Metaphor Examples

The definition of a metaphor is "a figure of speech containing an implied comparison, in which a word or phrase ordinarily and primarily used of one thing is applied to another (Ex.: the curtain of night, “all the world's a stage”)."

There are two types of metaphors:

- a simile, where two unlike things are compared followed by a figurative example.
- an analogy, where a literal comparison is made between two things.

Both types of metaphors typically use the word like or as followed by the comparison. If this is confusing, take a look at some of these metaphor examples to get a better understanding of exactly what a metaphor is.

**Metaphor: Situation vs. the Real Thing**

You may have often heard expressions such as “he drowned in a sea of grief” or “she is fishing in troubled waters,” or “success is a bastard as it has many fathers, and failure is an orphan, with no takers.” All these expressions have one thing in common: a situation is compared to a real thing, although the situation is not actually that particular thing.

- Sea of grief - How and where does one come across a sea that is filled not with water, but with grief?
- Fishing - It is not used to mean that the person is actually fishing; it is an expression which is used to signify that the person is looking for something that is difficult to obtain.
- Success is a sense of achievement, it is not an illegitimate child! - The saying is used to reinforce the age-old belief that everyone wants to take credit for something that became a success, either by fluke or by conscious effort. On the other hand, no matter how much effort or creativity may have gone into an enterprise, the moment it is considered a failure, no one wants to take responsibility for it, much like an abandoned infant.
- Broken heart - Your heart is not literally broken into pieces; you just feel hurt and sad.
- The light of my life - The person described by this metaphor isn't really providing physical light. He or she is just someone who brings happiness or joy.
- It's raining men - Men do not literally pour from the sky; there are simply an abundance of male suitors around at the time.
- Time is a thief - Time isn't really stealing anything, this metaphor just indicates that time passes quickly and our lives pass us by.
- He is the apple of my eye - There is, of course, no real apple in a person's eye. The "apple" is someone beloved and held dear.
- Bubbly personality - A bubbly personality doesn't mean a person is bubbling over with anything, just that the person is cheerful.

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- **Feel blue** - No one actually ever feels like the color blue, although many people say they are "feeling blue" to mean they are feeling sad.

- **Fade off to sleep** - You don't actually fade, you simply go to sleep.

- **Inflamed your temper** - The news inflamed your temper is not a situation where there is any actual fire or flames, it is just a situation where someone gets mad.

- **Reeks of infidelity** - When said about a cheating partner, this doesn't actually mean that there is a literal smell. Instead, it is just apparent that the person is cheating.

- **Rollercoaster of emotions** - A rollercoaster of emotions doesn't exist anywhere, so when people are on a rollercoaster of emotions, they are simply experiencing lots of ups and downs.

- **Stench of failure** - The stench of failure is strong, according to the common metaphor, but of course failing doesn't really smell.

All of these expressions are examples of metaphors which are also similies. They are juxtaposing an actual (literal) thing and a figurative thing in order to give more meaning to the figurative concept. To use the above examples, the literal expression in the phrase is “sea,” while “grief” is the figurative item.

An example of a metaphor that is an analogy would be so say "The house looked like it was designed in the 1940s."

For metaphors that kids might enjoy, check out [Metaphor Examples for Kids](http://examples.yourdictionary.com/metaphor-examples.html).

**Purpose of Metaphors**

Expressions are used to give effect to a statement. Imagine how bland a statement such as “he was sad” is, compared to a statement describing a “sea of grief.” The metaphor is sure to give the reader a better idea of the depths of grief in this situation.

Similarly, who would really spend time thinking of the vast differences between success and failure if the metaphor was missing, and the statement was just “Everyone wants to be successful, no one wants to be a failure?” That statement would be a failure itself, in inspiring interest in the conversation!

Metaphors are meant to create an impact in the minds of readers. Other kinds of expressions that belong to this genre are:

- **analogies**, which are literal comparisons
- **hyperboles**, which are exaggerations
- **antitheses**, which use contrasts to prove a point

The aim of all these literary tools is to convey a thought more forcefully than a plain statement would.

This, in essence, is what metaphors are about. They are exaggerated expressions no doubt, but they are exaggerated because they are supposed to paint a vivid picture, or become a profound statement or saying.

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