

Mental Menagerie: Animal Imagery

Teacher Notes

Grade: 5 to 9

Subject: Language Arts

Group Size: Whole class or small groups

Duration: 50-minute period

Skills: Figurative language (introduction or review)

Vocabulary: Imagery, figurative language, literal language, metaphor, simile, symbol

OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this lesson, students should be able to:

- Tell the difference between literal language and figurative language
- Understand the purpose of figurative language
- Distinguish between similes and metaphors
- Use similes and metaphors to enhance their writing

MATERIALS:

- **Worksheets: A: Practice With Similes and Metaphors; B: Write Your Own Similes and Metaphors; C: Figurative Language in Ray Bradbury's "A Sound of Thunder"**

BACKGROUND:

Animals are powerful symbols of certain qualities we admire or despise. This lesson will show how we often use animal references or imagery in describing human behavior and feelings.

PROCEDURES:

- Introduce this activity by discussing the symbolic power of animals. Ask the class why, for example, is the eagle a symbol of

America? What does this bird of prey represent? What qualities do we admire in the eagle?

- Introduce or review the following terms with the class:

Literal language states the truth or facts. For example: The horse is thin.

Figurative language describes one thing in terms of another and is not meant to be taken as literally true. For example: The horse is as thin as a rail (simile). The horse is a bag of bones (metaphor)

Imagery is language that appeals to the senses. Most images are visual, they create pictures in the reader's mind. Imagery can appeal to the sense of sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell. Imagery is important in all writing, but it is an especially important element in poetry.

A metaphor is a comparison between two unlike things in which one thing becomes another. For example: The man has a heart of stone. The woman has eagle eyes.