

Figurative language

Use this sheet to remind you how and when to use figurative language

Figurative language is useful in all kinds of writing: poetry, fiction and even non-fiction. Choosing the right words can make an image much clearer.

- **Similes** compare one thing to another using the words 'like' and 'as'.

The moon was **like** a staring eye (in the darkness).
Early in the morning, the traffic noise along that road sounds **like** thunder.
... as cold **as** a polar bear's nose.

- A **metaphor** is a way of describing something or someone by implying it/they has/have the qualities of something else.

The stream **is** a silver ribbon.
The fallen leaves **are** a blanket...

- Lots of similes and metaphors are **idioms**. These are well-known phrases that do not mean what they actually say.

He ran **like the wind**.
It was **raining cats and dogs**.

- **Personification** is a special sort of metaphor. This makes non-humans and objects behave like people.

The trees **sighed** gently.
The car's radiator **snarled**.

- **Alliteration** means repeating the same sound several times in a sentence or saying, for effect.

Round and **r**ound the **r**agged **r**ock...
The **ch**imney **ch**uffed...

- **Onomatopoeia** is the word used to describe words that sound like their meaning.

Bronches **cracked**.
Tyres **cunched** over the uneven road.

