

SAMPLE PAGES

from

Passing the NCCTR

❖ *SECOND EDITION* ❖

by  
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# 5 | CHAPTER

## FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Figurative language is another way of describing things. You can use similes, metaphors, and personification.

### SIMILE

A simile compares two things using the words “like” or “as.”

Her hair shone like a brilliant star.

The witches’ lips cracked like dry earth.

Their kite flew as high as a cloud.

### METAPHOR

A metaphor calls one thing another (without using “like” or “as”).

Her feet were boats.

A skyscraper is a towering mountain.

The teams were snarling tigers.

### PERSONIFICATION

Personification gives human qualities to animals, ideas, or things.

The teapot sang a lively tune.

The mother dog laughed at her playful puppies.

Trees were dancing in the forest.

### **PRACTICE**

Put **S** for simile, **M** for metaphor, and **P** for personification.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Ann could hear the heartbeat of the car.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The ogre’s eyes were bowling balls.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Her hair was like golden fleece.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. His legs were like tree stumps.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. His touch was ice.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The crickets were playing violins.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Fingernails, as long as talons, scraped on the window pane.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The snow looked like white velvet.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The crab's claws were two vises.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Leaves were swimming in the bird bath.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Spiders were as busy as beavers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. The train crawled down the track.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. His head was a giant pumpkin.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Words are running through my mind.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. The water was blue like a sapphire.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. The oak trees were waving their arms.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. The fried chicken was like a piece of concrete.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. The hole was a bottomless pit.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. That book was a highway to adventure.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. He caught a fish as big as a whale.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. Mrs. Wynne was a mysterious creature.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. The swan waltzed across the surface of the pond.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. The hail was like pebbles from heaven.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. During the earthquake, the table leaped across the room.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. Rebekah ate the ice cream like it was her last meal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. A rabbit skated across the frozen pond.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. The tractor crawled down the plowed rows of tobacco.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. Yellow corn kernels were pieces of topaz on the cob.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. Icicles, like broken glass, hung from the rooftop.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. The cry of the wounded child was music to my ears.

## ➤ Review

Read each selection or poem and answer the “figurative language” questions.

### VELVET SHOES

Let us walk in the white snow  
 In a soundless space;  
 With footsteps quiet and slow,  
 At a tranquil pace,  
 Under veils of white lace.

I shall go shod in silk,  
 And you in wool,  
 White as a white cow’s milk,  
 More beautiful  
 Than the breast of a gull.

We shall walk through the still town  
 In a windless peace;  
 We shall step upon white down,  
 Upon silver fleece,  
 Upon softer than these.

We shall walk in velvet shoes:  
 Wherever we go  
 Silence will fall like dews  
 On white silence below.  
 We shall walk in the snow.

1. What is a metaphor for “velvet shoes”?  
 a. gull  
 b. windless place  
 c. white snow  
 d. silver fleece
2. Which of the following is a simile?  
 a. in a soundless space  
 b. white as a white cow’s milk  
 c. in a windless place  
 d. upon softer than these
3. Which of the following is a simile?  
 a. I shall go shod in silk.  
 b. We shall step upon white down.  
 c. Silence will fall like dews.  
 d. We shall walk in the snow.

### FLASHLIGHT

My flashlight tugs me  
 through the dark  
 like a hound  
 with a yellow eye.

sniffs  
 at the edges  
 of steep places

paws  
 at moles  
 and rabbits  
 holes,

points its nose  
 where sharp things  
 lie asleep—

and then it bounds  
 ahead of me  
 on home ground.

4. My flashlight tugs, sniffs, paws, points its nose, and bounds are examples of what figurative language?  
 a. simile  
 b. metaphor  
 c. mood  
 d. personification
5. “My flashlight tugs me through the dark *like a hound with a yellow eye*” is an example of what figurative language?  
 a. simile  
 b. metaphor  
 c. mood  
 d. personification

REMEMBERING

Soft grey ghosts crawl up my sleeve  
to peer into my eyes  
while I within deny their threats  
and answer them with lies.

Mushlike memories perform  
a ritual on my lips  
I lie in stolid hopelessness  
and they lay my soul in strips.

6. Which of the following is personification?
- a. Soft grey ghosts crawl up my sleeve.
  - b. a ritual on my lips
  - c. I within deny their threats.
  - d. I lie in stolid hopelessness.

PASSING TIME

Your skin like dawn  
Mine like dusk.

One paints the beginning  
of a certain end.

The other, the end of a  
sure beginning.

7. "Your skin like dawn, mine like dusk" is an example of what figurative language?
- a. simile
  - b. metaphor
  - c. mood
  - d. personification

MRS. FLOWERS

For nearly a year, I sopped around the house, the Store, the school, and the church, like an old biscuit, dirty and inedible. Then I met, or rather got to know, the lady who threw me my first lifeline.

Mrs. Bertha Flowers was the aristocrat of Black Stamps. She had the grace of control to appear warm in the coldest weather, and on the Arkansas summer days it seemed she had a private breeze which swirled around, cooling her. She was thin without the taut look of wiry people, and her printed voile dresses and flowered hats were as right for her as denim overalls for a farmer. She was our side's answer to the richest white woman in town.

8. Which of the following is an example of a simile?
- a. She had the grace of control.
  - b. She had a private breeze.
  - c. Mrs. Flowers was the aristocrat of Black Stamps.
  - d. I sopped around the house, the store, the school, and the church, like an old biscuit, dirty and inedible.
9. Which of the following is a simile?
- a. She was our side's answer to the richest white woman in town.
  - b. Her printed dresses and flowered hats were as right for her as denim overalls for a farmer.
  - c. The lady threw me my first life-line.
  - d. She had the grace of control.

*A TALE OF TWO CITIES*

Like most people in France in 1775, they were nearly starving. A taste of wine was a rare treat for them.

Most of what they earned had to be paid in taxes. The king and the nobles used the tax money to buy fancy food and clothes for themselves.

One of the starving people thought about this as he saw the red wine in the street. He dipped his finger into it. Then he wrote the word *blood* on a wall. He wished that the wine was the blood of the rich people.

Ernest Defarge smiled at the man. But he covered the word with some mud.

“I know why you wrote it,” he told the man. “I feel the same way you do. But it isn’t safe to write such words in public.”

The other man smiled and nodded. Then he and the others went back to their houses.

10. Which is a metaphor?
- a. He dipped his finger into it.
  - b. He saw the red wine in the street.
  - c. The wine was the blood of the rich people.
  - d. I feel the same way you do.

*STRUGGLE*

My Soul is like the oar that momentarily  
Dies in a desperate stress beneath the wave,  
Then glitters out again and sweeps the sea:  
Each second I’m new-born from some  
new grave.

11. “My soul is like the oar” is an example of what figurative language?
- a. simile
  - b. metaphor
  - c. mood
  - d. personification

*STILL*

It has been six years  
Six long revolutions round the sun  
And she still haunts me.  
The memory is gray, like an October  
New York City day.  
Forgotten is the reason why it stopped  
Hazy is the memory of how it began  
Lost forever is the magic of it all;  
And she still haunts me.

12. Which of the following is a simile?
- a. It has been six years.
  - b. She still haunts me.
  - c. The memory is gray, like an October  
New York City day.
  - d. Forgotten is the reason why it  
stopped.

*BUTTERFLY*

You took my love  
Gently in your hands  
Like a butterfly;  
Then you plucked off  
One of the wings  
And laughed as it flopped  
Upon the ground.

13. “You took my love gently in your hands  
like a butterfly” is an example of what  
figurative language?
- a. simile
  - b. metaphor
  - c. mood
  - d. personification

*A RED, RED ROSE*

O, my luvie is like a red, red rose,  
That's newly sprung in June.  
O, my luvie is like the melodie,  
That's sweetly play'd in tune.  
As fair art thou, my bonie lass,  
So deep in luvie am I,  
And I will luvie thee still, my dear,  
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,  
And the rocks melt wi' the sun!  
And I will luvie thee still, my dear,  
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luvie,  
And fare thee weel a while!  
And I will come again, my luvie,  
Tho' it were ten thousand mile!

14. Which of the following is a simile?
- a. So deep in luvie am I.
  - b. Till a' the seas gang dry.
  - c. O, my luvie is like a red, red rose.
  - d. And the rocks melt wi' the sun.
15. Which of the following is a simile?
- a. That's newly sprung in June.
  - b. O' my luvie is like the melodie.
  - c. While the sands o' life shall run.
  - d. Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

*THE MUSHROOM*

The mushroom is the elf of plants,  
At evening it is not;  
At morning in a truffled hut  
It stops upon a spot

As if it tarried always;  
And yet its whole career  
Is shorter than a snake's delay,  
And fleeter than a tare.

'Tis vegetation's juggler,  
The germ of alibi;  
Doth like a bubble antedate,  
And like a bubble hie.

I feel as if the grass were pleased  
To have it intermit;  
The surreptitious scion  
Of summer's circumspect.

Had nature any outcast face,  
Could she a son contemn,  
Had nature an Iscariot,  
That mushroom, — it is him.

16. "The mushroom is the elf of plants" is an example of what figurative language?
- simile
  - metaphor
  - mood
  - personification
17. Which of the following is a simile?
- It stops upon a spot.
  - The germ of alibi; doth like a bubble antedate.
  - at morning in a truffled hut
  - at evening when it is not

18. "I feel as if the grass were pleased" is an example of what figurative language?
- simile
  - metaphor
  - mood
  - personification
19. Which of the following is a metaphor?
- Could she a son contemn?
  - Had nature an Iscariot,  
that mushroom, — it is him.
  - I feel as if the grass were pleased.
  - At evening it is not.

*THE EARTH'S A BAKED APPLE*

The earth's a baked apple  
Circling on a stick  
Of sunlight  
For best results  
Add patience and let cool.  
Serves 3 1/2 billion.

20. Which of the following is a metaphor?
- The earth's a baked apple.
  - Add patience and let cool.
  - Serves 3 1/2 billion.
  - circling on a stick of sunlight

*THE WIND TAPPED LIKE A TIRED MAN*

The wind tapped like a tired man,  
And like a host, "Come in,"  
I boldly answered; entered then  
My residence within.

A rapid, footless guest,  
To offer whom a chair  
Were as impossible as hand  
A sofa to the air.

No bone had he to bind him,  
His speech was like the push  
Of numerous humming-birds at once  
From a superior bush.

His countenance a billow,  
His fingers, if he pass  
Let go a music, as of tunes  
Blown tremulous in glass.

He visited, still flitting;  
Then, like a timid man,  
Again he tapped — 'twas flurriedly —  
And I became alone.

21. "A rapid, footless guest," "his fingers," and "he visited" are words that describe the wind. What form of figurative language is this?
- simile
  - metaphor
  - mood
  - personification
22. Which of the following is a simile?
- No bone had he to bind him.
  - his countenance a billow
  - The wind tapped like a tired man.
  - I boldly answered.

23. Which of the following belongs in the empty box in the graphic organizer?

Stanza	Simile
1st	The wind tapped like a tired man
2nd	To offer whom a chair were as impossible as hand a sofa to the air.
3rd	His speech was like the push of numerous humming-birds at once.
5th	?

- And I became alone.
  - Again he tapped
  - He visited still flitting; then like a timid man.
  - 'twas flurriedly
24. "His countenance a billow" is what type of figurative language?
- simile
  - metaphor
  - mood
  - personification

*FOREIGN LANDS*

Up into the cherry tree  
Who should climb but little me?  
I held the trunk with both my hands  
And looked abroad on foreign lands.

I saw the next door garden lie,  
Adorned with flowers, before my eye,  
And many pleasant places more  
That I had never seen before.

I saw the dimpling river pass  
And be the sky's blue looking-glass;  
The dusty roads go up and down  
With people trampling in to town.

If I could find a higher tree  
Farther and farther I should see,  
To where the grown-up river slips  
Into the sea among the ships,

To where the roads on either hand  
Lead onward into fairy land,  
Where all the children dine at five,  
And all the playthings come alive.

25. "I saw the dimpling river pass and be the sky's blue looking glass" is an example of which figurative language?
- a. simile
  - b. metaphor
  - c. mood
  - d. personification
26. Which of the following is an example of personification?
- a. I held the trunk with both my hands.
  - b. Who should climb but little me?
  - c. to where the grown-up river slips
  - d. where all the children dine at five

27. "I saw the next door garden lie" is an example of which figurative language?
- a. simile
  - b. metaphor
  - c. mood
  - d. personification

MY SHADOW

I have a little shadow that goes in and  
out with me,  
And what can be the use of him is more  
than I can see.

He is very, very like me from the heels  
up to the head;  
And I see him jump before me, when I  
jump into my bed.

The funniest thing about him is the way  
he likes to grow—  
not at all like proper children, which is  
always very slow;  
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an  
india-rubber ball,  
And he sometimes gets so little that  
there's none of him at all.

He hasn't got a notion of how children  
ought to play,  
And can only make a fool of me in every  
sort of way.  
He stays so close beside me, he's a cow-  
ard you can see;  
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that  
shadow sticks to me!

One morning, very early, before the sun  
was up,  
I rose and found the shining dew on  
every buttercup;  
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant  
sleepy-head,  
Had stayed at home behind me and was  
fast asleep in bed.

28. "He's a coward you can see" is an exam-  
ple of what figurative language?  
a. simile  
b. metaphor  
c. mood  
d. personification

29. Which of the following is a simile?  
a. but my lazy little shadow, like an  
arrant sleepy-head  
b. and I see him jump before me  
c. He hasn't got a notion of how chil-  
dren ought to play.  
d. before the sun was up
30. "He likes to grow" and "he sometimes  
shoots up taller" are examples of what  
figurative language?  
a. simile  
b. metaphor  
c. mood  
d. personification
31. Which of the following is a simile?  
a. I have a little shadow that goes in and  
out with me.  
b. one morning, very early  
c. He stays so close beside me.  
d. For he sometimes shoots up taller like  
an india-rubber ball.

*THE DUMB SOLDIER*

When the grass was closely mown,  
Walking on the lawn alone,  
In the turf a hole I found,  
And hid a soldier underground.

Spring and daisies came apace;  
Grasses hide my hiding place;  
Grasses run like a green sea  
O'er the lawn up to my knee.

Under grass alone he lies,  
Looking up with leaden eyes,  
Scarlet coat and pointed gun,  
To the stars and to the sun.

When the grass is ripe like grain,  
When the scythe is stoned again,  
When the lawn is shaven clear,  
Then my hole shall reappear.

I shall find him, never fear,  
I shall find my grenadier;  
But for all that's gone and come,  
I shall find my soldier dumb.

32. "Grasses run like a green sea" is an example of what figurative language?
- a. simile
  - b. metaphor
  - c. mood
  - d. personification
33. "Grasses hide" and "grasses run" are examples of what figurative language?
- a. simile
  - b. metaphor
  - c. mood
  - d. personification
34. Which of the following is a simile?
- a. to the stars and to the sun
  - b. Then my hole shall reappear.
  - c. When the grass is ripe like grain.
  - d. I shall find my soldier dumb.

*AT THE SEA SIDE*

When I was down beside the sea  
A wooden spade they gave to me  
To dig the sandy shore.

My holes were empty like a cup.  
In every hole the sea came up,  
Till it could come no more.

35. "My holes were empty like a cup" is an example of what figurative language?
- a. simile
  - b. metaphor
  - c. mood
  - d. personification

*I LIKE TO SEE IT LAP THE MILES*

I like to see it lap the miles,  
And lick the valleys up,  
And stop to feed itself at tanks,  
And then, prodigious, step  
Around a pile of mountains,  
And, supercilious, peer  
In shanties by the sides of roads,  
And then a quarry pare  
To fit its sides, and crawl between,  
Complaining all the while  
In horrid, hooting stanza,  
Then chase itself down hill  
And neigh like Boanerges—  
then, punctual as a star,  
Stop—docile and omnipotent—  
At its own stable door.

36. Which of the following is a simile?
- a. around a pile of mountains
  - b. complaining all the while
  - c. stop—docile and omnipotent
  - d. and neigh like Boanerges
37. “And lick the valleys up” is an example of what figurative language?
- a. simile
  - b. metaphor
  - c. mood
  - d. personification
38. “Then, punctual as a star” is an example of what figurative language?
- a. simile
  - b. metaphor
  - c. mood
  - d. personification
39. Which of the following is an example of personification?
- a. in shanties by the sides of roads
  - b. and stop to feed itself at tanks
  - c. and neigh like Boanerges
  - d. at its own stable door

*TWO BUTTERFLIES WENT OUT AT NOON*

Two butterflies went out at noon  
And waltzed upon a farm,  
Then stepped straight through the firmament  
And rested on a beam.  
And then together bore away  
Upon a shining sea,  
Though never yet, in any port,  
Their coming mentioned be.  
If spoken by the distant bird,  
If met in ether sea  
By frigate, or by merchantman,  
No notice was to me.

40. “And waltzed upon a farm” is an example of what figurative language?
- a. simile
  - b. metaphor
  - c. mood
  - d. personification
41. Which of the following is an example of personification?
- a. upon a shining sea
  - b. no notice was to me
  - c. then stepped straight through the firmament
  - d. though never yet, in any port

*A PROMPT, EXECUTIVE BIRD IS THE JAY*

A prompt, executive bird is the jay,  
 bold as a bailiff's hymn—  
 brittle and brief in quality—  
 Warrant in every line.  
 sitting in a bough like a brigadier  
 Confident and straight—  
 Much is the mien of him in March  
 As a magistrate.

42. "A prompt, executive bird is the jay" is an example of what figurative language?  
 a. simile  
 b. metaphor  
 c. mood  
 d. personification
43. Which of the following is a simile?  
 a. confident and straight  
 b. bold as a bailiff's hymn  
 c. warrant in every line  
 d. brittle and brief in quality
44. "Sitting in a bough like a brigadier" is an example of what figurative language?  
 a. simile  
 b. metaphor  
 c. mood  
 d. personification
45. "Much is the mien of him in March as a magistrate" is an example of what figurative language?  
 a. simile  
 b. metaphor  
 c. mood  
 d. personification

*THE WIND*

I saw you toss the kites on high  
 And blow the birds about the sky'  
 And all around I hear you pass,  
 Like ladies' skirts across the grass—  
 O wind, a-blowing all day long,  
 O wind, that sings so loud a song!

I saw the different things you did,  
 But always you yourself you hid.  
 I felt you push, I heard you call,  
 I could not see yourself at all—

O wind, a-blowing all day long,  
 O wind, that sings so loud a song!

O you that are so strong and cold,  
 O blower, are you young or old?  
 Are you a beast of field and tree,  
 Or just a stronger child than me?

O wind, a-blowing all day long,  
 O wind, that sings so loud a song!

46. Which of the following is an example of personification?  
 a. you that are so strong and cold  
 b. I felt you push.  
 c. a-blowing all day long  
 d. I saw the different things you did.
47. "And all around I hear you pass, like ladies' skirts across the grass" is an example of what figurative language?  
 a. simile  
 b. metaphor  
 c. mood  
 d. personification
48. "O wind, that sings so loud a song" is an example of what figurative language?  
 a. simile  
 b. metaphor  
 c. mood  
 d. personification