

Using Similes and Metaphors

1. Tell what two things are being compared in each of the following quotations. What do the two parts have in common?

a. I saw Eternity the other night
Like a great ring of pure and endless light
All calm, as it was bright
-from "The World" Henry Vaughn

b. and there's the moon, thinner than a
watchspring
-from "what time is it..."
E.E. Cummings

c. The Roman Road runs straight and bare
As the pale parting-line in hair
-from "The Roman Road"
Thomas Hardy

d. ...some dreams
hang in the air like smoke
touching everything.
-Lucille Clifton

2. In each of the following quotations, name the two different things the poet is bringing together in a metaphor. What do they have in common? Some quotations contain more than one metaphor.

a. The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
-Psalm 23

b. The wind was a torrent of darkness among
the gusty trees,
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed
Among cloudy seas
-from "The Highwayman"
Alfred Noyes

c. The lightning is a yellow fork
From tables in the sky
-from "The lightning is..."
Emily Dickinson

- d. The lightning showed a yellow beak
And then a livid claw.
-from "The Wind begun to rock the grass"
Emily Dickinson

3. Metaphors are not only used by poets. Each of the following newspaper headlines contains an implied metaphor. Answer the question after each headline to show that you recognize the comparisons.

- a. Islanders Lick Wounds; Series Resumes Tonight
What are the Islanders compared to?
- b. New Crisis Knocks Lisbon Off Course
What is Lisbon compared to?
- c. Taxpayers are Drained
What are the taxpayers compared to?
- d. NBC Shelving "Taxi"; To Go To New Time
What is NBC's action compared to?
- e. President Believes America on the Mend
What is America compared to?

Writing

1. Creating Similes to Describe Emotions or Ideas

Here are some common emotions and ideas: love, hate, anger, mischief, honesty, grief, stinginess, generosity, ambition, laziness, hunger, despair, joy, innocence, carelessness, neatness, sloppiness, thirstiness, restlessness, dreaminess, pain, lightheartedness, giddiness, drowsiness, selfishness, jealousy, cowardice, moodiness.

Choose any five of these and make up five similes in which you compare them to something else.

2. Creating Metaphors to Describe Emotions or Ideas

Take five other items from this list and make up metaphors that compare the item to something else.

3. Extra Credit: Extending a Simile or Metaphor

Select one of your similes or metaphors and extend it for three or four lines-or for as long as you can and still make sense. As a model, use this poem by Emily Dickinson.

Fame is a bee.
It has a song-
It has a sting-
Ah, too, it has a wing.
-Emily Dickinson