

Lesson 5: Figurative Language and Voice

Getting Started

Today you will read poems about the Southwest region of the United States. Most people think of the desert when they think about this region. The poems in this section paint beautiful pictures of the Southwest. You will also analyze two more figurative language tools often used by poets: metaphor and personification.

Stuff You Need

- ✓ *My America: A Poetry Atlas of the United States* by Lee Bennett Hopkins
- ✓ *R is for Rhyme: A Poetry Alphabet* by Judy Young

Ideas to Think About

- How do figurative language techniques make poetry more effective and engaging?
- How do poets influence the emotions and thoughts of the reader?

Things to Know

- First person writing uses the word "I," second person uses "you," and third person uses "he" or "she."
- **Personification** is a tool used by writers to give inanimate objects or ideas human traits.

Reading and Questions

Read the poems in the section, "The Southwest States," in *My America*, and then answer the questions below.

1. What was your favorite poem in this section and why?

2. Which poem created the most vivid image in your mind? What words from the poem made the image so vivid?

3. What did you learn about the culture and the geography of the Southwest?

4. Many of the poems in this section mention plants and animals found in the Southwest. Write down the names of the plants and animals found in the poems.

Activities

Activity 1: Metaphor

Reread "M is for Metaphor" in the book *R is for Rhyme*. Poets often use the figurative language device of metaphor. Remember that metaphors compare seemingly unlike things to create vivid images while describing something that might be quite common. When the poet uses "like" or "as" to compare the two items, the comparison is called a simile.

In the poem "March in New Mexico," identify the metaphors used by the author:

_____ is compared to _____

_____ is compared to _____

Write three metaphors that compare two different things on the page, "Metaphor." Illustrate all three metaphors.

Activity 2: "You Voice" Poem

Read "Y is for You Voice" in the book *R is for Rhyme*.

When something is written to "you," it can also be called "second person." There is a poem in the "Southwest" section of *My America* that is written to a "you," even though the word does not appear in the poem.

Take a sheet of notebook paper and fold it in half to make two columns. One column should be labeled "Title" and the next "Point of View."

In the "Southwest" section of the poetry book, write the title of each poem in the first column. Then in the second column write if the poem is written in first person ("I"), second person ("you"), or third person ("he," "she," or "it").

At the bottom of the page, answer this question:

One of the poems has some lines written in second person. Does the use of second person in the poem make the poem more effective? Why or why not?

Activity 3: Personification

Another figurative language technique used by writers is personification. Personification gives human traits to an idea or non-living thing. Reread the poem "Desert" in *My America*. In your journal, write down the line where the author uses personification.

Next, reread the the poem "Cactus." In your journal, explain how the author uses personification in this poem.

Use one of the personification activity sheets to write a poem about an inanimate object and give it human characteristics. Ask your parent which option to complete.

Wrapping Up

Review the techniques of personification and metaphor and the difference between a metaphor and a simile. Look through any poetry books you have in your home and try to find examples of both techniques.

Metaphor



Directions: Write three metaphors that compare two completely different things.
Illustrate all three metaphors.

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Personification

Directions: Write a short poem that uses personification.

Example:

A flower is gentle and meek
It pouts when it rains
It laughs at the sun
And in the winter it sleeps.

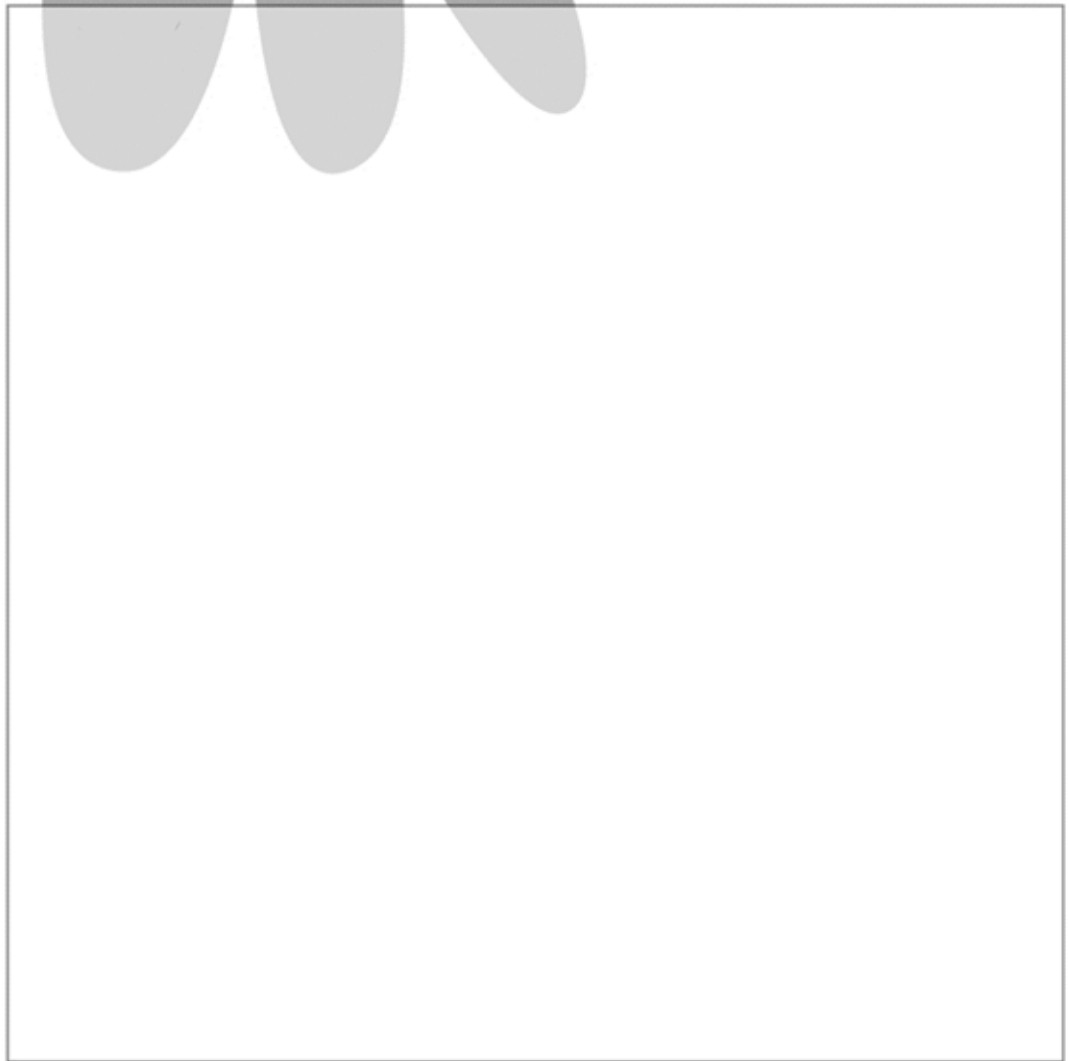
A _____ is _____
and _____
It _____
It _____
And _____

Personification

Directions: Write a short poem that uses personification.

Example:

A flower is gentle and meek
It pouts when it rains
It laughs at the sun
And in the winter it sleeps.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the student to write their own poem using personification. The box is positioned to the right of the flower's stem and below the example poem.

Parent Overview

Lesson 5: Figurative Language and Voice

Getting Started

? Big Ideas

- How do figurative language techniques make poetry more effective and engaging?
- How do poets influence the emotions and thoughts of the reader?



Facts and Definitions

- First person writing uses the word "I," second person uses "you," and third person uses "he" or "she."
- **Personification** is a tool used by writers to give inanimate objects or ideas human traits.

⦿ Skills

- Identify examples of figurative language found in text. (LA)
- Select a writing focus, organizational structure, and a point of view based upon purpose, audience, and format requirements. (LA)
- Use concrete sensory details in writing. (LA)
- Define figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification) and identify its use in literary works. (LA)

Introducing the Lesson

Ask your child to give you an example of a metaphor. Tell him that today he will explore more figurative language tools used by poets. Ask your child what he has enjoyed most learning about poetry. Explain that today he will continue reading poems about the geography of the United States. Today's poems reflect the culture and geography of the Southwest. Ask him what he knows about this region of the country.

Reading and Questions (Answers)

1. What was your favorite poem in this section and why?
 - Answers will vary.
2. Which poem created the most vivid image in your mind? What words from the poem made the image so vivid?
 - Answers will vary.
3. What did you learn about the culture and the geography of the Southwest?
 - Answers will vary.
4. Many of the poems in this section mention plants and animals found in the Southwest. Write down the names of the plants and animals found in the poems.
 - Hawk, cactus, coyote, ants, rabbit, tortoise, birds, buffalo, horse

Outline of Activities and Answer Keys

Activity 1: Metaphor

Students learn more about metaphor in this activity.

Answer Key:

The visible part of the low clouds is compared to hems of garments.

The trail is compared to a love poem.

Read your child's metaphors to check that he understands what a metaphor is and can record examples.

Activity 2: "You Voice" Poem

Students learned about "You Voice" poetry in this activity and then identified the point of view for each poem in the "Southwest" section of *My America*. At the bottom of the page, they should have answered a question about the effectiveness of second person. Answers will vary.

Answer Key:

- "Lifeline" — first person
- "Cactus" — second person and/or third person (a couple lines of this poem have an implied "you.")
- "Desert" — third person
- "The Hawk" — first person
- "Santa Fe, New Mexico" — first person
- "March in New Mexico" — first person
- "Grand Canyon Colors" — third person

Activity 3: Personification

Students explore personification in two poems. In their journal, they should have noted that the personification in "Desert" involves the desert holding a giant breath. In "Cactus," the cactus talks in the poem and warns the reader that it is dangerous. The cactus is also described as "poised to pierce."

Students should write a poem of their own containing personification. Assign an option for your child to complete. The Option 1 activity page provides a template for the structure of the poem while Option 2 does not.

Wrapping Up

Questions to Discuss

1. What is a metaphor? (A comparison between two seemingly unrelated things.)
2. What is personification? (A tool used by writers to give inanimate objects or ideas human traits.)

Things to Review

Review how the use of figurative language makes writing more interesting and vivid.