

Metaphor (& Simile) Worksheet



Figure 1: My love is like a red, red rose. ← That's a simile because it uses the word "like" to make the comparison. Similes use the word "like" or "as," while metaphors make a direct comparison.

In descriptive writing, metaphors are valuable because they can do a lot of work with very few words. Here are some tips on crafting rich, meaningful metaphors. **First**, think of metaphors as consisting of two parts: a **subject term** and a **vehicle term**. The subject term is the thing being compared, while the vehicle term does the comparing. For example, consider this metaphor:

Derrick Rose
(Subject Term)

is

a panther on the basketball court.
(Vehicle Term)



Now, this sentence doesn't mean that Derrick Rose has claws and would like to tear your chest open. Rather, the metaphor asks you to transfer some of the qualities of a panther to Derrick Rose the basketball playing man. Which qualities do you suppose those are?

The **second** tip for crafting a quality metaphor: Think of what aspects of your subject term you want to emphasize. Then think of a vehicle term that exaggerates those aspects. For instance, if I want to complain about how difficult and painful it is to grade 100 essays, I need to compare grading to something that is obviously difficult and painful. What could I say?

The **third** tip: Avoid clichés. A metaphor is dead when everyone has heard it too many times—when its vehicle term has ceased to have any significance. For example, people refer to a table's "legs" all the time—so often and for so long, in fact, that we've forgotten that the term "table legs" is a metaphor.

Now make some metaphors or similes of your own:

Subject Term		Vehicle Term
The first year of college	is	
An angry lover	is	
A child playing in the park	is	
The sky at night	is	
Litter on the streets	is	
People standing in the hall	are	