

Lesson Plan Title: Simile

Concept / Topic To Teach: Use of simile in poetry writing.

Standards Addressed: California State Board of Education, English-Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools, 1997*

General Goal(s): To teach student the use simile in literature through applied practice in a student composition.

Specific Objectives: Use of simile in student writing. Students learn to make connections between unrelated ideas and events while learning how to perceive those objects and events beyond the things and actions as we ordinarily understand them to be.

Required Materials:

Sample poems:

“The Eagle” by Tennyson

“The Six Strings” by Lorca

Further Poem Examples‡

Star Simile Worksheet

Sharp Pencil and Composition Paper

Time: One Hour

Anticipatory Set (Lead-In): Discussion of word “simile.”

Write the word “S-M-I-L-E” on the board in large letters. Explain that simile is easily remembered by adding the letter “i” between the S and the M written on the board. Write in the letter “I” between the “S” and “M.”

Ask for background knowledge: does anyone know what a simile is? Reward correct responses and explain that a simile compares two very unlike things using the words “like” or “as.”

Read aloud the poems by Tennyson and Lorca. Ask students to find the word “like” or “as” in poems. Have them put finger on word. Ask them what two things are being compared in first, then the second poem.

Discussion of how an eagle is like a thunderbolt (Tennyson). Discussion of how a tarantula is like a guitar (Lorca).

Tell students they are going to make their own similes and use them in a poem.

Step-By-Step Procedure:

Format: Example poems, discussion. Group participation. Individual writing.

Reading and brief discussion of the example poems (appropriate to grade level).

Have pencil and paper ready at desks and hand out Star Simile worksheets to students.

Draw a large star on the whiteboard similar to the star on the worksheet and write the words “ ____ as BIG as” beside it.

Explain to students that they will write their own answers inside the first star on the worksheet.

Ask class to tell you some things are big (elephant, refrigerator, mountain). Reward good responses and write ONE response inside the star.

You now have [sample response: mountain] written inside the star. Ask students to write their own responses for “BIG” inside the star on their worksheet.

Demonstrate that to make a simile, we must compare something to the mountain. Ask the class to answer the question: WHO or WHAT is as big as a mountain?

Responses could be: a person, family member, an animal, or an emotion.

Write words for emotions on the board: “love, joy, anger, sadness, jealousy, happiness.” Tell class that ANY of these words might be compared to a mountain. Ask students to give oral responses by raising hands and saying aloud their simile. “Love is as big as a mountain.” Or, “My dad is as big as a mountain.”

Write best response on the blank line: “ ____ as BIG as” and read the phrase aloud to the class “Love is as big as a mountain,” or “My dad is as big as a mountain.”

Draw a second star beside the first star on the whiteboard, labeling the second star “ ____ as SMART as.” Follow the same procedure as above by asking students to tell you a single noun for something that is smart. (A dictionary, the sun, my mom.) Choose the best oral response and write it inside the second star on the whiteboard.

You now have [sample response: dictionary] written inside the star. Ask students to write their own responses for “SMART” inside the star on their worksheet.

Again, ask the students WHO or WHAT is as smart as a dictionary, and choosing the best oral response, write that answer on the line: “ ____ as SMART as.” My hand is as smart as the dictionary.

Ask students to complete their worksheets by writing words INSIDE the remaining stars that satisfy the simile. Prompt with questions: “Tell me something that is HONEST.” What can you think of that is SOFT? What do you know that makes a WHISTLING

sound? Reward good oral responses and ask students to write oral responses INSIDE the star on their worksheets.

When all stars are filled in, ask class WHO or WHAT is HONEST, and ask students to write their answers on the line above HONEST. Complete the other stars. One word written inside the star, one word of comparison written on line next to star.

When students have all stars filled in and all lines above the stars completed, tell them they have made a list of similes. You will now have a number of clichés.

To make this exercise exciting and to move it away from the cliché, ask them to SWITCH answers from star to star. Demonstrate this by returning to the board. In the first star you may have this sentence:

“Love is as big as a mountain”

In the second star you have this sentence:

“My hand is as smart as the dictionary”

Demonstrate how an exciting simile can be formed by switching answers, thus:

Love is as big as the dictionary.
My hand is as smart as a mountain.

Draw arrows on the board from the first star to the second star to model this.

You are demonstrating symbolic logic. Rationally speaking, Love cannot be as big as the dictionary. Return to the example poems and demonstrate that an eagle FALLS like a thunderbolt, and a guitar SPINS like a tarantula. How can this be true? Logically it can't, but in poetry unusual comparisons can be made using strong active verbs. Ask students how, or under what conditions could your hand be as big as a mountain; how could love be as smart as the sun?

Love is as big as a dictionary when it RUNS through the pages.

Ask students to switch answers from star to star on worksheet at desk. Ask for oral responses. Does anyone have an interesting simile? Reward good responses.

Ask students with good oral responses to write their responses at the top of their composition paper. Tell them that this is the first line of their poem.

To complete the poem, ask students to write five to ten lines describing WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, and WHY or under what conditions “My hand is as big as a mountain.” or “Love is as smart as the sun.” My hand is as big as a mountain WHEN ... Or, Love is as smart as the sun WHERE ...

By switching answers from star to star, students will avoid clichés.

Rotate around room, checking answers, making sure that students are NOT starting with a simile of a cliché.

Ask students to complete five to ten lines describing how or under what conditions the first sentence on their page could be true. Have them fill on or make up a story describing and elaborating the first line they have written.

Give entire class a SILENT writing time of ten minutes.

As you circle room, read the student writing-in-progress. Encourage further details. Instruct those with first lines to begin writing.

End silent writing time.

Ask for VOLUNTEERS to come to front and share writing. Do not force anyone to share if he does not feel comfortable.

Tell author at front of class to ask class for raise hands to tell give responses to the poem (What do you like about the poem?) Encourage all responses to author. Give author at front the opportunity to pick students with raised hands.

Plan For Independent Practice: Ask students to revise and complete poems.

Closure (Reflect Anticipatory Set): Ask class what they have learned about simile. Ask class to illustrate poems with drawings.

Assessment Based On Objectives: Did student compare two *unrelated* things in poem? Did student use complete sentences? Did student give details? Did student use “like” or “as” to compare two things? Did student give details or explain how or under what conditions could the simile be true? Did student have fun?

Adaptations and Modifications (For Students With Learning Disabilities). Special Education: Reduce number of responses from five stars to three . Allow students to use phrases rather than complete sentences. Consult with IEP to apply learning objectives in Reading/Writing to this lesson. Ask “early finishers” to collaborate with “late finishers” and act as scribe. Early finisher writes down oral response from “late finisher” on worksheet. Ask students to make up own words instead of “big,” “smart,” etc. Teacher takes dictation from Special Ed. student oral response and writes oral response for student on worksheet.

ELL/ELD: Ask for responses relative to students' native culture.

Extensions (For Gifted Students): GATE students write more than ten lines. Ask them to use more than one word for emotion in composition. Ask them to use phrases of both "like" and "as" in composition. Use simile at another place in the composition other than the first line. Illustrate compositions when complete. Place compositions on poster paper and hang throughout the classroom.

Possible Connections To Other Subjects: Cross-discipline with science, history, math. Ask students to pick subject from other disciplines and describe that subject using the simile. For math: if a numeric operation (multiplication) could be LIKE some other operation, what operation would it be? If an historical event could be LIKE another event, what event would it be like?

* California ELA Contents Standards

Grade Four: Reading

3.0 Literary Response and Analysis

3.5 Define figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification) and identify its use in literary works.

Grade Seven: Reading

1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

Students use their knowledge of word origins and word relationships, as well as historical and literary context clues, to determine the meaning of specialized vocabulary and to understand the precise meaning of grade-level-appropriate words.

Vocabulary and Concept Development

1.1 Identify idioms, analogies, metaphors, and similes in prose and poetry.

Grade Eight: Reading

1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

Vocabulary and Concept Development

1.1 Analyze idioms, analogies, metaphors, and similes to infer the literal and figurative meanings of phrases.

Lesson Plan Title: Simile Poetry Writing by [Scott Reid](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0 United States License](#).

<http://scotts.members.sonic.net/albany/>

Sample Poems

The Six Strings

The guitar
makes dreams weep.
The sobbing
of lost souls
escapes
through its round mouth.
And like the tarantula
it spins a large star
to trap the sighs
floating in its black,
wooden cistern.

Lorca

The Eagle

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

Tennyson

+ further sample poem:

The Ocean

Love is as big as the forest.
It never ends.
It stretches on and on,
going to the end of the world.
It may get sad sometimes,
but it will always be there
slow as the wind. Then it rises again.
But sometimes it falls
and lands with a howl.
It ends, and the forest fades away.

Star Simile Worksheet

WRITE ONE SIMILE INSIDE EACH STAR

