelated things in poem? Did student use complete sentences? Did student give details? Did student use “like” or “as” to compare two things? (Incorrect: this is a simile) Did student have fun?

Adaptations (For Students With Learning Disabilities): Special Education: Give students opportunity to move to different parts of room to reduce distraction. Give students opportunity to co-author poem. Extra time for ADHD. Differentiated instruction: give students objects to look at while writing and ask them to describe it as if it were a family member.

ELL/ELD: give students opportunity to write in their own language and use cultural artifacts from their native culture.

Extensions (For Gifted Students): Ask GATE students write collaborative poems, make a book collection. Author’s Theatre. Ask students to present poems as group. Have them type and publish a book of their own poems.

Possible Connections To Other Subjects: Cross-discipline with science, history, math. Ask students to pick subject from other disciplines and compare that subject (single noun) with another object. For math: hold numeral up in front of class and turn sideways or upside down and ask them to tell you what it is. A number seven when held sideways can be a boat. (Seven is a boat ...) The number four held upside down can be a house (Four is a house ...).

* California ELA Contents Standards

Grade Four: Reading

3.0 Literary Response and Analysis

3.5 Define figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification) and identify its use in literary works.

Grade Five: Reading

1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

1.4 Know abstract, derived roots and affixes from Greek and Latin and use this knowledge to analyze the meaning of complex words (e.g., controversial).

1.5 Understand and explain the figurative and metaphorical use of words in context.

Grade Five: Reading

2.0 Literary Response and Analysis

3.5 Describe the function and effect of common literary devices (e.g., imagery, metaphor, symbolism).

Grade Seven: Reading

1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

1.1 Identify idioms, analogies, metaphors, and similes in prose and poetry.

Hope is the thing with feathers
by Emily Dickinson

Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words,
And never stops at all,

And sweetest in the gale is heard;
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm.

I've heard it in the chillest land,
And on the strangest sea;
Yet, never, in extremity,
It asked a crumb of me.

+++++

The mountain sat upon the plain
by Emily Dickinson

The mountain sat upon the plain
In his eternal chair,
His observation omnifold,
His inquest everywhere.

The seasons prayed around his knees,
Like children round a sire:
Grandfather of the days is he,
Of dawn the ancestor.

++ further sample poems:

The Sun is a Golden Earring

Some say the sun is a golden earring,
the earring of a beautiful girl.
A white bird took it from her
when she walked in the fields one day,
But it caught on a spider web
that stretches between the homes of men
and the homes of the gods.

-Anonymous

Metaphor: Sun IS a golden earring. Poem continues narrative describing what happened to the earring. Use this poem as an example of a metaphor poem that develops a narrative after the initial metaphor.

The Heart is a Silent Diamond

The heart is mute
like a sleeping baby.
The heart escapes from
the damaged roses, but
it can not always escape
from all that many roses.
The heart searches for
happiness, but most of the time
all it can find is sadness.
The heart doesn't
try to understand.

In this poem, the lines open with a metaphor and expand the poem to include feelings.

Lesson Plan Title: Metaphor Poetry Writing by [Scott Reid](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0 United States License](#).

<http://scotts.members.sonic.net/albany/>